

A Neo-Aristotelian Criticism of Barack Obama's Rhetoric in The State of the Union Addresses of 2010-2014

Suthida Saenla and Rujira Rojjanaprapayon

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how President Barack Obama, the present president of the United States of America, employed rhetoric in the State of the Union Address in the years of 2010-2014. The study employed a neo-Aristotelian approach which is a dominant approach to criticism for examining rhetoric in public speech. In addition, three canons of rhetoric, including invention, organization, and style were applied. The findings revealed that Obama tried to enhance his credibility and gain intended responses from the audiences through the application of inartistic proofs, artistic proofs, speech arrangement, and persuasive language. The findings also suggested that Obama followed the tradition of components in his addresses. Sequences of rhetorical arguments, major ideas, and emphasis have become his major rhetorical tools to gain public attention and popularity.

Keywords: Neo-Aristotelian criticism, State of the Union Address, Barack Obama

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการใช้วาทกรรม (Rhetoric) ของประธานาธิบดี บารัค โอบามาในการแถลงนโยบายประจำปีต่อรัฐสภา (The State of the Union Address) ระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2553-2557 (ค.ศ. 2010-2014) โดยใช้แนวทางนีโอ-อริสโตเติลเลียน (Neo-Aristotelian approach) ของวาทวิทยา (Rhetorical criticism) ซึ่งเป็นที่นิยมใช้ศึกษาวาทกรรมในที่สาธารณะ ในงานวิจัยนี้ได้เน้นเฉพาะ 3 องค์ประกอบในหลักการทั่วไปของวาทวิทยา คือ (1) การสร้างประเด็น (invention) (2) การจัดวางโครงสร้าง (organization) และ (3)

ลีลา (style) ผลการศึกษาระบุว่าโอบามาได้พยายามที่จะเสริมสร้างความน่าเชื่อถือ (credibility) ของตนเอง เพื่อให้ได้รับการสนับสนุนจากผู้ฟังตามที่คาดหวังไว้โดยการปรับใช้วิธีการ 4 ประเภท คือ (1) ข้อพิสูจน์ที่เกิดขึ้นเองตามธรรมชาติ (inartistic proofs) (2) ข้อพิสูจน์ที่มนุษย์สร้างขึ้น (artistic proofs) (3) การปรับแต่งวาทะ (speech arrangement) และ (4) ภาษาเพื่อโน้มน้าวใจ (persuasive language) นอกจากนี้ ได้พบว่าโอบามายังคงใช้องค์ประกอบดั้งเดิมทั่วไปทั้ง 3 แบบของวาทวิทยาตามระดับข้างต้น และใช้เครื่องมือทางวาทกรรมที่สำคัญ 3 ชนิด คือ (1) การจัดลำดับข้อโต้แย้งทางวาทกรรม (Sequences of rhetorical arguments) (2) การนำเสนอความคิดหลัก (Major ideas) และ (3) การเน้นย้ำ (Emphases) เพื่อดึงดูดความสนใจจากสาธารณะและเพิ่มประชานิยม

คำสำคัญ: แนวทางนีโอ-อริสโตเติลเลียน, การแถลงนโยบายประจำปีต่อรัฐสภา, ประธานาธิบดี บาร์ค โอบามา

Introduction

The State of the Union Address, which is the annual report of American presidents to Congress and the American public about the condition of the country and administration's plans (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Shogan & Neale, 2012), serves as one of the most important speeches of American presidents in terms of drawing public attention. In order to gain intended responses from the audiences, the presidents utilize different rhetorical strategies. Therefore, for better understanding of rhetorical processes in this public sphere, the way American presidents utilize available means of persuasion to enhance rhetoric in their speeches should be investigated.

As there is little research conducted by non-Americans outside of the U.S. devoted to the investigation of Aristotle's rhetoric in the presidents' speeches and the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address, the purpose of this study is to examine these two areas. In addition, as President Barack Obama is considered one of the most influential and rhetorical American presidents (Maugh, 2012; Wilson,

Dilulio, & Bose, 2014), the study utilizes his State of the Union Addresses as artifacts. The research questions of this study are:

RQ1: How were inartistic proofs and artistic proofs, according to the neo-Aristotelian approach, employed in Obama's speeches given at the State of the Union Address?

RQ2: What are the general characteristics of Obama's State of the Union Address?

The knowledge derived from this study is intended to be of benefit to individuals by increasing knowledge about President Obama's speeches at the State of the Union Address and about the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address. In addition, the knowledge is intended to contribute to a better understanding of Aristotle's rhetoric in the political sphere for scholars.

