

Rhetorical Devices in Hillary Clinton Concession Speech

Article history

Accepted
3 July 2017

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Published online
9 September 2017

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Abstract

After her losing in United States presidential election on November, 8th 2016, Hillary Clinton delivered an amazing and encouraging concession speech for all audiences around the world. One factor attributing to Hillary's success in a speech is that she has skillfully applied the variety of rhetorical devices. In accordance with this fact, this research tried to analyze the rhetorical devices and their respective function applied in the Hillary's speech by using Harris' theory. By watching the speech record and reading the transcription, the researchers collected the data. Then, to describe the phenomena qualitative research design was used in this research and textual analysis is used as a research method. Moreover, this research is kind of library research. The result shows there are thirteen rhetorical devices that were applied in the speech. Regarding to emphasis rhetorical devices, Hillary frequently used a sentential adverb, alliteration, anaphora, conduplicatio, diacope and epistrophe. For association rhetorical devices, Hillary utilized antanagoge, antithesis, metaphor, and parallelism. For decoration rhetorical devices, Hillary tended to apply asyndeton, polysyndeton, and sententia. Emphasis rhetorical devices are the most repeatedly used in her concession speech. Hillary used emphasis rhetorical devices to directly emphasize her point and purpose and also making the points of the speech is distinctly and explicitly delivered to the audiences.

Keywords: *rhetorical devices; Hillary Clinton Concession Speech; United States Presidential Election.*

INTRODUCTION

Speech has been being used as an important and strong way to influence others for thousand years ago. A speaker always proposes something in his or her speech, whether it is implicit or explicit. As one of the unique kinds of communication, a successful speech consisted of many skills. Among them is the using of proper rhetorical devices in an accurate and appropriate way.

As a strategy or technique to convey speech, many people especially politicians use rhetorical devices to successfully convince the targeted audience then achieve their political ends. Behind personal image, rhetorical devices are also important and useful for politicians because they usually deal with how to gain sympathy and support from people. Adding emotion in the given discourse is really important to attract audience's attention (Sukma

& Utomo, 2016). Politicians can use rhetorical devices in order to make their speech more mesmerizing and encouraging.

In the last 2016, there was one speech that became most of the most widely shared and the most popular political tweet of the year in the United States. It was Hillary Clinton's concession speech on November 9th, after the surprise and unexpected result of United States presidential election a day before. Besides her remarkable concession speech, Hillary Clinton is already well-known as one of the inspirational women of the United States. Based on those facts, it is undoubtedly interesting and useful idea to analyze Hillary's speech. Using Harris (2013) theory about rhetorical devices as the main theory and supported by related theories, this research focuses on exploring the rhetorical devices applied and their respective functions in Hillary Clinton concession speech.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is one of the branches of linguistics which concerns with the study of meaning. Learning pragmatics is one of the ways to create effective communication because by knowing the meaning by seeing the context, the hearer can understand what the speaker's intention. This is in line with Horn and Ward (2004: 6) who state that, Pragmatics is the study of the context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content logical form. So, the advantage of studying pragmatics is that one can talk about people's intended meanings, their assumption, and their purpose or goals, and kinds of action in their speech.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the skill to use language more impressive and persuasive. This is in line with Aristotle cited in Murphy (2006: 864) who defined rhetoric as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. Moreover, Leech (1983: 15) defines rhetoric as the effective use of language in its most general sense, how it is applied in everyday conversation and public speaking. The context is the focus place on a goal-oriented speech situation, which the speaker uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the hearer. So, the function of rhetoric is not simply to

succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case.

Rhetorical Device

In writing or speaking there are some devices that will help the writer or speaker to succeed make the audience keeps attention and gets his or her intention. According to Harris (2013: 3) rhetorical devices are aids for writing or speaking. People that master in using rhetorical device will put beauty and emphasis and effectiveness to their writing or speaking. Moreover, Crystal, Robson and Stockwell cited in Swerwani (2010: 3) state rhetorical device depends on figurative language to express things that cannot be described in a realist way. So, rhetorical devices in public speaking, for example, will give a beautiful, emphasis or effective speech. Rhetorical devices also give the speaker a kind of freedom of thought and expression.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is focused on analyzing recorded material in order to describe and understand it. Then, the goals of this research were exploring the rhetorical devices applied and their respective functions in the corresponding context in Hillary Clinton concession speech. In order to give a detailed explanation, qualitative research design is used in this research. Moreover, to explain describe and interpret the characteristic of data, this research applied textual analysis method. The method is very useful in analyzing the data as supported by Frey, et al. (1999) who state:

Textual analysis as the method of communication researcher use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message. The purpose of the textual analysis is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts.

