

## A Genre Analysis of American University Presidents' Inaugural Speeches

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### ABSTRACT:

Language can be a powerful vehicle of influence for leaders as it enables them to frame and organize the meanings and messages they need. Academic leadership and communication are intimately connected in the sense that the way the newly elected university presidents craft their inaugural speeches for their audience is crucial in selling themselves and their visions, an aspect that is rarely addressed in earlier research of genre analysis. As such, drawing upon genre analysis theories, the study takes the form of a qualitative investigation of the generic structure and obligatory rhetorical moves and steps in ten inaugural speeches of the newly appointed American university presidents collected through the use of simple random sampling. The results of the study demonstrated that the new university presidents organize their inaugural speeches on a succession of eight obligatory generic moves. Each move was reported and explained with concrete examples from the corpus.

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## 1. Introduction:

Benoit (2009) argues that inaugural addresses form a genre of a situational character in the sense of being delivered in a particular situation represented by the time when the newly elected university president assumes a new office. An inaugural address represents the first speech delivered by the new coming presidents when taking on new office, such as the professorship at a university, or the presidency of a state. Inauguration is also defined by Campbell & Jamieson (2008) as a form of rhetoric used on ceremonial occasions to praise or blame, open the door to addressee to evaluate the performance of the new leader, connect the past to the present and speculate the future, utilize a unique literary and rhetorical style and enhance admitted facts. It is a ritual involving a transition of an institutional leadership from an earlier leader to a new one. As being pertinent to and the focus of the current study, university president's inaugural address, Khwaja (2015) thinks, symbolizes the important and wise employment of the president's leadership rhetoric reflected by wielding the power of language in his/her first opportunity as a leader of a particular academic institution (Sigelman, 1996). Consequently, Lawrence-Hughes (2017) asserts that speeches given by academic leaders in inaugural ceremonies provide them with a chance to garner trust and affect

behaviour. Inaugural speech, delivered by the new university president, is used as an instrument by which he or she presents a vision for the university future. Lawrence-Hughes elaborates more pointing out that university presidents' inaugurals are deeply affected, when written, by the culture, tradition and history of the institution, and they facilitate the task of explaining how the above themes, with a new vision for the institution, can be embodied. Thus, through the official opportunity of presenting the inaugural address, new university presidents are allowed to show internal and external constituencies of their worthiness of the newly appointed role – to legitimize his leadership by the means of the performative act of public address. Similarly, Khwaja (2015: 11) reveals that “this initial address to the university community and stakeholders establishes a baseline of expectations for presidents and provides a pulpit upon which they can discourse their plans and leadership strategies”.

According to Bimbaum (1988), for any leader to be effective and persuasive, his/her rhetorical style must correspond to an institution's culture, orientation and objectives. As a result, Khwaja (2015: 23) illustrates that the process of academic leadership assists the university president to find and maintain, by the use of language, a reasonable balance and correspondence “between one's own style and the increasing complex nature of academic institutions”. By definition, leadership styles, as written by Eagly et al. (2003: 569), refer to “relatively stable patterns of behaviour displayed by leaders”. As the role of language is given a central position in the social functions it does (Clair, 1982), and in the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), the way language used by academic leaders reflects the way their academic leadership and their established meanings are understood by audience and followers (Khwaja, 2015).

Fairhurst and Sarr (Cited in Khwaja, 2015) state that successful leadership is a matter of a language game and the way leaders exploit this game can help or hinder in their articulation to lead. They posit that to have a vision for an institution does not matter more than effectively communicating it which is heavily based on the way leaders frame messages and manage meanings.

### ***1.1. Statement of the Problem***

Rhetoric, as an important tool used by speakers, is defined as “the study and practice of shaping context” (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995: 4) and the canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery are fundamental in communicating their leadership publically and effectively as they play a crucial role in shaping the way content is presented and interpreted. Therefore, as stated by Khwaja (2015), academic leaders, in particular, have access to a set of rhetorical alternatives to craft their presidential inaugural addresses including, as the focus of this study, arrangement or, in terms of genre analysis, move-structures. Young (2013) states that effective communication is an essential theme strongly pursued by academic presidents in their academic leadership. Accordingly, this study seeks to understand how the coming university presidents articulate their visions and legitimize their university leadership through communication – cognitive move-structures in the text. However, a review of academic leadership rhetorical studies reveals little argument dedicated to the investigation of the generic structure of university president's inaugurals as being an important instrument through which university presidents “can connect with broad audiences to advance institutional agendas, increase institutional visibility, galvanize stakeholders in times of crisis, and even build their personal brand” (Lawrence-Hughes, 2017). This is also reviewed by Khwaja (2015) who claims that the university presidents' use of rhetoric to communicate their leadership and their

messages in their inaugural addresses are still scant and infrequently approached. Young (2013), Khwaja (2015) and Baur et al. (2016), therefore, affirm that this forms a major gap in higher education contexts and literature on academic leadership as rhetorical communication adopted by university presidents and academic leaders in general form a valuable field of literature through which we can obtain insights into how leadership is oriented and how leaders, through rhetoric, structure their communication to generate support for their visions and future policies. Presidential rhetoric including presidential inaugurals has attracted much of researchers' attention in the field of political discourse analysis (Trosborg, 2000; Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Scacco, 2011; Gruber, 2013; Vigil, 2013), but little attention is directed to study the academic presidents' rhetoric (Anastasia, 2008; Young, 2013; Khwaja, 2015; Baur et al, 2016; Lawrence-Hughes, 2017). Surveying the studies investigating the themes or move structure of the leadership rhetoric of university presidents' inaugurals, Lawrence-Hughes' (2017: 228) study reached to five themes emerging from the analysis of three university presidents' inaugurals including

