



Avoiding Self-bragging: How to Establish Effective Self-Credibility in a Persuasive Speech

การหลีกเลี่ยงการพูดโอ้อวดตัวเอง: วิธีการสร้างความน่าเชื่อถือของผู้พูดในการพูดโน้มน้าวใจ

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การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาเทคนิคการโน้มน้าวใจที่ใช้ในการสร้างความน่าเชื่อถือและความเชื่อใจในการพูดโน้มน้าวใจ และศึกษาวิธีการใช้เทคนิคดังกล่าวในการสร้างความน่าเชื่อถือและความเชื่อใจในการพูดโน้มน้าวใจ การวิเคราะห์วาทศิลป์ (Rhetorical Analysis) ถูกนำมาใช้ในการวิเคราะห์บทพูดของ โอปราห์ วินฟรีย์ (Oprah Winfrey) ในสองเหตุการณ์ ได้แก่ พิธีจบการศึกษา ณ มหาวิทยาลัยฮาร์วาร์ด ในปี ค.ศ.2013 และ งานประกาศผลลูกโลกทองคำครั้งที่ 75 กรอบความคิดทางทฤษฎีการวิเคราะห์วาทศิลป์ของอริสโตเติล (Aristotle) ถูกนำมาใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ โดยมุ่งเน้นที่การสร้างคุณลักษณะของผู้พูด (Ethos) และการใช้เทคนิคการโน้มน้าวใจ อาทิ ความคล้ายคลึงกัน (Similitude) การเคารพผู้ฟัง (Deference) ความเชี่ยวชาญ (Expertise) การวิจารณ์ตัวเอง (Self-criticism) และการอ้างอิงความสำเร็จ (inclination to succeed) ผลการวิจัยพบว่า แนวคิดเรื่องการถ่อมตัวถูกนำมาใช้ในบทพูดของทั้งสองเหตุการณ์ โดยการใช้เทคนิค การเคารพผู้ฟัง (Deference) ในขณะที่เทคนิคการวิจารณ์ตัวเอง (Self-criticism) ถูกใช้มากในบทพูดในพิธีจบการศึกษา ณ มหาวิทยาลัยฮาร์วาร์ด แต่พบไม่บ่อยในบทพูดในงานประกาศผลลูกโลกทองคำครั้งที่ 75 ผลของการวิจัยยังพบว่า คุณลักษณะของผู้ฟังมีส่วนสำคัญในการเลือกใช้เทคนิคเช่นกัน

คำสำคัญ : คุณลักษณะของผู้พูด (Ethos) ; การพูดโน้มน้าวใจ ; การวิเคราะห์วาทศิลป์ ; ความน่าเชื่อถือของผู้พูด ; โอปราห์ วินฟรีย์



ABSTRACT

This study aimed to 1) investigate persuasive techniques employed to establish a credibility and trust (ethos) in persuasive speeches, and 2) explore the techniques used in establishing a credibility and trust (ethos) in persuasive speeches. The rhetorical analysis was conducted to analyze Oprah Winfrey's speeches divided into two scenarios consisted of the speech that delivered at Harvard University Commencement Ceremony in 2013 and the one at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards. The Aristotle's rhetorical theoretical framework was used to analyze focusing on ethos and persuasive techniques including similitude, deference, expertise, self-criticism, and inclination to succeed. The findings found that the notion of humility was primarily emphasized in both speeches of Winfrey by using the technique of deference. While self-criticism was more used in the Harvard University Commencement Ceremony speech, however it was not as prominent in the Golden Globe Awards speech. Additionally, it was observed that the characteristics of the audiences were also the principal role in choosing the techniques.

Keywords : Ethos ; Persuasive Speech ; Rhetorical Analysis ; Self-credibility ; Oprah Winfrey

Introduction

Public speaking, also referred to as rhetoric or oratory, traditionally involves addressing a group of individuals in person. However, contemporary public speaking encompasses diverse communication forms, including formal and informal presentations to specific audiences. These include recorded speeches, online presentations, and virtual speeches transmitted via technological means like videoconferencing and multimedia platforms. The primary objectives of public speaking encompass informing, persuading, and entertaining.

Among these speech types, persuasive speaking is acknowledged for its complexity and challenges (Erkek, 2022; Özdil and Duran, 2023). The speaker's task involves convincing the audience to accept their viewpoint, employing specific strategies. This entails establishing credibility and trust (Ethos), delivering language that evokes persuasion and emotions (Pathos), and providing effective logical reasoning (Logos). However, persuasive speaking can become intricate when dealing with self-presentation or self-praise (Ethos), which may have potential drawbacks.

Self-praise involves making positive statements about oneself, explicitly or implicitly acknowledging personal qualifications that receive positive evaluation from the speaker and attentive audience. While presenting oneself as highly credible, speakers often emphasize unique qualities, skills, or personal successes to create a positive image. Nonetheless, caution is necessary, as self-praise may be perceived as boasting or exaggeration, which could undermine credibility and lead to a positive bias. Hence, it is vital to explore effective approaches for establishing or enhancing a speaker's credibility and trust in persuasive speeches without resorting to self-praise or fostering biased perspectives.

