



## 内容摘要

文体学是一门运用现代语言学理论和研究方法研究文体的学科。它的研究目的在于通过对具有文体意义的语言特征进行分析,揭示语言运用的表达效果和交际功能。由于现代语言学的流派不同,文体学也产生了多种流派。韩礼德等人所推行的功能主义的文体观近年来很盛行。它强调语篇与情景语境的关系,促使人们从语篇外部或社会历史环境来探讨文体风格问题。

英语政治演讲是西方社会一种重要的文化现象,它是指针对国家的内政事务和外交关系,表明立场,阐明观点,宣传主张的一种演讲,是政治斗争的重要武器。美国总统就职演说是政治演讲的一种。它在总统就职时向国内外公开发表,宣布自己的施政纲领,说服公众接受并支持自己的观点。就职演说影响广泛,意义重大,是一种独特而重要的实用文体。对它的研究不仅能进一步拓宽演讲文体的研究范畴,而且有助于读者更好地欣赏这一文体,有助于演讲爱好者提高公众演讲语言运用技能,并有助于大学里英语阅读及写作的教学。

本文以韩礼德的功能主义文体学语境制约观及突出理论为基础,旨在通过系统地文体分析,揭示美国总统就职演说的文体特征。为了反映现代英语的特点,本论文语料为十篇二战以后的美国总统就职演说辞。分析方法主要采用功能文体学的方法。但在对词汇、句法、语篇等层面的具体分析过程中,也采用了一些广为接受的其他语言学理论。利用具体的数据统计进行系统研究是本文的一大特点。

本文的分析基本按“描写—阐释—评价”这三个步骤,在词汇、句法、修辞、语篇等语言层面进行。词汇层面的分析主要涉及了词的结构、形容词



及第一人称复数代词的用法等方面；句法层面的分析主要涉及了句子结构、句子类型、名词的后置现象、动词的时态等方面。因为文体与修辞的密切关系，对修辞层面的分析是本文的一个重点。该层面的分析主要涉及了平行结构、隐喻、头韵法等修辞手法，而语篇层面的分析主要涉及了就职演说辞的语篇模式、宗教色彩、以及空话现象等。

通过分析，揭示了以下有关美国总统就职演说的文体特征：首先，受情景语境制约，就职演说辞中含有大量的抽象名词；一般现在时、现在完成时及将来时的使用频率较高，而过去时的使用频率较低；就职演说还具有正式书面语体的特征，主要属于书面语体，但它同时也具有口语体的部分特征。其次，演说者充分利用了第一人称代词、富有感情色彩的形容词、句式的多样性、后置修饰语、各种修辞手法等语言技巧，使就职演说生动有力，富于鼓动性。另外，受其社会文化因素的影响，美国总统就职演说从形式到内容都具有鲜明的宗教色彩。而且，演说中还存在空话现象。

**关键词：** 文体分析； 就职演说； 情景语境； 语域



## Abstract

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that studies language style. The goal of most stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of text for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate possible meanings or effects to linguistics “causes” where these are felt to be relevant. Theories and schools of modern linguistics are various; this results in various theories and schools of stylistics. Functional stylistics advocated by M. A. K. Halliday has been prevailing since the 1970s. It stresses the relationship between the text and the context of situation, and advocates studying the style in the social-cultural context.

English public political speaking is an important social-cultural phenomenon of the West. It is one that the speaker, usually on behalf of a certain class, society, or party, makes to an audience on some important matters and relationships at home and abroad. American presidential inaugural address is a sub-component of the public political speaking. It is delivered to the people at home and abroad, when the newly elected president takes office. In these addresses the speakers are expected to make his government policy known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support his policy. With worldwide influence and long-lasting significance, American presidential address is an important functional variety. The analysis of its stylistic features cannot only broaden the scope of the stylistic study of the public political speaking, but can also help the readers better appreciate the inaugural address, develop language skills of public speaking learners, and it is also helpful to us in teaching English reading and writing in college.

This dissertation, mainly based on Halliday's functional stylistic theories, especially his theories of context and foregrounding, aims to reveal the stylistic features of the American presidential inaugural address. In order to reflect the characteristics of modern English, and to ensure the reliability and convenience of



the analysis, the corpuses of this dissertation are ten American presidential inaugural addresses after World War II. The analysis is mainly based on M. A. K. Halliday's functional stylistic theories, but in detailed analysis at the lexical level, syntactic level, rhetorical level, and textual level, it also employs some other commonly accepted contemporary linguistic theories. The analysis generally follows the following three steps: Description (mainly linguistic) \_\_\_\_ Interpretation \_\_\_\_ Evaluation. Systematic investigation of the linguistic data is a characteristic of this dissertation. Because of the close relation between speech skills and rhetorical devices, the analysis at the rhetorical level is the emphasis of this dissertation.

The analysis reveals the following stylistic features of American presidential inaugural address: First, determined by its context of situation, American presidential address contains many abstract nouns; the frequently used tenses in it are the simple present, perfect present and future simple. American presidential address is characteristic of formal written language while exhibiting features of spoken language. It is mainly treated as a written language. Second, the speakers make good use of language skills to make their speeches vivid, forceful and effective. These language skills include the first-person plural, adjectives with emotional color, variety of sentence, and suitable rhetorical devices. Third, influenced by its social, cultural background, the American presidential inaugural addresses possess much religious color. And semantically, there are some hollow words in the inaugural addresses, which is the product of the emotional appeal.

**Key Words:** Stylistic analysis; Inaugural addresses; context of situation; Register



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## 1. Introduction

Stylistics is the study of language style using modern linguistic theories and approaches. Since style can be viewed in different ways, and modern linguistic theories include many different schools, the definitions and approaches of stylistics are also various. According to its approaches and functions, stylistics can be classified into general stylistics, literary stylistics, formal stylistics, functional stylistics, discourse stylistics, linguistic stylistics, and social-historical/social-cultural stylistics, etc.

Functional stylistics advocated by British linguist, M. A. K. Halliday has been prevailing since the 1970s. According to Halliday, "language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations." (Halliday, 1985) He stresses the relationship between the text and the context of situation, and advocates studying the style in the social-cultural context. Language is used in a context of situation: the circumstances under which it is used. According to Halliday, a language feature, such as a word or rhetorical device, can be regarded as a stylistic feature only when it corresponds with its context of situation, and performs its function. Functional stylistic theory is one of the most influential theories in recent years, when linguistics lays much emphasis on the social –cultural context.

Another widely accepted stylistic theory is "foregrounding" theory, which is first advocated by Russian Formalism and Prague School. Since the 1960s, this theory has been greatly developed. Leech and Short classified the forms of foregrounding into "qualitative foregrounding" and "quantitative foregrounding". Halliday believes that foregrounding may result in two ways: "deviation from a norm" and "establishment of a norm". He thinks only the "motivated prominence" can be regarded as the stylistic feature (Halliday, 1973). The foregrounding theory is used widely in the stylistic analysis.

British linguist, Michael Short (1984) summarizes the process of the stylistic





analysis into three relevant steps: Description (mainly linguistic) — Interpretation — Evaluation. What remains central to the practice of stylistics is the application of linguistic knowledge to describe the ways that writers use language, and the choices that they make in creating texts. But because the purpose of stylistic analysis is to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text, interpretation and evaluation are also important.

For a long time researchers have laid much emphasis on stylistic analysis of the literary works such as, fiction, drama and poetry. So in a narrow sense, stylistics refers to literary stylistics. Only in 80's of this century, the study of the other varieties began to flourish. Public speaking is one of the varieties that draw much attention of the stylisticians.

English public speaking is the transmission of a message in English from one person who addresses to an audience who is physically present. In terms of content public speaking has several sub-components, such as military speaking, cultural speaking, political speaking, etc. Each of these sub-components has its own subcomponents. Presidential inaugural speech is a sub-component of public political speaking.

There is a trend in recent years that based on the systematic investigation of linguistic data, varieties are studied more and more deeply and concretely, and the significant sub-components are taken into account. As an important sub-component of public speaking, public political speech has drawn attention of many stylisticians. Such as: 王佐良, 徐有志, 徐振忠 in China, and Martine Joos, Ofer Feldman, Robert C. Pooley abroad. But their studies are scarcely based on systematic investigation of linguistic data. None of their studies deals particularly with its sub-component: American presidential inaugural address.

In fact, American presidential address is a very important variety with worldwide influence and long-lasting significance. When American presidents declare to take office, inaugural speeches are delivered to people both at home and abroad. In these addresses the speakers are expected to make his government policy



known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support his policy. In order to achieve these aims, the speakers often resort to language skills among other things. Therefore, a stylistic study of American presidential inaugural addresses is significant. Theoretically, this study can broaden the scope of stylistic study of public political speaking. Practically, with the analysis of their stylistic features, it can help the readers better appreciate American presidential inaugural addresses, and develop language skills of the public speaking learners. And it is also helpful to us in teaching English reading and writing in colleges.

