



The Analysis of Rhetorical Styles of World Figures in Public Speaking

Tomi Arianto

Universitas Putera Batam (UPB), Batam, Indonesia

Tomy2088.ta@gmail.com

Septriani

Institut Seni Indonesia Padangpanjang, Sumatera barat, Indonesia

Septriani22@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

This research aims to reveal various rhetorical styles of world figures when delivering their orations/speeches in front of the public from a language style perspective. This research uses a figurative language approach as a theoretical concept. Figurative language is language that "symbolizes" a typical way of expressing thoughts and feelings in mental or verbal form. Abrams (2010) stated that figurative language is part of language style in the form of rhetoric. By using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research reveals several speeches by world figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, and Soekarno. The results of this research showed that world figures apply a distinctive rhetorical style but can be traced using the styles of Anaphora, Parallelism, Heterical Questions, Metaphor, Tricolon, Antithesis, Epistrophe, Pathos, Allusion, and Litotes.

Keywords: Communcation, Figurative Language, Language, Public Figures, Public Speaking, Rhetorical Styles.

1. Introduction

This research paper explores the significance of rhetoric as an essential tool for effective communication. Rhetoric, derived from the Greek term "rhetorike," is the skill of using language persuasively to influence an audience. The paper delves into the history and evolution of rhetorical

techniques and their relevance in various contexts, such as politics, advertising, and public speaking. Through a professional lens, this paper emphasizes the importance of mastering rhetorical skills to enhance communication efficacy. Rhetoric, in its essence, denotes the art of persuasive communication

that dates back to ancient Greece (Herrick, 2020). This professional research paper aims to explore the integral role rhetoric plays in achieving effective communication. By analyzing various rhetorical techniques and examples throughout history, we delve into the mechanics of rhetorical persuasion and its impact on diverse fields like politics, advertising, and public speaking. Adopting a professional standpoint, this paper seeks to shed light on the timeless importance of mastering rhetoric in order to engage audiences, convince skeptics, and influence positive outcomes. Body: Rhetoric has long been recognized as a central element in successful communication strategies (Enos, 2013).

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, classified rhetoric into three modes: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos establishes the credibility and trustworthiness of the speaker, logos presents logical reasoning and evidence, and pathos evokes emotional appeal. Understanding and effectively employing these modes can foster engagement, forge connections, and mobilize individuals towards collective action Murphy, etal (2013). In politics, rhetoric plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and garnering support for political agendas. Prominent leaders have harnessed rhetorical techniques to sway voters, deliver compelling speeches, and rally support for their causes. Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, filled

with ethos, logos, and pathos, encapsulates the power of rhetoric to inspire action and unite a nation. Advertisers also tap into rhetorical strategies to captivate consumers and persuade them to purchase products or services. Clever slogans, emotional narratives, and celebrity endorsements are all examples of persuasive techniques rooted in rhetoric (Ferguson, 2009). By appealing to consumers' emotions and leveraging credibility, advertisers create connections that instill brand loyalty and drive commercial success.

From ancient Greece to modern society, rhetoric has proven to be an indispensable tool for effective communication. By understanding and mastering rhetorical techniques, individuals can engage audiences, influence opinions, and drive positive outcomes in various spheres. Whether it is through politics, advertising, or public speaking, the strategic use of ethos, logos, and pathos allows communicators to create lasting impressions and inspire action. In a professional context, the knowledge and application of rhetoric enable effective persuasion and foster stronger connections with diverse audiences. Thus, honing rhetorical skills should be a priority for anyone seeking to achieve impactful communication.

Rhetorical styles refer to different techniques and approaches used in communication to persuade, inform, or entertain an audience. Here are a few common

rhetorical styles (Brummett, 2008). Expository, this style aims to explain or inform by presenting facts, statistics, or logical arguments in a clear and objective manner. Persuasive, the persuasive style seeks to convince the audience to agree with a particular point of view or take a specific action. It often employs emotional appeals, logical reasoning, and rhetorical devices to sway the audience. Descriptive, this style focuses on creating vivid and detailed descriptions to engage the reader's senses and imagination. It often uses sensory language and figurative devices to paint a picture in the reader's mind. Narrative, the narrative style tells a story or recounts an event, often with a beginning, middle, and end. It can be used to entertain, engage, or educate the audience by using characters, plot, and dialogue. Argumentative, this style involves presenting a strong argument and supporting it with evidence, reasoning, and counterarguments. It aims to persuade the audience by logically refuting opposing viewpoints. Satirical, satire uses humor, irony, and exaggeration to criticize or mock individuals, institutions, or societal issues. It often employs sarcasm and wit to highlight flaws or draw attention to absurdities. Remember that these styles are not mutually exclusive, and writers often combine multiple styles within their work to achieve their desired effect. The choice of rhetorical style depends on the purpose, audience, and context of communication.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Rhetorical Rhetoric