The present study aims to shed light on how to generate credible self-presentation, avoiding self-bragging and positive bias in persuasive speeches. Specifically, it seeks to 1) investigate persuasive techniques employed to establish a speaker's credibility and trust (ethos) in persuasive speeches, and 2) explore the techniques used to effectively present oneself without resorting to self-praise in persuasive speeches. The study employs a qualitative approach using case studies, as numerous influential public figures have utilized various rhetorical devices to deliver impressive and convincing persuasive speeches.



Among the prominent modern public figures, Oprah Winfrey stands out as an exceptionally skilled public speaker. She is internationally recognized as the first African-American woman to own her own production company. Moreover, she is a gifted actress, earning an Oscar nomination for her debut film. Additionally, she has achieved great success as a television talk show host, reaching an audience of 15 million daily. Her philanthropic endeavors and reputation as a motivational speaker further contribute to her widespread recognition. Her speech at two remarkable events, Harvard Commencement 2013 and the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards were purposely selected, which represent two different genres: education and entertainment. The rhetorical analysis was then employed for qualitative analysis. There were two research questions as follows.

1. What persuasive techniques did Oprah Winfrey use in establishing her credibility and trust (ethos) in her persuasive speeches at Harvard Commencement 2013 and the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards?
2. How were the techniques employed in establishing effective self-praise in Oprah Winfrey's persuasive speeches at Harvard Commencement 2013 and the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards?

Objectives

The present study aims to shed light on how to generate credible self-presentation, avoiding self-bragging and positive bias in persuasive speeches. The objectives of this study were as follows.

1. To investigate persuasive techniques employed to establish a speaker's credibility and trust (Ethos) in persuasive speeches.
2. To explore the techniques used to effectively present oneself without resorting to self-praise in persuasive speeches.

Literature Review

What is Persuasive Speech?

Persuasive speech is a form of communication that aims to persuade an audience to take a specific action or adopt a certain point of view. The goal of the speaker is to convince the listeners that their position is valid, logical, and beneficial (Maricchiolo, Gnisci, Bonaiuto and Ficca, 2020). Persuasive speeches can be delivered in a variety of settings, such as political campaigns, business presentations, or public debates.

To be effective, a persuasive speech needs to be carefully planned and executed. This involves researching the topic thoroughly, selecting appropriate evidence and examples to support the argument, and anticipating potential objections and counterarguments. The speaker must also consider the audience and tailor their message to their interests, beliefs, and values.

Moreover, according to Kashiha (2022) and Munazil and Rababah (2022), there are several rhetorical strategies that speakers can use to persuade their audience. These include emotional appeals, such as using vivid language or personal anecdotes to engage the audience's emotions, and logical appeals, such as using statistics or expert testimony to make a logical argument. Other strategies include using rhetorical questions, repetition, and humor to make the speech more memorable and impactful. The details of rhetorical strategies and implications of studying persuasive speeches are elaborated in the following sections.

Rhetorical Analysis: Aristotle's Rhetorical Appeals (Ethos, Pathos and Logos)

In academia, rhetoric is occasionally regarded as discourse and is sometimes utilized interchangeably with ideology. Research in rhetoric delves into how language and other symbolic expressions impact the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of an audience (Peeples and Murphy, 2022). As such, rhetoric serves both as a means of persuasive communication and an inherent component of everyday interactions.



The concept of classical rhetoric is attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who developed his theory based on empirical observations of persuasive speeches delivered in Athens, specifically in the law courts and government settings. Through his systematic examination, Aristotle identified three elements of persuasive appeals: ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic), as depicted in Figure 1 (Afzal and Hassan, 2021; Alderman, 2018; Alkaraan, Albahloul and Hussainey, 2023). These elements have found widespread application in various fields such as mass communication, linguistics, and marketing.

