Ivanka's Rhetoric in Defense of Donald Trump's Political Standing

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ABSTRACT

This study was to find out about the rhetorical appeals and the prominent forms of persuasions in Ivanka Trump's political speech. The source of the data of this study are texts (both written and spoken) related to Ivanka Trump's 2020 RNC speech. The data of this study are the verbal speech, gestures, vocal delivery, and facial expression (from the video) as well as words, phrases, and sentences (from the written transcript). In this study, the writer used a qualitative content analysis approach. The theories applied consist of rhetorical appeals and persuasion theory as main theory, supported by the theories of rhetorical styles, rhetorical delivery, and context. The findings reveal that Ivanka used all forms of rhetorical appeals (*ethos, pathos, logos*) in her 2020 Republican National Convention speech. In addition, 20 forms of prominent persuasions were present in her speech.

Keywords: persuasion; rhetoric; rhetorical appeals; political speech

INTRODUCTION

On the final night of the Republican National Convention (RNC) on August 27, 2020, Ivanka Trump delivered a political speech entitled "What Do We Stand For?". The speech is about Donald Trump's argumentative political standing related to his second bid for the U.S presidency in 2020 (Carrazana, 2020). For his 2nd bid for the U.S presidency of 2020, as referring to Mckinnon (2020), Donald Trump used "Transition to Greatness" as his campaign theme. The theme refers to America as not currently in its greatest condition, but America is going to get into that condition at some point. Ivanka's speech, in this context, is to give support to the campaign theme of Trump's 2nd bid of the U.S presidential election

Alas, Ivanka's 2020 RNC speech was delivered in a less congruent social and political climate of August 2020 whereby the country was hit by Covid-19 pandemic and other less encouraging issues.

Amidst less supportive social and political climate surrounding Donald Trump's second bid for the U.S presidency, Ivanka's 2020 RNC political speech had received some favorable feedback on account of her appealing persuasion to prospective voters to be on Donald Trump's side. This was seen on some comments in Youtube and published online articles.

Evidently, Ivanka's way of delivering her RNC speech was strongly persuasive. This was supported by Cunha (2016) who mentioned that Ivanka's speech was satisfactorily convincing, even if the speech was simply meant to endorse Donald Trump's political standing. In addition, Cunha (2016) also stated that Ivanka could construct sentences to her advantage, to present her father's status as a protector of all men, a lover of all people, and a giver of opportunities; meanwhile also praising his ruthless economic prowess. In short, the speech had the persuasive power that could have affected the voters' perspective to vote for Donald Trump (Cunha, 2016). Aside from its persuasiveness, Ivanka's 2020 RNC speech was also able to offer a much more intimate portrait of Donald Trump. As a case, in a point, Ivanka described Donald Trump's less publicly grasped patriotic performances that only Ivanka could have experienced due to her privileged daughter status (Bowden & Feis, 2020).

This study is to focus on her speech on account of the very nature of Ivanka's political speech which was persuasive, appealing, and intimate. The object of the study as pursued in this thesis is therefore the persuasive political discourse in the form of the political speech entitled "ENGLISH SPEECH | IVANKA TRUMP: What Do We Stand For?" as delivered by Ivanka Trump on the final night of the Republican National Convention on August 27, 2020.

As Ivanka Trump's speech possesses persuasive power that affects U.S prospective voters to vote for Donald Trump, the study as pursued here is to focus on Ivanka's persuasions displayed in her speech despite the less congruent social and political climate surrounding the 2nd bid for the U.S presidency of 2020. The study is also to investigate the prominent forms of persuasions which noticeably shape prospective voters' choice to support Donald Trump by expressing messages in with line his 2nd bid campaign theme *"Transition to Greatness"*. The theme means that America was currently working to transition itself into its greatest condition (Mckinnon, 2020).