The analysis is mainly based on M. A. K. Halliday's functional stylistic theory, especially on his theories about "context" and "foregrounding". But in detailed analysis on the lexical level, syntactic level, rhetorical level, and discourse level, it also adopts some other commonly accepted contemporary linguistic theories. The analysis generally follows the following three steps: Description (mainly linguistic) — Interpretation — Evaluation. Systematic investigation of the linguistic data is a characteristic of this dissertation. Because of the close relation between speech skills and rhetorical devices, the analysis at the rhetorical level is the emphasis of this dissertation.

This dissertation mainly consists of four parts: introduction, literature review, the analysis and result, and conclusion. The introduction is concerned with the purpose of this dissertation, the present state of the relevant research, the significance and the value of the chosen topic. Literature review is about the theories and methods used in the dissertation, the definition of the chosen subject, and the procedures of the research, including the design, corpus, and concrete methods of the analysis. The analysis and result is the main part of this dissertation; it gives a detailed analysis to the stylistic features of the American presidential inaugural addresses. It consists of four parts, concerning the analysis at the lexical level, syntactic level, the rhetorical level, and the textual level respectively. The emphasis of the analysis to the rhetorical features is on the use of parallelism, metaphor, and alliteration, which are the main rhetorical devices used in the inaugural addresses.





## 2. Literature review

This part mainly deals with the theories and approaches relating to this dissertation, the definition of the chosen subject, the present state of the research, and the procedures of the research.

### 2.1 Theories and methods

The functional linguistic theory advocated by British linguist, M. A. K. Halliday has been prevailing since the 1970s. It is widely used in stylistic analysis. Functional stylistics has three features: first, stressing the relationship between the text and the context of situation, and advocating studying the style in the social-cultural context; second, adopting systematic-functional grammar in stylistic analysis; third, summarizing the foregrounding theory systematically. Systematic-functional grammar is a very useful approach to the stylistic analysis to some extent, but quite a few functional stylisticians use this approach mainly to examine or improve systematic-functional grammar itself, make the apparently simple language phenomenon formulistic. And many people esp. the outsiders think that the stylistic analysis based on the systematic-functional grammar is hard to understand. (申丹, 1998: 105) On the other hand, the theories about context, and foregrounding are widely accepted.

#### 2.1.1 Theory of “context”

In *Linguistics: An Advanced Course Book* (胡壮麟, 2002: 489), Stylistics is defined as “the branch of linguistics that studies language style. It explains the relationship between the text and its context” This shows that importance of “context” in stylistic analysis.

Halliday believes that contexts should be taken into consideration in stylistic



analysis. The contexts include social-cultural context and context of situation. It has been long recognized that language is an essential and important social-cultural phenomenon, and it is a reflection of the social activities. Each speech community has its own history, culture, custom, convention, and moral principles, etc. These ways and factors characterize a certain speech community, and form the "social-cultural context". The meaning of a text lies in its social function and its purpose of usage. The same text may have different social meaning and communicative effects in different social-cultural contexts, thus have different interpretations. (黄国文, 2001: 124).

"Social-cultural context" is an abstract and general concept. It represents an abstract form of people's daily activity. Actually, text is a form of communication which performs in a context of situation.

"Context of situation" is originally suggested by Malinowski (1923) and subsequently elaborated by Firth in his 1950 paper "Personality and language in society"(Firth 1957:14). Essentially what this implies is that language comes to life only when functioning in some environment. According to Halliday, the situation is the environment in which the text comes to life. The type of language, which is selected as appropriate to the type of situation, is a register. He said, "A register can be defined as the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type. It is the meaning potential that is accessible in a given social context." (Halliday, 2001, 111) He further distinguishes three social variables that determine the register: field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse. These variables are concerned respectively with the three metafunctions of language: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function.

The field is the social action in which the text is embedded; it includes the subject-matter, as one special manifestation. The tenor is the set of role relationships among the relevant participants; it includes levels of formality as one particular instance. The mode is the channel or wavelength selected, which is



essentially the function that is assigned to language in the total structure of the situation; it includes the medium (spoken or written), which is explained as a functional variable. Field, tenor and mode are not kinds of language use, nor are they simply components of the speech setting. They are a conceptual framework for representing the social context as the semiotic environment in which people exchange meanings. Given an adequate specification of the semiotic properties of the context in terms of field, tenor and mode we should be able to make sensible predictions about the semantic properties of texts associated with it (Halliday, 2001:110).

“The goal of most stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of text for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate possible meanings or effects to linguistics ‘causes’ where these are felt to be relevant.”(Wales, 1989) According to Halliday, a linguistic feature, such as a word or a rhetorical devices, can be regarded as a stylistic feature only when it corresponds with its context of situation, and performs its function.

### 2.1.2 Theory of “foregrounding”

Another important theory of functional stylistics is its theory about foregrounding. “Foregrounding means the use of the devices of language in such a way that this use attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon, as non-automatic.”(胡壮麟, 2002:521) Russian Formalism and Prague School first advocated the theory of foregrounding. Since the 1960s, this theory has been greatly developed. Leech and Short (1981:48-49) classified the forms of foregrounding into “qualitative foregrounding” and “quantitative foregrounding”. Halliday defines foregrounding as prominence that is motivated (Halliday, 1973). He believes that foregrounding may result from two ways: “deviation from a norm” and “establishment of a norm”. The former means a departure from a norm; it is a negative way of prominence. The later means the attainment or establish of a norm; it is a positive way of prominence. Halliday later revises these terms as



“incongruity” and “deflection”

“Incongruity” emphasizes the “qualitative deviation”. “Deflection” emphasizes the “quantitative deviation”. Halliday puts more emphasis on “deflection” (quantitative foregrounding) than on “incongruity”(qualitative foregrounding)(申丹, 1998: 104). “Quantitative foregrounding” can be achieved in two ways: 1. The writer adopts some regular, consistent expressions, such as parallelism, repetition, and antithesis. In this sense, deflection means over-regularity. 2. The writer can also achieve “quantitative foregrounding” though frequency distribution. In this sense, deflection means a departure from some expected pattern of frequency. The data-collection and data-analysis are very helpful to find out this kind of “quantitative foregrounding”.

According to Halliday, not all of the foregrounding features are stylistic features. Only the motivated prominence is the real foregrounding. A language feature can be regarded as a stylistic feature only when it corresponds with its function in the context of situation. Therefore the stylistic analysis should involve both the foregrounding features and context of situation.

## **2.2 The definition of American presidential inaugural address:**

When American presidents declare to take office, inaugural speeches are delivered to people both at home and abroad. In these addresses the speakers are expected to make his government policy known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support his policy. From the point of view of the functional stylistics, “language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations.”(Halliday, 1985) So American presidential inaugural addresses will be defined from the angle of context of situation.

Field of discourse refers to what is going on: to the area of operation of the language activity. It is concerned with the purpose and subject-matter of communication. It answers the questions of ‘why’ and about ‘what’ communication



takes place. The field of a register has close relationship with the ideational function of language, determines to a great extent the vocabulary to be used in communication, and it also determines the phonological and grammatical features of the language. American presidential inaugural address is one type of public political speaking. Its field of is political. What the speaker talks about is the government policy.

Tenor of discourse concerns greatly the interpersonal function of language. It refers to the addressee relationship in the situation and the intention of communication. So there are two types of tenor: personal tenor and functional tenor. Personal tenor to a great extent determines the level of formality of the language; functional tenor on the other hand, determines the generic structure. The participants of the activity of American presidential addresses are American presidents and the people in the United States and abroad. In the inaugural address the speaker is expected to make his government policy known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support his policy. So the address is mainly persuasive and informative as well. American linguist Martin Joos, distinguishes five stages of formality: 1.intimate, 2.casual, 3.consultative, 4.formal, and 5.frozen (Joos, 1961). American presidential inaugural addresses are both consultative and formal. This will be further proved though the language analysis.

Mode of discourse mainly refers to the means of communication. It is concerned with "how" communication is carried out — the textual function of language. Fundamental to the mode of discourse is the distinction between spoken and written. American presidential inaugural addresses are prepared beforehand in form of written language, intended to be spoken in the inauguration and to be read afterwards in newspapers or magazines. So their mode of discourse is mainly "written".

### 2.3 The present state of the research





For a long time researchers have laid much emphasis on stylistic analysis of the literary works such as, fictions, dramas and poetry. So in narrow sense, stylistics refers to literary stylistics. *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (1988) defines it as “a branch of linguistics which studies the characteristics of situationally-distinctive uses of language, with particular reference to literary language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language.” Only in 80's of this century, the study of the other varieties began to flourish. Public speaking is one of the varieties that draw much attention of the stylisticians.

