



Persuasive Through Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in BTS' Speech at The White House

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ABSTRACT: Race is the diversity given by God Almighty. Race can be understood as the distinctive characteristics of a nation in groups based on different physical characteristics. This difference is a beautiful thing because humans do not only consist of one group, but also various groups with differences that can complement one another. Unfortunately, in the reality of social life, there is still discrimination against certain races with different physical forms from the majority in a region. The United States is an example of a country that has the highest level of racism in the world. The Asian-American race often experiences acts of racism that result in fatalities. BTS, a band from South Korea, became the representative of Asians invited by Joe Biden to speech at The White House to express their concern about hate crimes. The purpose of this study is to analyze BTS' speech regarding racial issues towards Asians at The White House from the perspective of Rhetorical theory using the elements of ethos, logos, and pathos. The speech reflected the reality of racism towards Asian ethnic groups, as well as a solution to end this problem by fighting racism at all levels of society. This research uses the interview method by collecting primary and secondary data from relevant books, journal articles, and websites to analyze the Rhetoric speech by BTS in order to get accurate results. The implications of the results of this study include improving Rhetoric not only used in Political occasions but can be used for anyone like BTS did from an entertainment background.

Keywords: Racism, Discrimination, BTS, Rhetoric



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INTRODUCTION

The existence of disparities or discrimination often occurs due to factors that exist between groups in society towards different groups (Little & McGivern, 2014). This happens because of the failure to find a solution in communication between the parties. Therefore, a middle point is needed as a form of solution to find a good decision for both parties. One of the causes of discrimination

between individuals or groups often occurs against their opponents by discriminating against physical form, ethnicity, race, religion, etc. ([Hebb & Dion, n.d.](#)). This results in disruption of relationships, interaction, and communication patterns.

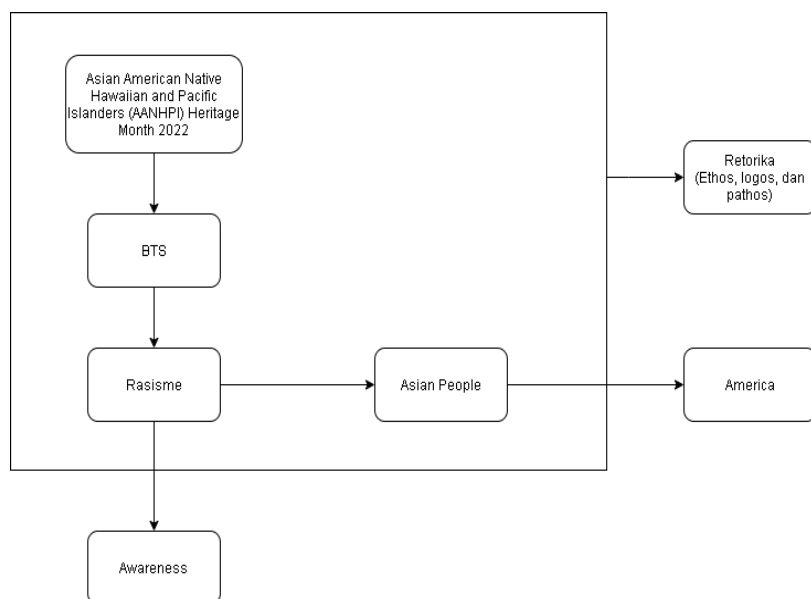
Prejudice is a belief that is not based on evidence but instead on preconceived stereotypical ideas that cannot be changed, thus bringing racism into the realm of ideas and attitudes rather than actions ([Adman & Jansson, 2017](#); [Cather, 2023](#); [Fitzgerald, 2023](#); [Lee, 2018](#); [Mutz, 2022](#); [Yang et al., 2020](#)). Racism is a chronic social disease that can be transmitted from one generation to the next ([Call et al., 2023](#); [Suryanto et al., 2012](#)). Referring to previous sources, it can be said that discrimination is a social problem. This builds a group to have a view of an individual or another group into an opinion that is generalized and will be narrowed down to a stereotype.