This research article consists of five parts: Research background, literature review, methodology, research findings, and conclusion which will be described respectively.

Literature Review

This section describes the theoretical framework of this study. Two related areas which are a neo-Aristotelian approach and the State of the Union Address are explained below.

A Neo-Aristotelian Approach

According to Foss (2009), a neo-Aristotelian approach is a standard methodology designed for examining rhetorical processes. Foss added that this approach was regarded as the dominant method for speech analysis. The important features, including the speaker's personality and character, the audience's identity, the

speaker's ideas, the means of persuasion, the messages, the speaker's arrangement, the speaker's expression, the speaker's delivery and style, and the effect on a certain audience are required to be investigated (Brock, Scott, & Chesebro, 1990). Critics applied canons of rhetoric consisting of invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery for analysis (Foss, 2009). Aristotle's concepts of rhetoric were drawn as the theoretical basis of this approach (Dues & Brown, 2004).

Aristotle's rhetoric means the technique for "classifying, studying, and interpreting" speeches (Keith & Lundberg, 2008). The main function of rhetoric is to discover available means of persuasion, including inartistic proofs and artistic proofs (Herrick, 1998). Inartistic proofs or external proofs are the things not controlled or created by a speaker (Herrick, 1998; Sillars & Gronbeck, 2001). Inartistic proofs such as examples, statistics, and testimony are external factors enhancing a speaker's credibility because they reinforce the speaker's knowledge, trustworthiness, and authoritativeness (Benjamin, 1997).

Artistic proofs mean the things produced through spoken words (Benjamin, 1997). There are three types of artistic proofs including ethos, pathos, and logos (Herrick, 1998). Ethos refers to a speaker's credibility (Herrick, 1998). Aristotle regarded ethos as the most persuasive means of persuasion (Benjamin, 1997). The speakers can enhance their credibility through representing moral character, intelligence, and goodwill to the audiences (Herrick, 1998; Keith & Lundberg, 2008; Foss, 2009).

Pathos is an emotional appeal or the way of putting the audiences into a particular state of mind (Hughes & Duhamel, 1966; Herrick, 1998; Sillars & Gronbeck, 2001). Pathos is an effective means of persuasion to move an audience into action (Herrick, 1998). In order to evoke different types of emotions and sway the audiences' perceptions, a speaker can apply pathos through employing vivid language (Benjamin, 1997; Keith & Lundberg, 2008).

Logos refers to the way of persuading the audiences through logical steps (Keith & Lundberg, 2008). Speakers can apply logos through utilizing evidence such as statistics, quoting of experts' claims, and personal experiences to support their claims (Foss, 2009). Logical arguments are divided into two categories, including inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning (Herrick, 1998).

Deductive reasoning is the manner of reasoning from generalization to a specific instance (Benjamin, 1997), and syllogism and enthymeme are its subcategories (Herrick, 1998). Syllogism includes major premise, minor premise, and conclusion, and conclusion can be drawn from the first true two premises (Benjamin 1997; Keith & Lundberg, 2008). Enthymeme refers to the adapted form of syllogism in which one premise is unstated, and it requires the implication shared by a speaker and an audience (Benjamin, 1997; Herrick, 1998). On the other hand, inductive reasoning means reasoning from a specific instance to generalization in which a speaker draws the conclusion from real or hypothetical examples (Keith & Lundberg, 2008).

Reasoning can be fallacious or irrational if an argument contains error in structure or error in content (Van Vleet, 2011). According to Van Vleet (2011) and Bennett (2014), the use of unknowledgeable fact, illegitimate authority, inconsistent comparison, and insufficient information are examples of fallacious arguments.

In this section, the neo-Aristotelian approach which is the conceptual framework of this study has been described. The next section is the explanation of the State of the Union Address which is utilized as the artifact of this study.

The State of the Union Address

The State of the Union Address is the annual message from American presidents delivered to Congress and the American public containing his administration's reports and policy proposals (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Shogan &

Neale, 2012; Embassy of the United States of America, 2013). According to Campbell and Jamieson (2008), the State of the Union Address is regarded as the most important speech of American presidents to gain public attention and popularity. There are no regulations as to how the message should be delivered, and the speech components of each president are different (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). This section discusses the components of the State of the Union Address, including sequence of rhetorical arguments, recurring themes, and tone.