English public speaking is the transmission of a message in English from one person who addresses to an audience who is physically present. In terms of content public speaking has several sub-components, such as militarily speaking, cultural speaking, political speaking, etc. Each of these sub-components has its own subcomponents. Presidential inaugural speech is a sub-component of public political speaking.

There is a trend in recent years that based on the systematic investigation of linguistic data, varieties are studied more and more deeply and concretely, and the significant sub-components are taken into account. As an important variety, public political speech has drawn attention of many stylisticians, such as 王佐良, 徐有志, 徐振忠 in China, and Martine Joos, Robert C. Pooley abroad. They have discussed the stylistic features of English public speaking in many of their works, such as: *An Introduction to English Stylistics*(王佐良,1987), “Discussion on the style of English address” (徐振忠,1990:28), “On the religious color of English public political speaking” (徐振忠,1995:28), “On English Public Speaking”(徐有志,1994:19), *The Five Clocks* (Joos, 1961), *Politically Speaking* (Feldman, 1998)

These studies mainly deal with the general stylistic features of English public speaking, esp. the degree of formality of public speaking, some semantic color of public speaking. They are scarcely based on systematic investigation of linguistic





data. And they have not achieved an agreement on the degree of formality of the public speaking. Furthermore, none of these thesis deals particularly with the important sub-component of the public political speaking: American presidential inaugural address, though in *Politically Speaking* (Feldman, 1998) there is a thesis by Montero about the analysis of presidential addresses in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela.

In fact, American presidential address is a very important variety with worldwide influence and long-lasting significance. When American presidents declare to take office, inaugural speeches are delivered to people both at home and abroad. In these addresses the speakers are expected to make his government policy known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support his policy. In order to achieve these aims, the speakers often resort to language skills among other things. Therefore, a stylistic study of American presidential inaugural addresses is significant. Theoretically, this study can broaden the scope of stylistic study of public political speaking. Practically, with the analysis of their stylistic features, it can help the readers better appreciate American presidential inaugural addresses, and develop language skills of the public speaking learners. And it is also helpful to us in teaching English reading and writing in colleges.

## **2.4 Procedures of the research**

### **2.4.1 Design**

This dissertation aims at analyzing the stylistic features of American presidential address from the point of view of the functional stylistics. The analysis is mainly based on M. A. K. Halliday's functional stylistic theory, especially on his theories about "context" and "foregrounding". But in detailed analysis on the lexical level, syntactic level, rhetorical level, and discourse level, it also employs some other commonly accepted contemporary linguistic theories.

### **2.4.2 Corpus**

It is a fact that all languages change through time. The American presidential



inaugural address is no exception. In order to reflect the features of modern American English, all corpuses in this dissertation are selected from the American presidential inaugural addresses after the World War II. In order to ensure the reliability and convenience of the analysis, 10 addresses are included in the corpus. Since the analysis is not concerned with the phonological level, all of the corpuses are in written forms.

#### **2.4.3 Method of analysis**

British linguist, Michael Short (1984) summarizes the process of the stylistic analysis into three relevant steps: Description (mainly linguistic) \_\_ Interpretation \_\_ Evaluation. What remains central to the practice of stylistics is the application of linguistic knowledge to describe the ways that writers use language, and the choices that they make in creating texts. But because the purpose of stylistic analysis is to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text, interpretation and evaluation are also important. The analysis in this dissertation generally follows the above three steps.

Statistics are very helpful to find out foregrounding features, and the analysis based on statistics is relatively objective. So systematic investigation of the linguistic data is a characteristic of this dissertation. And because of the close relation between speech skills and rhetorical devices, the analysis at the rhetorical level is the emphasis of this dissertation.



### **3. The analysis and result**

The following analysis aims to reveal the stylistic features of the American presidential inaugural address. It is mainly based on M. A. K. Halliday's functional stylistic theory, especially on his theories about "context" and "foregrounding". It also adopts some other commonly accepted linguistic theories. The analysis generally follows the following three steps: Description \_\_\_\_ Interpretation \_\_\_\_ Evaluation. Systematic investigation of the linguistic data is a characteristic of this dissertation. The analysis is mainly concerned with the lexical level, syntactic level, rhetorical level, and textual level. Because of the close relation between speech skills and rhetorical devices, the analysis on the rhetorical level is the emphasis of this dissertation.

#### **3.1 The stylistic features on the lexical level**

Word is a basic grammatical unit, which is smaller than sentence. This analysis will begin with the analysis on the lexical level.

##### **3.1.1 Word structure**

The word structure is influenced by the tenor of discourse and mode of discourse, and is related to the interpersonal function and textual function.

Stylisticians usually set six letters or three syllables in a word as a standard to analyze the length of the words. The words with more than six letters are usually regarded as long words. These long words may be words of Latin, French or Greek origin, which are usually formal words. And they may also be derivational or compounding words, which have relatively complicated structure.



Table 1: word structure

Addressers	Total words	Words with 6 letters	Percentage
Truman	2232	782	35%
Eisenhower	1625	426	26.2%
Kennedy	1342	349	26%
Johnson	1475	336	22.8%
Nixon	2088	528	25.3%
Carter	1135	343	30.2%
Reagan	2398	672	28%
G. Bush	2279	534	23.5%
Clinton	1578	465	29.5%
W. Bush	1583	469	29.6%
Total	17735	4904	27.7%

This table shows that in American presidential addresses the average percentage of the words with six words is 27.7%. The highest percentage is in Truman's address. There are 782 words with six letters, which is 35% of the whole words. The lowest percentage is in Johnson's address. There are 336 words with six letters, which is 22.8% of the whole words. The percentage in Reagan's address and W. Bush's address are near the average percentage.

The percentages in daily conversation, instant commentary, and even advertisement are not more than 20%(王佐良, 1987: 235). So comparatively speaking, the words used in inaugural addresses are quite formal and the structures of the words are more complicated.

There are two reasons for this. First, the presidents deliberately use formal words to make their speeches more serious. *E.g.: prosperity, discrimination, obligation, intolerance, sacrifice, deficit, standard, ultimate, sustain, privilege,*



*occurrence, constitution, guarantee, pursuit, routine, magnificent, independence, synagogue, substitute, accumulate, coincidence, proportionate, adversary, possess, persistent, multiply, fantastic, covenant, opportunity, sufficiency, mediocrity, compensate, compassionate, persecute, perseverance, etc.*

Then, the intrinsic structures of the words are quite complicated. There are many derivational or compounding words. The derivation from verbs to nouns is a characteristic of the language in the addresses. We can find many such words: *affirmation, aggression, addiction, demoralization, encouragement, conviction, agreement, celebration, intention, declaration, renewal, division, civilization, contribution, determination, investment, application, exploitation, subversion, limitation, revolution, pursuit, obligation, establishment, distinction, assistance, consummation, elimination, administration, solution, cooperation, recognition, discrimination, competition, etc.* These derivations not only help to form long words with more complicated structures, but also make the words in the addresses more formal.

There is a long lasting dispute that whether public speaking is a spoken variety or a written one. The above analysis on the lexical level shows clearly that as one type of public speaking, American presidential address embodies more features of a written variety, which is characteristic of long, complicated, formal words. These features correspond with the tenor of discourse: both consultative and formal, and mode of discourse: written to be spoken.

The above nouns with such suffixes as: *-tion, -ment, -cy, -ty* are mainly abstract nouns, for they usually refer to the state, quality, cause or result of an action. And we can find many other abstract nouns in American presidential addresses. This phenomenon is determined by the field of discourse. American presidential inaugural address is one type of public political speaking. Its field of discourse is political. Many political terms are abstract. It is natural for the presidents to use many abstract nouns in their addresses.

### 3.1.2 Word classes



The choice of words in word class is determined mainly by the tenor of discourse, and related to the interpersonal function of the language.

The functional tenor of inaugural address is both persuasive and informative. In the inaugural addresses, the speaker is not only to make his government policies known to the public, but also to persuade the public to accept and support his policy. So like advertisement, inaugural address belongs to a loaded language, which triggers emotional reaction. It should have great persuasive power. So the words used in the inaugural address usually contain emotional coloring. This is reflected especially in the use of adjectives, and the first-person pronouns.

#### A: Adjectives

The use of adjectives in the addresses is mainly determined by the functional tenor of the language, and related to its interpersonal function. Table 2 is about the use of adjectives in American presidential addresses.

