Systemic Functional Rhetoric: A Mixed Hallidayan-Aristotelian Approach to Persuasive Speeches

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Abstract

Aristotle's' theory on rhetoric has been much used to analyze speeches of great people of various discourses, only to come up with a sort of evaluation of how persuasive, inspiring, convincing, motivating and arguing those speeches are in terms of Logos, Ethos, and Pathos. Rarely, if ever, do analysts go into a deeper investigation of the linguistic features –grammatical intricacy –as used by the rhetoricians. This article aims to justify a mixed approach (Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and Aristotelian Trilogy of Rhetoric) to persuasive speeches. Aristoteles' Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR) was highlighted to position the three effective pillars upon which Persuasive Rhetoric had been built. Aa well, a critical review of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to highlight its thorough description of linguistic meta-functions (ideational, interpersonal and textual), leading respectively to field, tenor and modes of the discourse and grammatical intricacy as a barometer of spoken text. It was proven that TR and SFL were potentially synergized as a mixed approach to persuasive speeches, employing its newly-formulated framework of Analysis. Thus, the new approach termed as "Systemic Functional Rhetoric Approach" was confirmed   as a comprehensive tool to analyze persuasive speeches, employing both Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Keywords: rhetoric, systemic functional approach, linguistic meta-functions, grammatical intricacy

Introduction

Prior to the discussion of the proposed mixed approach (Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic and Aristoteles' Trilogy of Rhetoric) to persuasive speeches, it is of importance to highlight related theoretical concepts to be better informed of the foundations of Rhetoric and Systemic Functional Linguistics. The two grand theories are synergized to form a much better tool to analyze prominent persuasive speeches of international caliber.

Concept of Rhetoric

Distinguished experts have formulated the concept of rhetoric. It is first of all argued that rhetoric is a science epistemologically related to speech acts by means of which words are manipulated in such a way to construct a sort of cooperative understanding in any

communication be they social, educational or high-risk communication related to natural and medical phenomena (Bavili, 2022; Gordon, 2022). Thus, in other words, someone is claimed to have good rhetoric when he or she in expressing his or her ideas through any media manages to develop an interpersonal relation between him or her as the speaker and audience as the listeners (Atkins, 2022; Biočina & Rajh, 2022; Goodman & Bagg, 2022). The reliable indicator for this can be seen from the enthusiasm of the audience in listening to his or her speech with considerable comprehension of the speech in question.

Meanwhile another expert, Plato, states that rhetoric is closely related to techniques of dialogues in reach of the truth (Martin, 2022; Vidauskytė, 2022). This, of course, has something to do with how dialogues are organized in both bilateral and multilateral grounds to arrive at a resolutive consensus of the problems involving groups of individuals concerned—and thus, it is inseparably related to the management of human resources synergized to reach the unanimous goal. Another distinguished philosopher, Socrates, reiterates that rhetoric is someone's ability to use spoken language to improve and finalize his or her knowledge in disclosive information (Hoppmann, 2022; Miller, 2022). This has something to do with the ability to perform speech acts to dig out information from other individuals—as exemplified in in-depth interviews and or legal interrogations in court rooms.

It is also argued that rhetoric has something to do with the ability to use linguistic symbols to express ideas (Martin, 2022; McLeod et al., 2022). This is closely related to strategies of conveying particular information to a particular target of audience. The main objective is to force the target to do something in accordance with the information contents (orders). At this level, rhetoric has been directed to strategies of persuasion (Alkhalidi & Alghazo, 2022; Benoit, 2022; Ilie, 2022).

Based on much that has been discussed above, there are several issues related to the concept of rhetoric which can be tentatively concluded that rhetoric is closely related to the art in the use of spoken language aimed at emotionally attracting the audience to understand what is being talked about (Browdy & Milu, 2022; Holmes-Henderson et al., 2022). Therefore, in the learning of rhetoric, one of the topics is how to arouse 'perception', which is in itself a process of an individual in response to a received stimulus. There is also possibly a collection of the same perceptions in a group of people toward an issue—thereby termed as a consensus, which can be achieved through a leader's organizational skills.