According to [Murdianto \(2018\)](#), a stereotype is an unbalanced assessment of a group of people that tends to generalize without differentiation. This can encourage negative judgments and look down on other people. There is a tendency to label certain groups as problems that need to be addressed. Stereotypes are not accurate, but they are so universally applicable and experienced so often that they seem almost an essential part of the human condition ([Maryam, 2021](#)).

According to research by [Nainggolan et al. \(2021\)](#), it is explained that Asian Americans in the US have long been considered a threat to countries that promote whites-only immigration policies. The term "yellow peril" means ineligible for US citizenship. The US is a country that upholds liberal democracy where every individual has the right to freedom to fulfill their dreams, the right to voice, the right to express their opinion, and the right to choose their religion. Uncle Sam's country has a long history, and it can be said that the recognition of human rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression in the Constitution took quite a long time ([Nainggolan et al., 2021](#)). The US has a significant role in the international world. As a superpower, the US has succeeded in exerting influence in various regions by implying the spread of democratic values, human rights, and other liberal ideas ([Congressional Research Service, 2020](#)).

According to research which was written by [Koerniadi \(2019\)](#), Trump's public communications often arouse public controversy. This research analyzed Trump's populism politics and statements of controversial Donald Trump in the realm of public communication for the last 10 years. According to the components of rhetorical theory in ethos, logos, and pathos of Trump can be said to be good at fulfilling ethos and pathos components. The logos by Trump was quite controversial due to it contains about religion and race.

Picture 1. Conceptual framework



This research analyzes BTS' speech which talks about racism against Asians in America using Rhetoric theory which looks at the elements of ethos, logos, and pathos. It is hoped that this research can increase public awareness of the problem of racism that still occurs today.

Rhetoric

[Maarif \(2015\)](#) said Rhetoric comes from Greek which means the ability to make a speech. In the Ancient Greek era, rhetoric was used by politicians and statesmen in conveying policies to persuade the people to gain people's support. Rhetoric in Greek, "*rhētorikē*" means the art of someone's ability to speak. Aristotle said that rhetoric is the ability to select language in certain situations and use it in an effective way to persuade other people. Rhetoric can determine whether the speaker is good at carrying out persuasion in the form of speeches, messages or writing. According to Aristotle, rhetoric is the rhetorician's skill in expressing something, and when conveying it, the rhetorician can have a persuasive effect on the audience.

People use rhetoric because basically everyone needs to put forward and defend opinions, whether to defend themselves or attack other people's opinions ([Aristoteles, 2018](#)). In Greek times, rhetoric was used by politicians and statesmen in conveying policies to persuade the people in order to gain people's support (Hendrikus in Suisyanto, 2020, p. 10). Rhetoric can be defined as an ability to obtain the tools of persuasion that exist in the situation and interpreted as the art of good speaking, which is achieved based on natural talent and technical skills. According to [May \(2022\)](#), the art of speaking is not just speaking fluently without a clear train of thought and no content, but the ability to speak and make short, clear, concise, and impressive speeches. The aim of rhetoric is persuasion, which means to convince the audience of the truth of the topic being discussed by the orator

Aristotle said that three more things were needed to support this method, namely ethics (ethos) or it could be said to show a trustworthy and honorable personality, then logic (logos) approaching the audience through the brain or logic and touching feelings (pathos). Aristotle's classification of ethos, pathos, and logos is used to help communicators find arguments to create good intentions and transfer them to the audience ([Koerniadi, 2019](#)).

In rhetorical literature, ethos is the persuasive potential of the speaker's personal character and credibility. For Aristotle, character can be said to be the most effective tool of persuasion. Credibility is a persuader's main capital in persuasive communication ([Hendri, 2019](#)). Ethos can simply be described as the credibility of the speaker so that he can be trusted. Ethically, the speaker's personality is an important factor in rhetoric ([Maarif, 2015](#)). Persuasion can be achieved through the personal character of the communicator if the content of the conversation is like that, so that it can make the audience feel that the communicator has credibility ([Braca & Dondio, 2023](#); [Davies, 2022](#); [Gerend, 2020](#)) .