Table 2: Adjectives

Addressers	Total words	Adjectives	Percentage
Truman	2232	208	9.3%
Eisenhower	1625	113	6.9%
Kennedy	1342	105	7.8%
Johnson	1475	79	5.4%
Nixon	2088	146	7%
Carter	1135	92	8.1%
Reagan	2398	154	6.4%
G. Bush	2279	164	7.2%
Clinton	1578	91	5.8%
W. Bush	1583	157	9.9%
Total	17735	1309	7.4





This table shows 7.4% words in the inaugural addresses are adjectives. In the addresses of Truman and W. Bush, the percentages of the adjectives are near 10%. This percentage is obviously higher than that in instant commentary, which is 5%. (王佐良, 1987: 221) Most of the adjectives are subjective and emotional words, such as: *great, strong, peaceful, free, secure, own, certain, rich, powerful, faithful, difficult, solemn, magical, massive, hopeful, wrong, vital, joyful, weary, vigorous, decent, hard, firm, easy, only, safe, creative, high, grateful, heavy, magnificent, fresh, ambitious, essential, sufficient, unique, orderly, heavy, etc.* Some of the adjectives are even in their comparative or superlative forms, such as: *better, more, most, longest, greatest, etc.*

This is determined by the functional tenor of the presidential addresses. In these addresses the speakers are expected to make their government policies known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support their policies. In order to achieve these aims, the speakers often resort to emotional appeal among other things. Adjectives are very useful in expressing one's emotion, so the speakers use so many adjectives in the addresses. Comparatively, there are fewer adjectives in the instant commentary, which is more objective than the inaugural address.

On the other hand, the percentage of adjectives is much smaller than that of the advertisement, which is about 30% (秦秀白, 2002: 309). This is because as a political address with worldwide influence, American presidential address is much more serious than advertisement. Preaching political views is different from promoting goods. It should seem more subjective and could not be too garish.

#### B: The first-person pronoun

Another noticeable fact in the presidential addresses is the use of the first-person pronouns, which is determined by the personal tenor of the inaugural address, and is related to its interpersonal function.

The most frequently used pronouns are the first-person pronouns: *I, we* and



their derivational forms: *me*, *us*, and *our* etc. Let's take George W. Bush's address as an example. We can find many sentences with the first-person pronouns:

- (1) *I* am honored and humbled to stand here, where so many of America's leaders have come before *me*, and so many will follow.
- (2) *We* have a place, all of *us*, in a long story. A story *we* continue, but whose end *we* will not see.
- (3) *I* will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity.
- (4) Americans are generous and strong and decent, not because *we* believe in *ourselves*, but because *we* hold beliefs beyond *ourselves*.
- (5) *We* know the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.

\_\_\_\_\_(George W. Bush, 2001)

Because the speaker usually mentions himself and his opinions, it is very natural for him to use *I* or *me* frequently. *We* or *us* in English are the form referring to both the speaker plus the audience. In the inaugural address, the speaker frequently uses *we*, *us*, and *our* instead of *you* or *yours*. This creates some special stylistic effects.

First, the inclusive pronouns unite the speaker and the audience. They are helpful to build a sense of closeness between the speaker and the audience. The American president appears to be one member among ordinary American citizens. Thus the speech becomes more intimate, and more acceptable.

Second, the first person plural can encourage a sense of group unity, a feeling of cohesiveness. This practice minimizes differences within our group, and emphasizes differences between group members and those on the outside. (Osborn, 1988: 243) For example in Kennedy's address, he said, "*Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.*"(para4) The first person plurals: *we*, *us* in this sentence distinguish American people from the other nations, encourage a sense of group unity, awaken a sense of national pride and responsibility, thus make the speech very inciting.



In addition, the first-person plural in declarative structure can also perform an imperative function (王佐良, 1987). This indirect imperative form is implicit, and much easier to accept.

- (1) *We* invite other countries to pool their technological resources in this undertaking. (Truman)
- (2) So *we* voice our hope and our belief that we can help to heal this divided world. (Eisenhower)
- (3) *We* shall plan now for the day when our wealth can be transferred from the destruction of war abroad to the urgent needs of our people at home. (Nixon)
- (4) *We* dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. (Kennedy)
- (5) *We* must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles. (Carter)
- (6) *We* will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading sometimes being led rewarding. (Bush)

If we rewrite the above sentences with imperative sentences, they may sound more like orders than requests, and then widen the gap between the speaker and the audience. Thus the inciting effect cannot be achieved.

### 3.2 The stylistic features on the syntactical level

Traditionally, a sentence is seen as a sequence of words. How words are combined to form sentences to achieve the stylistic effects in American presidential inaugural address will be discussed in this part. The discussion will include the sentence structure, the postmodification in noun phrase, and tense in verb phrase.

#### 3.2.1 Sentence structure:

Sentence structure is influenced by the mode of discourse and the functional tenor, and related to the textual function and interpersonal function of a language.

The average sentence length of different variety is different. According to 王佐良's analysis, the average sentence length of daily conversation is less than 12



words per sentence (王佐良, 1987: 204), and the average sentence length of news report is about 28 words per sentence (王佐良, 1987: 247). The sentence length of legal document is much longer. Most sentences in legal document contain more than 40 words. Generally speaking, the longer the average sentence length is, the more formal the variety is. The average sentence length of all varieties is 17.8 words per sentence (Leech & Short, 1981). Short sentence is the characteristic of spoken language.

Table 3: Average sentence length:

Addressers	Total words	Total sentences	Average sentence length
Truman	2232	116	19.2
Eisenhower	1625	91	17.9
Kennedy	1342	52	25.8
Johnson	1475	92	16
Nixon	2088	105	19.9
Carter	1135	53	21.4
Reagan	2398	123	19.5
G. Bush	2279	141	16.2
Clinton	1578	92	17.2
W. Bush	1583	84	18.8
Total	17735	949	19.19

According to Table 3, the average sentence length of American presidential inaugural addresses is 19.2 words per sentence. The longest one is in Kennedy's address, which is 25.8 words per sentence. The shortest one is in Johnson's address,



which is only 16 words per sentence. These figures show that the average sentence length of American Presidential Addresses is longer than that of daily conversation, but shorter than news report, much shorter than legal document. And it is near the average sentence length of all varieties.

Table 4: Sentence length:

Addressers	1-9	Percentage	10-19	Percentage	20-29	Percentage	30-39	Percentage	40-	Percentage
Truman	11	9.5%	54	46.6%	36	31%	13	11.2%	2	1.7%
Eisenhower	17	18.7%	40	43.9%	23	25.3%	10	11%	1	1.1%
Kennedy	7	13.5%	13	25%	17	32.7%	5	9.6%	10	19.2%
Johnson	34	37%	33	35.9%	14	15.2%	7	7.6%	4	4.3%
Nixon	20	19%	32	30.5%	31	30%	14	13.3%	8	7.6%
Carter	7	13.2%	20	37.7%	12	22.6%	12	22.6%	2	3.8%
Reagan	18	14.6%	57	46.3%	31	25.2%	9	7.3%	8	6.5%
G. Bush	32	22.7%	63	44.7%	33	23.4%	11	7.8%	2	1.4%
Clinton	20	21.7%	43	46.7%	19	20.7%	9	9.8%	1	1.1%
W. Bush	13	15.5%	43	51.2%	17	20.2%	7	8.3%	4	4.8%
Total	179	18.9%	398	41.9%	233	24.6%	97	10.2%	42	4.4%
Average	17.9	18.9%	39.8	41.9%	23.3	24.6%	9.7	10.2%	4.2	4.4%

Table 4 is a detailed analysis of the sentence length. It shows that in American presidential inaugural addresses 39.8% sentences contain 10-19 words per sentence. 23.3% sentences contain 20-29 words per sentence. In Bush's address the percentage of the sentences with 10-19 words per sentence is even up to 51.2%. This shows the majority of the sentences in American presidential address contain 10-30 words per sentence. Comparatively speaking, most sentences in daily conversation contain less than 10 words (王佐良, 1987: 204), and most sentences



in news report contain 20-40 words (王佐良, 1987: 247).

Table 5: Sentence structure:

Addressers	Simple		Complex		Compound		Fragment	
Truman	60	51.7%	52	44.8%	4	3.4%	1	1.1%
Eisenhower	42	46.2%	38	41.8%	10	11%		
Kennedy	20	38.5%	28	53.8%	4	7.7%		
Johnson	57	62%	29	31.5%	5	5.4%	1	1.1%
Nixon	44	41.9%	55	52.4%	6	5.7%		
Carter	20	37.7%	17	32.1%	16	30.2%		
Reagan	47	38.2%	55	44.7%	17	13.8%	4	3.3%
G. Bush	47	33.3%	54	38.3%	37	26.2%	3	2.1%
Clinton	39	42.4%	41	44.6%	8	8.7%	4	4.3%
W. Bush	28	33.3%	31	36.9%	23	27.4%	2	2.4%
Total	404	42.6%	400	42.1%	130	13.7%	15	1.6%

The sentence structure of the address is more complicated than that of daily conversation. In daily conversation most of the sentences are short simple sentences. But in presidential address the percentage of simple sentence is only 42.6%. 42.1% of the sentences are complex sentences, and 13.7% of the sentences are coordinate sentences. In Kennedy's address the percentage of complex sentence is even up to 53.8%, and in Nixon's address 52.1% of the sentences are complex sentence. Compared with news report this percentage is less, because in news report more than 60% of the sentences are complex sentences (王佐良, 1987: 248). There are much more complex sentences in legal document.