- (a) *Recognition of inaugural speech norms*, (b) *identification of common values*, (c) *communication of competence*, (d) *articulation of vision and mission*, and (e) *fostering of community* (Lawrence-Hughes, 2017: 228).

The analysis came out with additional patterns including

- (a) *express identification as the institution's leader*, (b) *express mention of bona fides*, (c) *willing subjectivity ...*, and (d) *the importance of diversit* (Lawrence-Hughes, 2017: 228).

Another study conducted by Khwaja (2015) to investigate the similarities and differences among the inaugural addresses of men and women university presidents yielded the following main themes which are common both to men and women presidents:

All university presidents thanked the audience and specific guests such as governors and academic leaders, and most of the presidents acknowledged the members of their families. Most male and female university presidents, delivered their universities' missions, and visions along with the core missions. Most of them focused on the significance of higher education as a public merit. Almost all university presidents talked about the responsibility of higher education in terms of history and/or present events. They also confirmed the significance of relationships with other institutions Khwaja (2015).

Young in his study entitled "Exploring the Utility and Application of Framing Devices in College/University President Speeches", reveals the basic and major framing devices used in university presidents' inaugural addresses including: "communicated predicaments, possible futures, jargon, vision themes, and catchphrases, positive spin, agenda setting, and stories" (2013: 88).

In view of the studies of the academic leaders' rhetoric described above, the present research looks for identifying the cognitive generic structure of some selected American university presidents' inaugurals regardless to the gender of the speaker president. Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that, being a genre or sub-genre, American university presidents organize their inaugural speeches into a specific group of obligatory rhetorical moves and steps to attain the communicative purpose of this specific genre.

## 1.2. Objectives of the Study

Informed as a genre-based analysis, the central aim of this study is to identify the American university presidents' inaugural speeches as a genre and explore how the language of this genre was effectively used to achieve its communicative purpose. Against such a backdrop and to meet the central aim of the study, the following objective is set:

1. Identifying the obligatory rhetorical moves and steps running in the texts.
2. Identifying the sequential predictable order these moves and steps take.

## 1.3. Value of the Study

The present research may be valuable and beneficial in light of bringing scholars an accurate map of the nature of the university presidents' inaugurations, that is, familiarizing the discourse community members with the patterns utilized in crafting this type of genre (Bhatia, 1993). Examining the variety of the obligatory rhetorical moves and their sequence can be of great value and significance to language learners in general and ESP students in particular both as readers and writers of this genre. The results of the study might form an educational guide for curriculum and training courses dedicated to teaching students in the field of English and presidential rhetoric.

## 2. Generic Analysis

To describe the generic or rhetorical practices of a particular genre is part of a rhetorical theory (Benoit, 2009). Genre analysis is viewed as a means that is repeatedly conducted in communication studies to highlight commonalities or structural patterns repeated in a given genre as an essential part of its discourse organization; for it is similarities of text structure established in a group of discourse which bring them into a given rhetorical genre distinct from others (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Sigelman, 1996). Put similarly, Benoit (2009: 77) stresses that the process of generic and rhetorical analysis derives from the thought that "observable, explicable, and predictable rhetorical commonalities occur in groups of discourses as well as in groups of people". Once genre is established, scholars, then, can determine whether the type of rhetoric utilized (manipulation of the rhetorical moves and steps in the current study) achieves its communicative purpose (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). Scholars working in the theories of genre and rhetoric view genres as typifications of rhetorical acts or behaviours called for when rhetorical situations re-exist (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Devitt, 2004; Freedman and Medway, 2015). Most of these views of genre are based on and similar, in one way or another, to Miller's (1984: 159) most cited definition of genres as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations". Genre is also defined by Bhatia (1993: 49) as follows:

*"it is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the*

*discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)” (Bhatia, 1993: 49).*

Genres are also defined by a social purpose as stated by Eggins and Martin (1997), or by a communicative purpose as argued by Swales (1990). More important to genre analysis are the communicative purposes which are closely connected to relatively stable discourse community of text users and producers (Heuboeck, 2009). As discussed by Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993), Bruce (2008), and reiterated by Heuboeck (2009), fulfilling the communicative purpose of a group of texts belonging to a certain genre is conventionalized within the discourse community of that genre. Texts are constructed and built in an international and typical ways, “thus realizing schematic structures imposed by the genre. Such structure can be formulated as sequential models of text organization, realizing functionally distinct stages (moves, steps) towards the accomplishment of the communicative purpose”. Swales’ CARS model – Create A Research Space – for the analysis of introductions of research articles represents a staged model recognizing the text segments adopted to realize the given genre’s communicative purpose (Swales, 1990).