In a religious speech (*dakwah*), the speaker, employing his or her rhetoric, manages to arouse the audience's interests, regarding the topic of discussion (sermon) as such to form a consensus (the same collective perceptions due to listening to the same source of information. In other words, it is the speaker who is supposed to be able to use his or her rhetoric, employing various kinds of persuasive strategies. It can, thus, be confirmed that the basic concept of rhetoric is persuasion to achieve a consensus (Bolsen et al., 2022; Dunlop et al., 2022; Vandeweerdt, 2022).

Theoretically speaking, persuasion is an attempt to emotionally drive other people (audience) through written or spoken texts or other illustrative images and symbols in order for them to do something (Blumenau & Lauderdale, 2022; Zakrzewski, 2022). It is also arguably true that persuasion can be considered an act to transform individual attitude and behaviors by means of written or spoken texts—normally in speeches as exemplified above. As for written texts, they can be notices or brochures (leaflets) with persuasive purposes to change the mindset in order to have a consensus of understanding. A hotel brochure, for instance, is aimed at persuading prospective guests to stay in the hotel as an indicator of success.

Furthermore, persuasion is an attempt to implant a new opinion, for example the rhetoric as used by politicians (Ballard et al., 2022; Blumenau & Lauderdale, 2022; Purike, 2021; Vandeweerdt, 2022). A politician, through his or her political speeches, tries very hard to implant a new opinion related to the issues in his or her campaigns. Meanwhile, the indicator of success in implanting the new opinions in political campaign is that there is a relative increase in votes in the general election. Thus, due to the success of persuasion, it is possible for an individual or groups of individuals who at first have political interests in Candidate A to change their minds to prefer Candidate B—quite likely in direct elections of Mayors, Governors or even Presidents.

Finally, it is also argued that persuasion is considered a deliberate effort to change attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors by means of message transmission. Concrete examples can be advertisements through various media, consisting of possible persuasive texts of both written and spoken forms or a combination of both. In short, rhetoric is persuasion through language (spoken/written) in pragmatically-manipulated words (Budniakiewicz, 1992), phrases and sentences in such a way to create meaningful and eye-catching linguistic forms.

For those who have just commenced rhetoric as a profession or wanted to start learning it, it is necessary for them to know the first step of persuading through the art of language, that is to deliberately duplicate the speeches of great public figures of interest, followed by learning the principles of rhetoric and regular practices. Experience plays a dominant variable in relation to the development of rhetorical skills—persuading through the art of speaking to change attitudes, ideologies, and mindsets.

A Clear Gap of Rhetoric Analysis

Rhetoric limits itself, at the level of physical attribute as the art of speaking to a relative judgment whether or not someone succeed in persuasion of various kinds, such as arguing, giving evidence, positioning audience, and to list only a few. In reality, there is a gap of knowledge if the study of rhetoric is limited as such. There is a thirst for more elaboration of the discipline, that is to provide linguistic features in support of the current analysis of rhetoric. This article attempts to offer an approach—a combination of Aristotelian Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR) and Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to enhance the analysis of public speeches based on rhetorical and linguistic perspectives.

Theoretical Highlights

Aristotelian Rhetoric

The discussion of rhetoric has narrowed down to its essence that rhetoric is the art of speaking in the form of persuasion to influence people (audience) to change their mindsets, ideologies, attitudes, behaviors and the like. Described below are rhetorical insights favored by Aristoteles, a great philosopher of his time—thereby named after him: Aristotelian Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR).