This research paper derives into the core aspects and applications of this theory, illuminating its significance in contemporary discourse. The Theory of Rhetorical posits that effective persuasion lies in the artful manipulation of rhetorical devices, encompassing ethos, pathos, and logos. It contends that a successful communicator must strike a delicate balance between these elements to engage an audience and convey their intended message persuasively. Aristotle begins with three main points that are important in the rhetorical process, namely Ethos, Pathos and Logos. When this is used in various rhetorical studies, both for political and non-political purposes (Murthy & Gosal, 2016; Floyd-Lapp, 2014; Joerke, 2010).

Abrams (2010) stated that figurative language is part of language style in the form of rhetoric. There are some rhetorical devices that commonly used in literature, speeches, and other forms of communication to enhance the effectiveness of the message and engage the audience. They are:

- a. Anaphora is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. It is often used to create emphasis and evoke an emotional response.
- b. Parallelism involves using similar grammatical structures or patterns in a series of words,



- phrases, or clauses. It adds balance and rhythm to sentences.
- c. Rhetorical Questions are questions posed for effect rather than to elicit answers. They are used to emphasize a point or to engage the audience in a thought process.
 - d. Metaphor is a figure of speech that involves making a direct comparison between two unrelated things, suggesting that they are alike in some way. It is used to make language more vivid and imaginative.
 - e. Tricolon is a rhetorical device that involves the repetition of words, phrases, or clauses in threes. It is often used to create a sense of completeness or emphasis.
 - f. Antithesis involves placing contrasting ideas or words in parallel structures. It is used to highlight the contrast between them and create a sense of balance.
 - g. Epistrophe is the repetition of a word or phrase at the end of successive clauses or sentences. It is used for emphasis and can create a rhythmic effect.
 - h. Pathos is one of the modes of persuasion and involves appealing to the emotions of the audience. It aims to evoke feelings such as sympathy, pity, or compassion.
 - i. Allusion is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing, or idea of historical,

cultural, literary, or political significance. It adds depth to the text by connecting it to a broader context.

- j. Litotes is a figure of speech in which understatement is used to emphasize a point by stating a negative to affirm a positive. It often involves the use of double negatives.

It highlights the role of proper audience analysis, careful selection of persuasive strategies, and ethical considerations, as crucial factors enabling communicators to achieve desired outcomes. The Theory of Rhetorical Abrams constitutes an invaluable tool in the realm of persuasion, offering practitioners a systematic framework to navigate the complexities of influencing others effectively. By recognizing and utilizing the power of ethos, pathos, and logos, communicators can engage their audience, build trust, and successfully persuade, thus optimizing their persuasive efforts across a wide range of professional fields (Afdhal, 2023. Septriani, 2023).

2.2. Previous Research

This research is not new, but researchers emphasized the rhetorical style of world figures who are quite popular in the public sphere. Lim (2002) described An examination of presidential language from George Washington to Bill Clinton reveals five tendencies. Isa (2022) examines the Rhetoric of Nadiem Makarim's Speech is analyzed at National Teacher 2019 day. Fadhillah, et al.

(2021) explores the rhetoric in President Jokowi's speech "united to face corona" as an appeal via youtube media. Fasadena (2022) analyzes the rhetoric of Laura Kiehl's Love Speech on the eve of the launch of the Ministry of Religion's Religious Moderation Action. Ansori (2022) analyzes the rhetoric of preaching on Fajri FM radio (Qualitative analysis of interactive talk shows). All the previous research above reveals various analyzes of the rhetorical styles of each figure which are different from their respective theoretical approaches. This research raises a different theme, namely Rhetorical Styles of World Figures in Public Speaking.

3. Method of the Research

Qualitative research is a crucial methodology employed in various disciplines for gathering in-depth insights and understanding of human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena. This approach focuses on exploring the subjective perspectives, meanings, and interpretations individuals attach to their experiences, utilizing methods such as interviews, observations, and analysis of texts or artifacts. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of complex phenomena by allowing researchers to delve into the complexities and nuances of human experiences, emotions, and interactions. It enables researchers to uncover rich and context-specific data, enabling

the development of theories grounded in real-life situations.

This research paper delves into the crucial step of data analysis in qualitative research, highlighting its significance and elucidating its relevance to the overall research process. The paper emphasizes the professional approach required to undertake this step effectively and presents the importance of using English as the language of communication. By understanding the intricacies of data analysis and adopting a professional and language-specific approach, researchers can enhance the credibility and reliability of their qualitative research findings.