### 3. Move-Structure

Besides focusing on traditional linguistic constructs, such as phrase and clause structures, the study of language use also focuses on linguistic structures beyond the sentence, that is, extended series of utterances or sentences known as texts, and how those texts are produced and organized in a systematic way through the text (Upton & Cohen, 2009). Move analysis (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993, 2004) is a type of discourse analysis that looks for linguistic structures beyond the level of sentence. Bhatia (1993) and Upton & Cohen (2009) argue that move analysis is a top-down method of analysis applied to categorize the various discourse segments within the text with respect to their communicative purposes or semantic functions. The text is analyzed as a sequence of moves where each move is given a heading only when it performs a specific meaning and it is reflected as a unit of a discourse that established for achieving a specific communicative function. The analysis of move-structure in any text begins with identifying and describing the move types that appear in that text-genre. Subsequently, selected texts are analyzed through segmenting each text into moves, noting the type of each move and its communicative or rhetorical function. As such, the overall structure of a genre can be described in terms of the sequence of move structures. Rhetorical moves used widely and frequently through a given genre are called conventional or obligatory, while those moves that recur infrequently in texts of a given genre are known as optional. Based on Swales (1981, 1990) model, a given genre can be categorized into moves with respect to their functions in the text and a move is further divided into steps or, in Bhatia’s (1993) term, strategies. The steps or strategies of a move semantically operate to achieve the rhetorical function of the move under which they are categorized. In turn, all rhetorical functions of a set of moves unfolded in the text interact with each other in order to obtain the whole communicative purpose of the genre under study (Upton & Cohen, 2009).

A genre is primarily defined in terms of its shared communicative purposes; these purposes accompanied with the role of the genre within its context lead to specific textual regularities (Freedman & Medway, 2005). For instance, in Swales’ (1981) CARS (Create A Research Space) model for investigating the genre entitled “introduction to a scientific article”, Swales (1981) initiated his analysis with identifying the communicative purpose of the text, i.e., that of “creating a research space for the new work”. He noticed a generic organization that forms

the genre through segmenting the text into a series of moves and steps. From the survey presented above, presenting a vision for the university future and legitimizing academic leadership of the newly named presidents are the main communicative purposes realized by a series of moves and steps generating the rhetorical or generic pattern of such a genre (Luo & Huang, 2015).

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Data Collection

The context for this study is institutions of higher education, specifically universities in the United States of America. Using a simple random sampling, presidential speeches, specifically university presidents' inaugural speeches as a genre, were collected from university websites and content analyzed for specifying its generic structure. The study is limited to examining the written texts of the only public available inaugurals to ensure consistency in terms of the data source (Khawaja, 2015). The corpus of the study consists of ten university inaugurations which are restricted in neither their time nor in their speakers to ensure the validity of the study and to ensure the generalizability principles of the resulting labelled moves and steps. Each one of the selected inaugural speeches was retrieved from the formal website of each university. Table (1) provides the necessary information of the randomly selected inaugural speeches of the present study.

**Table 1: Information Summary of University Presidents' inaugural Speeches**

No.	University	Speaker President	Year of Delivery
1	Emporia State University	Allison D. Garrett	2016
2	The university of Southern Mississippi	Rodney D. Bennett	2014
3	Chaminade University	Lynn M. Babington	2018
4	Felician University	Anne Prisco	2013
5	The George Washington University	Thomas LeBlanc	2017
6	The University of Kansas	Doug Girod	2018
7	Yale University	Peter Salovey	2013
8	Cornell University	Martha E. Pollack	2017
9	Notre Dame of Maryland University	Marylou Nancy Yam	2014
10	Carson-Newman University	J. Randall O'Brien	2009

### 4.2. Data Analysis

To analyze the generic structure of the university presidents' inaugural speeches, the study, based on the generic framework derived from the different genre theories mentioned in the preceding sections, applied a cognitive move-structure analysis to the inaugural speeches in an attempt to address the linguistic composition and the communicative purpose of this specific genre. In other words, the study takes the form of a qualitative data analysis dedicated to identify the obligatory organizational commonalities which "reflect accumulated and conventionalized knowledge available to a particular discourse community" (Zhan, 2012: 214).

To guarantee the reliability of the coding of data and its interpretation, the study utilized the 'constant comparison' as a method of reliability and trustworthiness of the data analysis. This was reflected in comparing the coding of data over and over again to codes and categories that

were already achieved. The initial examination and classification of data into codes was not finished as these codes were continually integrated into the further process of comparison (Flick, 2009; see also Creswell, 2014; Ary et al. 2019). To more guarantee the trustworthiness of the study results and interpretations, the study analyzed the data twice within two months interval. Put differently, the study applied the code–recode strategy where the researcher coded the data, left the analysis for a period of time, and then, after a month, came back again to recode the data and compare the two groups of the resulting coded material (Ary et al. 2019). Furthermore, a rater’s service was asked to avoid subjectivity of analysis and interpretation and to more ensure inter-rater reliability. Based on the value and significance of the study, generic analysis of the academic leaders’ inaugurals provides a rich insight into the leadership language use and a wealth of literature and information on the leaders’ use and manipulation of rhetoric and the institutions they lead. The study is also beneficial to students and leaners of leadership realm in general and academic leadership in particular as it constitutes a solid basis for understanding realities of organizational context and academic presidency (Khwaja, 2015).