The type of this research is library research which collecting and identifying a factual and related information to achieve the goal of the research. The primary data is the transcription of Hillary Clinton concession speech that she delivered on Wednesday, November 9th, 2016 in the Grand Ballroom of New Yorker Hotel in front of the thousands of her supporters. The secondary data is all related topic references or sources, which can be theories, works or news that useful to clarify the analysis of the speech, as the main data.

Triangulation and Trustworthiness

This research used data triangulation which means the data are collected from different sources. The sources are taken from some online sources that provide the transcription of Hillary Clinton concession speech; those are from Larimer (2016), Kelley (2016) and Revesz (2016). Besides the use of data triangulation, trustworthiness is also used in this research. The strategy of using critical friend is chosen by the researchers. Rallis and Rossman (2009: 265-269) state:

Trustworthiness of a research is judged by two sets of standards, competent practice and ethnically sensitive practice. Using critical friend is one of the strategies in ensuring competent practice which means cooperate with one person that serves as an intellectual watchdog for the researcher to modify design decisions, develop possible analytic categories, and build an explanation for the phenomenon of interest.

The 'peer debriefer' or critical friend in this research is one of the lecturers of English Education Department of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data based on procedures proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) that consist of data reduction, data display and drawing or verifying conclusion. The following is the steps to analyze the data; first, data reduction; in data reduction researchers read carefully the data, reduced unrelated data and all statements relating to the research questions are identified, and each is assigned a code, or category. The researchers also counted the speech by the number of sentences and identified the data based on the rhetorical devices were applied and also the functions. In this stage, the first question was answered. Second, data display, the researchers displayed the qualitative data in research finding and discussion. Then, the researchers analyzed and described each of them; in this stage the second research question was answered. Last step is drawing conclusion, the researchers drew the conclusion by explaining several most used of rhetorical devices and their functions in Hillary Clinton's concession speech.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Finding

In this section, the researchers show the data finding based on the analysis of the Hillary Clinton's concession speech. The speech duration was about 12 minutes and consisted of 1.172 words with 62 sentences. The

researchers found there were 13 rhetorical devices with 18 extracts data that were applied in the speech. Those rhetorical devices are a sentential adverb, alliteration, anaphora, antanagoge, antithesis, asyndeton, conduplicatio, diacope, epistrophe, metaphor, paralelism, polysyndeton, sententia.

Research Discussion

In this research discussion, researchers discuss further the data finding. Here the researchers discuss the extracts of the speech based on kind of rhetorical devices are applied. The researchers used the theory of rhetorical devices by Harris (2013) as the main theory, then as the additional or referential theories, the researchers used the theory of rhetorical devices proposed by Abrams (1999), Zimmer (2009), Nichol (2011), and other related experts.

The researchers generally categorized the rhetorical devices based on the function in the speech. There are three categories; those are as emphasis, association, and decoration. The following sections presented each category of the rhetorical devices that found in the Hillary Clinton's concession speech.

1) Emphasis Rhetorical Devices in Hillary Clinton Concession Speech

A. Using Adverb for Emphasis

a. A sentential adverb

A sentential adverb is an emphasis rhetorical devices that using adverb in a sentence.

Extract 1

*And I still believe, **as deeply as I ever have**, that if we stand together and work together with respect for our differences, strengthen our convictions, and love for this nation, our best days are still ahead of us.*

By using a sentential adverb, in this case, is a positive degree "as deeply as I ever have", Hillary clearly showed then emphasized her deep faith in this sentence. As Spirko (2001) states, "which sentential adverbs can show the sentence's emphasis and also insert a rhythmic effect". By analyzing those paralleled sentences, there are also two indicate points that Hillary wanted to emphasize to all of the audiences. Firstly, as the election makes the country divided between her supporters and her rival's, Hillary intended to call the unity of all Americans and cherish the various kinds of them. Secondly, by stating "our best days are still ahead of us", which was following

the first point, explained why Hillary wanted all of her supporters to still unite. It was because of the election's result was not the result they wanted and expected. So, they still need to wait and work for that day is coming in Americans' history.

B. Using Repetition for Emphasis

1. Repetition of Terminal Syllables

a. Alliteration

Alliteration is an emphasis rhetorical device which repeats syllables of a clause or sentence.