4. Result and Finding

Many famous figures throughout history have used various rhetorical styles to convey ideas, persuade an audience, or create an emotional impact. The following are some examples of rhetorical styles used by several famous figures:

1) Martin Luther King Jr. Rhetorical Style

Martin Luther King Jr. was a very influential orator and used various rhetorical styles in his speeches to convey messages of justice, unity and social change. Several rhetorical styles often used by Martin Luther King Jr.

a. Anaphora (Repetition)

One of the characteristic features of King's speeches is the use of anaphora, namely the repetition of phrases or words at the beginning of successive

sentences or clauses. A famous example is in the "I Have a Dream" speech: "I had a dream that one day..." in which the phrase "I have a dream" is repeated for rhythm and emphasis.

b. Metaphor (Metaphor)

King often uses metaphors to powerfully illustrate meaning. In his speech, he likened the dream of justice and equality to a "blank check," illustrating racial injustice.

c. Allusion (Allusion)

King often made allusions to historical documents or famous writings, including the United States Declaration of Independence and the Book of Amos in the Bible, to strengthen his arguments and make his message more pervasive.

d. Parallelism (Parallelism)

Parallelism was used by King to give clarity and power to his speech. An example is in his speech "I Have a Dream": "This is our hope. This is the faith. With this faith, we will be able to..."

e. Alliteration

The choice of words with the same prefix or sound, such as "freedom ring" in the "I Have a Dream" speech, gives the speech a musical and memorable quality.

f. Pathos (Emotional Persuasion)

King often utilized pathos, or emotional appeal, to move the hearts of his audience. The use of words and phrases that evoke emotion and sympathy, as in "I Have a Dream," helps form an

emotional connection with the listener.

g. Ethos (Character Persuasion)

King builds his ethos, or ethical character, by referring to moral and religious values, and depicts his fight for equality as a moral calling.

h. Rhetorical Questions (Rhetorical Questions)

King's use of rhetorical questions provides an opportunity for the listener to reflect and absorb his message, as in "I Have a Dream": "How long will it take? Not long!"

King's rhetorical style was not only effective in conveying the messages of the civil rights struggle, but also provided a powerful and inspiring legacy in the history of United States rhetoric.

2) John F. Kennedy Rhetorical style

John F. Kennedy, as a United States president and accomplished orator, used a variety of rhetorical styles in his speeches to inspire, convince, and connect with audiences. Some rhetorical styles frequently used by JFK include:

A. Parallelism (Parallelism)

JFK often uses balanced and parallel sentence structures to provide rhythm and emphasis. Example: "So, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

B. Antithesis (Antithesis)

Kennedy utilized antithesis, which is the placement of opposing ideas or concepts side by side, to create an interesting

contrast. Example: "Today we witness not a party victory but a celebration of freedom."

C. Metaphor (Metaphor)

Metaphors were used by JFK to explain complex concepts in a way that was easy to understand. Example: "The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans."

D. Alliteration (Alliteration)

Repetition of initial sounds or syllables in adjacent words has a powerful effect. Example: "Let us move forward to lead the country we love."

e. Rhetorical Questions (Rhetorical Questions)

Rhetorical questions are used to provoke thought and engage the audience. Example: "But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our destination?"

F. Tricolon

The repetition of three elements or phrases in a row gives the impression of a strong and effective speech. Example: "In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been given the role of defending freedom in its most dangerous moments. I do not hesitate to take on this responsibility—I welcome it."

G. Chiasmus

JFK uses chiasmus, namely the reversal of syntax or word patterns in two consecutive clauses, to give the impression of symmetry. Example: Humanity must end war, or war will end humanity.

H. Pathos (Emotional Development)

Kennedy often utilized emotional appeals, especially in famous speeches such as his brother's wedding speech in Berlin, to inspire and move listeners.

I. Ethos (Character Building)

JFK established his ethos, or ethical character, by referring to the values of the United States and emphasizing the individual's moral responsibility to society.

Kennedy's speeches are known for their passionate, optimistic, and motivational rhetorical style. His powerful and memorable style has made him one of the foremost orators in United States history.