According to Campbell and Jamieson (2008) and Shogan and Neale (2012), sequence of rhetorical arguments includes public meditations on values, assessments of information and issues, and policy recommendations. They explained that the presidents underline the audiences' values, highlight their concerns on a particular issue, and propose their policies to solve the problems respectively. Shogan and Neale noted that the sequence of rhetorical arguments in the State of the Union Address are predictable.

According to Campbell and Jamieson (2008) and Shogan and Neale (2012), there are three recurring themes in the State of the Union Address which are "past and future," "bipartisanship," and "optimism." They explained that the presidents' central ideas includes: (1) reminding about past conditions and then proposing their legislative plans, (2) framing their arguments in a certain way in order to build consensus, and (3) pointing out the difficulties in goal accomplishment and then establishing a strong statement to reach the goal.

Shogan and Neale (2012) pointed out that tone is the emphasis of the presidents in the State of the Union Address, and the emphasis in each presidential term is different. Shogan and Neale added that the presidents put a great emphasis on hope in the first year address, highlight their administration's achievement in the midterm address, focus on the past achievement and policy proposals in the election year address, and emphasize their credit claiming and policy proposals in the second term address. However, Shogan and Neale noted that the presidents' emphasis in the second term address is varied.

In this section, the review of related literature has been described. The next section explains the methodology of this study.

Methodology

This section describes the methodology of the research. Data collection and data analysis are presented below.

Data Collection

President Barack Obama's State of the Union Addresses were used as the artifacts of this study. The speeches were collected from the website of the White House. Five speeches given at the State of the Union Address of President Barack Obama employed in this study are presented below.

1. Remarks by the President Barack Obama in the State of the Union Address on February 27, 2010 (Whitehouse.gov, 2010).
2. Remarks by the President Barack Obama in the State of the Union Address on January 25, 2011 (Whitehouse.gov, 2011).
3. Remarks by the President Barack Obama in the State of the Union Address on January 24, 2012 (Whitehouse.gov, 2012).
4. Remarks by the President Barack Obama in the State of the Union Address on February 12, 2013 (Whitehouse.gov, 2013).
5. Remarks by the President Barack Obama in the State of the Union Address on January 28, 2014 (Whitehouse.gov, 2014).

Data Analysis

The approach of this study is rhetorical criticism which is a qualitative method designed for investigating and explaining rhetorical process and the effect of rhetoric on an immediate audience (Foss, 2009). Rhetorical criticism is the approach to examine social texts such as “public speeches, television programs, and films” (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). In order to examine how inartistic proofs and artistic proofs were employed in the President Barack Obama’s State of the Union Addresses, a neo-Aristotelian procedure which is the dominant method of rhetorical criticism was utilized as the major tool of this study. Foss (2009) explained that the neo-Aristotelian approach was based on Aristotle’s concepts of rhetoric, and critics should apply five canons of rhetoric, including invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory for the investigation.

Regarding the examination of the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address, the concepts of sequence of rhetorical arguments, recurring themes, and tone provided by Campbell and Jamieson (2008) and Shogan and Neale (2012) were applied. The study investigated three main areas, including: (1) the way rhetorical arguments were invented, (2) the way the ideas were developed, and (3) the emphasis of the president in the speeches.

In order to answer the first research question, “How were inartistic proofs and artistic proofs, according to the neo-Aristotelian approach, employed in the speeches given at the State of the Union?” the study applied Foss’ neo-Aristotelian procedure (2009). Because this research focuses on exploring Obama’s rhetoric through only a written form, the analyses were conducted by employing only three of the five canons of rhetoric, which are invention, organization, and style.

Regarding invention, Foss (2009) suggested that invention was based on both inartistic proofs and artistic proofs by exploring external evidence that the speaker does not create such as testimony of witness, experts’ claims, and other documents. In addition, the study examined internal proofs or things that the speaker created through

spoken words which are ethos, pathos, and logos. Therefore, the way Obama enhanced his credibility, evoked the audiences' emotions, and invented logical arguments were investigated. Regarding logos, the study examined whether arguments contain faulty reasoning through applying the concept of fallacy provided by Van Vleet (2011) and Bennett (2014). In terms of organization, the study explored how the speeches were organized and developed. Regarding style, the study examined how the speaker used language to enhance rhetoric.

In order to answer the second research question, "What are the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address?" the study applied concepts of sequence of rhetorical arguments, recurring themes, and tone provided by Campbell and Jamieson (2008) and Shogan and Neale (2012). Therefore, the study explored how rhetorical arguments were invented, how the ideas were organized, and the emphasis of the president.

Findings

This section is divided into two major parts: (1) findings on how inartistic proofs and artistic proofs were employed in President Barack Obama's State of the Union Addresses, and (2) findings on the general characteristics of the State of the Union Addresses.

