



Rhetorical Strategies on TikTok

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ABSTRACT

Rhetoric is the art of employing language effectively for specific purposes, such as presenting ideas or viewpoints, persuading, convincing, and influencing audiences, whether orally or in writing. Rhetorical competence involves the ability to construct sound arguments, select appropriate linguistic styles, and organize strategies for delivering messages clearly and engagingly. In the context of daily life, rhetoric is closely intertwined with various domains—not only politics, education, law, business, and everyday communication, but also health—where it serves as a means to foster understanding and promote healthier lifestyles. Accordingly, this study aims to identify and analyze rhetorical strategies in the TikTok application of Dr. Samhan. The study adopts a qualitative approach using content analysis of 20 selected videos based on specific criteria. The analysis is guided by the concept of rhetorical strategies proposed by Idris Aman (2006). The findings indicate that argumentative rhetorical strategies are the most frequently employed in conveying health information on Dr. Samhan's TikTok platform. Such strategies are predominantly realized through topical statements, factual assertions, as well as conditions and assumptions, all of which strengthen arguments and ensure that the core messages are delivered clearly and comprehensibly. In contrast, narrative rhetorical strategies are the least utilized, as narrative techniques involving character portrayal, story development, imagery, and narrative language are less suitable in health-related contexts, where information must be presented accurately, factually, and concisely. Furthermore, the findings of this study contribute to the advancement of digital health communication practices by demonstrating that the careful selection of rhetorical strategies can enhance the effectiveness of information delivery, build trust, and encourage positive attitudinal and behavioral changes among social media users.

Keywords: Rhetorical strategies, TikTok application, Dr. Samhan, Idris Aman

INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric is the art of communication that emphasizes the ability to convey ideas persuasively through both speech and writing. Rhetorical strategies involve the use of techniques such as logical reasoning, emotional appeal, and credibility to influence audiences. In oral communication, elements such as intonation, body language, and delivery style play a crucial role, while in written communication, sentence structure, word choice, and argument organization are central. Both forms complement one another in shaping messages that are effective and impactful (Zamimah, 2015; Syamsul & Berliana, 2024).

The use of rhetorical strategies has become increasingly widespread on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. These platforms enable communicators to integrate visual, auditory, and textual elements to enhance communication effectiveness. Studies indicate that creative, interactive, and authentic content is more likely to attract attention and increase audience engagement, particularly among younger generations. Rhetorical strategies in social media often capitalize on concise narratives, persuasive language, and appealing visuals to deliver messages quickly and effectively (Sitanggang et al., 2024).

Ineffective use of rhetorical strategies in speeches frequently results in messages failing to achieve their intended objectives. Although speeches serve as a vital medium for persuasion and influence, weaknesses in applying strategies such as argumentative, expository, or expressive approaches reduce the overall impact (Suhaidah et



al., 2023). Research demonstrates that speakers who lack rhetorical competence tend to present ideas in a general manner without clear argumentative structure, thereby diminishing audience comprehension and acceptance of the speech content (Zamimah et al., 2018).

Moreover, information is often poorly understood due to unclear or overly complex language. Ambiguous, convoluted, or disorganized expressions can confuse audiences and reduce the effectiveness of communication (Pusat Strategi & Perhubungan Korporat UPM, 2024). Previous studies have found that inaccurate word choice and lengthy sentence structures can cause messages to lose focus, ultimately undermining audience comprehension (Mohd Hazreen & Sharil Nizam, 2019). This underscores that linguistic clarity is a critical factor in ensuring that messages are received accurately.

In addition, research on rhetorical strategies in social media remains limited, particularly in the context of platforms like TikTok, which integrate visual, auditory, and textual elements. Although social media has emerged as a primary channel for disseminating information, much of the prior research has focused on rhetoric in formal speeches or academic writing (Noor Asliza et al., 2023). This gap has left the understanding of how rhetorical strategies function in short-video formats incomplete, despite the platform's significant potential to shape user perceptions and behaviors.

Overall, weaknesses in the use of rhetorical strategies, linguistic ambiguity, and the lack of research in social media contexts form a significant research gap. This gap necessitates contemporary studies that can provide in-depth analyses of rhetorical strategies on platforms such as TikTok, in order to assess their effectiveness in delivering messages that are clear, persuasive, and relevant to today's digital audiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on rhetorical strategies and the TikTok application have been conducted both locally and internationally. For instance, Muhammad Faizul Abd Hamid et al. (2022) analyzed two special Movement Control Order (MCO) addresses using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods based on Idris Aman's (2006) framework. The sample consisted of official speech texts downloaded from the Prime Minister's Office website. The findings revealed four rhetorical strategies—expository, explanatory, argumentative, and expressive—with varying dominance depending on the circumstances of the pandemic. This study demonstrates that crisis contexts influence the choice of rhetorical strategies; however, the key challenge lies in ensuring that messages remain clear despite the prevailing sense of panic (Muhammad Faizul et al., 2022).