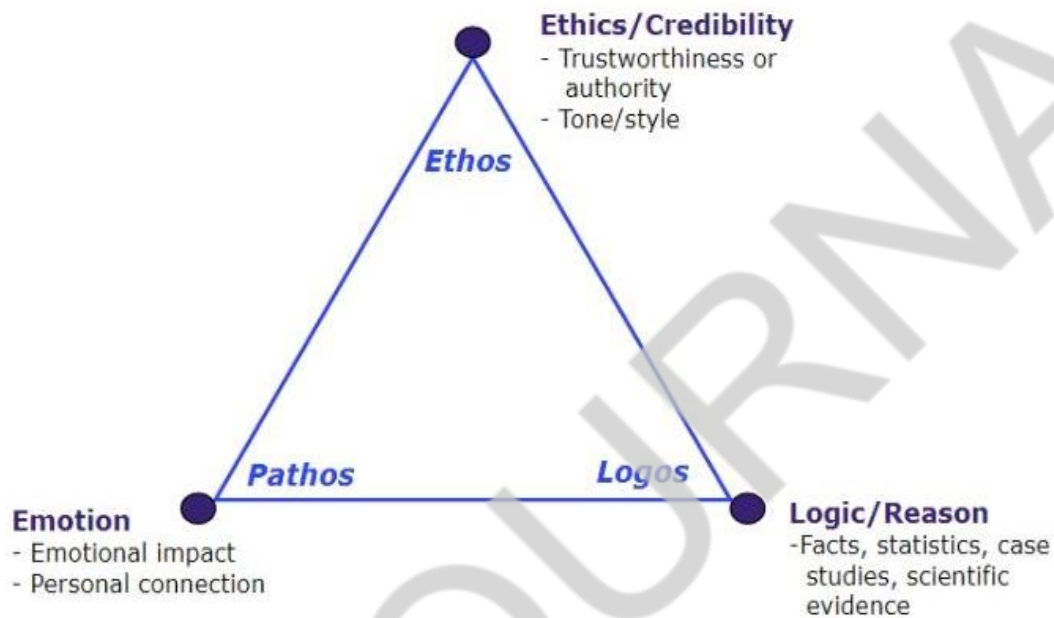


Figure 1 Aristotle's modes of persuasion

Ethos pertains to the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness, emphasizing the persuasive impact of the speaker's character. As mentioned in Table 1, Alkaraan, Albahloul and Hussainey (2023) identify five appealing strategies for establishing ethos: similitude, deference, expertise, self-criticism, and the inclination to succeed. Similitude involves emphasizing shared qualities with the audience using inclusive pronouns ("we," "you and I") to foster a sense of unity and cohesion. Deference is demonstrated by the speaker's respectful acknowledgment of the audience's rights and feelings, employing phrases like "please allow me to" or "I'm glad being here." Expertise relies on the speaker's judgment, experience, and firsthand knowledge. Self-criticism involves humbly acknowledging past or present mistakes to appear more relatable. Lastly, the inclination to succeed is utilized to enhance ethos by referring to past achievements or predicting future success.

Pathos pertains to evoking the audience's emotions through persuasive language. Oeppen Hill (2020) notes that metaphor and non-literal language are often employed to create emotional appeals, which can be challenging to identify due to cultural specificity. Consequently, understanding the audience's cultural background becomes crucial in identifying such appeals.

Logos relates to logical reasoning. Mohammad (2022) recommends using facts, statistics, historical and literal analogies, authoritative sources, and evidence to support arguments. Cause-and-effect reasoning can be employed to demonstrate the relationship between events or ideas, aiding the audience in understanding the argument's importance and relevance.

Recently, previous studies have actively demonstrated how rhetorical devices work in various persuasive texts, but the prominent arena was in the political discourse. The rhetoric of Aristotle, that is pathos, logos, and ethos, has been employed as a theoretical framework of analysis. Afzal and Hassan (2021) examine the rhetorical and persuasive tactics employed by Imran Khan, the current Prime Minister of Pakistan, in his victory speech following the 2018 general election, adopting a qualitative approach, and drawing on Aristotle's rhetorical principles of pathos, ethos, and logos. In 2016, after Hillary Clinton defeated in the United States presidential election, she delivered a remarkable and uplifting concession speech that resonated with audiences worldwide. One key contributing factor to the success of Hillary's speech was her adept use of various rhetorical devices. Therefore, Taping, Juniardi and Utomo (2017) explored the rhetorical devices and their functions in Hillary's speech, focusing on pathos or the use of language that generated emotional effects. Apart from Hillary Clinton's speech, Ghazani (2016), dissects the persuasive strategies employed in speeches by Presidents Bush and Obama. Aristotle's persuasion appeals (Ethos, Logos, and Pathos) were one of the aspects scrutinized.

From the studies mentioned, it is noted that they analyze the rhetorical and persuasive strategies used in political speeches. They all delve into the techniques employed by different political figures to convey their messages effectively. They employ qualitative research methods, such as textual analysis, to investigate these strategies. In each case, the studies draw from established rhetorical and communication theories to dissect the speeches. However, not many studies focus solely on ethos or establishing a speaker's credibility and raising the issue of excessive self-praise that Dayter (2018) insist that self-bragging may pose an interactional risk and a positive bias. With this potential gap, this study, therefore, aims to explore how rhetorical devices are used in establishing an effective self-praise in a persuasive speech. Oprah Winfrey is then selected as a case study since she has been recognized as a professional and outstanding public speaker.

As this study solely focuses on how self-praise contributes to a speaker's credibility and trust in persuasive speech, ethos is the primary framework of analysis. The persuasive techniques of ethos are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Ethos's persuasive techniques

Appeal	Persuasive techniques	Descriptions
Ethos: Speaker's credibility and trust	Similitude	The similarities between the speaker and the audiences are boosted.
	Deference	The speaker expresses respect for the rights and feelings of the audiences
	Expertise	The speaker conveys his or her judgement, experience, and first-hand knowledge.
	Self-criticism	The speaker promotes his or her weakness or past or present mistakes in order to degrade himself or herself.
	Inclination to succeed	The speaker refers to past accomplishments or predicts future success to demonstrate passion and achievement orientation.