It has been generally argued that Aristoteles—birth 384 BC, and death 322 AD, at the age of 61 or 62) is undoubtedly one of key philosophers of the ancient time along with other philosophers: Plato and Socrates. As well, historically noted, at the age of 17, Young Aristoteles was Plato's student, who then was appointed as a lecturer in Academy of Plato. He also served as Great Alexander's teacher (Aristoteles et al., 2018). He was such a great philosopher with a strong influence especially in rhetoric. So great was he that his rhetorical theory has been claimed to be 'perfect' in the eyes of the next generation. Evidently, no

rhetorical theories falsify his. However, the idea that one of the characteristics of a science is falsifiable remains unchanged.

Aristoteles himself claims that rhetoric is nothing but the ability to speak in selection of methods of persuasion in accordance with particular contexts of events (*Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 2022; Cushing, 2020). At this level, a speaker has to be able to provide arguments in line with the audience's interests and purposes to create equilibrium of understanding. There must be a mutual symbiosis between the speaker as an information provider and the audience as information receivers, demonstrated in correct changes of attitudes, ideologies, behaviors, etc., as designed.

Aristoteles' theory on rhetoric, hereinafter referred to as Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR), originated from his smart idea that there are three methods or ways of persuasion by using language effectively (accuracy-targeting) and efficiently (non-time consuming). Such methods are referred to as **Ethos**, **Logos** and **Pathos** which are then directed to one unified whole as Aristoteles' Rhetorical Triangle (Mohamad, 2022; Voci, 2022). In other words, the three methods are simultaneously used as a totality in a speech delivery.

The term 'Ethos' theoretically refers to the quality of a speaker in terms of his or her credibility, capacity and knowledgeability related to the topic in question (Herman, 2022). This includes the subject matter, its hierarchical relevancy as a topic theme of the talk, and any possible problem that may come up during the speech delivery in front of the audience. In other words, a speaker has to be able to publicly convince that he or she has a reliable personality with high expertise in the subject matter, including a highly respectable social status. In a logical consequence, therefore, such a speaker, in the eye of the audience, can be philosophically labeled as King can do no wrong, implying consistently expressing nothing but the truth.

In normal practice, the Ethos of a speaker is described with confidence by the master of ceremony (MC) right before he or she starts his or her presentation. Along with the development of social media, Ethos can also be demonstrated through advertisements, such as 'flyer', 'brochure', 'Facebook feeds', 'Instagram' and many more. At one time or another, Ethos may be automatically attached to an individual in accordance with his or her social, political or organizational position, such as Prime Minister, President, King, Manager and the like.

In addition, a speaker must also be able to emotionally deal with the audience related to their feelings, love and expectation. Such a quality attribute is referred to as Pathos (emotional appeals) (Rabab'ah & Al-Qudah, 2022). This has something to do with the ability to create a conducive and communicative atmosphere (situation), thereby developing a harmony engagement between a speaker and the audience. The success of Pathos quality management contributes more or less to arousing the audience's interests, as indicated by full attendance of the enthusiastic audience from the beginning to the end without reluctance and or passive participation during the question & answer session. For monologue speeches in social media channels, such YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, the quality of Pathos can be seen from the number of likes, shares and comments, including subscribers.

Final but of no less importance is Logos. It is the quality of a speaker in using his or her logic (Mohamad et al., 2022). In light of this statement, a good speaker must be able to provide complete and valid data for his or her arguments, bridging possible gaps of information. To introduce a new product, for instance, in a new product launching, the speaker (sales or

company representative), must be able to provide arguments related to the background of the new product, along with the narration of the new features which are not available in the old product. As well, argumentative explanations are also required with respect to the new product competitiveness against similar products belonging to different producers. Advertorial ethics must also be observed by not mentioning the name of the competitors.

It is important to note that Trilogy of Rhetoric, consisting of Ethos, Pathos, and Logo in practice occurs simultaneously in a persuasive text (speech) (Mohamad, 2022; Voci, 2022). Examine the following partial text:

This is our time, to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth, that, out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope.