Therefore, we can conclude that the sentence structure of American presidential address is characteristic of formal written language while exhibiting





features of spoken language. This is determined by its tenor of speech and mode of speech.

American presidents deliver these inaugural addresses to the people at home or abroad when they take office. All these presidents have good education background, and the situation of inauguration is quite formal. In these addresses the orators are expected to make their government policies known to the public and to persuade the public to accept and support their policies. These personal tenor and functional tenor determine that inaugural address should not be as casual as daily conversation, and it is unnecessary to be as serious as news report and legal document.

These addresses are all prepared in advance in the form of written language. It is possible to make long and well-structured complicated sentences, which manifest the characteristics of written language. On the other hand, the addresses are to be spoken, too long and complicated sentences, such as the sentences with more than 40 words, may make trouble for the orators to speak and for the audience to understand. So most sentences in the addresses are in middle-length with 10-30 words per sentences, and the percentage of the complex sentences is almost equal to that of the simple sentences.

Table 3 also shows that apart from the sentences in middle length, there are 17.9% of sentences with only 1-9 words per sentence, and 4.2% sentences with more than 40 words per sentence. Table 5 shows apart from simple sentences and complex sentence, there are still 13.7% of coordinate sentences and a few sentence fragments. Short sentences are usually emphatic, whereas long sentences are capable of expressing complex ideas with precision, because it may contain more modifiers. Sentence fragments are also forceful. If they are used wisely, they can make the main ideas prominent. Involving such amount of short sentences, long sentences and sentence fragments in the addresses is not only helpful to stress the ideas that should be stressed, but also helpful to achieve a variety of sentence pattern, length and rhythm, thus avoid monotony.

### **3.2.2 Postmodification in noun phrase**

The majority of noun phrases consist of a head noun plus one or two optional



elements. These optional elements refer to premodifier and postmodifier. Premodifier refers to the determiners, numbers, pronouns, and adjectives, or nouns with an adjectival function, which appear to the left of the head noun. Postmodifier refers to the phrases or clauses that appear to the right of the head noun. Most of the premodifiers are simpler, thus save space. Some types of text, such as adverts, newspaper headlines, frequently use premodifications. The postmodification keeps the head noun in the front of part of the noun phrase, thus making it prominent. In addition, the postmodification supplies more space for accurate expression. The long and complicated postmodification, especially the one with relative clauses, appears more frequently in formal texts.

In American presidential addresses, 21.4% words are nouns. This shows that the proportion of nouns is the largest one in the whole words. This partly results from conversion from verbs to nouns. The premodifiers in the noun phrases are not complicated. They are mainly determiners or single adjectives. Comparatively speaking, the postmodifiers in these addresses are much more complicated. It is because of these complicated postmodifiers that the syntactical structures of the inaugural addresses are complicated. Table 6 is an analysis of the postmodifiers in the American presidential addresses.

Table 6: Postmodification:

Addressers	Nouns	Nouns with postmodifiers	Percentage
Truman	538	164	30.5%
Eisenhower	354	120	33.9%
Kennedy	282	92	32.6%
Johnson	221	92	41.6%
Nixon	422	136	32.2%
Carter	224	70	31.3%
Regan	486	158	32.5%
Bush	448	116	25.9%



Clinton	332	84	25.2%
W. Bush	494	95	19.2%
Total	3801	1127	30%

About 30% nouns in these addresses are postmodified. In Johnson's address there are even more than 40% nouns postmodified. These postmodifiers are infinitive phrases, prepositional phrases, participle phrases, etc. And many of the postmodifiers are relative clauses. Possessive case 's is seldom used; it is replaced by postmodifying "of phrase", e.g. "the people's promise" is replaced by "the promise of people", and "some Americans' ambitions" is replaced by "the ambitions of some Americans". The postmodification makes the expression more serious and emphatic. In addition, the postmodification provides more space for more information, and makes the expression more accurate. And they also makes these inaugural addresses seems more formal. All these are determined by and suitable for the situational-context of the American presidential addresses.

### 3.2.3 Tense:

The use of tense is related to the field of discourse, and related to the ideational function of the language. In American presidential inaugural address the presidents make their government policies known to the publics. They need to review the past, summarize the present, and then forecast the future.

The following table is about the use of tenses in the American presidential addresses. It is mainly concerned with past tense, simple present, perfect present, and future tense, which are the main tenses used in these addresses.



Table 7: tense:

Addressers	Past tense	Percentage	Simple present	Percentage	Present perfect	Percentage	Future simple	Percentage
Truman	1	0.86%	80	69%	17	14.7%	12	10.3%
Eisenhower	0	0%	81	89%	3	3.3%	5	5.5%
Kennedy	0	0%	41	80.8%	4	7.7%	6	11.5%
Johnson	14	15.2%	50	54.3%	15	16.3%	10	10.9%
Nixon	7	6.7%	62	59%	21	20%	13	12.4%
Carter	3	5.7%	41	77%	4	7.5%	5	9.4%
Regan	8	6.5%	81	65.9%	11	8.9%	19	15.4%
Bush	6	4.2%	111	78.7%	13	9.2%	11	7.8%
Clinton	5	5.4%	66	71.7%	14	15.2%	5	5.4%
W. Bush	2	2.4%	68	81%	4	4.8%	9	10.7%
Total	46	4.8%	682	71.9%	106	11.2%	95	10.1%

This table shows that simple present is used most frequently in the American presidential addresses, 71.9% sentences in the addresses are in simple present. In the addresses of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and W. Bush, more than 80% sentences are in the simple present. Present perfect and future simple are also frequently used. 11.2% sentences are in present perfect, and 10.1% sentences are in the future simple. However, the simple past tense is seldom used; only 4.8% sentences are in the simple past tense. In the addresses of Eisenhower and Kennedy, the simple past tense is even not used.

This model of tenses in the American presidential addresses is quite unique. Because the normal tense used in other literary works, especially in fictional narrative is the simple past tense. Even in other public speaking, the simple past tense is also frequently used. This model of tense in American presidential addresses is determined by the context of situation.



In these addresses, the addressers make their government policies known to the public. These policies are planned to be adopted in the future. So the future simple is frequently used. And these policies are based on the present situation. The presidents need to display the present facts to the public, analyze the present situation, explain the reason for the reform, and thus persuade the public to support the new policy. The simple present tense is frequently used. Although they need to mention something in the past, the emphasis is its influence to the present situation. So instead of using the simple past, the present perfect is used, which emphasizes the influence of the past events to the present situation.

A noticeable phenomenon is that in the addresses of Eisenhower and Kennedy, the simple past tense is not used at all, but in Johnson's address, the simple past is used frequently. This is determined by the special social context in their times, and their special personal tenor.

When Eisenhower took office in 1957, America was experiencing its golden age: after World War II, the economy was increasing steadily; America had become the greatest superpower of the world. And it was the second time for Eisenhower took office. In his inaugural address, Eisenhower seldom mentioned the past, but stressed the prospect of the future, and the present achievements that seemed to have resulted from his wise policy. And Eisenhower tended to talk about the plan in the future in the simple present. So in his address, the simple present was used most frequently. On the other hand, the simple past was not used.

When John Kennedy took office in 1961, he was only 44 years old. As the youngest president of America, Kennedy had much confidence in his own governing policy, and was hopeful of the future. It was natural for him to neglect the past and stress the present state and the future plan. So in his address, the simple past tense was not used either.

Lyndon Johnson had ever been Kennedy's companion during the presidential election. He took office on Nov 22, 1963, the day Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Although this inaugural address was given in 1965, the past still had a



strong influence on Johnson. Based on the review of the past, Johnson proposed his "American covenant" in his inaugural address. So the simple past tense was used frequently in his address.

### 3.3 Rhetorical features:

The history of stylistics can be traced back to the rhetoric in the ancient Greek, when rhetoric refers to the skill of public speaking(胡壮麟, 2000:11-24). Rhetorical devices are closely related to the skill of public speaking. And according to Halliday, many rhetorical devices, such as alliteration, parallelism, simile, and metaphor are foregrounding features, which may have some stylistic effects. So the analysis of the rhetorical features in American presidential inaugural address is not only necessary but also important.

The object of a political speech is to explain, convince and persuade the audience that what the speaker is saying and planning to do best represents their interests so they should support him. In the inaugural addresses, the presidents of the United States have to appeal not only to the American people but also to the different groups of nations in the international community. The addresses should be moving, forceful, and effective. To do this successfully, the speakers must employ suitable rhetorical devices to create the desired emotional impact. Among the various rhetorical devices, Parallelism, metaphor, and alliteration are most frequently used. Here is an analysis to the statistics of the rhetorical devices used in the inaugural addresses.