According to Alkaraan, Albahloul and Hussainey (2023), the framework of ethos's persuasive techniques potentially provides the concrete evaluations of how self-credibility is effectively established and how sequence of the techniques should be arranged for the persuasive effect. Apparently, the analysis



of the techniques can yield several insights into the effectiveness of the speaker's argument and their ability to persuade the audience as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Contributions of ethos's techniques

Persuasive Techniques	Techniques' contributions
Similitude	It can help determine whether the speaker has effectively connected with the audience. By finding common ground with the audience, the speaker can establish trust and rapport, which can make their argument more persuasive.
Deference	It shows respect for the audience, can help determine whether the speaker has successfully engaged the audience. If the speaker is respectful and acknowledges the audience's opinions and beliefs, the audience may be more likely to listen and consider the argument.
Expertise	It can help determine whether the speaker is credible and trustworthy. If the speaker can demonstrate their expertise and knowledge, the audience may be more likely to accept their argument.
Self-criticism	It can help determine whether the speaker is honest and trustworthy. If the speaker can admit to weaknesses in their argument, it can increase their credibility and make their argument more persuasive.
Inclination to succeed	It can help determine whether the speaker is passionate and persuasive. If the speaker is committed and passionate about their argument, it can make their argument more persuasive and inspire the audience to take action.

However, there have been some concerns when analyzing or following the patterns of public figures' persuasive speeches (Charteris-Black, 2018). There are three issues including bias, context, and public persona of which students and practitioners should be aware. First, the analysis of the elements playing an important role in a persuasive speech can be subjective and influenced by personal biases. Researchers or analyzers may have preconceived ideas towards speakers or topics being delivered. This can affect their analysis since the interpretations may not be academically comprehensible. Second, the context of the speech such as the audience, the occasion, and the social and political climate can also affect how the elements are perceived. Finally, public figures often have a public persona that they project in their speeches, which may not reflect their true beliefs or intentions. Analyzing their techniques used in the speech may not accurately reflect their actual views or motives. Therefore, to avoid subjectivity and to strengthen the interpretations, validation through inter-rater reliability should be essentially conducted (McDonald, Schoenebeck and Forte, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

The research framework drew upon Aristotle's rhetorical appeals, with an emphasis on ethos (the speaker's credibility and trust). The Aristotle's rhetorical appeals were selected as they cover all aspects of delivering persuasive speech including how to establish speaker's credibility and trust, how to use the impactful language and how to provide rigid reasons (Afzal and Hassan, 2021; Alderman, 2018; Alkaraan, Albahloul and Hussainey, 2023). According to Alkaraan, Albahloul and Hussainey (2023), within ethos, there are five techniques a speaker contributes to establish effective self-credibility and trust of a speaker in a persuasive speech as presented in Figure 2.

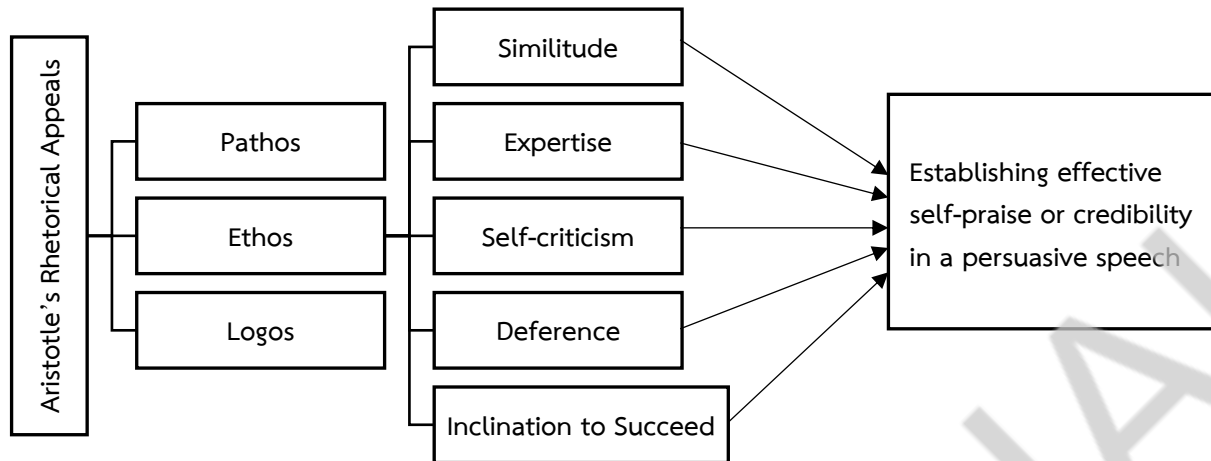


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Data

This study analyzed transcripts from two distinct events: Oprah Winfrey's commencement speech at Harvard University in 2013 and her speech at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards in 2018. Harvard, renowned globally as a prestigious Ivy League institution, hosted Winfrey's address in 2013, underlining the event's significance due to Harvard's history of producing accomplished alumni and distinguished faculty. Therefore, the importance of the event and the audiences establish the ceremony as significant and worth investigating. The Golden Globe Awards in 2018, on the other hand, provided a high-profile platform for Winfrey's speech, with a diverse and extensive audience from the entertainment industry. This diversity encompassed various demographics and political views, emphasizing the need for effective rhetorical strategies to connect with such a multifaceted audience.