## 5. Results and Discussion

As a result of a careful reading of the selected university presidents’ inaugural speeches, the study arrived to a set of rhetorical moves and steps where each move or step is further illustrated with some concrete instances extracted from the data of the study. In spite of the variation in the cognitive rhetorical moves and steps extracted, these moves and steps have taken the sequential predictable order as that is clear in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: The Common Rhetorical Moves and Steps across the Presidents’ Inaugural Speeches**

Move No.	Move Label		Freq.
Move 1	Expressing salutations, acknowledgements and thankfulness		10
Move 2	Communicating acceptance of position/office		10
Move 3	Communicating rapport, sentiments, and membership to university		8
Move 4	Preparing audience to accept challenging visions of the university		8
Move 5	Communicating the university’s identity, competence and achievements		7
Move 6	Identifying the university’ vision		10
Move 7	Serving the public good of the community		7
Move 8	Closure	Step Brief reference to vision already communicated	10
		Step Asking the audience’s assistance to achieve the university’s vision and future plans	
		Step Re-expressing brief thankfulness and acknowledgements	

### Move 1. Expressing salutations, acknowledgements and thankfulness

All of the university presidents’ inaugural speeches start with communicating salutations and acknowledgements. Most salutations and acknowledgements expressed by the newly elected university presidents take the form of a hierarchy. Presidents begin thanking and acknowledging the formal individuals who contributed to the decision of naming the new university president, and also those who occupy important positions attributed to decision-making in the university or the University State. Those formal individuals involve the Board of Regents, the Board of Trustees, University State’s Foundation, Commissioner Bounds, State Institutions of Higher Learning, the Board of Governors, delegates of universities, previous fellow presidents.

*Distinguished platform guests, esteemed Board of Trustees, illustrious presidents and notable colleagues from sister institutions... (Carson-Newman University, 2009).*

*Thank you ... For the support of the Kansas Board of Regents (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*For the advocacy and the strength provided by Emporia State's Foundation and its trustees (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Commissioner Bounds – as I have indicated to you on numerous occasions throughout this past year, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to lead this university (The University of Southern Mississippi, 2014).*

*President Patterson and other members of the Board of Trustees for the State Institutions of Higher Learning – thank you for the confidence you have demonstrated in my ability to help move The University of Southern Mississippi to its next level of success and relevance (The University of Southern Mississippi, 2014).*

*I salute my fellow presidents and the other delegates who have graciously joined us, bringing their wisdom and support, and demonstrating by their presence the bond that connects all of us in higher education (Yale University, 2013).*

Most presidents, then, shift to extend thanks and gratitudes to the chair, co-chairs, and staff of the inauguration committee and those who assisted in the preparation of the inaugural ceremony. In this stage, the presidents' expressions of acknowledgments are also due to the former teachers, colleagues, and mentors, and university community involving leaders, deans, faculties, staff, alumni, students and other guests.

*I particularly want to extend my thanks today to Vice President Jennifer Denton and Professor Jim Bartruff, because they have served as co-chairs of the Inauguration Committee. In effect, they've planned a wedding (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*And I'd also like to thank all of those who served on the committee and who assisted in the preparation because they have done a masterful job. So please join me in thanking all of them (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*I want to recognize and thank the members of the Inauguration Steering Committee, especially the chair, Kitty Wo (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*I appreciate that so many of my former teachers and mentors are here today: from high school, college, and graduate school (Chaminade University, 2018).*

*My colleagues here at Yale, the hundreds of faculty, staff, students, and alumni who have spoken to me or written since my appointment: You, too, have been my teachers, especially these last few months. Thank you for your encouragement and support (Yale University, 2013).*

Finally, the president's communication of thankfulness and acknowledgments extend to include the president's former and present friends, family, and other relatives. This stage of acknowledgments represents the closure of this specific rhetorical move and its communicative intention which pave the way, with other moves in the text, to realize the overall communicative purpose of the genre under study.