At a glance, it is logical to assume that the speech is delivered by a great leader or politician. It can be seen from the structure (grammar); albeit the use of a simple sentence, the speaker managed to accommodate quite a number of information. In other words, he or she is a credible public speaker with a high index of Ethos. The skillfully repeated use of the first-person plural (our and we) indicates he or she managed to touch the audience's emotion (emotionally appealing). He or she has a considerably high index of Pathos. Above all, regarding Logos, the arguments he or she presented are in a good order, resulting in influential impacts on the part of the audience. Meanwhile the most striking part of his or her utterance is "*reaffirm that fundamental truth, that, out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope.* This part of his or her possibly long speech is persuasive and thus influential, putting high hopes of changes.

The success of employing Aristotelian Trilogy of Rhetoric (Ethos, Pathos and Logos) as exemplified and justified above guarantees that a public speaker shall manage to persuade the majority of audience to comply with the new proposition the speaker has set up (Amos et al., 2022; Blumenau & Lauderdale, 2022).

Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics

Unlike Aristoteles' fame for philosophical theories—one of which is on Trilogy of Rhetoric, Halliday is a British linguist—a strong proponent of Neo-Firthian theory who viewed language basically as a social phenomenon.

Born on April 13, 1925, Leeds, Yorkshire, England and died on April 15, 2018, Manly, New South Wales, Australia, Halliday earned a B.A in Chinese language and literature from the University of London and then pursued his post graduate majoring in linguistics, first at Peking University, and later at the University of Cambridge, from which he obtained a Ph.D. in 1955 (Steiner, 2018). His influential theory on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was not of a sudden emergence. It has a long history, starting from his early work, known as "Scale and Category Linguistics" in which he theorized that to describe a language, there were four categories (unit, structure, class and system) and three scales (rank, exponent and delicacy). He also did work on intonation and discourse analysis as of which he managed to methodologically influence language teaching, translation, discourse analysis and other related works on linguistics. SFL was introduced to the teaching and learning of language in Indonesia back in 2004, deconstructing formal (traditional) grammar-based teaching methods which had been in use for over decades—of course during which modifications were made to devise language teaching leading to communicative approaches. Thus, SFL was really a revolutionary

breakthrough in language teaching in Indonesia in which a discourse approach was introduced (Haliday, 2004).

It was theorized In SFL that language as a social phenomenon has three meta-functions (ideational, interpersonal and textual) simultaneously occurring as long as a language is used to make meanings (ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings) (Eggins, 2004; Halliday et al., 2014; Wiratno, 2018). These three domains of meanings form one unified whole of meaning in a language engineered through the application of lexicogrammar. In text analysis, therefore, a text as a realization of discourse has to be ideationally, interpersonally and textually analyzed to come up with a valid and reliable description of language.

Ideational meanings are basically analyzed in terms of Transitivity Systems with which participants, verb processes and circumstances are dealt in order for the analysts to arrive at **the field of the discourse**, that is to focus on the topic or what the text in question is all about (Ismail et al., 2022; Sakrikar, 2019, Wiratno, 2018). For example:

We are sorry for the delay in our departure. Please fasten your seat belt and refrain from smoking while the no smoking sign is on. From captain Jackson and the crew, it is our pleasure to serve you today. If there is anything we can do to make your flight more enjoyable, please let us know.

SFL analysts must be familiar with transitivity analysis involving the participants (who are involved in the talk), the verb processes (physical or non-physical verbs) and the circumstances (how, where, when etc.). The field of the discourse of the above text is Flight Announcement—expressing 'regret' for the delay, instructing what the passengers should (not) do and offering better flight services. A long text may of course require a longer and more complex description of the field of the discourse (Harahap, 2022; Ismail et al., 2022).