Aristotle's Inartistic Proofs and Artistic Proofs

This first major part presents five analyses on inartistic proofs and artistic proofs employed in Obama's five State of the Union Addresses ranging from 2010 to 2014. In each analysis, the findings were described through three canons of rhetoric, which are invention, organization, and style. Table 1 below illustrates how Obama

enhanced rhetoric through three canons of rhetoric, including invention, organization, and style.

Table 1

Summary of Obama's Rhetoric in the State of the Union Addresses from 2010 to 2014

Year	Invention			Organiza- tion	Style
	Inartistic Proofs	Artistic Proofs			
		Ethos	Logos		
2010	utilizing law, precedent, witness, experts' claims, and statistics Example: "Economists on the left and the right say this bill has helped save jobs and avert disaster." (experts' claim)	demonstrating goodwill and good character Example: "I refuse to pass this problem on to another generation of Americans." (goodwill)	reasoning through deduction (syllogism and enthymeme) and induction (examples) Example: "China is not waiting to revamp its economy. Germany is not waiting. India is not waiting.... Well, I do not accept second place for the United States of America." (inductive reasoning through the use of examples)	evoking emotions of sympathy, sorrow, courage, pride, concern, anger, hatred, and friendship Example: "And if there's one thing that has unified Democrats and Republicans, and everybody in between, it's that we all <i>hated</i> the bank bailout. I <i>hated</i> it. I <i>hated</i> it. You <i>hated</i> it." (evoking emotions of anger and hatred)	utilizing rhetorical devices (repetition of words or phrases, parallelism, rhetorical questions, and metaphor), inclusive pronouns, and colloquial terms Example: "We <i>cut taxes</i> . We <i>cut taxes</i> for 95 percent of working families. We <i>cut taxes</i> for small businesses. We <i>cut taxes</i> for first-time homebuyers. We <i>cut taxes</i> for parents trying to care for their children. We <i>cut taxes</i> for 8 million Americans paying for college" (emphasizing ideas through the repetition of phrases)

2011	<p>quoting of experts' claims and statistics</p> <p>Example: "Three years ago, it was <i>rated</i> one of the worst schools in Colorado--located on turf between two rival gangs. But last May, 97 percent of the seniors received their diploma." (statistics)</p>	<p>demonstrating goodwill and good character</p> <p>Example: "But let's make sure that <i>we're not doing it on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens.</i>" (goodwill)</p>	<p>reasoning through deduction (enthymeme) and induction (examples)</p> <p>Example: "<i>South Korean homes</i> now have greater Internet access than we do. <i>Countries in Europe and Russia</i> invest more in their roads and railways than we do. <i>China</i> is building faster trains and newer airports. <i>We have to do better.</i>" (inductive reasoning through the use of examples)</p>	<p>evoking emotions of friendship, pride, concern, and hope</p> <p>Example: "Steel mills that <i>once needed 1,000 workers can now do the same work with 100.</i> Today, just about any company can set up shop, hire workers, and sell their products wherever there's an Internet connection." (evoking a feeling of concern)</p>	<p>arranging the speech in a problem-solution pattern</p>	<p>utilizing rhetorical devices (repetition of words or phrases, parallelism, and alliteration), inclusive pronouns, and colloquial terms</p> <p>Example: "And so the question is whether all of <i>us</i>--as citizens, and as parents--are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed." (inclusive pronoun)</p>
2012	<p>quoting of experts' claims and statistics</p> <p>Example: "<i>Experts</i> believe this will support more than 600,000 jobs by the end of the decade." (experts' claim and statistics)</p>	<p>demonstrating goodwill and good character</p> <p>Example: "Send me these tax reforms, and I will sign them <i>right away.</i>" (active leader)</p>	<p>reasoning through deduction (syllogism and enthymeme) and induction (examples)</p> <p>Example: "And I will not stand by when our competitors don't play by the rules. We've brought trade cases against China at nearly twice the rate as the last administration--and it's made a difference." (deductive reasoning through enthymeme)</p>	<p>evoking emotions of pride, courage, anger, and unity</p> <p>Example: "No one built this country on their own. This nation is great because we built it together. This nation is great because we worked as a team. This nation is great because we get each other's backs." (evoking senses of pride and unity)</p>	<p>arranging the speech in a problem-solution pattern</p>	<p>utilizing rhetorical devices (repetition of words or phrases, parallelism, and rhetorical questions), strong and vivid words, inclusive pronouns, and colloquial terms</p> <p>Example: "No <i>bailouts</i>, no <i>handouts</i>, and no <i>copouts.</i>" (parallelism)</p>
2013	<p>quoting of experts' claims and statistics</p> <p>Example: "<i>The CEO of Siemens America--company</i> that brought hundreds of new jobs to North Carolina--</p>	<p>demonstrating goodwill and good character</p> <p>Example: "Our government shouldn't make promises we cannot keep--but we must keep the promises</p>	<p>reasoning through deduction (enthymeme: using research findings which might be fallacious) and induction (examples in the forms of facts and personal experience)</p>	<p>evoking emotions of happiness, concern, disappointment, and sympathy</p> <p>Example: "Yes, the biggest driver of our long-term debt is the rising cost of health care for an aging population."</p>	<p>arranging the speech in a problem-solution pattern</p>	<p>utilizing rhetorical devices (repetition of words or phrases, metaphor, and rhetorical questions), concrete and vivid words inclusive pronouns, and colloquial terms</p> <p>Example: "A</p>