*It also brings me great joy to share this weekend with family and friends who have traveled here from around the country. To the large contingent from the University of Michigan, though, I have a word of warning—we don't sing "Hail to the Victors" here. I just didn't want you waiting for that (Yale University, 2013).*

*Finally, a very special thanks to my immediate family—my amazing husband, Ken Gottschlich; our children, Anna and Nick; and my father, Martin Pollack, who at 83 still works full-time because he wants to, and who taught me, from a very early age, the ultimate value of education, hard work, and family (Cornell University, 2017).*

*Colleagues from our nonprofit and business community (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

*And dear family members and friends ...my thanks for your presence today! I am thrilled that you are all here as we celebrate this remarkable University and look forward with great enthusiasm to all that is before us (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

*My parents taught me the meaning of love, commitment and family; their values shape my life. I know that my mom and dad – Alma and Eugene– are smiling with us today. God bless them! (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

*My husband David has been a constant support – 35 years this week of constant support, in fact – and I thank him and our cherished son Michael for the love and inspiration that have been the cornerstone of my life. They, too, have embraced Notre Dame with wide open hearts – and I am grateful for their commitment (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

*A special thanks to my dear aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces and to my life- long friends from New York and New Jersey for being here today. What can I say? I have a big family and many friends! They will all be recruiting for us in New York and New Jersey...expect to see our enrolments grow from their neighborhoods next year! (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

Expressing thankfulness is a strategy pursued by all the newly appointed university presidents and which have been realized mostly as the first rhetorical move in their inaugurals. Seven out of ten presidents initiated their inaugural speeches with phrases of acknowledgements and gratitude. The other three preferred to start their inaugurals with honour of accepting the position as the new university president which represents the focus of the second cognitive move-structure. Thus, labelling the functional unit of expressing thankfulness and acknowledgments as a rhetorical move advancing the rest of moves in the text is similar to

Khwaja's (2015) finding of assigning expressions of thankfulness as the first framing device in her data analysis.

## Move 2. Communicating acceptance of position/office

In most of the inaugural speeches, the rhetorical move of communicating acceptance of position/office immediately follows the president's expression of acknowledgements. This is one of the obligatory cognitive moves that is frequently communicated by presidents when entering upon office. In this study, it stands for 10 frequencies. It takes the form of showing honour and humbleness to accept and hold the new position as the new coming president to the university.

*It is an honor to stand before you today as the 17th president of Emporia State University, a position I am humbled to hold (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*It is an honor to address you as the 18th chancellor of the University of Kansas. I am humbled by the kind words of our presenters, and I am grateful to see so many of you here to celebrate this occasion (The University of Kansas, 2018).*

*I am honored and humbled to serve as your 17th president (The George Washington University, 2017).*

From the close and careful reading of the inaugural speeches of the current study, it may be said that articulating phrases and expressions of honor and modesty is a typical way of accepting and assuming the new position. Showing modesty and humbleness of behaviour in this specific context is a rhetorical label adopted by university presidents to uncover the sense of being equal and not better than other people. Communicating this type of sense or meaning helps presidents highlight commonality by categorizing themselves under the category of common people so that audience could easily accept their future visions and their academic leadership. Thus, it follows that expressing humbleness and highlighting commonality represents a strategy frequently used by the newly named presidents to prepare their audience to accept the presidents' membership to the university and their establishment of rapport and sentiment which is the focus of the third obligatory rhetorical move in the study.

## Move 3. Communicating rapport and membership to university

Communicating rapport and membership to university forms the third obligatory rhetorical move that is immediately sequenced after the announcement of entering upon office in most of the inaugurals and which is frequent 8 times out of ten inaugural speeches of the study. Rapport and membership to university as a specific cognitive move is realized through the presidents' communication of spending the last few months before assuming office as listening, asking, and questioning people, learning things about the university, and working with teams to explore what makes the university such a special place. Furthermore, it also takes the form of the president's excitement to call the university for which he is the executive chief as his home, or being part of a community dedicated to promoting a love for learning as the university.

*Although I have been here only four months, I have already had remarkable conversations with faculty members who are renowned for their scholarship in everything (Cornell University, 2017).*

*I have spent these last few months getting to know many of you, listening, asking questions and exploring and learning what makes the city of Emporia and Emporia State University such special places (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*As part of that listening effort, I've been working with a great team to develop and refine a vision for Emporia State University (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*I am grateful to each and every person who has touched my life and led me to this moment, and I am excited to call The University of Southern Mississippi and the city of Hattiesburg my home (The University of Southern Mississippi, 2014).*

*A love of learning, a longing for discovery, a commitment to pursuing truth and making the world a better place are the underpinnings of a great university. I find these in abundance here at Chaminade University. During the past 5 ½ months as president, I have spent much of my time learning about this exceptional place. I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with hundreds of people (Chaminade University, 2018).*

*Since arriving at Felician last summer, I have felt the joy that comes from being part of a community dedicated to promoting a love for learning, a desire for God, self-knowledge, service to others and respect for all (Felician University, 2013).*

Thus, establishing rapport and communicating membership of community is a strategy frequently used by the newly appointed president to frame a meaning or reality of being worthy of the new office and that he is qualified to map the appropriate vision to the university future.

#### **Move 4. Preparing audience to accept challenging visions of the university**

The function of this cognitive move-structure is to mentally prepare audience to accept the future university visions and plans that the president is going to declare. It is considered an obligatory rhetorical move since it is frequently used and utilized by the newly elected university presidents. In all of the inaugural speeches, this specific move occurred for eight times. This important move has been realized in two different ways in the inaugurals. The first one is through connecting the past with the present and speculating the future. In other words, the coming president communicated the direction of the institution through referring to the well-known university past and drawing connection between the past and future.