Employing the text as above, the interpersonal meanings can be analyzed in terms of Mood Systems in which the analysts look at how Mood is represented in 'Subject and Finite Verbs' and the Residue (of the clause) which may also contribute to the meaning as a whole. It is arguably clear that the tenor of the discourse is High Formal—with no reply required on the part of the passengers as the message can be clearly understood (Geng, 2022; Pratama & Rustipa, 2020; Vinchristo, 2022). Phrases as part of a clauses are judged whether or not they contribute to interpersonal values in order for the analysts to be able to present a more accurate description of **the tenor of the discourse** (Ko, 2022)**.**

To facilitate the description of textual meaning analysis, the text sample is redisplayed with numbered clauses as follows:

[1] We are sorry for the delay in our departure. [2] Please fasten your seat belt and refrain from smoking (3) while the no smoking sign is on. [4] From captain Jackson and the crew, it is our pleasure to serve you today. (5) If there is anything we can do to make your flight more enjoyable,[6] please let us know.

Theoretically, the textual meanings of the text exemplified above can be analyzed in terms of Thematic Progression, Cohesiveness and Coherence (Kusumawardani & Putu Putra, 2021). The theme "We" in the first clause represents both the theme of the clause and the hyper-theme for the whole text—the text represents the voice sof the flight personnel. The hidden theme (you) occurs twice as polite instructions (please). The text is cohesively spoken albeit the hidden cohesive devices. The messages are also coherently presented one after another

without any conflicts of ideas. Thus, **the mode of the discourse** is Formal Spoken Text, presented in a spoken monologue and no verbal replay is required on the part of the audience (passengers). However, the passengers are requested to behaviorally respond to the announcement (fastening seatbelts). Verbal responses may be made in case passengers want to express requests for a better service on board.

If at all necessary, an analyst may analyze the text below the clause, above the clause, beside the clause, around the clause and beyond the clause, depending on the objectives of the research. A text analysis of 'below the clause' refers to the analyses of groups and phrases. In other words, it deals with the grammar of groups and phrases. Analyzed in the grammar of groups are nominalization (Sirait et al., 2022) and verbal groups to represent the experiential meaning (Harahap, 2022; Hidayat, 2019; Ismail et al., 2022). Nominalization may occur as participants and circumstances while verbal groups occur in verb processes. Thus, this applies to both transitivity and mood analyses. For further discussion, please see pp. 179-214 (Halliday, 1994).

Meanwhile, 'above the clause' refers to the analysis of clause complex. It primarily deals with clause subordination in terms of modification (progressive, with nesting or with internal regressive bracketing). For further discussion, please see pp. 215-258 (Halliday, 1994), especially regarding hypothetic and paratactic structure, and clause expansion. This may apply to the analysis of long texts (written or spoken) where it is necessary to describe the working mechanism of clauses. Again, it all depends on the objectives of the research (analysis).

Regarding 'beside the clause', it deals with intonation and rhythm. This type of analysis is especially significant in spoken texts. This is understandable since intonation and rhythm contribute to the meanings of utterances. In other words, an utterance may have different meanings when it is expressed in different intonation and rhythm. For further discussion, please see pp. 292-307 (Halliday, 1994). It is, of course, preferable to use software application in the analysis of 'beside the clause'.

Dealt with in 'around the clause' are cohesion and coherence in which they are closely related to the analysis of textual meaning apart from thematic progression (Halliday, 1994). Cohesion refers to the relationship between clauses—how clauses are structure to form a unified paragraph and to make sure that paragraphs are in support of each other to discuss the topic in question in a text as a whole. This is where the logico-semantics plays a central part. Meanwhile, coherence refers to the relationship between ideas. It is theorized that ideas in a text have to be logically ordered to facilitate understanding.

Finally, 'beyond the clause' refers to the analysis of text with literary values, called 'metaphorical modes of expression. Discussed in this part are rhetorical transference (metaphor, metonymy synecdoche used as metaphoric tools), grammatical metaphor (grammatical features in place of grammatical features of metaphoric nature), ideational metaphor in which meaning is represented by different metaphorical words, and interpersonal metaphor (use of modality, modulation). For further discussion on 'beyond the clause, please see pp. 340-367 (Halliday, 1994).