Another study by Muhammad Faizul et al. (2022), published in the *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, examined the use of modality in eight MCO addresses. The results indicate that informative modality was more dominant than directive modality, reflecting efforts to foster a relaxed social connection with the public. Nevertheless, the use of directive modality remained necessary to reinforce authority. The challenge identified was maintaining a balance between firmness and empathy so that the message would be accepted without resistance (Muhammad Faizul et al., 2022; Fairclough, 2013).

A study by Nur Fadilah Helda and Nyak Mutia Ismail (2023) employed a quasi-experimental post-testonly design to evaluate the effectiveness of analytical TikTok videos in enhancing university students' rhetorical competence. The sample comprised a group of undergraduates, whose rhetorical skills were assessed based on strategies such as amplification and chiasmus. The findings revealed a significant improvement in the mastery of these strategies; however, the challenge lay in the reliance on third-party content, which necessitated careful filtering to ensure alignment with learning objectives (Helda & Ismail, 2023).

Similarly, Susanti (2022) conducted a Classroom Action Research (CAR) study in two cycles involving 25 students. Data were collected through oral tests and questionnaires, showing improved English-speaking skills after TikTok was integrated as a learning medium. While its effectiveness was evident, challenges such as distractions due to TikTok's entertainment-oriented nature and the need for time management controls emerged as critical considerations (Susanti, 2022; Yovita & Purnamaningsih, 2022).

In addition, several studies are related to the Rhetorical Strategy Model. The model introduced by Idris Aman (2006) is based on discourse analysis that examines how speakers or writers employ various linguistic techniques

to influence audiences. It categorizes rhetorical strategies into five main types: expository, explanatory, argumentative, expressive, and narrative, each serving distinct functions in shaping effective messages. Within the context of TikTok, these strategies can be applied to analyze how content creators construct arguments, establish emotional connections, and convey information concisely yet impactfully. Previous scholars have emphasized that rhetorical strategies enhance message credibility (Zamimah, 2015), strengthen audience influence (Suhaidah et al., 2023), and adapt communication styles according to medium (Muhammad Faizul et al., 2022). Thus, the model is not only relevant in traditional communication but also essential in understanding the dynamics of digital communication. A new perspective that emerges is the need to integrate visual, auditory, and interactive elements as complements to rhetorical strategies in the era of social media.

The relationship between Idris Aman's (2006) model and past studies indicates that this framework has been widely employed in the analysis of political speeches, official addresses, and academic writing. Muhammad Faizul et al. (2022) found that expository and explanatory strategies dominated special addresses, whereas Suhaidah et al. (2023) showed that argumentative and expressive strategies were more effective in persuasive speeches. In the context of social media, Abdillah (2023) and Fauzan (2023) demonstrated through their studies of rhetorical strategies in Islamic preaching on TikTok that these strategies can be adapted to short-video formats to capture the attention of younger audiences. The application of this model to TikTok underscores the importance of concise messaging, engaging visuals, and accessible language. A new insight that can be drawn is that the model holds potential for expansion by incorporating dimensions of interactivity and platform algorithms to further enhance the effectiveness of digital message delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The approach of this study is qualitative, as it emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the meaning, context, and purpose of rhetorical strategies in digital communication. This approach allows the researcher to examine not only the frequency of strategies but also their functions and effects on audiences (Creswell, 2014). In this study, data were analyzed interpretatively to understand how rhetorical strategies shape the perception and reception of health messages on TikTok. This approach also provides space to evaluate the nuances of language, visuals, and emotional elements employed by Dr. Samhan in each video. The study employs content analysis to examine rhetorical strategies in Dr. Samhan's TikTok videos. This method enables researchers to systematically identify, classify, and analyze messages based on rhetorical strategy categories. Content analysis is deemed appropriate as it combines qualitative observation of message meanings with the quantification of specific elements (Neuendorf, 2017). In the context of this study, each video was analyzed according to the five rhetorical strategies proposed by Idris Aman (2006) to identify usage patterns and their effectiveness in delivering health messages to digital audiences. The study involved 20 videos drawn from the overall content population of Dr. Samhan's TikTok account. A purposive sampling method was employed, selecting samples based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This method has also been used by Noor Asliza et al. (2023) in analyzing rhetorical strategies in social media advertising and by Fadhilah (2023) in studies of TikTok religious rhetoric, as it allows for the selection of data that best represents the phenomenon under investigation. In the present study, only videos by Dr. Samhan containing health-related messages were selected, ensuring that each sample contained rhetorical features that could be analyzed in depth and aligned with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis conducted on 20 of Dr. Samhan's TikTok videos revealed the application of all five rhetorical strategies, namely expository, explanatory, argumentative, expressive, and narrative rhetorical strategies.