*In the days ahead, we will focus on our future together. But for now, let us pause for a few minutes, be present to each other and to this occasion and time in our history as a university. Let us be grateful and celebrate the path that was travelled to get us here and thank all who were part of the journey. It is, after all, why can be here today (Felician University, 2013).*

*Through this process, I have learned that, for a relatively young university, we are immensely proud of our roots and humble beginnings. We are resilient – enduring and growing through times of turmoil, threat and challenge. And, we have an extraordinary capacity for renewal, reinventing ourselves and leaning in to hurricane-like forces that reshape our landscape (Felician University, 2013).*

*This university was founded on the vision of President George Washington (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*It was established in our nation's capital...to prepare students to lead and advance the cause of the young American republic (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*President Washington didn't want American leaders to be educated in Europe. He wanted America to do that work—and to do it here (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*That vision has become our mission: To be a community of learning that serves the public good (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*The university's founders did not seek to prepare students for the world they knew—a world in which the District was a swampy and provincial government town (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*Rather, they sought to prepare students for the world they saw emerging...a world dominated by science, medicine, law...a world shaped by democratic values that aspired to equality and freedom (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*Despite this grand mission, our first decades were marked by constant struggle to meet more basic needs (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*For our first 100 years as a university, we lived hand-to-mouth, sustained by the charity of the Baptist church. We struggled merely to survive (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*Yet today, here we stand, within walking distance of our halls of government and the unique cultural resources of our nation's capital. We are just four years from our bicentennial, and we stand proudly among the nation's oldest and most enduring institutions of higher education (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*What we have built here, I believe, has brought great credit and lasting distinction to this neighborhood...this city...this region...and our nation. We have realized George Washington's hope and now seek the fulfillment of his vision (**The George Washington University, 2017**).*

*Like many of you, I have always been inspired by the history of this place. Since our founding, KU has embodied the aspirations of the abolitionists who settled on the curve of the Kaw River. Their first goal was to ensure the new Kansas Territory entered the union as a free state. Their second goal was to establish our university. In 1866, our new university enrolled 55 students for the first day of class. Nearly all of those students hailed from within a horseback ride of Mount Oread (**The University of Kansas, 2018**).*

*Today, we have 28,000 students from 50 states and 100 countries. What started as a small college on the hill has become an international research university. Now, we have the opportunity and responsibility to define our university's future (The University of Kansas, 2018).*

*My vision for KU is straightforward: The University of Kansas will be the destination for the best students and scholars from the region, the nation, and the globe. They will come here because they recognize KU as a place where they can transform themselves and the world around them (The University of Kansas, 2018).*

Another form of realizing this rhetorical move is to motivate audience for looking ahead to things that seemed impossible and have been taken over and achieved.

*On the same topic, Aristotle once said that "Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Too often, we limit ourselves. We are unwilling to dream about impossible things. In other words, things that are impossible may be so because of us (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*From its 1863 founding with just two assets — a dictionary and a Bible — to today, Emporia State is looking ahead to things that seemed impossible just a few years ago (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*What impossible things are we achieving today? What impossible things are we looking for in the future? (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Last night, we heard from noted civil rights lawyer Fred Gray of Tuskegee, Alabama. He faced incredible hurdles to go to college and then on to law school to become a lawyer and then to return to Alabama. He worked there with Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., fighting segregation and racial injustice (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*I grew up in a small town, Neosho, Missouri. It was home for many years to George Washington Carver. He then went on to spend the bulk of his in Tuskegee, and he once said "Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom." Whatever your dream is, education is the key to help you achieve it. So dream big! (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Just about four years ago, ESU began its first ever comprehensive campaign. And at that time, those at the university had no idea whether we could actually achieve our goal within the five-year target (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*You know what? We are already there. We have reached our goal ahead of schedule. And we're not done yet (Emporia State University, 2016).*

## Move 5. Communicating the university's identity, competence and achievements

One of the similarities among the inaugural speeches under analysis is the frequent use of this specific rhetorical move. Accordingly, it is considered an obligatory rhetorical move as it stands for 7 frequencies out of the total number of the inaugurals. In all of its uses, this cognitive move-structure is recognized through expressing the university's status in higher education, the academic programs and research it carries out, students and teachers' competence and achievements, and opportunities and responsibilities to make new discoveries.

*An openness to all people is embedded in Cornell's identity as a university for "any person (Cornell University, 2017).*

*Just a few moments ago, you heard Emporia State Faculty Senate President Andrew Houchins talk about ESU's identity as "the adaptive university" which seeks to change lives for the common good. ... Emporia State University is the adaptive university. We showcase innovation and creativity and high-impact learning (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Our students travel and they conduct research with their professors all around the world (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Dr. Dwight Moore from biology takes students to the Bahamas every year for a tropical field biology class that, frankly, sounds like a lot of fun (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Our sociology students traveled to Uganda recently for a course in applied sociology and service learning (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*As a university, we recognize that curriculum should not be created by accretion, but rather by answering the question "What knowledge and skills should ESU students possess? (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Last year, we introduced our master's program in forensic science because we identified a need within the state of Kansas (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*And today, throughout the university, academic departments are thinking about what skills and programs are needed (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Among the many treasures of this university — from the most ancient manuscripts to the most contemporary scientific discoveries — it is our students who are the greatest treasure of all. So today let me reaffirm that we are a research university that proudly and unapologetically focuses on our students. This is who we are and what we aspire to be (Yale University, 2013).*