Table 8: Rhetorical devices:

Addressers	Parallelism	Metaphor	Alliteration
Truman	17	5	28
Eisenhower	13	9	17





Kennedy	20	8	28
Johnson	17	13	17
Nixon	25	13	32
Carter	24	7	33
Reagan	10	5	17
G. Bush	20	18	32
Clinton	24	14	27
W. Bush	18	8	30
Total	188	100	261
Average	18.8	10	26.1

According to this table, on average, parallelism is used 18.8 times, metaphor is used 10 times, and alliteration 26.1 times. In a text with less than 2000 words, such high frequencies of using rhetorical devices are not common. But it is these rhetorical devices that add force and vividness to the addresses, thus creating the desired emotional impact to the audience.

Kennedy's inaugural address is generally regarded as one of the best delivered by an American president. Here we'll take his address as an example to have a detailed analysis of the rhetorical devices used in the presidential inaugural address.

### 3.3.1 Parallelism

Parallelism is a syntactic rhetorical device(冯翠华, 2000: 33). It refers to a structural arrangement of parts of a sentences, sentences, paragraphs, and larger units of discourse by which one element of equal importance with another is similarly developed and phrased. In parallel construction it is necessary to balance word for word, phrase with phrase, clause with clause, sentence with sentence, or paragraph with paragraph.

#### 1. Parallelism by words



(1) ... *a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.*(para22)

(2) *The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and ...* (para24)

## 2. Parallelism by phrases

(1) *We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom, symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal as well as change.*(para1)

(2) ... *the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness ...*(para3)

(3) ... *that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe ...*(para4)

(4) ... *we renew our pledge of support: to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective, to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak, and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.*(para10)

(5) ... *both sides overburdened by ...,both rightly alarmed by ..., yet both racing to...*(para13)

(6) *Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depth and encourage the arts and commerce.* (para17)

(7) *Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet.* (para20)

(8) *Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West,that can ...*(para23)

(9) ... *with a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds ...* (para27)

## 3. Parallelism by clause

(1) ... *not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.*(para 8)



- (2) ... *ask not what American will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.* (para 26)

#### 4. Parallelism by sentences

- (1) *We shall not always hope.... But we shall always hope....* (para7)  
(2) *Let all our neighbors know that.... And let every other power know that ...* (para9)  
(3) *And so, my fellow American s ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.* (para25)  
(4) *Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.* (para 14)

#### 5. Parallelism by paragraphs

- (1) Paragraphs 6,7,8,10,11 begin with the same type of phrases:

*To those old allies...*  
*To those new states...*  
*To those peoples...*  
*To our sister republics...*  
*To that world assembly ...*  
*To those nations...*

- (2) Paragraphs 15,16,17,18 begin with the same type of phrases: "Let both sides..."

Owing to its balanced structure, neat rhyme, parallelism plays an important role in making the inaugural address emphatic, forceful, thus making it a successful appeal to the emotions of the audience.

Very often, repetition is used with parallelism to emphasize the equal importance and weight of the parallel parts. In most of the above parallelisms there are repetitions. As for repetition of important words we have: "all forces" and "belief" (para 2); "committed" (para3); "good" and "free" (para9), etc.

Another rhetorical device used with parallelism is climax. Climax refers to the arrangement of phrases or sentences in ascending order of importance. The elements in the parallel constructions are usually arranged in climactic order in



order to add force. For example, in Kennedy's inaugural address, "*Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our life time on this planet.*" (para20)

Antithesis is the deliberate arrangement of contrasting words or ideas in balanced structural forms to achieve force and emphasis. It is a special kind of parallelism. In this inaugural address, we have the following antitheses:

- (1) United, there is little we cannot do ...Divide, there is little we can do... (para 6).
- (2) If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.(para8).
- (3) Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.(para 14)
- (4) Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems, which divide us. (para15).
- (5) And so, my fellow American s ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. (para25)

Parallelism, repetition, antithesis, and climax are all foregrounding features. They involve regular, consistent expressions. According to Halliday, they are "deflections" through over regularity, which emphasize the "quantitative deviation". In American presidential inaugural address, parallelism is used 18.8 times on average. In a text with less than 2000 words, such high frequencies of using parallelism are not common. It belongs to "deflection" though departure from some expected pattern of frequency, which is also a type of "quantitative deviation".

Parallelism, repetition, antithesis, and climax are not only foregrounding features, but also the cohesion devices, which may result in the coherence in the meaning of the text.

### 3.3.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is a lexical rhetorical device. It is an implied comparison between two unlike elements having at least one quality or characteristic in common. It is an important rhetorical device used in the inaugural addresses. In Kennedy's address, we have the following metaphors:



(1) ... those who foolishly sought power by *riding the back of the tiger ended up inside*.

\_\_\_\_\_ those who foolishly sought power by calling in strong, greedy countries ended up by losing their independence to these countries.

(2) But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot *become the prey of hostile powers*.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will not allow any enemy country to subvert this peaceful revolution.

(3) And let every other power know that this hemisphere intends to *remain the master of its own house*.

\_\_\_\_\_ And let every other power know that this hemisphere will not tolerate any interference in their affairs by countries outside this hemisphere.

(4) ...to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective, *to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak*.

\_\_\_\_\_ to strengthen its power so that it can protect the newly independent and weak nations

(5) And if *a beachhead of co-operation may push back the jungle of suspicion*

\_\_\_\_\_ And if a little bit of cooperation can lessen the deep suspicion that exists on both sides.

(6) ...which we bring to this endeavor *will light our country and all who serve it, and the glow from that fire can truly light the world*

\_\_\_\_\_ which we bring to this endeavor will inspire not only the United States and her people but also the whole world

Metaphors relate the strange or abstract thing to the one that is familiar to the audience, and make it more understandable. Metaphors are usually full of emotional coloring. They play an important role in making the speech vivid and effective.

According to Halliday's foregrounding theory, metaphor is a "qualitative foregrounding" or "incongruity", by which the meaning of one vocabulary collection is transferred to another collection (张德禄, 1998: 149). And in American presidential inaugural address, metaphor is used 10 times on average. In a text with less than 2000 words, such high frequencies of using rhetorical devices are



not common. It belongs to “deflection” though departure from some expected pattern of frequency, which is also a type of “quantitative deviation”.

### 3.3.3 Alliteration

Alliteration is a phonetic rhetorical device. In alliteration the same consonant sound is repeated at intervals in the initial position of words. It has been said to be the most popular device of the orators throughout history (Katula, 1987:192). Kennedy makes a wise use of it in his address.

- (1) Let the word go forth from this time and place, to *friend* and *foe* alike, ...(para3)
- (2) Let every *nation know*, *whether* it wishes us *well* or ill, that we shall *pay* any *price*, *bear* any *burden*, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the *survival* and the *success* of liberty. (para 4)
- (3) Let both sides, *for* the *first* time, *formulate* serious and *precise proposals* for the inspection and control of arms ... (para16)
- (4) ... ask of us here the *same* high *standards* of *strength* and *sacrifice* which we ask of you.(para27)

These alliteration not only adds musical beauty to the address, captures the audience attention, but through repetition of like initial sound, the speaker can also make a strong emotional response to his subject, and impress some thing on the audience memory.

Alliteration is also a foregrounding feature. Like parallelism, repetition, and antithesis, it involves regular, consistent expressions: the same consonant sound is repeated at intervals. According to Halliday, they are “deflection” through over regularity, which emphasizes the “quantitative deviation”. In American presidential inaugural address, alliteration is used 26.1 times on average. In a text with less than 2000 words, such high frequencies of using parallelism are not common. It belongs to “deflection” though departure from some expected pattern of frequency, which is also a type of “quantitative deviation”.

## 3.4 The stylistic features on the textual level





### 3.4.1 Pattern of organization

“A well-organized speech is more easily understood and more positively evaluated than a disorganized message.”(Hanna and Gibson, 1989:124) Research has shown: clear organization is positively associated with audience's understanding and retention; it may influence audience's perceptions of the speaker's credibility, and perceptions of the speech's effect are also greatly influenced by organization. The structure of a speech should follow the way people naturally see and arrange in their minds. A well-structured speech has good form: it is simple, symmetrical and orderly.

The basic feature and aim of political speech require speakers to have clear logical thinking, to have a pattern to follow. Ideas are related to the purpose of a speech and to one another. They have to be arranged in a way that will help the speaker achieve the purpose and that will help the audience know what's going on.

Inaugural speech is to be delivered to the people both at home and abroad. Every newly elected president attaches much importance to it. And every inaugural speech is well prepared beforehand. Thus not only is the language effective, but the structure is also well organized. Generally speaking, the American presidential inaugural addresses follow the following pattern:

- (1) To greet the audience
- (2) To declare to take office
- (3) To make known the government policy and to persuade the public to accept and support his policy
- (4) To say the prayers

At the beginning of the inaugural address, the president usually greets the audience: the vice president, the ex-president, the chief justice, and the fellow citizen, etc. Then he declares to take office. In this part, the president usually says something about the present situation, or shows his thanks to the ex-president, or the rival of the election etc. For example, Truman began his address by saying: “I accept with humility the honor which the American people have conferred upon me.



