

Logos Appeal In Khairy Jamaluddin's Press Conference Statements: A Rhetorical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on one of Aristotles' rhetorical theory of argumentative persuasion, logos, this paper aims to identify the rhetorical strategies employed by Khairy Jamaluddin (KJ), the former Minister of Health Malaysia, in his press conference discourses to journalists covering the events. By examining the discourses, the researchers try to highlight the linguistic performances, specifically in the use of logos, in KJ's press conferences on Covid-19's daily updates. Written transcripts of his statements from downloaded YouTube videos were made to enable the researchers to examine the responses thoroughly and identify some of the most representative and typical linguistic evidence of logos from his statements.

Keywords: Discourses, linguistic performances, logos, rhetorical theory, article

INTRODUCTION

On the concept of rhetoric and rhetoric strategies, scholars agree on a common concept of "rhetoric" which is ascribed as the art of persuasion, or the study of the art of persuasion, and an individual act of persuasion (Williams, 2015).

To understand the use of persuasion, there is a need to outline techniques such as identifying the central message, that influences listeners to accept the speaker's point of view. The reason for employing different speaking tactics is to inflict a specific effect on listeners by using persuasive language, evidence, and arguments to manipulate their responses by targeting their emotions and their use of logic and reason (Breuer, Napthine & O'Shea, 2008).

This paper aims to identify the rhetorical strategies employed by Khairy Jamaluddin (KJ), the former Minister of Health Malaysia, in his press conference discourses to journalists covering the event. By examining the discourses, the researchers try to highlight the linguistic performances in KJ's press conferences on

Covid-19's daily updates based on Aristotle's rhetorical theory of argumentative persuasion: logos (Aristotle, 1356/2006). When speakers use logos, they take advantage of the audience's sense of logic. They must exhibit that what they present is well-supported, factual and clearly structured. The main focus is on numbers and facts and details that can be measured and evaluated. When using logos to persuade, speakers use facts and information that matter to the audience and present them in a way that makes sense. This means that logos uses facts and reasoning to get the reader's attention to think and feel a certain way (Saaty, 2020). Thus, logos, or appeals to reason, depends heavily on the arguments, "provided by the words of the speech itself" (Aristotle & Barnes, 1998, p. 2155).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a discourse analysis applying a qualitative approach to examine KJ's press conference statements. Three downloaded YouTube videos of his press conferences dated 1st September 2021, 9th September 2021 and 19th September 2021 were used for this study. Written transcripts of the statements were made to enable the researchers to examine the responses thoroughly. After that, the sentences that utilise logos either in the form of words, phrases, or clauses were collected. His reasoning, character, and emotional appeal are conveyed through his verbal statements, nonverbal communication, and situational contexts.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Logos can be understood as a speaker's attempt to appeal to the logic or reason of the audience. Appealing to facts is utilised by KJ to build the Malaysian public's confidence in the efforts made by the Malaysian government in combatting Covid-19. The following are some of the examples of the data that show evidence that KJ employs logos in his statements.

STATEMENTS	LOGOS APPEAL
<p><i>Sukacita saya umumkan bahawa kerajaan akan mengumumkan beberapa langkah untuk memudahkan SOP-SOP yang sedia ada supaya tidak terlalu banyak, tidak terlalu rumit, tidak terlalu complicated, supaya apabila kita masuk dalam fasa endemik nanti, kita ada senarai SOP yang jelas, yang mudah difahami dan yang sama-sama dapat kita mempraktikkan sebagai persediaan untuk hidup bersama Kovid-19 dalam fasa endemik".</i></p>	<p><i>... akan mengumumkan beberapa langkah untuk memudahkan SOP-SOP (will announce several measures to simplify the existing SOPs)</i></p> <p><i>...sebagai persediaan untuk hidup bersama Kovid-19 dalam fasa endemik (in preparation for living with Covid-19 in the endemic phase)</i></p>

<p>(I am pleased to announce that the government will announce several measures to simplify the existing SOPs so that they are not too many, not too complicated, so that when we enter the endemic phase later, we have a clear list of SOPs, which are easy to understand and which we can both practice in preparation for living with Covid-19 in the endemic phase)</p>	
<p>We do not give home quarantine to everyone... who comes back to Malaysia, who are fully vaccinated, no. We have received 20,000 applications <i>yang kita telah lulus adalah 4,159 sahaja.</i> (We do not give home quarantine to everyone... who comes back to Malaysia, who are fully vaccinated, no. We have received 20,000 applications and we have passed is only 4,159.)</p>	<p>...received 20,000 applications <i>...kita telah lulus adalah 4,159 sahaja.</i> (we have passed only 4,159)</p>
<p><i>Saya ingin memaklumkan bahawa kita telah pun melaksanakan pemantauan yang rapi terhadap kes-kes AEFI ataupun Adverse Event following Immunization... untuk memastikan bahawa vaksin yang kita bagi ini adalah selamat dan tidak mengundang kemudaratan dari segi kesan sampingan yang serius.</i> (I would like to inform that we have already implemented close monitoring of cases of AEFI or Adverse Event Following Immunization... to ensure that the vaccine we provide for is safe and does not cause harm in terms of serious side effects)</p>	<p><i>...melaksanakan pemantauan yang rapi terhadap kes-kes AEFI ataupun Adverse Event following Immunization</i> (implemented close monitoring of cases of AEFI or Adverse Event following Immunization)</p>
<p><i>Namun begitu, paparan data di gate hub dirasakan lebih sesuai untuk mereka yang mahir dengan sains data. Oleh yang demikian bermula hari ini, seiring dengan hasrat saya untuk lebih telus dalam perkongsian maklumat dan untuk kita lift the veil of secrecy around data and statistics, KKM akan melancarkan laman web baru iaitu "covidnow" dan anda boleh mula layarinya bermula jam 6 petang hari ini di</i></p>	<p><i>...untuk kita lift the veil of secrecy around data and statistics, KKM akan melancarkan laman web baru iaitu "covidnow" (for us to lift the veil of secrecy around data and statistics, MOH will launch a new website called "covidnow")</i> <i>...mula layarinya bermula jam 6 petang hari ini di https://covidnow.moh.gov.my (start</i></p>