Quoted from [Maarif \(2015\)](#) it is said that public speakers should know "What the community believes makes a person believable," which is interpreted as what kind of person should the audience trust. In ethos there are speaker qualities related to three things; perceived intelligence (the speaker's intelligence), virtuous character (the speaker's character), and goodwill (the speaker's good intentions) ([Griffin et al., 2019](#)).

For Aristotle, the speaker's perceived intelligence is assessed by the audience through the overlap between their beliefs and the speaker's ideas. This is in line with what Howard Gardner said, there are 9 types of multiple intelligences that humans possess as modalities of intelligence, namely visual intelligence, verbal intelligence (linguistics), logical intelligence (mathematics), kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, and existential intelligence ([Cherry, 2023](#)). A virtuous character (the speaker's character) is assessed by the audience as to whether he is a good and honest person. Furthermore, goodwill is the audience's assessment of the positive assessment of the orator's intentions towards the audience.

Logos encompass a variety of practices, including logical statements and the use of clear language([West & Turner, 2017](#)). Logos, according to Aristotle ([Griffin et al., 2019](#)) can be described as logical evidence presented by a speaker in conveying an argument or rationalization. Aristotle focuses on two forms of logos evidence, namely enthymeme and example. Persuading through evidence means using enthymemes or examples. Enthymemes are syllogisms and examples are induction (Aristoteles, 2018) An enthymeme can be said to be a piece of a conclusion drawn deductively, and generally an enthymeme eliminates a premise that is generally known. An example is an orator's argument that refers to a problem with a process implied by generalization. Examples in rhetoric can be used as evidence when a proposition is based on several cases. Moreover, when the proposition or statement is true, the subsequent propositions will be true, and this is called an enthymeme.

Aristotle considered enthymemes to be strong evidence. Pathos is emotional evidence. Persuading people emotionally or feelings will be accepted more quickly than logically. Persuasion will reach the listener when the content of the conversation can move the listener's emotions ([Aristoteles, 2018](#)) Fear is a commonly used emotional feeling. According to Aristotle ([Griffin et al., 2019](#)), the audience is the place of evidence when emotions are aroused. These emotions include anger, mildness, enmity, fear, confidence, indignation, pity, admiration, and envy. envy). Audiences judge differently when influenced by happiness, pain, hatred, or fear ([Ruliana & Lestari, 2019](#)).

Public Speaking

Public speaking is the ability to communicate in front of the public professionally and systematically, both in communication between two parties and in group communication ([Fathoni et al., 2021](#)). Public speaking is believed to be able to develop communication skills, as De Vito said can develop charm and logic and develop the orator's logical intelligence in communicating ([Supriyadi & Amalia, 2022](#)).

Public speaking is an interactive process, as stated by [German et al. \(2016\)](#), "Each time you speak publicly, you are contributing to a process of community building and affecting the lives of others. Every time you plan to speak to an audience whether it is at a formal speaking event or an impromptu, you have ethical responsibilities to fulfill (Gruber, 2022, p. 41). The act of speaking therefore always involves making ethical choices; that is a matter of ethos. And you must consider the moral frames of your listeners if you want to convince them of anything." There are 7 types of public speaking; to inform, to persuade, to special occasion, to entertain, to demonstrative, to motivate, and to present or accept awards ([Corray, 2019](#)).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach. According to Creswell, qualitative research is a process of understanding based on a methodology that investigates a human and social phenomenon, where the researcher creates a complex picture, examines words, and detailed reports from the respondent's views, and conducts studies on situations. which is natural ([Habsy, 2017](#)). Most qualitative research often develops new hypotheses to detail causal mechanisms and processes in more specific case series The aim of choosing a qualitative approach in this research is to explain the background of the problem of the topic that is the focus of the research. Qualitative research has a descriptive nature using analysis and perspectives obtained in data collection.

Qualitative approaches to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing. Purposeful sampling, collection of open-ended data, analysis of text or images, representation of information in figures and tables, and personal interpretation of the findings all inform qualitative methods ([Creswell & Creswell, 2017](#)). This research uses primary and secondary data to emphasize the results of topics. The primary data will be gained from interview methods with expert sources the Rhetorician. This is so that the research can be reduced towards a simpler and more accurate conclusion. The secondary data was gained from books, journal articles, and related websites, and the most supporting secondary data is from YouTube which shows BTS' speech.