*Professor Jim Rothman, who was awarded the Nobel Prize earlier this week, embodies this identity and aspiration. On Monday, he departed swiftly from the press conference, where he was extolled for his groundbreaking work unlocking the secrets of cells, to teach two seminars. A future Nobel laureate may have been sitting in a classroom with him that very afternoon. This is Yale's calling as a research university, exemplified every day by faculty and students in our classrooms, laboratories, and studios (Yale University, 2013).*

Thus, communicating the university's identity and competence together with preparing audience to accept visions of the university represent two rhetorical moves paving the way to explicitly state the university's vision and its future map. This is also evidenced by Lawrence-Hughes' (2017) study in which communicating competences is regarded as one of the obligatory rhetorical moves. As the main communicative purpose of this specific genre is the statement of vision and communication of the institution future, these two specific obligatory rhetorical moves (preparing audience to accept challenging visions of the university and communicating the university's identity, competence and achievements) interact with other preceding and following rhetorical moves to realize the overall communicative purpose of the university presidents' inaugural speeches.

### Move 6. Communicating the university's vision

The rhetorical move of communicating the university's vision is given centrality and importance in the inaugural speech as it serves as the main communicative purpose around which all other cognitive moves in the text revolve and function to realize it. This is strongly enhanced by Widmer (2005) when he points out that the inaugural speech serves as a tool for presidents in general to present a vision for the future, and by Kerr and Gade (Quoted in Young, 2013: 63) who wrote that successful academic leadership "requires both vision and the ability to persuade others". Thus, the main reason of communicating visions and future plans is to legitimize academic leadership and to generate follower support. Thus, segmenting discourse units in the inaugural speeches and labelling them under the move of communicating the university's vision supports Lawrence-Hughes' (2017) and Khwja's (2015) results where this theme or rhetorical move emerges as one of the main discourse patterns in the analysis of their data. In the present study, communicating the university's vision as an obligatory rhetorical move takes different forms and topics. The most frequent and salient of them is the university's orientation to embrace change, innovation and new technologies, and to be a diverse, comprehensive and global institution. Other frames that the coming president employ to formulate his future vision is through articulating plans for building new learning environment, fostering greater focus on scholarship and research, and improving the student's education and experience. The following are examples of the new presidents' tendency to adopt change, innovation, universality and new technologies as the central vision of their inaugural speeches.

*So, as we embrace new technologies — and we must do so — we must avoid the chronological snobbery that Owen Barfield described. We must keep the things of the past that are proven, while we embrace the future (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Emporia State will continue to embrace new technologies, seeking ways to complement and expand on that which we already do (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*In fact, just last year, a group of Emporia State faculty and staff built in-house a lightboard. That project was showcased at Educause, the international educational technology conference, as one of twenty projects from around the world. We will continue to embrace technology but we will not abandon what is tried and true (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*In addition to the technological changes, we've seen a number of other changes through the years. Our world is changing in many other ways. One of the most significant changes has occurred in the last few decades in our K-12 schools across the United States. We are a collection of minorities. There is no majority group in K-12 in the United States today (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Educational innovation represents another exciting frontier for universities. Our students relentlessly pursue pedagogical excellence and energize our campus. Innovation is part of our DNA as a Marianist university. One of the differentiating characteristics of a Marianist education is preparing students for adaptation and change. In today's ever-evolving world, the jobs our graduates will have five years from now don't even exist. But as lifelong learners, they will easily adapt to new situations (Chaminade University, 2018).*

### **Move 7. Serving the public good of the community**

Lawrence-Hughes (2017) finds, as is the case in the current study, that fostering of community is one out of five main themes resulting from the analysis of her data. To legitimize his academic leadership and to authenticate the future plans and visions of the institution, the coming university president links these visions and plans to the betterment of the society people and service of the good public of the community. In other words, to draw the support of people and followers and to make the university visions and plans brilliant and acceptable to audience, the newly elected president communicates the achievements and the success that the execution of these plans and visions will bring to the community. This cognitive move-structure has been adopted seven times in the present study. Because of the similarity among the inaugural speeches of the study in articulating the move of fostering or serving the public good of the community, it is regarded as one of the obligatory rhetorical moves in the context of university presidents' inaugurals. In most of the inaugurals speeches, the forms of serving and outreaching the university state and beyond, serving the community organization and changing the lives of the common good are typical ways of communicating this specific move.