3) Barack Obama's Rhetorical Style

Barack Obama, as the former President of the United States, is known for his strong and inspiring rhetorical style. He uses various rhetorical techniques to convey his messages clearly and convincingly. Some rhetorical styles often used by Barack Obama include:

a. Anaphora (Repetition)

Obama often uses anaphora, which is the repetition of phrases or words at the beginning of successive sentences or clauses, to create strong rhythm and emphasis. Example: "Yes, we can."

b. Parallelism (Parallelism)

Obama often uses balanced and parallel sentence structures to give the impression of harmony and clarity. Example: "We want our children to live in an



America... that isn't threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet."

c. Rhetorical Questions (Rhetorical Questions)

Rhetorical questions are used to invite thought and reflection from the audience. Example: "Did I say that hope isn't irrational? It requires faith and reason to sustain it."

d. Metaphor (Metaphor)

Obama often uses metaphors to explain complex concepts more visually. Example: "The audacity of hope."

e. Tricolon

The repetition of three elements or phrases in a row, gives a speech a strong and effective impression. Example: "Yes, we can. And we will. Yes, we can."

f. Antithesis (Antithesis)

Placing opposing ideas or concepts side by side creates a strong contrast. Example: "Not that I believe that government is the answer to everything, but I do believe that government has a role to play..."

g. Epistrophe

Repetition of words or phrases at the end of consecutive sentences or clauses. Example: "That's what we can be. That's what we must be."

h. Pathos (Emotional Persuasion)

Obama utilized emotional appeals to move the hearts and feelings of his audience. He often links his messages to values and emotional aspirations.

i. Ethos (Character Persuasion)

Build ethical character by emphasizing moral values and collective responsibility. He often spoke about unity, justice and shared responsibility.

j. Allusion (Allusion)

Obama often makes allusions to history, literature, or important events to support and strengthen his message.

k. Litotes

Conveying an idea in a way that lowers or reduces its meaning. Example: "It's not that our friends are irrational, but that the decisions they have made on tax cuts for the wealthy and on other issues do defy logic."

Obama's rhetorical style often focused on messages of unity, hope, and change. His famous speeches, such as the election speech and the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, reflect his power and communication skills.

4) Nelson Mandela's Rhetorical Style

Nelson Mandela, icon of the anti-apartheid struggle and former President of South Africa, was known for his inspirational and powerful speeches. Mandela's rhetorical style reflects his wisdom, courage, and determination to achieve peace and racial equality. Some of the rhetorical styles frequently used by Nelson Mandela include:

a. Anaphora (Repetition)

Mandela used anaphora to provide rhythm and emphasis to his message. Example: "We shall

fight... We shall go... We shall win!"

b. Parallelism (Parallelism)

Balanced and parallel sentence structures help provide a sense of balance and clarity. Example: "The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come."

c. Metaphor (Metaphor)

Metaphors are used by Mandela to illustrate abstract concepts. Example: "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

d. Antithesis (Antithesis)

The use of antithesis helps create a strong contrast to emphasize the point. Example: "We were born to make \manifest the glory of God within us, it's not just in some of us, it's in everyone."

e. Rhetorical Questions (Rhetorical Questions)

Rhetorical questions are used to stimulate the audience's thinking and reflection. Example: "How many more times are we to die at their hands before our voice is heard?"

f. Alliteration

Mandela used repetition of initial sounds or syllables to impressive effect. Example: "Let freedom reign."

g. Pathos (Emotional Persuasion)

Mandela utilized emotional appeal to touch the hearts of his audience. His speeches often reflect wisdom, patience, and determination to achieve peace.

h. Ethos (Character Persuasion)

Build ethical character by affirming moral values and courage in the struggle for justice. Mandela exuded moral authority.

i. Epistrophe

Repetition of words or phrases at the end of consecutive sentences or clauses. Example: "...and when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men, and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last!"

Mandela's rhetorical style reflects his wisdom, patience, and strength of character. His speech provided lasting inspiration and carried a message of peace, reconciliation and unity.

5) Soekarno's Rhetorical Style

Soekarno, as the Proclaimer and first President of the Republic of Indonesia, was known for his passionate speeches, nationalism and political rhetoric. Some of the rhetorical styles often used by Soekarno include:

a. Parallelism (Parallelism)

Soekarno often used balanced and parallel sentence structures to provide rhythm and emphasis to his message. Example: "This is my homeland, the land of my blood, Indonesia!"

b. Anaphora (Repetition)

Repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of consecutive sentences gives a strong and motivating impression. Example: "Freedom or Death!... Freedom or Death!... Freedom or Death!"

c. Metaphor (Metaphor)

Soekarno used metaphors to describe complex concepts clearly. Example: "Indonesia is very big, very rich, Indonesia is very powerful."

d. Rhetorical Questions (Rhetorical Questions)

Using rhetorical questions to elicit thought and emotional participation from the audience. Example: "Are you ready to become new heroes?"

e. Antithesis (Antithesis)