The direction of question lists based on ethos, logos, and pathoselement. After the data is collected, it is analyzed using theories and concepts that are in accordance with the issue of air na, it is focused on the perspective of Rhetorician expert as my scope with the aim of the results obtained were more valid.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher will analyze the research object, especially the content of BTS's speech at the White House. Researchers would describe key rhetorical elements as elements that are important for a speaker to support his speech discussing racial issues facing Asian people in America. The speech will then be analyzed using rhetorical analysis by describing the elements of ethos, logos, and pathos, which will help researchers sort out the types of elements in BTS' speech.

Ethos

It can be emphasized that intelligence is the same as IQ and cannot be determined academically. However, the intelligence assessment can be seen from multiple intelligence (complex intelligence). They deserve to make a speech at the White House because Joe Biden thinks BTS has potential in the field of public speaking. Evaluating someone's intelligence cannot be measured by IQ but there is something called multiple intelligences. This intelligence includes 9 types, namely visual intelligence, linguistic intelligence (linguistics), logical intelligence (mathematics), kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, intellectual intelligence, personal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, natural intelligence, and existential intelligence.

Aristotle emphasized that a broad education and development of moral character are essential characteristics for those who want to deliver compelling oratory (Perloff, 2017, p. 78). Ethos of the speaker meaning the reputation it is perceived to have even before intentional communication things (Broom & Sha, 2013, p. 329). The evidence of they have fulfilling the ethos' element is proven by the interview session with Rhetorician expert.

"As a human, we have verbal intelligence and musical intelligence. BTS has the kinesthetic intelligence, verbal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and musical intelligence. Then, the lyrics of the song, the way he speaks, that's verbal intelligence. Then musical intelligence, he is intelligent because his works are good, but another intelligence that I think is good is interpersonal intelligence." (Mr. Subroto, Personal Communication, 2023).

Treating BTS as a global music group is one of Biden's strategies to improve the image of America, a country that was once racist, but is now gradually appearing to care about issues like this. As explained later, America is the most racist country in the world, so this was America's chance to invite BTS.

Logos

West & Turner (2017) say that logos include the use of language that is clear and logically acceptable. With the BTS members giving speeches according to their portions, the sentences are not excessive, and to the point, this is feasible if it is easily accepted logically because the sentences said are quite rational. What can be measured by whether a speech is logical or not is whether the audience can draw general conclusions. Based on the facts that occurred in the field in the results of interviews, all interviewees agreed that what they could conclude was to respect the differences that exist and as humans we are certainly different, therefore BTS made a speech to campaign for this anti-racism.

In their speech, BTS spoke according to existing facts, this was proven by Untung Subroto saying, from the results of his interview:

"The sentence is said to make sense if he has evidence. If the context is BTS, why is he talking rationally? Because when he talks about violence or racism related to Asian people, it is at a high level. That's the criteria for sentences that are considered evidence." (Mr. Subroto, Personal Communication, 2023).

It can be concluded that BTS also fulfills the logos component. Starting from using clear language, all interviewees also agreed that their sentences were easy to understand and appropriate to the portion. From this speech too, conclusions can be drawn because their arguments are reasonable. A clear argument that racism occurs is following existing facts.

Pathos

Persuading people emotionally or with feelings will be accepted more quickly. Fear appeals can be very effective in persuading audience (Lee, Neeley & Stewart, (2021). The practice of government public relations. Routledge. Starting from the speaker's character (ethos), what kind of person the audience should trust based on what is said in his speech until an emotion (pathos) arises from the audience using appropriate logic (logos).

An argument will be better if you use persuasion with an emotional approach that is not fiery, does not show anger and hatred, and speaks softly. Based on the video of BTS' speech, if you look at them, they discuss sensitive issues and they are also victims of racism. When giving a speech they remain calm and behave in a polite and friendly manner so as to raise their authority.

Associated with Aristotle's classical understanding of communication, it remains useful as strategic communicators focus on the message source by selecting a spokesperson on the basis of credibility, charisma, and control or influence over the audience. It deals with the logical aspect of an argument that gathers and presents facts and sound reasoning. It also considers the emotional impact (pathos) of messages and nonverbal communication that expresses them (Smith, 2021, p. 317).