Research Instrument

This study employed the existing codes or categories of persuasive techniques presented in Table 1 as a research instrument. They include Similitude, Deference, Self-criticism, Expertise, and Inclination to Succeed. The descriptors of each technique were reviewed and refined based on the previous studies and literature.

Data Collection

The scripts of the two events were retrieved from credible sources. The script for the Harvard Commencement 2013 was obtained from <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/05/winfreys-commencement-address/> while the script of the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards was from <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-42600486>. To verify the scripts, they were rechecked with the recorded videos of Oprah Winfrey giving her speech by a researcher and another English lecturer. Accuracy between the spoken and written text were examined. Subsequently, the scripts were analyzed through rhetorical analysis.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, the verified data were analyzed using a qualitative approach. Content analysis was employed by screening the scripts. Persuasive techniques of establishing speaker's credibility and trust (ethos) under Aristotle's rhetorical appeals were selected as theoretical frameworks for data analysis.



The frequency of techniques employed was collected and explanations of how the techniques were used was offered.

To validate the interpretations of the results, two experts from the fields of cultural studies and discourse analysis were recruited to validate the researcher's interpretations. The validation form, together with an overview of the study, was sent to the raters. After the raters' results were obtained, Cohen's Kappa statistic was employed to find interrater reliability, which represents the level of agreement between two raters. The interpretations of percent agreement generated by Landis and Koch (1977) are shown below, and the results of this study's Kappa agreement are presented in Table 3.

Kappa	Agreement
<0.00	Poor agreement
0.00 - 0.20	Slight agreement
0.21 - 0.40	Fair agreement
0.41 - 0.60	Moderate agreement
0.61 - 0.80	Substantial agreement
0.81 - 0.99	Almost perfect agreement

Table 3 Results of Kappa agreement

Kappa Agreement	Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Kappa Agreement	.75	.17	9.73	.00
No. of Valid Cases	45			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that the level of agreement between the two raters towards the researcher's interpretations was substantial (0.748 Kappa agreement) and there was a statistically significant similarity between two raters.

Results and Discussion

1. Responding to the first objective, the frequency of Ethos' rhetorical techniques used was counted, and the findings were presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Ethos' rhetorical techniques used in Winfrey's speeches at two events

Techniques	Harvard Commencement 2013 (3,810 words) - Frequency of techniques used	the 75 th annual Golden Globe Awards (998 words) - Frequency of techniques used
Similitude	3 (12%)	4 (20%)
Deference	10 (40%)	11 (55%)
Expertise	1 (4%)	3 (15%)
Self-criticism	9 (36%)	2 (10%)
Inclination to succeed	2 (8%)	N/A
Total	25 (100%)	20 (100%)



According to the findings presented in Table 4, Winfrey employed different strategies to establish credibility in her speeches at two events. On both occasions, she predominantly used the deference strategy, showing respect for the rights and feelings of the audiences. The self-criticism technique, involving the promotion of weaknesses, was the second most frequently used strategy during her speech at the Harvard Commencement. On the other hand, at the Golden Globe Awards, Winfrey utilized the similitude strategy, emphasizing similarities between herself and the audience, as the second most employed technique.

Interestingly, the aspects highly regarded for establishing credibility, such as emphasizing the speaker's judgment, experience (expertise strategy), and showcasing first-hand knowledge and past accomplishments or the potential for future success (inclination to succeed strategy) (de Villiers Scheepers, Barnes and Garrett, 2021; Jovic, Kurtishi and AlAfnan, 2023), were rarely evidenced in Winfrey's speeches. The details and explanations of how these techniques were utilized are elaborated in the subsequent section.

2. To explore the techniques used to effectively present oneself without resorting to self-praise in persuasive speeches, content analysis was employed. The results were divided into two main events as follows.

At Harvard Commencement 2013

During Winfrey's commencement speech at one of the world most prestigious universities, Harvard University, she employed four persuasive techniques including self-criticism, deference, expertise, and similitude to construct her credibility among well-known and well-educated audiences. In the introduction part, before stating her objective, Winfrey noticeably used both deference and self-criticism techniques, switching back and forth. She began by showing appreciation to Harvard's key persons, who invited her to be a speaker as presented in [1] and [2]. After she praised others, she then lowered her self-praise as stated in [3] and [4].

[1] Oh my goodness! I'm at Harvard! Wow! To President Faust, my fellow honorans, Carl [Muller] that was so beautiful, thank you so much, and James Rothenberg, Stephanie Wilson, Harvard faculty, with a special bow to my friend Dr. Henry Lewis Gates. All of you alumni, with a special bow to the Class of '88, your hundred fifteen million dollars. And to you, members of the Harvard class of 2013! Hello!