Expository Rhetorical Strategy

Isteri pernah pembedahan besar 16 tahun dulu dan sekarang ni dia alami vaginismus, faraj terkunci. Jadi setiap kali cuba bersama dia akan rasa sakit selama dua tahun.

Based on the analysis conducted, the expository rhetorical strategy of temporality can be clearly observed in the excerpt. According to Idris Aman (2006), the expository strategy of temporality is employed to explain an issue

or event by emphasizing aspects of time, sequence, and the progression of circumstances from one period to another. In this example, the narration begins by highlighting a past event—namely, major surgery that took place 16 years ago—followed by the present situation in which the wife is experiencing vaginismus, and subsequently describing the two-year duration of pain endured during intimacy. The emphasis on chronological order and the progression of the health problem enables the audience to grasp both the sequence and the prolonged impact experienced by the patient.

This approach is consistent with Idris Aman's (2006) view that the expository strategy of temporality is highly effective in assisting audiences to understand issues within a chronological and logical framework. In addition, Abdul Rahim Hamid (2019) also supports the notion that temporal explanations are crucial in health communication, as such strategies enable audiences to perceive cause-effect relationships and the overall development of an illness. Therefore, this data is appropriately categorized as expository temporality, as it contains elements that systematically and effectively highlight the temporal dimension and the progression of the issue (Noraini Talib, 2022).

Explanatory Rhetorical Strategy

Kalau you test before ambil himcoffee dan you consume himcoffee selepas beberapa kotak, you akan ambil test balik, testo you akan naik.

Based on the excerpt, the application of the explanatory rhetorical strategy can be observed. According to Idris Aman (2006), this type of strategy is crucial in helping the audience understand the reasons behind certain occurrences and the consequences that result from these causes. Explanatory cause-and-effect strategies are usually identifiable through the use of conjunctions such as "because," "due to," "as a result," or "therefore" which directly link two ideas. For instance, when himcoffee is consumed before and after a test, an increase in testosterone levels can be detected in the test results after some time. This illustrates a direct relationship between product consumption (cause) and hormonal changes (effect), thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of the explanatory cause-and-effect strategy in conveying information that is scientific and data-driven. The classification of data as explanatory cause-and-effect can be made by identifying whether the explanation contains clear elements of cause and effect, as well as a logical relationship between the two. Abdul Rahim Hamid (2019) also supports the view that cause-and-effect explanations are highly important in health communication as they help the audience grasp the rationale behind certain recommendations or practices. Meanwhile, Noraini Talib (2022) emphasizes that this strategy is particularly suitable for use in social media contexts, as it allows messages to be delivered concisely, clearly, and in an easily understandable manner without compromising accuracy.

Argumentative Rhetorical Strategy

Bahaya ke ambil celtic salt bulan puasa? Celtic salt tidak bahaya jika diambil dalam jumlah yang betul.

The argumentative strategy of condition and assumption is one of the key techniques in rhetoric used to construct arguments more cautiously and logically. Through this strategy, the speaker places a condition or assumption as the basis for either accepting or rejecting a given statement. The use of conditional conjunctions such as "if," "provided that," or "suppose" enables the speaker to manage the range of possibilities and avoid making overly absolute generalizations.

For example, in the sentence "Celtic salt tidak bahaya jika diambil dalam jumlah yang betul," the speaker neither fully rejects nor accepts the claim outright, but instead places a condition that must be fulfilled for the action to be considered safe. According to Idris Aman (2006), the strategy of condition and assumption is highly effective in argumentative discourse because it allows the speaker to explain risks or possibilities based on specific circumstances. In this way, the argument becomes more flexible and acceptable to the audience, as it is neither absolute nor overly rigid. The speaker is also able to demonstrate critical thinking skills by taking into account various factors before drawing a conclusion, thereby enhancing the credibility of the argument presented.