Extract 2

*So now, our responsibility as citizens is to keep doing our part to build that **better, stronger, fairer** America we seek.*

From the extract above, the usage of comparative degree for three words that end up with 'er' indicates Hillary used alliteration to call the audience's attention. Harris (2013: 44) also states, "the function of alliteration is to call attention to the phrase and fixes it in the audience's mind and it is useful for emphasis as well as art". The three words '*better, stronger, fairer*' remind the audience about the final pitch of Hillary's campaign in North Caroline, before the election. As cited from CBS news (2016), in that time, Hillary urged her supporters to believe that, it was the right decision to vote her as the next United States president, then she elaborated the reasons. This time, after this loss, Hillary urged her supporters to get back to their each role as citizens of America to keep trying to build better, stronger and fairer America together.

2. Repetition of Words

a. Anaphora

Anaphora is an emphasis rhetorical device which repeats the front word or words.

Extract 3

*So my friends, **let us** have faith in each other, **let us** not grow weary, **let us** not lose heart, for there are **more** seasons to come and there is **more** work to do.*

The extract above is a great message from Hillary to all of her supporters. Through addressing triple '*let us*' and twice '*more*', Hillary wanted to command her supporters to directly move on from the heartbreaking loss

then put forward the reasons. Hillary accurately used anaphora to reinforce the idea to acknowledge this loss by faith and still continuing to do a good action for the future that still ahead of them. Hillary did not want them to stop now; she wanted her supporters to keep going. Actually, this part is the last minutes of her speech which also the conclusion of her messages to her beloved supporters.

b. Conduplicatio

Conduplicatio is an emphasis by repetition rhetorical device, it repeats the key word.

Extract 4

*Our constitutional democracy enshrines the peaceful transfer of power. **We don't just respect that. We cherish it.** It also enshrines other things; the rule of law, the principle we are all equal in rights and dignity; freedom of worship and expression. **We respect** and **cherish** these values, too, and we must defend them.*

Hillary used conduplicatio as she repeated the words 'respect' and 'cherish'. From this extract, Hillary emphasized two ideas to the supporters. First, they can keep the peaceful spirit throughout the United States presidential transition. Second, Hillary hoped that the supporters defend the constitutional values. Although the election result was the shocking and surprising, Hillary wanted all of her supporters to keep those two important ideas in their mind.

c. Diacope

Diacope is an emphasis by repetition rhetorical devices. It repeats a preceding word or words. As Nichol (2011) states, "diacope is a repetition of one or more words after the interval of one or more words. It is used as a method for emphasis". The following extract is the example of the using of diacope in Hillary Clinton concession speech.

Extract 5

*This loss hurts, but please never stop believing that fighting for what is right is **worth it.** It is, it is **worth it.***

In this part, Hillary marked the phrase 'worth it' to the audiences. This is in line with Zimmer (2009) statement that, "in diacope the repeated words are emphasized". The emphasized phrase here is clearly describing the condition

of what she and her supporters had been through, all struggles for the campaign. But Hillary also wanted all of her supporters and audiences in general, to still believing that the arduous way they face to the right purpose is never useless unless it will be always paid off. Moreover, Hillary is one of the examples for people especially women that never give up to fight for achieving their dreams.

d. Epistrophe

Epistrophe is another example of an emphasis by repetition rhetorical devices, it repeats the last word or words. As Harris (2013: 18) states, "an epistrophe is the repetition of the same word or words comes at the end of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences. Epistrophe is useful for emphasis". The following extracts are the examples of the using of epistrophe in Hillary Clinton concession speech.

Extract 6

*We spent a year and a half bringing together millions of people from every corner of our country to say with one voice that we believe that the American dream is big enough **for everyone**. For people of all races, and religions, for men and women, for immigrants, for LGBT people, and people with disabilities. **For everyone**.*

In this extract, Hillary used epistrophe as she repeated the phrase 'for everyone' at the end, which emphasizes her clarification. Hillary underlined that American dream is an open chance for all Americans, for everyone. As the third largest nation in the world, United States has been known as a multicultural nation with multiethnic and religions. This is in line with Wilkinson's (2016) statement that, "United States has always been and will always be a multicultural society, where people from many distinct ethnic backgrounds have come together and form a society as a whole". Moreover, it could be a satire for the new president but the emphasis point is how Hillary tried to strengthen all Americans to never give up on their dreams.

2) Association Rhetorical Devices in Hillary Clinton Concession Speech

A. Association of Opposite and Contrastive Ideas

a. Antanagoge

Antanagoge is an association of opposite ideas rhetorical devices. As Harris (2013: 49) states, "antanagoge is the contradiction of a negative

comment with a positive one. The function of antanagoge is to reduce the impact or significance of the negative point". The following extract is the example of the using of antanagoge in Hillary Clinton concession speech.