The Proposed Approach

Two theories have been highlighted; one is Aristoteles' Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR) and the other is Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). TR claims that it provides three barometers of successful persuasive speeches—Ethos, Logos and Pathos. In other words, a

good persuasive speech can be seen from the index of achievement of TR as it is boldly stated in a slogan 'Persuade your audience by appealing Logos, Ethos and Pathos.' (Thinkers, 2022) Meanwhile, SFL claims that it can describe language in terms of its meta-functions, resulting in the production of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings simultaneously occurring in a speech event. Through the analysis of each domain of meaning, the field, tenor, and mode of the discourse can be identified and described, reflecting the speech quality. Further linguistic evidences for quality can also be identified and described through the analyses of **below**, **above**, **beside**, **around** and **beyond** the clauses.

To eliminate the research gap in dealing with the analysis of persuasive speeches, the two theories are then combined to come up with a single approach that can be used to analyze texts with full benefits from the two theories—one disadvantage has been covered by another. The new approach is named Systemic Functional Rhetoric to represent both theories. SFL is represented by Systemic Functional and TR is represented by Rhetoric as can be seen in Figure 1 below:
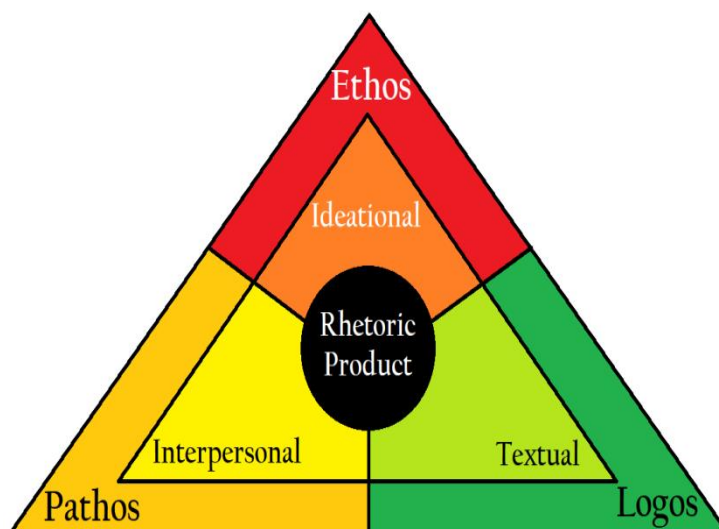

Figure 1 *Systemic Functional Rhetoric*

Figure 1 indicates that a rhetoric product, especially the persuasive type is analyzed using a two-dimension approach (Systemic Functional Rhetoric Approach) to yield more holistic findings—Aristoteles 'philosophical dimension of rhetoric supported or justified by Halliday's linguistic representation. Thus, dealing with persuasive rhetoric, the principle becomes 'persuade the audience through the correct and acceptable use of (1) Ethos-ideational to show the speaker's credibility in terms of contents, (2) Pathos-interpersonal to show the speaker's emotional appeals to the audience, and (3) Logos-textual to show how the speaker presents his or her arguments to strengthen the claims.