	said that if we upgrade our infrastructure, they'll bring even more jobs." (expert's claim)	we've already made." (sincere person)	Example: " <i>Study after study shows that</i> the sooner a child begins learning, the better he or she does down the road. <i>So tonight, I propose</i> working with states to make high-quality preschool available to every single child in America." (deductive reasoning through enthymeme by claiming research findings)	(evoking a feeling of concern)		<i>growing economy</i> that creates goods, middle-class jobs-- that must be the <i>North Star</i> that guides our efforts." (metaphor)
2014	utilizing witness, statistics, and experts' claims Example: "And if you want to know the real impact this law is having, just talk to <i>Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky</i> , who's here tonight." (witness)	demonstrating goodwill and good character Example: "As President, I'm committed to making Washington work better, and rebuilding the trust of the people who sent us here." (goodwill)	reasoning through deduction (enthymeme: using experts' claim, research findings, and analogy which can be fallacious) Example: "Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education....As a parent as well as a President, I repeat that request tonight." (deductive reasoning through enthymeme by claiming research findings)	evoking emotions of happiness, pride, concern, sympathy, strength, and attempt Example: "Congress, give these hardworking, responsible Americans that chance. They need our help." (evoking a feeling of sympathy)	arranging the speech in a problem-solution pattern	utilizing rhetorical devices (repetition of words or phrases and parallelism), inclusive pronouns, and colloquial terms Example: " <i>Moms</i> , get on your <i>kids</i> to sign up. <i>Kids</i> , call your <i>mom</i> and walk her through the application" (colloquial terms)

The analyses from Table 1 revealed that in terms of invention, Obama extensively employed inartistic proofs and artistic proofs in all five of these State of the Union Addresses. He utilized inartistic proofs in the forms of statistics and expert's claim as the major tool to strengthen and enhance his credibility.

Regarding artistic proofs, Obama extensively employed ethos, logos, and pathos in all of his five speeches. However, he was devoted to the use of pathos in his first speech and fourth speech. Also, logical proofs were frequently found in his fourth speech. On the other hand, he concentrated upon the application of ethos in his third speech. In his fifth speech, the researcher found that he utilized ethos, logos, and pathos equally. It is notable that Obama focused on appealing to the audiences' emotions at the beginning and the end of his five speeches. He tried to evoke the audiences' feelings through narrating personal stories, highlighting a particular problem, and reporting his administration's achievement. Obama also appealed to the audiences through ethical proofs or ethos by demonstrating his care and concern for the citizens of the United States. In addition, he tried to portray himself as a trustworthy, fair, active, and strong leader.

Regarding logos, Obama conveyed his arguments through both deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning. He utilized sufficient examples to support his inductive reasoning. His deductive reasoning in the forms of syllogism and enthymeme were valid and coherent because all premises were connected. In addition, he employed generally accepted premises. He also utilized evidence such as experts' claims and research findings to strengthen his arguments. However, as he did not provide sufficient information about the sources, thus his reasoning might be fallacious if the sources that he cites were unreliable. Also, his reasoning through analogy might be irrational because the information regarding the two things being compared was insufficiently provided. This could affect his credibility and the effectiveness of his speeches.

In terms of organization, Obama arranged his speeches in a problem-solution pattern. He addressed a problem that the audiences were interested in or concerned with and then proposed his administration's plans. The way Obama organized his speeches is appropriate for the situation. In addition, it suggested that he tried to gain the audiences' approval of his policy proposals.