[2] I thank you for allowing me to be a part of the conclusion of this chapter of your lives and the commencement of your next chapter.

[3] Not too many little girls from rural Mississippi have made it all the way here to Cambridge.

[4] I will be honest with you. I felt a lot of pressure over the past few weeks to come up with something that I could share with you that you hadn't heard before because after all you all went to Harvard, I did not.

As you can see that Winfrey showed respect to all those being at the ceremony. The statement "*I thank you for allowing me...*" signifies her humbleness as she need to ask the permission to be here, but she did not. While she was admiring others, she dispraised herself in order to show praise of others. Statement in [3] clearly demonstrates her incapability of what the Harvard graduates could do by referring her hometown, where she hardly found her opportunity to study at Harvard. Moreover, in [4], she conveyed the challenge of preparing her commencement address since had come from a less privileged background.



Winfrey used these two techniques to ground her first part of speech with a story of humble and ordinary women. After that, Winfrey employed the inclination to succeed technique to exhibit her professional success as stated in [5]. Nevertheless, the way of narrating her success was used not only to portray how successful she was, but also to emphasize the hardship that interfered during her path as mentioned in [6].

[5] ...Well I was on television by the time I was 19 years old. And in 1986 I launched my own television show with a relentless determination to succeed at first. I was nervous about the competition and then I became my own competition raising the bar every year, pushing, pushing, pushing myself as hard as I knew. Sound familiar to anybody here? Eventually we did make it to the top and we stayed there for 25 years. The “Oprah Winfrey Show” was number one in our time slot for 21 years ...

[6] ... one year later after launching OWN, nearly every media outlet had proclaimed that my new venture was a flop. Not just a flop, but a big bold flop they call it. I can still remember the day I opened up USA Today and read the headline “Oprah, not quite standing on her OWN.” ...

Throughout her speech, Winfrey strategically used deference, similitude, and self-criticism techniques to discuss failure. As stated in [7], she shared her past failure or difficult time to the audiences, but what she narrated further is that she could effectively handle it. She seems to heighten audiences’ praise through her story. She exhibited sincere respect especially to audiences’ competence and success as mentioned in [8]. Interestingly, similitude technique was deliberately used through narration of what she assumed to be mutually understood between the audiences and her. The pronoun ‘we’ was used in telling the story as presented in [9]. This then can trigger the audiences’ attention, resulting in investing the audiences with the speech.

[7] ...there is no such thing as failure. Failure is just life trying to move us in another direction. Now when you’re down there in the hole, it looks like failure. So this past year I had to spoon feed those words to myself. And when you’re down in the hole, when that moment comes, it’s really okay to feel bad for a little while. Give yourself time to mourn what you think you may have lost but then here’s the key, learn from every mistake because every experience, encounter, and particularly your mistakes...

[8] ...Because now and forever more when you Google yourself your search results will read “Harvard, 2013”. And in a very competitive world that really is a calling card because I can tell you as one who employs a lot of people when I see “Harvard” ...

[9] ...We understand that the vast majority of people in this country believe in stronger background checks because they realize that we can uphold the Second Amendment and also reduce the violence that is robbing us of our children. They don’t have to be incompatible. And we understand that most Americans believe in a clear path to citizenship...

Noticeably, it was found that expertise strategy was rarely found in this speech. As presented in [10] below, Winfrey demonstrated her expertise as a TV host; however, she still provided a gap where she could adjust it as a resource of praising others.

[10] I did it in an analog world. I was blessed with a platform that at its height reached nearly 20,000,000 viewers a day.



From [10], Winfrey demonstrated the accomplishment from what she was very keen on. Her platform could once reach 20,000,000 viewers a day. Nevertheless, showing high recognition about her work did not threaten the feeling of the audiences. The statement "*I did it in an analog world*" implies that her success or expertise in analog world may not be applicable to the today digital era. She identified herself as the successful person in the previous generation, not Harvard graduates who are active and successful in today moment.

At the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards

Through rhetorical analysis, it was found that Winfrey employed four persuasive techniques to establish and enhance her credibility and trust. The techniques used were self-criticism, deference, expertise, and similitude, but the frequency of techniques used varied depending on the part of the speech and its purposes. Noticeably, the deference technique was used the most in the process of self-credibility establishment. The explanation of each technique used is elaborated below.

Winfrey started her speech, after receiving a trophy by narrating her difficult and impoverished childhood background using the self-criticism strategy as shown in [11]. At the same time, she showed acknowledgement and admiration to the winner at the time, Sidney Poitier as presented in [12], [13], and [15].

[11] "Thank you, Reese. In 1964, I was a little girl sitting on the linoleum floor of my mother's house in Milwaukee watching Anne Bancroft present the Oscar for best actor at the 36th Academy Awards.

[12] "She opened the envelope and said five words that literally made history:" The winner is Sidney Poitier."