Expressive Rhetorical Strategy

Siap letak pisang, siap letak timun batang, siap bagitahu nak dapatkan ada promosi dan sebagainya. Oh ni memang tak okey sebenarnya saya rasa.

The expressive rhetorical strategy contained in the excerpt takes the form of prohibition, which is one of the communicative techniques used to emphasize matters that should not be undertaken or must be avoided by the audience. In rhetorical contexts, prohibition is not merely about conveying rules or restrictions but also functions as a persuasive tool to influence the attitudes and behaviors of listeners through emphasis, emotional appeal, and the use of assertive language. Prohibitions are frequently employed in discourses concerning health, safety, or morality, where the speaker or writer seeks to ensure that the audience understands the risks and adverse consequences of non-compliance.

In applying this strategy, speakers typically employ words such as “do not,” “must not,” “avoid,” or “prohibited” to deliver direct and unambiguous instructions. For example, in the data extracted from the table, the statement “*They even add bananas, cucumbers, stems, and even mention promotions and so on. Oh, this is really not okay, I think,*” highlights a strong prohibition against the act of promoting or adding inappropriate ingredients into a product. The speaker firmly rejects such actions, signaling to the audience that this conduct is unacceptable in light of prevailing values or norms.

According to Idris Aman (2006), prohibitive strategies within expressive rhetoric are highly effective in shaping audience perceptions and behaviors because they reinforce values, norms, and social responsibilities. By using language that is explicit, firm, and at times accompanied by warnings or satire, speakers can ensure that prohibitive messages are received more effectively and leave a lasting impression on the audience. Such prohibitions are often supplemented with justifications or logical reasoning, enabling the audience to understand the rationale behind the instruction and thereby enhancing compliance and acceptance of the conveyed message.

Narrative Rhetorical Strategy

Baru-baru ni saya jumpa seorang pesakit di Himwellness TTDI, umur baru 29 tahun, masih muda tapi dia datang dalam keadaan murung nampak sedih, dia share dengan saya yang dia rasa dia ada masalah mati pucuk.

Based on the excerpt, the narrative rhetorical strategy of character and character development has been applied, which is a storytelling technique that highlights the experiences, emotions, and transformations undergone by a particular individual within a narrative. In the example presented in the table, the speaker introduces the character of a 29-year-old male patient who arrived at the treatment center in a depressed and visibly sorrowful state. The speaker further describes the patient’s feelings and condition in detail, including how he shared his struggle with erectile dysfunction. Through this narrative, the audience is not only able to understand the health issue being experienced but can also sense the emotional strain and psychological challenges faced by the patient.

The use of such narrative strategies enables the speaker to build a stronger emotional connection with the audience, as real-life stories of individuals are more likely to elicit empathy and concern. Furthermore, character development within the narrative allows the audience to observe changes in attitude, thinking, and actions as the character confronts specific challenges. This technique also helps clarify complex issues, such as male health problems, in a more humanized and accessible manner, since the audience can follow the character’s journey from the beginning to a stage of resolution or acceptance.

According to rhetorical studies, the narrative strategy of character and character development is highly effective in capturing attention, building trust, and enhancing audience recall of the conveyed message. By presenting authentic stories and clear character development, the speaker is able to communicate messages more effectively, foster deeper understanding, and inspire the audience to be more attentive to the issues being discussed. This approach also reflects humanitarian values and awareness, making the narrative more meaningful and impactful in communication.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of the study's data found that the rhetorical strategies employed by Dr. Samhan in delivering health-related information on social media, particularly TikTok, are highly diverse and effective in capturing attention and influencing audiences. This approach enables the main message to be conveyed clearly, concisely, and in an easily comprehensible manner, aligning with the demands of digital communication that require clarity and accuracy within a short time span. The study also demonstrated that the use of topical statements is particularly suitable for social media, as it allows audiences to quickly grasp the central issue, while narrative strategies are less frequently used since health-related topics require precise and factual explanations through storytelling that is directly relevant to the intended message. In addition, explanatory strategies play an important role by offering detailed and systematic clarifications, which help audiences understand the chronology, distinctions, and logical relationships between the causes and effects of particular health issues. Expressive strategies, meanwhile, are utilized to build emotional connections, provide motivation, and encourage positive actions among audiences. Therefore, this study confirms that the combination of various rhetorical strategies—argumentative, explanatory, expressive, and narrative—has enhanced the effectiveness of Dr. Samhan's communication in educating society about men's health and general health matters, as well as successfully fostering awareness, attitude change, and more positive actions among social media users.

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