*Just a few hours ago, we were privileged to hear from Fred Gray, who has done so much for the common good. Like Mr. Gray, Emporia State will continue to explore the needs of society and seek the common good (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*We will continue to seek the betterment of society throughout the university as our areas work on projects (Emporia State University, 2016).*

*Among all NCAA divisions, Emporia State's student athletes rank in the top 20 in the entire nation for service hours (Emporia State University, 2016).*

### **Move 8. Closure of the inaugural speech**

To close and finalize the inaugural speech, the newly elected presidents resort to steps shown in table (3) to realize this specific rhetorical move. It is regarded as an obligatory cognitive move-structure as it represents one of the structural regularities used in all of the inaugural speeches with varying obligatory rhetorical steps. In another sense. this rhetorical move, realized with different cognitive steps, stands for ten regularities out of ten speeches investigated as the data of the study.

**Table 3: Steps of the Closure of the inaugural speech Move**

<b>Closure of the inaugural speech</b>	Step 1. Brief reference to vision already communicated <b>And</b> Step 2. Working together to achieve the university's vision and future plans <b>And/Or</b> Step 3. Re-expressing brief acknowledgments
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As indicated in the table above, brief reference to vision already communicated and working together to achieve the university's vision and future plans are two main obligatory steps utilized by the coming university presidents to put an end to their inaugural speeches. Another rhetorical step which is relatively frequent in the closure of the inaugural speeches is to re-thank audience briefly and rapidly. The following are examples of the three rhetorical steps used to achieve the communicative intention of the final obligatory move.

*For more than 104 years, our institution's fundamental purpose has remained consistent – to impact the lives of students, their families, and our communities through the high-quality educational opportunities offered here at Southern Miss. Each of you has the ability to help support this purpose (**The University of Southern Mississippi, 2014**).*

*We have already demonstrated that when we come together, great things are possible, and I look forward to our future together (**The University of Southern Mississippi, 2014**).*

*Again, thank you, Commissioner and members of the IHL Board of Trustees, for this amazing opportunity to serve as President of The University of Southern Mississippi. And thank you – faculty, staff, students, alumni, family, and friends – for joining us on this historic occasion (**The University of Southern Mississippi, 2014**).*

The Chaminade community is passionate, hopeful, proud, pragmatic and intensely focused on our Marianist, Catholic mission. We are, at the core, a collection of individuals sharing a common bond and journey. Through our coming together as one, we create that “something special” that is powerful and truly symbolizes Chaminade University of Honolulu (**Chaminade University, 2014**).

Thank you and God Bless (**Chaminade University, 2014**).

*I look forward to working with all of you as we shape that future...as we realize the vision of Felician College as a vital community of teachers, scholars, artists, staff, and students who bring hope to the next generations (**Felician University, 2013**).*

*May we meet these responsibilities entrusted to us with hearts filled with joy (**Felician University, 2013**).*

*Thank you, thank you very much (**Felician University, 2013**).*

*I ask you to join with me as we work together, rooted in our values and energized by our vision to achieve the transformation that our mission promises. We are*

*the authors of the next chapters in Notre Dame's history! (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

*Thank you and God Bless! (Notre Dame of Maryland University, 2014).*

## 6. Conclusion

The current study, through adopting a functional perspective to the analysis of the university presidents' inaugurals, called for cognitive content understanding instead of depending on linguistic features and their order and distribution in the genre to identify its communicative purposes and generic structure (Kwan, 2006). Through examining the communicative purposes and the typicality of the generic structure and the rhetorical moves and steps of the texts under analysis, it may be said that inaugurals of the newly elected university presidents can be regarded as a particular genre. Since the cognitive move-structure of any genre is constrained by the nature of the communicative purpose intended, eight rhetorical moves as the possible generic structure for this genre were examined and identified as serving to accomplish communicating the presidents' visions and their academic leadership as the main communicative purpose of this genre. In order to validate the data analysis of the present study, its results were compared to the findings of some other similar studies.

## تحليل نمطي للخطابات الافتتاحية لرؤساء جامعات أمريكية

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### ملخص البحث:

يمكن أن تكون اللغة وسيلة تأثير قوية تستخدم من القادة حيث تمكنهم اللغة من تأطير وتنظيم المعاني والرسائل المرجوة من خطاباتهم. ترتبط القيادة الأكاديمية والتواصل اللغوي ارتباطاً وثيقاً بمعنى أن الطريقة التي يصوغ بها رؤساء الجامعات المعينين حديثاً خطاباتهم الافتتاحية لجمهورهم أمر بالغ الأهمية في الترويج لأنفسهم ورؤاهم، وهو جانب نادراً ما تم تناوله في الأبحاث السابقة لتحليل النمطي للنصوص. طبقاً لهذه الفجوة البحثية وبتبني نظريات التحليل النمطي للنصوص فإن هذه الدراسة هي دراسة نوعية للبنية العامة والعناصر البلاغية الإلزامية في عشر خطابات افتتاح لرؤساء الجامعات الأمريكية المعينين حديثاً والتي تم جمعها من خلال استخدام أسلوب جمع العينات العشوائية. كما أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن رؤساء الجامعات المعينين حديثاً ينظمون خطاباتهم الافتتاحية على سلسلة من ثماني عناصر بلاغية إلزامية عامة حيث تم ذكر كل عنصر بلاغي إلزامي وشرحه بأمثلة ملموسة من بيانات الدراسة.