[13] "Up to the stage came the most elegant man I ever remembered. His tie was white, his skin was black—and he was being celebrated. I'd never seen a black man being celebrated like that.

[14] I tried many, many times to explain what a moment like that means to a little girl, a kid watching from the cheap seats as my mom came through the door bone-tired from cleaning other people's houses.

[15] But all I can do is quote and say that the explanation in Sidney's performance in *Lilies of the Field*: "Amen, amen, amen, amen."

As presented, the speaker strategically utilized self-criticism or self-degradation in the introduction of her speech to captivate the audience's attention. By narrating her past experiences of hardship and poverty, Winfrey bolstered her ethos. The specific phrases "*the linoleum floor*" in [11], "*the cheap seats*," and "*my mom came through the door bone tired from cleaning other people's houses*" in [14] were carefully chosen to depict her underprivileged background. However, this was not without purpose; it was coupled with the deference strategy to convey a sense of humility. While downplaying her own accomplishments, she expressed admiration for Sidney Poitier as evidenced in [12], [13], and [15]. This indicates Winfrey's acknowledgment of the vast difference between her position and Poitier's, recognizing that the place he occupied was far beyond her reach.



Subsequently, after commencing her speech with the use of self-criticism and deference to portray her past life, Winfrey promptly employed an expertise device to showcase her achievements, as exemplified in [16].

[16] “In 1982, Sidney received the Cecil B. DeMille award right here at the Golden Globes and it is not lost on me that at this moment, there are some little girls watching as I become the first black woman to be given this same award.”

Grounding the speech with her hardship during her childhood, together with her acknowledgement of others strengthens the difficulty and impossibility for her to be given the same award. With this potential challenge, she then demonstrated the achievement that she has earned from her profession, announcing that she could do it through the statement “...*there are some little girls watching as I become the first black woman to be given this same award.*” Becoming the first black woman to be given the award, she communicates that even though the Hollywood stars present were highly prestigious, she was greatly successful. After pronouncing her success, Winfrey again employed deference technique to demonstrate the sense of humbleness and respect to the audiences as presented in [17].

[17] It is an honor—it is an honor and it is a privilege to share the evening with all of them and also with the incredible men and women who have inspired me, who challenged me, who sustained me and made my journey to this stage possible.”

Winfrey showed respect to the audiences through the statement “*It is an honor—it is an honor and it is a privilege...*” Also, she felt grateful to people surrounding her, who were involved with her success. In addition, throughout the speech, Winfrey always used the similitude technique by inviting the audiences into mutual state of feeling. The pronoun “we” was used to promote collective recognition as shown in [18].

[18] “I want to thank the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. We know the press is under siege these days. We also know it's the insatiable dedication to uncovering the absolute truth that keeps us from turning a blind eye to corruption and to injustice.”

In addition to overtly expressing mutual connection using the pronoun 'we,' she employed compelling narratives that significantly captured the audience's attention by carefully selecting topics related to women's empowerment and tragic experiences of women subjected to abuse by men. These themes not only evoked emotional responses but also facilitated a shared sense of comprehension. Consequently, a space was created wherein the speaker and the audience could establish mutual understanding within the context of the narratives. This was exemplified when she stated the following.

[19] “And there's someone else, Recy Taylor, a name I know, and I think you should know, too. In 1944, Recy Taylor was a young wife and mother walking home from a church service she'd attended in Abbeville, Alabama, when she was abducted by six armed white men, raped, and left blindfolded by the side of the road coming home from church. She lived as we all have lived, too many years in a culture broken by brutally powerful men. For too long, women have not been heard or believed if they dare speak the truth to the power of those men. But their time is up. Their time is up.”



Winfrey introduced the painful life of Recy Taylor to her audiences since she believed that she had the ability to elicit empathy from the audience and foster a sense of shared emotional connection. This was evident from the audience's responses, both verbal and non-verbal, which indicated a sense of shared experiences and understanding. When considering the statement "*For too long, women have not been heard or believed if they dare speak the truth to the power of those men*", it was told after the life of Recy Taylor had been narrated. This is because Winfrey needed to highlight the consensus agreement between her and her audiences.

At the end of her speech, Winfrey employed the expertise technique by referring to what she did successfully in her career. She showed not only her achievements but her endeavor in doing so. This is exemplified as quoted in [20].

[20] "In my career, what I've always tried my best to do, whether on television or through film, is to say something about how men and women really behave. To say how we experience shame, how we love and how we rage, how we fail, how we retreat, persevere, and how we overcome. I've interviewed and portrayed people who've withstood some of the ugliest things, life can throw at you, but the one quality all of them seem to share is an ability to maintain hope for a brighter morning, even during our darkest nights. So..."