I accept it with a deep resolve to do all that I can for the welfare of this nation and for the peace of the world.” In Kennedy’s address, he said: “We observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom \_\_\_\_ symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning \_\_\_\_ signifying renewal, as well as change.” In Nixon’s address, he said: “I ask you to share with me today the majesty of this moment. In the orderly transfer of power, we celebrate the unity that keeps us free.” “Each moment in history is a fleeting time, precious and unique. But some stand out as moments of beginning, in which courses are set that shape decades or centuries. This can be such a moment.” When he ends his address, the president usually says the prayers to express his wish to the splendid future.

The third part is the most important part of the whole address. Different presidents may arrange their ideas in different ways. Let's take Kennedy's address and Clinton's address as examples to have a detailed analysis:

**Kennedy's address:**

Thesis: The new generation of Americans will do their best to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

- (1) To state the basic policy goals
- (2) To address different groups of allied nations or would-be allies.
- (3) To speak to his enemy
- (4) To appeal to his countrymen for support and sacrifice.

**Clinton's address:**

Thesis: America would have to change to preserve America's ideals and to renew America.

- (1) The present condition of the country makes it necessary to change, and our strengths make it possible to change.
- (2) To renew America, we must be bold, revitalize our democracy and meet challenges abroad as well as at home.
- (3) Fellow Americans should unite as one and answer the call of service.

Although in this part, different addressers may have different ways to arrange



their ideas, the general functions of these addresses are the same: to persuade as well as to inform. So these addresses belong to argumentation, which is one type of exposition with additional purpose of persuading.

In this part, most of the presidential inaugural addresses follow the five steps of Monroe's "motivated sequence" (Lucas, 1986):

- (1) **Arouse attention.** The speakers begin the motivated sequence by stimulating interest in their subjects.
- (2) **Demonstrate a need.** The speakers stress the necessity to solve the present problems. During the need step, speakers should develop logical arguments backed by ample evidence to support their position.
- (3) **Satisfy the need.** The speakers should set forth a plan of action and explain how it will meet the needs of the listeners.
- (4) **Visualize the results.** The speakers show the benefits from the new policy. A positive image of the future can help overcome resistance to action. The speakers can also visualize results with negative images. And they might even juxtapose these positive and negative verbal pictures to strengthen their impact through contrast.
- (5) **Call for action.** This call may be a challenge, an appeal, or a statement of personal commitment. The call for action should be short and to the point.

Monroe's "motivated sequence" is based on persuasive psychology. It follows the process of human thinking and leads the listeners step by step to the desired action.

#### 3.4.2 Religious color

It has been long recognized that language is an essential and important part of a given culture and the impact of culture upon a given language is something intrinsic and indispensable. Study of language in socio-cultural context is exactly what Halliday and many other modern linguists advocate. Public speaking, which bears much political color and influences the public ideology, inevitably expresses and embodies cultural and social reality.



Religion is a very important part of the westerner's life. Most of the westerners believe in Christianity. Their thoughts and actions are greatly influenced by the doctrines of *Bible*. Many public speakers make best use of this to make their speeches more inciting. The American presidential addresses are inevitably characteristic of much religious color.

Table 9:

Addressers	T	E	K	J	N	C	R	G.B	C	W.B	A
Religious color	3	3	6	4	5	5	4	4	4	3	4

This table shows that every American presidential address contains some religious color. On average, the expressions with religious color are used 4 times.

First, at the beginning of the inauguration, the newly elected president must put his hand on the *Bible* and swear the oath. This tradition originated from George Washington. On April 30, 1789, the first presidential oath was taken by George Washington. Washington added to his oath "so help me God," and kissed the Bible. His *Bible* was preserved till today, and this tradition is also handed down. This tradition has been handed down till today.

A typical example is in Eisenhower's first inauguration. At the beginning of Eisenhower's first inauguration, he asked all the people who were present to bow their heads, listened to his personal prayer. This prayer is quite long with 132 words and three paragraphs. Although the presidents after him didn't say such long prayers like him, we can still find some obvious religious features at the beginning of other American presidential inaugural addresses:

- (1) *We meet again, as upon a like moment four years ago, and again you have witnessed my solemn oath of service to you.*



*Before all else, we seek, upon our common labor as a nation, the blessings of Almighty God. And the hopes in our hearts fashion the deepest prayers of our whole people. (Eisenhower, 1957)*

(2) *For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago. (Kennedy, 1961)*

(3) *... on this occasion, the oath I have taken before you and before God is not mine alone, but ours together. (Lyndon Johnson, 1965)*

(4) *Here before me is the Bible used in the inauguration of our first President, in 1789, and I have just taken the oath of office on the Bible my mother gave me a few years ago, opened to a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah:*

*"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah 6: 8) (Jimmy Carter, 1977)*

(5) *I have just repeated word-for-word the oath taken by George Washington 200 years ago; and the Bible on which I placed my hand is the Bible on which he placed his.*

...

*And my first act as President is a prayer. I ask you bow your heads:*

*Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank You for Your love. Accept our thanks for the peace that yields this day and the shared faith that makes its continuance likely. Make us strong to do Your work, willing to heed and hear Your will, and write on our hearts these words: "Use power to help people." For we are given power not to advance our own purposes, nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one just use of power, and it is to serve people. Help us to remember it, Lord. Amen. (George Bush, 1989)*

Second, when he finishes his address, the president usually says prayers:

(1) *Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty, we will advance toward a world where man's freedom is secure. (Harry S. Truman, 1949)*

(2) *Let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His Blessing and His help, but*



*knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.* (Kennedy, 1961)

(3) *... But sustained by our confidence in the will of God and the promise of man.*  
(Nixon, 1969)

(4) *... with God's help, we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us.*  
(Reagan, 1981)

(5) *God bless you, and thank you.* (Reagan, 1981)

(6) *God bless you and God bless United States of America.* (George Bush, 1989)

(7) *And now, each in our way, and with God's help, we must answer the call.*  
(Clinton, 1993)

(8) *Thank you and God bless you all.* (Clinton, 1993)

(9) *God bless you, and God bless America.* (George W. Bush, 2001)

Third, the speakers tend to quote directly some words from the *Bible* to illustrate or support their political views. Let's take Bill Clinton as an example. When he first took office in 1993, America met its serious economic Depression. Lots of enterprises bankrupted and the rate of the unemployment was up to 7.8%. In his inaugural addresses, Clinton appeals to the people to "be bold, revitalize our democracy, and meet challenges to renew America." Clinton wisely used a quotation from Epistle of Paul to Galatians in the *New Testament*:

*And so my fellow Americans, as we stand at the edge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, let us begin with energy and hope, with faith and discipline, and let us work until our work is done. The scripture says, "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not."*(Clinton, 1993)

Nixon also used a quotation from the *Bible* to make his speech more inciting.

*The peace we seek to win is not victory over any other people, but the peace that comes "with healing in its wings"; with compassion for those with the opportunity for all the peoples of this earth to choose their own destiny.*

"With healing in its wings" is a quotation from the *Old Testament*.

In Kennedy's address, we can also find a quotation from the *Old Testament*:

*Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah--*





-to *"undo the heavy burdens ... and to let the oppressed go free."* (Kennedy, 1961)

Then, in their addresses, the presidents usually use Biblical language in some places to add solemnity to some of his weightier sayings. For example, in Kennedy's address, we can find the following sentences:

- (1) *And yet the same revolutionary belief for which our forbears fought is still at issue, around the globe, the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God. (para2)*
- (2) *Let the word go forth from this time and place... (para3)*
- (3) *To strengthen its shield of the new, and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run. (para10)*
- (4) *And so, my fellow Americans ask not what your country can do for you... (para25)*

Many Westerners believe in Christianity. Even the non-believers usually use "God" as their pet phrase. Religion is a product of its social development. The speakers usually make use of this and preach their own ideas in the name of God. The religious color in the inaugural address is very helpful to make the address more inciting.

### 3.4.3 Hollow words

When the speaker talks a lot but says very little of substance, we say his talking is full of hollow words, what he said is empty. Although the inaugural addresses are formal, moving and forceful, we can also find quite a few hollow words in them. Let's take George Bush's address as an example. We can find the following words:

- (1) *A new breeze is blowing, and a nation refreshed by freedom stands ready to push on. There is new ground to be broken, and new action to be taken. There are times when the future seems thick as a fog; you sit and wait, hoping the mists, will lift and reveal the right path. But this is a time when the future seems a door you can walk right through into a room called To-morrow. (para6)*
- (2) *Our children are watching in schools throughout our great land. And to them I*



*say, thank you for watching democracy's big day. for democracy belongs to us all, and freedom is like a beautiful kite that can go higher with the breeze. (para17)*

*(3) Some see leadership as high drama, and the sound of trumpets calling, and each day we fill a page with acts of hopefulness and meaning. The new breeze blows, a page turns, the story unfolds. And so today a chapter begins, a small and stately story of unity, diversity, and generosity, shared, and written, together. (para27)*

In Bush's address there are many such paragraphs talking about freedom, democracy, etc. He uses metaphor, simile, parallelism and repetition to describe for us a very attractive future. The readers or listeners may be moved to take some immediate actions to follow him. But after a calm thinking, we may find his address is actually very empty except for many such emotional appeals. In his speech we cannot find the answers to "what is real freedom?" "How can we get it?"