Of the 8 existing emotions, BTS relies on 2 emotional feelings; friendliness and worry. These two emotions are the right combination in making a speech on the theme of racism. As victims of racism, BTS remained friendly in their speeches by not using fiery emotions, and showing expressions of worry about the racism that often occurs.

Public Speaking

Public speaking is an interactive process, as stated by German et al. (2016), "Each time you speak publicly, you are contributing to a process of community building and affecting the lives of others. The act of speaking therefore always involves making ethical choices; that is a matter of ethos. And you have to consider the moral frames of your listeners if you want to convince them of anything." With this explanation, ethos or ethics is the main support for the speaker, this influences the audience's confidence in the speaker. communicative action is oriented towards, and requires, understanding and agreement on the part of the listener. This occurs in open dialogue, where certain validity claims, either implicit or explicit which express the speaker's belief that something is true or valid with claims about reality about social or subjective (Betz, 2016, p. 12)

In line with rhetoric, ethos is the credibility or reputation of the communicator. Ethical public speaking is a process. This process begins when you begin brainstorming the topic of your speech. For Aristotle, the speaker demonstrates ethos to the speaker by having a good sense (common

sense), to show the audience that the speaker has good information and knowledge; b. goodwill (good intentions), to show concern for what is being discussed with full attention; c. good morals, to foster audience trust and hope ([German et al., 2016](#))

According to Hojanto, how to dress, body language, and image are important things in supporting successful speaking and building value in front of an audience; whether they like the speaker or not. When giving a speech at The White House, BTS dressed formally wearing black suits, white shirts, and black hair. BTS' body language in speeches tends not to be excessive and precise. The type of public speaking used is persuasive ([Supriyadi & Amalia, 2022](#)).

Persuasiveness is the essence of public speaking because according to [Corray \(2019\)](#), this is the time to convince the audience to believe something and agree with the perspective given by the speaker. Persuasion is an invitation from the speaker who hopes that there will be a change in attitude. This is proven by Jimin's speech script which says, "We are devastated by the recent surge of hate crimes including Asian American hate crimes, to put stop on this support this because we like to take this opportunity to voice ourselves once again." The sentence "to put stop" is an invitation to stop the racism that occurs.

Based on the theory used by researchers, namely the Rhetoric by Aristotle. As the previous chapter mentioned, Rhetoric was used by politicians and statesmen in conveying policies to persuade the people in order to gain public support. In fact, BTS from music industry background is using Rhetoric to speak in the White House. Thus, it can be said that it is not only formal professions such as political figures whose rhetoric or public speaking needs to be highlighted, but those from the world of entertainment can also raise important issues that are global.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that BTS has implemented Rhetoric elements quite well. As a band that has the credibility and influence to invite audiences to fight the crime of racism and create a peaceful life throughout the world by using logical language, as well as evidence regarding the crime of racism in the world, and has presented the audience's emotional feelings, BTS has fulfilled the concept ethos, logos, and pathos.

The number of hate crimes against Asians in the United States seems endless. In fact, this crime often results in casualties resulting in death. It is not uncommon for this problem to happen to public figures, such as BTS. One effort to combat hate crimes is the Stop Asian Hate movement which is supported by many public figures in the world, such as BTS. Everyone can talk about anything. However, the audience is the key to the success or failure of the person speaking in front of an audience. This is called persuasion.

BTS' White House address exemplifies the power of well-crafted public speaking. By employing a strategic combination of ethos, logos, and pathos, they effectively delivered their message of combating anti-Asian racism. Their credibility as global music icons established their ethos, while their factual references to the rise of hate crimes provided logos. However, the true strength of their speech lay in their ability to evoke pathos. By sharing personal experiences and connecting

with the audience's emotions, BTS created a powerful call to action. Their authenticity, compassion, and clear delivery further amplified the impact of their message.

This successful address serves as a valuable case study for public figures and aspiring speakers alike. It demonstrates the importance of tailoring the message to the audience and the platform. In the face of a critical social issue, BTS leveraged their public speaking skills not just to raise awareness, but to inspire action and create positive change.

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