Regarding style, Obama made persuasive use of inclusive pronouns, vivid words, and rhetorical devices such as the repetition of words or phrases, parallelism, and rhetorical questions. In addition, his use of some colloquial terms indicated that he tried to create intimacy with the audiences. His language use helped to portray him as an intelligent and creative leader.

In the first part, the findings on inartistic proofs and artistic proofs employed in Obama's State of the Union Addresses have been described. The next part presents the findings on the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address.

General Characteristics of the State of the Union Address

This part provides the analyses of the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address. The analyses focus on three areas, including: (1) the way rhetorical arguments were invented, (2) main ideas of Obama's speeches, and (3) the emphasis of Obama's speeches. Table 2 below illustrates the general characteristics of the State of the Union Addresses based on sequence of rhetorical arguments, recurring themes, and tone.

Table 2

General Characteristics of Obama's State of the Union Addresses from 2010 to 2014

Year	Sequence of Rhetorical Arguments	Recurring Themes	Tone
2010	(1) creating the audiences' identity (2) evoking the audiences' concerns and (3) proposing	(1) acknowledging the limits of the president's power and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3)	focusing on the administration's accomplishments, legislative plans, and foreign policies

Year	Sequence of Rhetorical Arguments	Recurring Themes	Tone
	legislative plans	reminding audiences about past conditions and then proposing legislative plans.	
2011	(1) creating the audiences' identity (2) evoking the audiences' concerns and (3) proposing legislative plans	(1) acknowledging the limits of the president's power and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) reminding audiences about past conditions and then proposing legislative plans.	focusing on legislative plans and foreign policies
2012	(1) underlying the audiences' values (2) evoking the audiences' concern and (3) proposing legislative plans	(1) acknowledging the limits of the president's power and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) reminding audiences about past conditions and then proposing legislative plans.	focusing on credit claiming, legislative plans, and foreign policies
2013	(1) creating the audiences' identity (2) evoking the audiences' concerns and (3) proposing legislative plans	(1) acknowledging the limits of the president's power and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) reminding audiences about past conditions and then proposing legislative plans.	focusing on legislative plans and foreign policies
2014	(1) creating the audiences' identity and underlying the audiences' values (2) evoking the audiences' concern and (3) proposing legislative plans	(1) acknowledging the limits of the president's power and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) reminding audiences about past conditions and then proposing legislative plans.	focusing on the administration's accomplishments, legislative plans, and foreign policies

The findings from Table 2 revealed that in terms of sequence of rhetorical arguments, Obama began establishing rhetorical arguments through creating the audiences' identity. Then, he evoked the audiences' concern on a particular issue and proposed his legislative plans respectively. Regarding recurring themes, there are three themes developed in Obama's State of the Union Addresses. He developed his main ideas through: (1) reminding audience about past conditions and then recommending his legislative agenda, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) underlying the difficulty in carrying out a particular task and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved. In terms of tone, Obama's emphasis in each State of the Union Address is different. In his first speech, third speech, and fifth speech, his administration's accomplishments, legislative plans, and foreign policies were concentrated upon, whereas in his second speech and fourth speech, he focused on proposing his legislative plans and foreign policies.

Conclusions

This part provides the research conclusions. Four subcategories, including: (1) a summary of research findings, (2) discussion of the findings, (3) strength and limitations of the study, and (4) recommendations for further studies are presented below.

Summary of Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how inartistic proofs and artistic proofs, according the neo-Aristotelian approach, were employed in President Barack Obama's State of the Union Addresses. In addition, the study aimed to gain a deeper insight into the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address. The neo-Aristotelian approach was utilized as the major tool employed in this study. The key findings to answer the two research questions are presented below.

Regarding the first research question, “How were inartistic proofs and artistic proofs, according to the neo-Aristotelian approach, employed in the speeches given at the State of the Union Addresses?” the findings indicated that Obama extensively employed both inartistic proofs and artistic proofs in all of his five speeches given at the State of the Union Addresses. In terms of invention, Obama utilized external evidence such as statistics and experts’ claims to enhance his credibility. He also employed artistic proofs, including ethos, logos, and pathos throughout his five speeches. He enhanced rhetoric through portraying himself as a trustworthy, active, and fair leader, evoking the audiences’ emotions at the beginning and the end of his speeches, and conveying his arguments through both inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. He employed sufficient examples to strengthen his inductive reasoning. His deductive reasoning in the forms of syllogism and enthymeme was valid because all premises were coherent. He also utilized external evidence such as experts’ claims and research findings to strengthen his reasoning. However, as he did not provide sufficient information about his sources, this might affect his credibility if the sources that he cited were unreliable.