<p><i>https://covidnow.moh.gov.my dan data harian terkini akan tersedia di covidnow selepas jam 12 setiap malam, updated.</i></p> <p>(Nevertheless, the data display at the gate hub is felt to be more suitable for those proficient in science data. Therefore, starting today, in line with my desire to be more transparent in information sharing and for us to lift the veil of secrecy around data and statistics, MOH will launch a new website called "covidnow" and you can start browsing it starting at 6pm today at https://covidnow.moh.gov.my and the latest daily data will be available on covidnow after 12noon every night, updated)</p>	<p>browsing it starting at 6pm today at https://covidnow.moh.gov.my)</p> <p><i>...data harian terkini akan tersedia di covidnow selepas jam 12 setiap malam, updated.</i> (latest daily data will be available on covidnow after 12 noon every night, updated)</p>
<p><i>Oleh yang demikian, kita telah pun menyiapkan satu unit modular ICU di hospital Sultan Abdul Halim di Sungai Petani...yang mana kita ada tambahan 10 katil ICU err...di hospital Sultan Abdul Halim dan kita akan hantar dan telah pun hantar 1,510 silinder oksigen tambahan iaitu 500 sudah pun hantar, 210 tiba hari ini, dan 800 lagi akan sampai pada minggu depan. Jadi cukup oksigen untuk pesakit-pesakit Covid yang sesak nafas sama ada di hospital ataupun di PKRC.</i></p> <p>(Therefore, we have already completed a modular ICU unit at Sultan Abdul Halim Hospital in Sungai Petani... where we have an additional 10 ICU beds err... at Sultan Abdul Halim Hospital and we will send and have already sent 1,510 additional oxygen cylinders where 500 were already shipped, 210 arrived today, and another 800 will arrive next week. So, enough oxygen for Covid patients who are short of breath either in the hospital or at PKRC.)</p>	<p><i>...menyiapkan satu unit modular ICU di hospital Sultan Abdul Halim di Sungai Petani</i> (completed a modular ICU unit at Sultan Abdul Halim Hospital in Sungai Petani)</p> <p><i>...tambahan 10 katil ICU</i> (additional 10 ICU beds)</p> <p><i>...telah pun hantar 1,510 silinder oksigen tambahan iaitu 500 sudah pun hantar, 210 tiba hari ini, dan 800 lagi akan sampai pada minggu depan.</i> (have already sent 1,510 additional oxygen cylinders where 500 were already shipped, 210 arrived today, and another 800 will arrive next week)</p> <p><i>...cukup oksigen untuk pesakit-pesakit Covid yang sesak nafas sama ada di hospital ataupun di PKRC.</i> (enough oxygen for Covid patients who are short of breath either in the hospital or at PKRC)</p>

Table 1: Logos in KJ's Statements

KJ's statements seek to persuade the listeners by making reasonable claims ("will announce several measures to simplify the existing SOPs"; "in preparation for living with Covid-19 in the endemic phase"; "implemented close monitoring of cases of AEFI or Adverse Event Following Immunization"; "for us to lift the veil of secrecy

around data and statistics, MOH will launch a new website called covidnow”; and “enough oxygen for Covid patients who are short of breath either in the hospital or at PKRC”), and offering factual proofs to support his claims (“received 20,000 applications ... we have passed is only 4,159”; “start browsing it starting at 6pm today at <https://covidnow.moh.gov.my>”; “latest daily data will be available on covidnow after 12 noon every night, updated”; “completed a modular ICU unit at Sultan Abdul Halim hospital in Sungai Petani”; “additional 10 ICU beds”; and “have already sent 1,510 additional oxygen cylinders which is 500 already shipped, 210 arrived today, and another 800 will arrive next week”).

Thus, most people will not trust any information that they hear unless it is backed up by proper evidence. They will be reluctant to believe if it is not supported by facts and logical reasoning. KJ uses the rhetorical appeals of logos in his statements by including statistics, surveys, and factual data which makes people see him as a genuine source. He appears as an authority in his field and people are usually drawn to experts as they feel these experts can solve their problems. This is what makes the element of logos so effective.

CONCLUSION

This study found that logos, which is one of the elements of argumentative persuasion language, has been effectively implemented in KJ’s Press Conference statements. In terms of logos appeals, KJ is greatly skilful in utilizing facts and reasoning to convey the serious consequences of Covid-19 and to reassure the public that the Malaysian government is and will be implementing numerous measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. Logos is one of the three components of persuasion, along with ethos and pathos, influencing the process of logical, thorough, and well-founded argumentation based on facts and concrete evidence. In this context, the speaker is required to have a deep understanding of the speech topic so they can provide relevant examples and argue them convincingly.

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