Hollow words appear not only in Bush's address, they are the common feature of the American presidential inaugural addresses. Hollow words are used frequently when the presidents talk about "freedom" "democracy" and "peace", which are the common subjects of American presidential address. This phenomenon is related to the social context of the United States. "Freedom" "democracy" and "peace" are what the Americans are proud of, and concerned with. And they are also what all people in the world long for. Preaching "freedom" "democracy" and "peace" in the inaugural addresses can set up resonance in the hearts of the audience, thus bring a strong inciting effect.

Hollow words also result from the special function and mode of inaugural address. Inaugural address is mostly persuasion with very little explanation. As the address is generally short the speaker does not have time enough to cite facts and reasons. To do this successfully, the speaker must first understand the psychology of the audience to whom he is directing his words and then employ suitable rhetorical devices and words to create the desired emotional impact. These rhetorical devices are employed for force, vividness and emotional appeal. In this sense, hollow words are valuable. Political demagoguery usually relies on emotional



appeal for its success.

However, persuasion based on emotional appeal can be successful only on special occasions, for it does not put forward sufficient facts and reasons to convince. It can be successful when the audience is excited and does not have much time to think or when the audience is already susceptible to the message of the speaker.

### **3.5 The significance and value of this study**

A stylistic study of the American presidential inaugural address can not only broaden the scope of the stylistic study of the English public study, it has also some important practical significance and value.

First, it can help the readers to appreciate the American presidential addresses better. As a variety with worldwide influence and long lasting significance, American presidential inaugural address draws attention of many readers. But many people finish their reading only understanding the superficial meaning of these addresses. They are deeply moved by these addresses without knowing the reason. "The goal of most stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic 'causes' where these are felt to be relevant. ... Stylisticians want to avoid vague and impressionistic judgments about the way that formal features are manipulated." (Wales, 1989) So the use of linguistics to approach the American presidential inaugural address can supplies a relatively objective criteria rather than purely subjective and impressionistic values. Its emphasis is on the aesthetic properties of language. Therefore it is helpful to a better understanding of these inaugural addresses.

Second, a stylistic study of the American inaugural address can help the learners of public speaking to develop their language skills. Halliday emphasizes the appropriateness of the language used in the certain context. The context includes



the social-cultural context, context of situation and co-text, which determine the choice, content of language, and the method of communication. The principle of “appropriateness” is the “soul” of a language communication. Without the “appropriateness”, the language as a tool of social communication may loss its vitality and function (秦秀白, 2002) This dissertation, based on Halliday’s functional stylistic theory, reveals how the use of language performs its function in the certain contexts. This may set an example for the learners of public speaking to follow the principle of “appropriateness” in language use.

Apart from the principle of “appropriateness” in language use, the use of language skills is another important aspect for the learners of public speaking to notice. Almost every American president is an excellent orator, for the good public speaking skills are the necessary premises to their success in the presidential election. Their addresses are vivid, effective, forceful, and thus are strong emotional appealing to the public. Their wise use of the rhetorical devices, proper words, sentences, and textual pattern may also set a good example to the learners of public speaking.

Third, a stylistic study of American presidential inaugural address is also significant to the teaching of reading and writing in college. As we know, the presidential address as a functional variety is usually chosen as the necessary reading material in almost every English reading textbook. The students of English know from their textbook Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address”, Churchill’s “Broadcasting on Hitler’s invasion on Russia”, and inaugural Addresses of Kennedy, Bush, or Roosevelt, etc. Their understanding of these texts is mainly on the levels of the vocabulary, sentences, etc. A stylistic study of American presidential inaugural address provides a model to analyze political address on every level of a language, relating the language use to its function. So adopting stylistics in the English teaching can help the students appreciate these reading materials more deeply and completely. And because of the close relationship between reading and writing, it is also helpful to develop the students’ writing skill of public speaking.



## 4. Conclusion

From the analysis above, we can conclude that as a sub-component of the public political speaking, while sharing many common features of the public political speaking, American presidential inaugural address has its own special stylistic features. The following is a summary of the preceding analysis:

First, in terms of context of situation, American presidential inaugural address has the following stylistic features:

Determined by the field of discourse, the speakers of the American presidential addresses tend to use many abstract nouns in their speaking. In these addresses, the speakers need to review the past, summarize the present, and then forecast the future. And the simple present and future simple are frequently used, but instead of using the simple past, the present perfect is used, which emphasizes the influence of the past events to the present situation.

The participants of the activity of American presidential addresses are American presidents and the people in the United States and abroad. The personal tenor of the discourse is not an intimate one, and the functional tenor is both persuasive and informative. American presidential inaugural addresses are prepared beforehand in form of written language, intended to be spoken in the inauguration and to be read afterwards in newspapers or magazines. So the tenor and mode of discourse determine that American presidential address is characteristic of formal written language while exhibiting features of spoken language. It is mainly treated as a written language.

This is well embodied through the language on the lexical level, syntactical level and textual level. The average percentage of the words with six words is 27.7%. This means the words used in inaugural addresses are quite formal and the structures of the words are quite complicated. And the percentage of the noun





phrases with postmodifiers is about 30%, and most of the postmodifiers are quite long and complicated. The average sentence length of American Presidential Inaugural Addresses is 19.2 words per sentence. It is near the average sentence length of all varieties. The percentage of the complex sentences is almost equal to that of the simple sentences. This shows that American presidential inaugural address is neither as casual as daily conversation and nor as serious as news report and legal document. The long and complicated postmodification, especially the one with relative clauses, appears frequently in these addresses, which is also a feature of formal texts. In addition, almost every inaugural address is well structured. They follow certain relatively fixed pattern, and many of them involve logic reasoning. This makes the inaugural addresses quite credible and persuasive.

Second, the speakers makes good use of language skills to make their speeches vivid, forceful and effective: (1) Using first person plural (we or us) to create a sense of group identity, the closeness between the speaker and the audience, and to perform an indirect imperative function. (2) Involving various sentences (short sentences, long sentences, sentence fragments, etc.) in the address to help to achieve a variety of sentence pattern, length and rhythm, thus avoid monotony. It is also helpful to stress the idea that should be stressed. (3) Using postmodification to make the expression more accurate, emphatic, and serious. (4) Employing suitable rhetorical devices (parallelism, metaphor, alliteration, etc) to create the desired emotional impact

Third, influenced by its social-cultural background, the American presidential addresses are characteristic of much religious color. The religious color in the inaugural address is very helpful to make the address more inciting. And semantically, there are some hollow words in the inaugural addresses, which is the product of the emotional appeal. They are words that are used to create the emotional impact, not based on the facts and reasons. Hollow words can be used successfully only when the audience is excited and does not have much time to think or when the audience is already susceptible to the message of the speaker.





American presidential inauguration is such an occasion.

A stylistic study of the American presidential inaugural address can not only broaden the scope of the stylistic study of the English public speaking, it has also some important practical significance and value. It can help the readers to appreciate the American presidential addresses better, and help the learners of public speaking to develop their language skills. A stylistic study of American presidential inaugural address is also significant to the teaching of English reading and writing in college.

However, there is still some room for improvement. First, because the corpuses used in this dissertation are all in the written form, the stylistic analysis on the phonological level is not included in this dissertation. Then, with regard to the readability of this dissertation among the common readers, this dissertation is scarcely cornered with the systematic-functional grammar, which is another important approach of functional linguistics. So if there are suitable conditions in the future to do further research in this subject, these two aspects will be taken into consideration.



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## Appendix

### Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy

Friday, January 20, 1961

*Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, reverend clergy, fellow citizens*, we observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning—signifying renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago. 1

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God. 2

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world. 3

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall 4



pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge—and more. 5

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do—for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder. 6

To those new States whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom—and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside. 7

To those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich. 8

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge—to convert our good words into good deeds—in a new alliance for progress—to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its 9



own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support—to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective—to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak—and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run. 10

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction. 11

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed. 12

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course—both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war. 13

So let us begin anew—remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. 14

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us. 15

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms—and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations. 16





- Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce. 17
- Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to "undo the heavy burdens ... and to let the oppressed go free." 18
- And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved. 19
- All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin. 20
- In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than in mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe. 21
- Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation"—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself. 22
- Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort? 23
- In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been 24



granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. 25

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. 26

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own. 27