Extract 7

We have seen that our nation is more deeply divided than we thought. But I still believe in America, and I always will. And if you do, then we must accept this result and then look to the future.

In this extract, Hillary used antanagoge as she emphasized the unity for all Americans after the campaign, after this election. That is supported by Zimmer (2016) that, "the campaign between Trump and Hillary was one of the most acrimonious, most brutal ever". The United States was more divided than it is at this moment. Sharpio (2016) also states, "Trump's challenge will be to engage those who did not support him and pull Republicans and willing Democrats together to heal American domestic fissures". In this part, Hillary skillfully used antanagoge in her speech. After that fierce campaign, Hillary wisely showed her deep faith in America. She called the unity of all Americans and admits the result even it was not an easy thing to do. In short, Hillary wanted all of her supporters to have the same faith as hers.

b. Antithesis

Antithesis is an association of contrastive ideas rhetorical devices.

Extract 8

*This is painful, and it will be for a long time, but I want you to remember this. **Our campaign was never about one person, or even one election. It was about the country we love and building an America that is hopeful, inclusive, and big-hearted.***

Undeniable, for some people especially the supporters, the result of the election is really shocking and surprising. From the extract above, Hillary used antithesis to implicitly remind the supporters of the proposal of her campaign. This is in line with Aristotle statement cited in Johnson (2016) that, "the use of an antithesis makes the audience better understand the point one is trying to make their argument, the comparison of two situations or ideas makes choosing the correct one simpler". Moreover, from Hillary's visions for America are, such as a fair tax system, labor and workers' rights and immigration reform. Then, Hillary also wanted to highlight, even that was hurt, the loss of

the election was not the end instead of the beginning to build America with the new president, Donald Trump.

B. Association of Comparison

a. Metaphor

Metaphor is the third example of association rhetorical device. It is the type of an association of comparison.

Extract 9

*Now, I know we have still not shattered that **highest and hardest glass ceiling**, but someday someone will and hopefully sooner than we might think right now.*

From the extract above, the phrase '*highest and hardest glass ceiling*' indicates the use of metaphor in Hillary's speech. In literal meaning, the glass ceiling is kind of roof made of glass. Furthermore, Merriam-Webster dictionary defines, "*glass ceiling* as an intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper-level positions". Glass ceiling came up in the United States history, especially for women and people of color, since the difference becomes an obstacle for them to get their highest careers. Hillary has been concerned in women's right since the beginning of her political career, as cited in Chasmar (2016) that, "Hillary has a duty to discuss systemic racism in America every chance she gets". In this part, Hillary used this metaphor to show the failure to crack the '*highest and hardest glass ceiling*' in American history, that is to be the first woman president of the United States, that was crystal clear for all the audiences. This is in line with Harris (2013: 33) that states, "metaphorical language makes writing more vivid, imaginative, thought-provoking, and meaningful". Although, it has been known that Hillary has a number of amazing accomplishments in her political career, such as first former first lady as secretary of state and as major-party president candidate, but unfortunately, she lost in her first presidential election, but then she still believed that soon it will happen.

C. Association of Gerund Phrase

a. Parallelism

Parallelism is another example of an association rhetorical device.

Extract 10

So let's do all we can to keep advancing the causes and values we all hold

dear; **making** our economy work for everyone, not just those at the top, **protecting** our country and **protecting** our planet. And **breaking** down all the barriers that hold any American back from achieving their dreams.

The extract above is the example of parallelism of gerund phrases. This part talked about the summary of Hillary's vision for America. This can be also targeted to the [middle class](#), as Johnston (2016) states, "Hillary was promised to secure the economic futures and expand their opportunities through greater access to education and more evenly distributed [economic growth](#)". The use of parallelism here makes the audience focus on the ideas, as Harris (2013: 10) states, "in parallelism several sentences are expressed similarly to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in importance". So, Hillary used parallel structure here is to remind all supporters to keep fighting for the missions that they had made since the campaign.

3) Decoration Rhetorical Devices in Hillary Clinton Concession Speech

A. Decoration with or without Conjunctions

a. Asyndeton

Asyndeton is a decoration rhetorical device without using any conjunction.

Extract 11

*But I feel pride and gratitude for this wonderful campaign that we built together, this **vast, diverse, creative, unruly, energized** campaign.*

Hillary's campaign team is much bigger than Trump's and many of them are the elite of United States. From the extract above, Hillary used asyndeton to show her appreciation for her supporters and describe the campaign they had built. Even they are defeated, Hillary shows her positive gratitude for everything they had done well. Moreover, Catanese (2016) states, "Hillary's loss at the hands of Donald Trump amounted to the most surprising outcome in the history of modern electoral politics". Therefore, those multiple nifty characteristics can be such a powerful strength for the team and supporters to face the election loss.

b. Polysyndeton

Polysyndeton is the counter form of asyndeton. It is a decoration rhetorical device with using multiple conjunctions.