In terms of organization, the findings revealed that Obama arranged his five State of the Union Addresses in a problem-solution pattern. He primarily addressed the topics that the audiences were interested in or concerned with and then proposed solutions or policies. This showed that he tried to gain the audiences’ approval of his policy proposals. Regarding style, the findings indicated that Obama made persuasive use of rhetorical devices to evoke the audiences’ feelings. In addition, the use of colloquial terms indicated that he tried to reduce the distance between the audiences and himself.

In terms of the second research question, “What are the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address?” the findings revealed that there are three major types of rhetorical arguments, including underlying the audiences’ values, evoking the audiences’ concern, and proposing legislative plans in Obama’ State of the Union Addresses. The audiences’ values were primarily established. Then, the audiences’ concerns on a particular issue were evoked, and the president’s legislative plans

recommended thereafter. The order of these rhetorical arguments is predictable. Regarding recurring themes, there are three main themes developed in Obama's speeches. He developed his main ideas through three main themes, including: (1) reminding the audience about past conditions and then recommending his legislative agenda, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) underlying the difficulty of carrying out a particular task and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved. In terms of tone, Obama's emphasis in each State of the Union Address is different. He focused on credit claiming, legislative plans, and foreign policies. However, credit claiming in Obama's first speech, third speech, and fifth speech were more emphasized.

Discussion of the Findings

The study has generated five implications of the research findings. The implications drawn from the research findings are presented below.

Table 3 Implications of Research Findings

Findings	Implications
Obama employed all three types of artistic proofs, including ethos, logos, and pathos.	Obama tried to adapt his speeches to different groups in the audiences.
Obama evoked the audiences' emotional response at the beginning and the end of his speeches.	Pathos is Obama's key tool to gain intended responses from the audiences.
Obama used rhetorical arguments through three steps, including: (1) creating and underlying the audiences' identity, (2) evoking the audiences' concern on a particular problem, and (3) laying out policy proposals in all of his five State of the Union Addresses.	Emotional appeal is a key rhetorical tool employed in the State of the Union Address.
Obama developed his main ideas through: (1) reminding the audience about past conditions and then recommending his legislative agenda, (2) framing his arguments in a certain	Obama aimed to propose his policies, gain the audiences' acceptance of his policies, and gain more popularity.

way and then building consensus, and (3) underlying the difficulty of carrying out a particular task and then reaffirming with the audiences his ability to accomplish the task.	
Obama placed a greater emphasis on credit claiming in his first speech, third speech, and fifth speech but focused on proposing his legislative plans and foreign policies in his fourth speech which was an election year.	Obama aimed to gain attention and popularity through proposing new policies rather than making claims about his administration's achievements.

Table 3 shows five implications drawn from research findings. Firstly, from the way Obama employed all three types of artistic proofs, including ethos, logos, and pathos it can be implied that he tried to adapt his speeches to different groups of the audiences. According to Sillars and Gronbeck (2001), the audiences' knowledge, group identification, and receptivity should be identified in order to reach a persuasive goal. In addition, persuasion could be achieved through both logical and psychological process (Dues & Brown, 2004). The way Obama enhanced his rhetoric through various techniques indicated that he realized the differences in the audiences. Therefore, he tried to adapt his speeches through utilizing different rhetorical strategies in order to achieve his persuasive goal.

Secondly, appealing to the audiences' emotions is a key tool of Obama to achieve his goal of persuasion. According to Herrick (1998), pathos is a powerful tool to move audiences into action. Therefore, from the way Obama extensively appealed to the audiences' emotions at the beginning and the end of all five speeches it can be implied that this type of proof is his major technique to convince the audiences to react favorably to his speeches. The way Obama tried to evoke the audiences' feelings at the end of his speeches also suggested that he attempted to create an impression in the audiences' mind.

Thirdly, emotional appeal is the key component of the State of the Union Address. Pathos is an effective tool to move the audiences to react favorably to the speech (Herrick, 1998). In addition, speakers can gain specific attention through

creating different types of emotions (Benjamin, 1997). Therefore, the way Obama primarily addressed a particular problem and then proposed policy proposals suggested that he attempted to put the audiences into a particular state of mind in order to gain the audiences' attention and listen to his further arguments. The predictable order of rhetorical arguments is in compliance with the study of Campbell and Jamieson (2008) and Shogan and Neale (2012) indicating that the sequence of rhetorical arguments employed in the States of the Union Address consists of: (1) "public meditations on values," (2) "assessments of information and issues," and (3) "policy recommendations." In addition, the findings correspond to the study of Shogan and Neale indicating that the sequence of these rhetorical arguments is predictable.