METHOD
The writer used the qualitative content analysis approach for a few reasons. First, the research involved the analysis of texts, as well as its themes and ideas in the texts (Mayring, 2010 as in Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Second, qualitative content analysis aims to examine the form of the delivery of the content (Drisko & Maschi, 2016), which is in line with the aim of this study (Ivanka's rhetorical speech delivery). Third, the research focused on subjective interpretation of the content of the text data. In the writer's research, the subjective interpretation of the content is the delivered rhetorical presentation of Donald Trump. This is in line with Hsieh & Shannon (2005), who defined qualitative content analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data. In addition, the writer used purposive sampling to present findings for her study. Leavy (2017) mentioned that purposive sampling strategies are typically used in qualitative study. The broad findings may be transferred from one case to another based on appropriateness (similarity between the cases). In other words, one case may be used as representative for other similar cases in findings. Related to this study, purposive sample is in the form of selecting Ivanka's relevant utterances that provides relevant data to answer the research question.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Explicit Ethos
Ivanka elicits explicit ethos in her 2020 RNC political speech, in a few ways; 1.) Using common ground, 2.) Stating fulfilled personal pledge, 3.) Informing about her distinctive experience as Donald Trump's daughter, 4.) Informing about her distinctive experience when she worked alongside Donald Trump (as Donald Trump's White House senior adviser), 5.) Mentioning/indicating her privileged status as Donald Trump's daughter. The five ways are all in alignment with Martin (2014), who mentioned that the approaches to explicit ethos are by claiming common ground (in this research; belongs to the first way), indicating a unique experience or ability that grants them knowledge or expertise in judgment (in this research; belongs to the third, fourth, and fifth way), and through personal pledges (in this research; belongs to the second way). Also, all the five ways are directed to present and defend Donald Trump's political standing to support his 2nd bid for the U.S presidency.

Implicit Ethos
In respect to Ivanka's utilization of implicit ethos in her 2020 RNC speech, she utilized the implicit ethos in her speech to support her defense of Donald Trump in favor of his presidential re-election. Particularly, Ivanka employs implicit ethos through few rhetorical

style elements, namely: schemes (anaphora, anadiplosis, antithesis, tricolon) and tropes (metaphor). These usage of rhetorical style elements as implicit ethos are all in alignment with Martin (2014, p. 64, 72-77), who mentioned that the approaches to implicit ethos include general eloquence and word control. The eloquence and word control can be demonstrated through rhetorical style elements like schemes and tropes.

Additionally, in employing the implicit ethos (only the ones deployed simultaneously with explicit ethos), the same speech lines also can be accompanied by the two other rhetorical appeals (pathos and logos). This means that all the rhetorical appeals overlap in the same lines (cf. Minahal, n.d.). Also, since the analyzed implicit ethos here are limited to the ones supporting the explicit ethos, the writer cannot make any conclusions on whether the implicit ethos can stand independently away from all the other rhetorical appeals or not.

Pathos

Regarding Ivanka's employment of *pathos* (joy), Ivanka brings these two portrayals, which turns up being defenses of Donald Trump; 1.) Donald Trump as the American people's hero, 2.) Donald Trump as a good family figure. These two portrayals were brought up along with good occurrences which supposedly invoke the emotion of joy from the audience (cf. Watkins et al., 2017). The *pathos* here attempts to shape the audience's emotions (joy) (cf. Martin, 2014) and takes part in making the portrayal of Donald Trump as a Hero and a good family figure be more compelling (cf. Gaiman, 2021).

Furthermore, while using pathos of joy, the same lines might be reinforced by other rhetorical appeals, such as ethos (explicitly, implicitly) and logos. That further means, all the rhetorical appeals overlap; (cf. Minahal, n.d.). Additionally, in this study, the rhetorical appeal (pathos of joy) can also be independently apart from other rhetorical appeals.

Regarding Ivanka's employment of pathos (sadness), Ivanka elicits the pathos of sadness when discussing the following three events: 1.) The hurricane, 2.) The Covid–19 pandemic, and 3.) The war. These three things/events involve the after-effect of losing someone (loss) or failing a goal; hence eliciting the emotion of sadness (cf. Shirai and Suzuki, 2017). The pathos here attempts to shape the audience's emotions (sadness) (cf. Martin, 2014) and takes part in making existing arguments be more compelling (cf. Gaiman, 2021). Also, all the pathos of sadness is directed to support Ivanka's defenses of Donald Trump in favor of his upcoming presidential re-election.

Furthermore, while using pathos of sadness, the same lines might be reinforced by another rhetorical appeal which is ethos (explicitly, implicitly). That means, the rhetorical appeals of ethos (explicit, implicit) and the pathos of sadness overlap. However, in this study, the employment of the pathos (sadness) is never found accompanied with logos. Moreover, the rhetorical appeal (pathos of sadness) is never found to be employed independently apart from other rhetorical appeals.