Extract 12

And to all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are

valuable **and** powerful **and** deserving of every chance **and** opportunity in the world to pursue **and** achieve your own dreams.

The extract above shows the usage of conjunction 'and' between each word and phrase. Hillary attractively and skillfully used polysyndeton with the intense message for all girls, not only in the United States but also around the world. The message is clear that for all girls and women to never ever give up for trying to attain dreams. The effect of using polysyndeton here supported by Zimmer (2009) statement that, "the repetition of the conjunctions adds power to the other words, there is also a feeling that the ideas are being built up". In this part, Hillary also forced the idea for every girl to realize and always believe how precious they are and everything is possible for them.

B. Decoration by Quoting a Wisdom

a. Sententia

The last type of decoration rhetorical devices is decoration by quoting a wisdom that is sententia.

Extract 13

*You know, scripture tells us, "**Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**"*

For summing her amazing and encouraging concession speech, Hillary used sententia as she quoted from Galatians 6: 9 from holy-bible. Obviously, from the extract above, Hillary did not want her supporters to lose heart or desperate, she wanted everybody to accept the truth and move forward and keep for doing right action. The using of sententia here is accurate as Zimmer (2009) states, "the using a proverb, etc, adds credibility to the words because it is well known and accepted and lends a truth to the argument". This part is also showing the faith and wise personality of Hillary that she shared to all of her supporters.

From all material in Hillary Clinton concession speech, the researchers found some emphasized points to her supporters besides the speech is used as the chance for Hillary to thank and appreciate all people that have been accompanied and worked with her during the campaign. First for all supporters, even this loss is hard and hurt, they can learn precious things from this then accept the election result and support the new president-elect, by

cherishing the constitutional values and keeping the unity of all citizens of United States. Second, for young people especially young women, to not lose hope and faith and never give up to fight for the right purpose in life because there will be a day to reap what they have been sown. Third, for everyone in any gender, race, religion and ethnic, they all have an equal opportunity to accomplish their highest potential in their life, including being the president of the United States.

On the whole, thirteen rhetorical devices were applied in Hillary Clinton concession speech, emphasis rhetorical devices are the most frequently used in the speech. In those six emphasis rhetorical devices, there are four repetitions of words devices which are the most frequently used than other types of emphasis rhetorical devices. The repetition of words is coming up in the front, behind, after an intervened word, and also the keyword of the successive phrase or sentence. Besides creating a thought-provoking atmosphere, it is clear that the usage of some kinds of those repetitions are making the points of the speech is firmly, distinctly, and explicitly delivered to the audiences. As supported by [Nordquist](#) (2017) statement that, "repetition that used deliberately can be an effective [rhetorical](#) strategy for achieving [emphasis](#) and make an idea clearer". The audiences could effectively understand Hillary's intention and meaning in her concession speech as they remind the memorable and emphasized points. So, it is obvious that the frequently used of some emphasis rhetorical devices have impacts to made the speech is strong and capable to influence others.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

After analyzing Hillary Clinton's concession speech from the theoretical basis of pragmatics and language rhetoric, the researchers find out there are thirteen rhetorical devices that were applied in the speech. Regarding to emphasis rhetorical devices, Hillary frequently used a sentential adverb, alliteration, anaphora, conduplicatio, diacope and epistrophe. For association rhetorical devices, Hillary utilized antanagoge, antithesis, metaphor, and parallelism. When it came to decoration rhetorical devices, Hillary tended to apply asyndeton, polysyndeton, and sententia. Compared with association and decoration rhetorical devices, emphasis rhetorical

devices are the most repeatedly used in her concession speech.

It is clear that the function of emphasis rhetorical devices is to emphasize the points of the speech and make the audiences can easily remind them. In this concession speech, Hillary tried to reinforce the ideas to keep constitutional values and unity in United States, empower young women to not lose heart, and remind the equality chance principle of all Americans. Moreover, the points are perfectly constructed in the speech by collaborating with the usage of other rhetorical devices.

The researchers realized in writing this paper, especially in the finding and discussion, because of the lack of background knowledge, there could be a subjective judgment from the researchers. Even, it has scientifically conducted and the validity of the analysis has been measured. The researchers are neither an American nor living in America. In gaining a conclusion, the researchers thoroughly applied the theory of rhetorical devices and also investigated from previous related books, researches and online news.

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