As you can see from what Winfrey narrated about her work experience, while she was emphasizing her contribution, she involved the audiences into her position by using the pronoun 'we'. According to the statement "*To say how we experience shame, how we love and how we rage, how we fail, how we retreat, persevere, and how we overcome*", Winfrey strategically utilized the inclusive pronoun 'we,' implying that her efforts in her career have yielded collective accomplishments, benefiting not only herself but also the audience. By assuming a representative role, she seeks to unveil shared experiences, irrespective of their nature, fostering a sense of unity among attendees. This approach not only emphasizes her professionalism and expertise but also reinforces a sense of harmony among all present.

Finally, through her manner of self-deprecation, admiring and respecting others, showing mutual understanding and experiences and presenting her success in both life and professionally, she concluded her speech with a call to an action as stated in [21].

[21] "So I want all the girls watching here, now, to know that a new day is on the horizon! And when that new day finally dawns, it will be because of a lot of magnificent women, many of whom are right here in this room tonight, and some pretty phenomenal men, fighting hard to make sure that they become the leaders who take us to the time when nobody ever has to say 'me too' again. Thank you."

It can be seen from the results mentioned above that the analysis identified deference and self-criticism as prominent techniques that contributed to the distinctiveness of her speeches. Particularly, deference was consistently employed on both occasions.

Winfrey employed self-criticism as an attention-grabbing technique at the outset of the speech, using it to acquaint the audience with her challenging life experiences while also laying the groundwork for her eventual triumph. As she recounted her past struggles and impoverished circumstances, she skillfully transitioned to highlighting her dedicated efforts in pursuing her objectives and achieving success. Throughout the speech, the speaker consistently displayed empathy and respect for the audience,



employing the deference technique, and captured their interest through relatable storytelling, employing the similitude technique to create a sense of mutual understanding.

However, it was found that the self-criticism technique was used more in Harvard Commencement ceremony. It can be seen that the audiences at Harvard University were new graduates, who can be considered newcomers in the professional field. As Winfrey was full of professional experience and was already accepted worldwide, she devalued herself by using the self-criticism technique many times in order not to make the audiences feel inferior or offended. This is what Augustina (2021) coins as a verbal face-saving strategy functioning to prevent conflict and mitigate audiences' loss of face. On the other hand, at the Golden Globe Awards, Winfrey rarely devalued herself in her speech. This can be because most of the audience was well-known, successful, and powerful in the entertainment industry. Self-deprecation was therefore not necessarily needed since the status of the audience and Winfrey was equal. Through this occurrence, Winfrey expanded our comprehension from a practical standpoint. According to Winfrey, self-praise as a means of bolstering credibility involves establishing a positive face for the listener (Augustina, 2021). Consequently, throughout Winfrey's credibility-building process, the audience did not encounter a loss of face.

Conclusion

1. The analysis identified deference and self-criticism as prominent techniques that contributed to the distinctiveness of her speeches. Particularly, deference was consistently employed in both events.

2. Oprah Winfrey's approach to establishing credibility and trust is characterized by humility and careful self-presentation. She avoids excessive self-praise or positive bias and instead shares her early struggles with poverty and an underprivileged life. Through her speech, she portrays the transformation from her challenging past to her present position of influence and power. This demonstrates her authenticity and sincerity in connecting with the audience. Dayter (2018) highlights that self-praise can be risky, as it may be perceived as a face-threatening act. Winfrey, however, takes a more modest approach, engaging in self-criticism to downplay her accomplishments. This aligns with Leech's (1983) Modesty Maxim, reflecting her polite consideration of the audience. Finally, Winfrey's speech illustrates the complexity of delivering a persuasive message. Understanding the audience and employing the appropriate techniques accordingly are crucial for effective persuasion.

Contribution

This study demonstrates how Oprah Winfrey established her credibility and trust at two significant events. The findings can contribute to two perspectives: education and business. For education, it can help educators and academic professionals improve their communication skills and effectiveness in presenting their ideas and arguments. By using self-praise strategically, educators can enhance their persuasive abilities and influence the opinions and actions of their audience. Also, this can be employed as a pedagogy of any subjects related to presentation skills. In the business arena, this study can help business professionals to effectively communicate their skills, expertise, and achievements to their target audience, such as potential clients, investors, or stakeholders. By highlighting their strengths and accomplishments, business professionals can establish their credibility and build trust with their audience, which can be crucial in establishing long-term relationships and achieving business goals. Moreover, it can help business professionals to avoid potential pitfalls or drawbacks associated with excessive or insincere self-promotion. By examining the impact of different types and levels of self-praise on audience perceptions and attitudes,



business professionals can gain insights into how to effectively balance self-promotion with authenticity and humility.

Suggestions

This study investigated only one aspect of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals, ethos. Further studies, therefore, can explore other aspects such as pathos and logos of Winfrey's speech to get a fuller perspective of giving a persuasive speech. Moreover, more Winfrey's speeches at different events should be collected for investigation so that the justifications of the used techniques and factors effecting the employment of each technique will be understood.

Limitations

Since this study solely focused on ethos or the speaker's credibility and trust, a full understanding of persuasive dimensions was not covered. In addition, the number of the speeches were limited to the selected two events, so the results may not be generalized or appointed to be the Winfrey's personal uniqueness.

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