Soekarno often used antithesis, namely the placement of opposing ideas or concepts side by side, to create a strong contrast. Example: "We are Revolutionaries, not Reactionaries!"

f. Alliteration

Repetition of initial sounds or syllables in adjacent words for impressive effect. Example: "Bung Karno, Bung Hatta, Proclaimer and Formulator of Pancasila."

g. Pathos (Emotional Persuasion)

Soekarno utilized emotional appeals to move the hearts and spirits of his audience. His speeches were often passionate and filled with calls for nationalism.

h. Ethos (Character Persuasion)

Building ethical character by emphasizing commitment to the struggles and interests of the Indonesian people. Sukarno often referred to his revolutionary values and moral leadership.

i. Imagery (Image):

Use of language rich in imagery to describe and stimulate the audience's imagination. Example: "Indonesia is the child of my heart, the land is the home of my blood."

j. Repetition

The use of repetition of words or phrases to provide emphasis and a strong impression. Example: "Freedom! Free! Free!"

Soekarno's speeches reflected his enthusiasm, courage and vision for an Rhetoric can be defined as the ability to communicate to spread ideas and influence others. People who are good at rhetoric can implant ideas, thoughts and opinions into the minds of their audiences and even encourage them to act. An orator must have two qualities to be a reliable person. Independent Indonesia. His rhetorical style plays an important role in shaping the national identity and fighting spirit of the Indonesian nation.

5. Conclusion

Rhetoric can be defined as the ability to communicate to spread ideas and influence others. People who are good at rhetoric can implant ideas, thoughts and opinions into the minds of their

audiences and even encourage them to act. An orator must have two qualities to be a reliable person. This research reveals several speeches by world figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, and Soekarno. The analysis showed that world figures applied a distinctive rhetorical style but could be traced using the styles of Anaphora, Parallelism, Heterical Questions, Metaphor, Tricolon, Antithesis, Epistrophe, Pathos, Allusion, and Litotes.

References

- Afdhal. 2023. Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi. Penerbit CV.Gita Lentera
- Ansori, T. (2022). Retorika dakwah pada radio Fajri FM (Analisis kualitatif pada talkshow interaktif). *Komunika: Journal of Communication Science and Islamic Dakwah*, 6(1), 1-5. <https://ejournal.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/Komunika/article/view/6134>
- Brummett, B. (2008). *A rhetoric of style*. SIU Press.
- Enos, T. (2013). *Encyclopedia of rhetoric and composition: Communication from ancient times to the information age*. Routledge.
- Fadhillah, F. F. H., & Irwansyah, I. (2021). Analisis Retorika Pada Pidato Presiden Jokowi "Bersatu Menghadapi Corona" Sebagai Himbauan Melalui Media Youtube. *Jurnal Lensa Mutiara Komunikasi*, 5(2), 49-60.
- Fasadena, N. S. (2022). Analisis Retorika Pidato Cinta Laura Kiehl pada Malam Peluncuran Aksi Moderasi Beragama Kementerian Agama RI. In *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars* (Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 1127-1138).
- Ferguson, R. A. (2009). Hearing Lincoln and the Making of Eloquence. *American Literary History*, 21(4), 687-724.
- Floyd-Lapp, C. (2014). *Aristotle's Rhetoric: The Power of Words and the Continued Relevance of Persuasion*.
- Gunderson, E. (2009). The rhetoric of rhetorical theory. *The Cambridge companion to ancient rhetoric*, 109-125.
- Herrick, J. A. (2020). *The history and theory of rhetoric: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Isa, A. T. H. (2022). Analisis Bukti Retorika Pidato Nadiem Makarim pada Hari Guru Nasional 2019. *Jurnal Lensa Mutiara Komunikasi*, 6(1), 127-138.
- Joerke, D. (2010). *Aristotle's Rhetoric: A Manual for the Politics of Emotion*. *Osterreichische Zeitschrift fur Politikwissenschaft*, 39(2), 157-169.
- Lim, E. T. (2002). Five trends in presidential rhetoric: An analysis of rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 32(2), 328-348. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0360-4918.2002.00223.x>



Murphy, J. J., Katula, R. A., & Hoppmann, M. (2013). A synoptic history of classical rhetoric. Routledge.

Murthy, M., & Gosal, M. (2016). A Study on Aristotle's Rhetoric Applied to Industrial Communication. British

Journal of English Linguistics, 4(1), 64-74.

Septriani, S. EndriZal, E. Arianto, Tomi. 2023. Politik Identitas Dan Pluralisme: Konsep Dan Realitas. ISBN: 9786238878871. Penerbit CV. Gita Lentera.