Fourthly, in all five State of the Union Addresses, Obama developed his main ideas through three main themes, including: (1) reminding the audience about past conditions and then recommending a legislative agenda, (2) framing arguments in a certain way and then building consensus, and (3) underlying the difficulty of carrying out a particular task and then reaffirming in the audience that the goal will be achieved. The findings are in compliance with the concept of recurring themes developed by Campbell and Jamieson (2008) indicating that major themes in the State of the Union Address consisting of: (1) "past and future theme" in which the presidents start reminding the audience about past conditions and then propose their legislative plans or future goals, (2) "bipartisanship theme" in which the presidents try to frame their arguments in a certain way in order to build consensus, and (3) "Optimism theme" in which the presidents start pointing out the difficulties in achieving the goal and then establish a strong statement that they will fulfill their duties to reach the goal. From the way Obama developed different themes in his speeches it can be implied that he tried to draw the audience's reaction on a particular issue. The main ideas developed in his speeches also revealed that he aimed to propose his policies, gain the audiences' acceptance of his policies, and gain more popularity.

Lastly, the way Obama highlighted credit claiming for his administration's achievement in his first speech, third speech, and fifth speech corresponds to the study of Shogan and Neale (2012) indicating that in the midterm address and the second term address, the presidents' emphasis on his administration's achievements is higher. From Obama's different emphasis in each State of the Union Address it can be implied that he aimed to gain an intended response from the audiences. However, it is notable that in his fourth speech, which is the election year address, Obama placed greater emphasis on proposing his legislative plans and foreign policies rather than making claims about his administration's achievements. The findings contradict Shogan and Neale's concept of tone indicating that in the election year address, the presidents focused on credit claiming and policy proposals. However, Shogan and Neale noted that each president sets a different tone in each State of the Union Address. Therefore, the findings indicated that Obama aimed to gain public attention and popularity through proposing new policies rather than making claims about his administration's achievements.

Strength and Limitations of the Study

As the neo-Aristotelian approach is the dominant tool to explore rhetorical strategies in public speeches, the application of this approach is the strength of this study. The approach revealed the strategies Obama employed in order to gain an intended response from the audiences. However, there are two limitations of the study. Firstly, as this study only investigated rhetorical strategies from the texts and applied only three canons of rhetoric, including invention, organization, and style, the ways the president presented his speeches have not been examined. In addition, the audiences' response has not been investigated. Therefore, the findings may not indicate the actual outcome. Secondly, as the examination of the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address was based simply on Obama's speeches, the findings may not be an actual indication.

Recommendations for Further Studies

As the study only investigated the speeches from the texts and applied only three canons of rhetoric, the audiences' response has not been examined. Also, the investigation of the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address was based simply on a single speaker's speeches. Therefore, there are three recommendations for further studies. Firstly, the researchers may explore how the speech is said as well as presented because the way a speech is delivered is a crucial tool for discovering the effect of the speech on the audiences. In addition, delivery is an important source in the investigation of pathos. Secondly, the immediate audiences' response may also be examined in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the speech. Thirdly, to gain more precise results, other presidents' State of the Union Addresses should also be explored and compared.

In this study, the neo-Aristotelian criticism was utilized as the tool to examine how inartistic proofs and artistic proofs, according to the neo-Aristotelian approach, were employed in Obama's State of the Union Addresses. In addition, the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address have been explored. The study revealed a great deal about rhetorical strategies that Obama employed in order to enhance the effectiveness of his rhetoric and gain intended responses from the audiences. In addition, the general characteristics of the State of the Union Address were discovered. The findings indicated that external proofs, internal proofs, speech arrangement, and language use were Obama's key tools to enhance his rhetoric and gain intended responses from the audiences. The findings also suggested that Obama followed the tradition of components in the State of the Union Address. How he utilized rhetorical arguments, central ideas, and emphasis in the speeches have become the important tools to gain public attention and popularity.

The study employed the neo-Aristotelian approach to explore Obama's speeches. It, therefore, is anticipated to reveal strategies and implications of the reasons he used in order to gain popularity from his audience. The study is also expected to make a contribution to the language and linguistic fields from Obama's

language used in his speeches. However, the approach allows a critic to see how well a speech is employed rather than help a critic to understand the speech. In addition, the effect of the speech is less of a focus. Therefore, the findings may not be an indication of the effectiveness of a speaker's speech.

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