

Inaugural address as a sample of persuasive discourse

For many of us, the word persuasion calls to mind the manipulative tricks of our century advertising, politics, and propaganda. Yet, though, persuasion can be more emotional form of speaking than exposition or argument, there is also no reason why persuasion cannot serve the equally sensible and honorable end of encouraging. Barack Obama's inaugural address is a vivid example of it.

On such ceremonial occasions as inauguration persuasion amounts to inspirational statements which people are expected to apply to their own individual circumstances. The message displays the speaker's attempts to solidify his relationship with the audience by frequently acknowledging the audience's presence: *But above all, I will never forget who this victory truly belongs to – it belongs to you; This is your victory; I promise you – we as a people will get there; It cannot happen without you; ... we rise or fall as one nation; as one people; Our union can be perfected.*

The President nearly in all paragraphs of his message includes specific reference to the audience present using the personal and possessive pronouns *you*, *your* and *we*, *our*. It creates a prevailing sense of intimacy in his message; it means he emphasizes the common interests and aims. He sounds modest, reasonable, and candid. His speech is based on appeals to the audience's emotions, contentment, desires, hopes, and the like. He takes into account the points of view of others, has a practical grasp of complex problems, and reaffirms the necessity of changes expected by people – voters: ... *to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids: to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace.*

By identifying himself with the American nation and focusing on areas of agreement, the President is more likely to persuade each member of society to follow his recommended course of action.