The ethos-ideational analysis of a rhetoric product can be further narrated in terms of rhetoric filed of the discourse, justifying the contents of the text. Meanwhile, the emotional appeal of the speaker toward the audience can be described in terms of rhetoric tenor of the discourse. Finally, how the speaker provides arguments can be described in terms of rhetoric mode of the discourse.as can be seen in Figure 2 below as the analytical process:
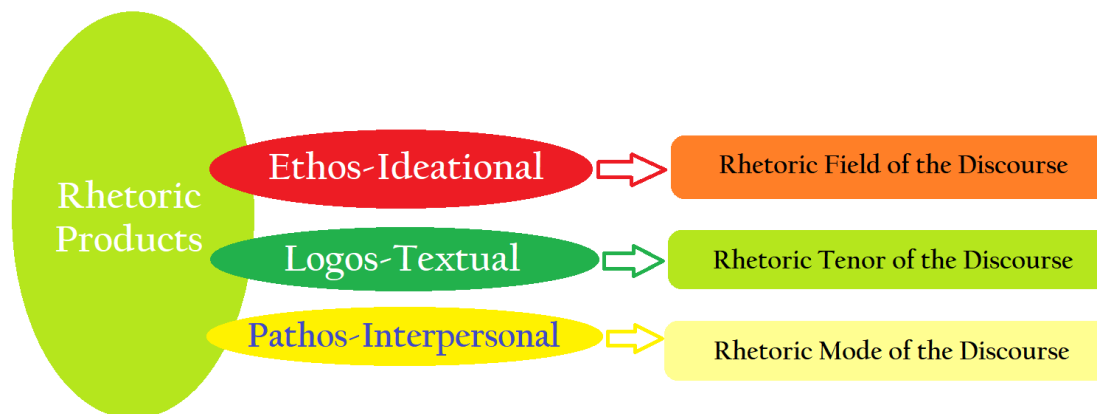
Figure 2 *Analytical Process of Rhetoric Product*

Described in Figure 2 above is the process of analysis of rhetoric product. Employing a special rubric. A rhetoric analyst can assess **ethos, pathos** and **logos** in score ranges, for example, **excellence** (90-100), **good** (70-89), **moderate** (60-69), and **poor** (50-69). The rubric provides a clear description for each scoring criteria. Meanwhile, in EFL perspectives, the text as rhetoric product can be measured in terms of **lexical density** (total number of function words divided by total number of function words multiplied by one hundred) (Academy, 2022; Gultom & Pintubatu, 2022). Normally, the lexical density of above fifty-two percent is considered **acceptable** for a persuasive rhetoric product to be labeled as '**influential**'. Analyses may go into deeper accounts of unique nominalization, verb groups and clause types.

Ethos-Ideational analysis is further discussed in rhetoric field of the discourse to justify the credibility of the speaker in the use of transitivity systems, including the use of unique lexical items to lexicogrammatically explain the clauses in the text as representation or experience. Meanwhile, rhetoric tenor of the discourse represents how a public speaker makes use of strategic appeals to win the attention of the audience by developing better engagement. Finally, logos-textual metafunction is described in rhetoric mode of the discourse in which to justify how arguments are made, following the logical and critical thinking. It is important to note that the three domains simultaneously occur in public speeches. In other words, there is no dichotomy among the three language metafunctions

Conclusion

Two theories, Trilogy of Rhetoric (TR) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) have both been highlighted in a short review to describe positive values of each theory. It turns out that TR specializes the methods of persuasion through Ethos, Pathos and Logos. It has been claimed that employing the principles of Aristoteles' Trilogy of Rhetoric guarantees the success of persuasive speeches. Meanwhile, SFL specializes in describing language as a social phenomenon by looking at three language metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual) through Transitivity Analysis (leading to the field of the discourse), Mood Analysis (leading to the tenor of the discourse) and Theme-Rheme Analysis along with cohesiveness and coherence (leading to the mode of the discourse. What is more, SFL may go into deeper analyses of clause complexes and expansion, nominalization, verbal groups and grammatical metaphors. Therefore, it is logical to consider mixing the two theories to come up with an approach to rhetoric analysis, adopting the positive values of both theories. The new approach is called Systemic Functional Rhetoric in which a persuasive speech is analyzed in terms of **Ethos-Ideational**, **Pathos-Interpersonal**, and **Logos-Textual**. With this approach, persuasive speeches can be analyzed in two ways—not only pertinent to the principles of Trilogy of

Rhetoric (TR) but also supported by linguistic evidences through SFL's lexicogrammatical analysis, representing a vivid and reliable description of a persuasive rhetoric product with final descriptions of **rhetoric field**, **tenor** and **mode** of the discourse.

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