Next, regarding Ivanka's employment of pathos (anger), Ivanka elicits the pathos of anger when bringing up the harmful actions of the other politicians or advisors, particularly: 1.) Neglectful action, 2.) Hypocritical action. These two actions are perceived to be harmful to the future of America: hence eliciting the pathos of anger to the audience (cf. Sasse, 2021). In addition, all the pathos of anger was projected to support Ivanka's defenses of Donald Trump in favor of his presidential re-election.

Furthermore, while using pathos of anger, the same lines might be reinforced by other rhetorical appeals, such as ethos (explicitly) and logos. Then, it can be concluded that the rhetorical appeals overlap (cf. Minahal, n.d.). In addition, the writer found out that the

rhetorical appeal of pathos (anger) was never employed independently away from other rhetorical appeals.

Ivanka did not utilize *pathos* by eliciting the emotion of fear. The emotion of fear, as in Fritscher (2022), is mentioned as a response to the presence of danger or the threat of harm. Ivanka's 2020 RNC speech did not contain any presence of danger or threat of harm to elicit fear. That means, no emotion of fear (*pathos* of fear) was elicited.

Logos
Regarding Ivanka's employment of logos, she used the rhetorical appeal of logos in proposing these seven ideas as conclusions: 1.) The nation will come together, 2.) Donald Trump has made brilliant decisions, 3.) Donald Trump Has Done a Terrific Job in His First Term of Presidency, 4.) All Americans want Donald Trump's offered future, 5.) Donald Trump's ability will bring the country forward, 6.) The country requires a different approach to solve its challenging problems, 7.) America needs a warrior and not an empty vessel. In addition, all the logos were used to support her defenses of Donald Trump in favor of his presidential re-election.

Prominent Form of Persuasions in Ivanka's 2020 RNC Speech (From Written Transcript and Video)
The prominent persuasions in this research are the ones standing out/very noticeably shape the prospective voters' choice to support Donald Trump through expressing messages in accordance with Donald Trump's re-election campaign theme; "Transition to Greatness" . This could be understood since Ivanka's speech was intended to support Donald Trump's re-election. The campaign theme message refers that America was already on its way to greatness and that the greatness will happen in the future.

In this research, the prominent forms of persuasions occur when bringing these four favorable portrayals of Donald Trump in light, namely: 1.) Trump as a president who fights for the American People, 2.) Donald Trump comes to Washington/White House to realize the future of American greatness, 3.) Trump offers the ideal future of America, 4.) Trump has a more optimistic and promising outlook for the American Future.

CONCLUSION
The findings for the first research question reveal that Ivanka used all forms of rhetorical appeals in her 2020 Republican National Convention speech. Particularly, the findings suggest that she used the rhetorical appeals to support her defenses of Donald Trump in favor of his 2nd bid of presidency. Moreover, she used the appeal of ethos both explicitly and implicitly, the appeal of pathos through eliciting four (out of five) emotions, and the appeal of logos by proposing seven kinds of conclusions. Thus, Ivanka had the tendency to rely on rhetorical appeals as her means of persuasion in the chosen speech since all parts of her speech contain at least one form of rhetorical appeal (as limited to the limitation of the study).

Meanwhile, the findings for the second research question reveal that Ivanka had indeed shaped the prospective voters' choice to support Donald Trump through expressing messages in accordance with Donald Trump's re-election campaign theme "Transition to Greatness", in which the writer regarded as prominent forms of persuasions. For detail, there were 20 speech lines deemed as the prominent forms of persuasions. All the prominent forms of persuasion occur when bringing favorable portrayals of Donald Trump in light which all either implies that Donald Trump had been working to transition America into its greatness state and/or he would be the only one able to do it. Additionally, in employing the prominent forms of persuasions, rhetorical style elements were also used at times.

Learning from Ivanka's 2020 RNC speech which had invited favorable reactions from the public, the writer realized that Ivanka's persuasions which includes taking advantage of one's privileged status to gain credibility, keeping the emotional atmosphere as positive/pleasant as possible and proposing favorable portrayals using logic should be referred as a sample in successful persuasion strategy. Also, one can use forms of persuasion which implicitly delivers campaign's message whilst bringing favorable portrayals to successfully affect the prospective voters' attitude and action.

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