



Persuasive Rhetorical Strategies in Anies Baswedan's TEDxC40Cities Speech: An Aristotelian Rhetoric Analysis

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Abstract. *This study examines the persuasive strategies used by Anies Baswedan in his TEDx speech titled "Governments, Make Public Transport Equitable." As the Governor of Jakarta, Baswedan delivered the speech on a global platform to advocate for equitable, inclusive, and sustainable public transportation. The research focuses on how he employs Aristotle's classical rhetorical appeals, namely ethos to establish credibility, pathos to create emotional connection, and logos to present logical reasoning, in order to engage and persuade his audience. Using qualitative rhetorical analysis, the study explores how these appeals are combined and positioned throughout the speech. The official transcript was carefully analyzed to identify statements that reflect each persuasive strategy. The findings show that logos is the most dominant appeal, as Baswedan presents data, measurable goals, and clear policy outcomes. Ethos is conveyed through his position, achievements, and inclusive vision, while pathos emerges in moments where he highlights social justice, the urgency of addressing climate change, and the unifying power of public transport. This research shows that rhetorical appeals in political speeches like Baswedan's are not applied in a strict sequence but are interwoven to strengthen the overall persuasive impact. The study offers insight into how classical rhetorical strategies are applied in modern communication platforms such as TEDx.*

Keywords: *Discourse Analysis, Ethos, Logos, Pathos, Persuasive Speech.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Persuasive speech plays a crucial role in political communication, as it helps leaders shape public opinion, build support, and influence policy decisions. Effective persuasion allows political figures to connect with audiences, inspire action, and frame issues in ways that resonate across diverse contexts (Perloff, 2020). In today's globalized world, political speeches are no longer limited to national platforms; they reach international audiences through various media channels, including globally recognized platforms such as TEDx.

One of the most enduring frameworks for understanding persuasive communication is Aristotle's classical theory of rhetoric, which identifies three key appeals: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. *Ethos* relates to the speaker's credibility and moral authority; *pathos* appeals to the audience's emotions; and *logos* focuses on logical reasoning and evidence (Aristotle, trans. 2007; Herrick, 2017). These rhetorical strategies continue to inform the study of contemporary political discourse, as they offer valuable insights into how speakers engage and persuade their audiences (Leith, 2012).

TED is a new media phenomenon known for its brief, accessible presentations. Since the first conference in Monterey, California in 1984, TED and its independently organized TEDx events have spread worldwide, covering not only technology, entertainment, and design but also a diverse range of topics like history, mental health, and popular culture (Ludewig, 2017, 2). Beyond serving as a platform for sharing ideas, TEDx provides a global stage where speakers combine intellectual depth with emotional appeal to inspire change and raise public awareness.

Anies Baswedan, the former Governor of Jakarta, used the TEDx platform to present his vision for equitable and sustainable public transportation in Jakarta. Known for his academic and political background, Baswedan has held roles as an educator, minister, and city leader, which contribute to his rhetorical persona and authority (*Tentang Anies - Kenali Anies Baswedan Presiden Indonesia 2024 | Situs Resmi*, 2024). His speech at TEDxC40Cities, titled “*Governments, Make Public Transport Equitable*,” is particularly significant because it addresses not only local policy but also global environmental and social justice concerns.

While rhetorical analysis of political speeches are well established, there is limited research focusing on Indonesian political figures who deliver speeches on global platforms like TEDx. Most existing studies tend to examine Western leaders or national speeches delivered in conventional political settings. This study seeks to address that gap by analyzing the persuasive strategies employed by Anies Baswedan in his TEDx speech, with the aim of understanding how classical rhetorical appeals are applied in modern political communication to engage a global audience.

The purpose of this research is to analyze how Anies Baswedan uses ethos, pathos, and logos in his TEDx speech to promote the idea of equitable public transportation, and to explore how these appeals are combined to strengthen the persuasive impact of his message on an international stage.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The practice of public persuasion is one of the most studied aspects of communication, with rhetoric being its most established theoretical foundation. According to Aristotle (2007), persuasive discourse is achieved through the strategic use of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical reasoning). These rhetorical appeals, while distinct, often overlap and are flexibly combined depending on the speaker's objectives and audience. Herrick (2017) also emphasizes that rhetorical appeals

rarely appear in a fixed order; instead, they shift and intertwine as the discourse progresses, allowing speakers to maximize impact.

In political communication, such rhetorical strategies are especially significant. Politicians craft their speeches to balance credibility, emotional resonance, and reasoned argument to persuade diverse audiences across different contexts (Charteris-Black, 2011). Several studies have investigated public speeches through a rhetorical lens, noting that TED Talks speakers commonly apply a range of persuasive strategies including ethos, pathos, and logos to appeal to their listeners' emotions and persuade them to accept particular viewpoints (Mohammed & Mayuuf, 2021). Similarly, Van Dijk (1997) discusses how political discourse shapes public perceptions by leveraging authority and values, making rhetoric an effective vehicle for influence.

Prior research on public figures' speeches demonstrates that discourse is rarely neutral or purely informative; rather, it carries underlying persuasive strategies. Analyzing these speeches enables a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, power, and social context. Building on these perspectives, this study focuses on Anies Baswedan's TEDx talk, employing a classical rhetorical framework to classify and interpret the ethos, pathos, and logos appeals he uses to advocate for equitable public transport in Jakarta. In doing so, this research aims to enrich the scholarly discourse on rhetorical strategies in contemporary public communication, especially as it pertains to urban policy and sustainability.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative discourse analysis design to examine Anies Baswedan's TEDxC40Cities speech, "Governments, make public transport equitable." The data source for this research is the official video of the TEDx talk and its publicly available transcript, which together provide an authentic record of the speech as delivered. Given the nature of discourse studies, this research does not require sampling; instead, the entire speech was treated as the corpus for analysis.

This qualitative discourse analysis approach is especially appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to explore the linguistic, rhetorical, and pragmatic features of the speech in its natural context, focusing on how language is strategically used to persuade and connect with audiences (Gee, 2014; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Unlike quantitative methods that generalize findings from a sample, discourse analysis aims to produce rich, detailed interpretations of the specific speech event and its social and cultural

implications. It is also a well-established method for analyzing public or political speeches, enabling the researcher to reveal patterns of meaning, ideological positions, and rhetorical strategies that contribute to the speaker's purpose (Fairclough, 2003; Paltridge, 2012).

Data were collected by carefully viewing the video and reading the transcript to identify linguistic features that signal ethos, pathos, and logos, using the categories outlined by Aristotle (2007) and supported by Herrick (2017). Segments containing rhetorical appeals were coded manually and then organized into a classification table. This coding process was conducted iteratively to ensure completeness, and ambiguous cases were discussed until a clear categorization was agreed upon. The reliability of coding was enhanced by peer checking with another researcher familiar with discourse analysis.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach, beginning with the identification of rhetorical devices, then interpreting their function in context, and finally relating findings to the theoretical framework. Established discourse-analytic procedures (e.g. Van Dijk, 1997) guided the process to ensure that the results remained grounded in textual evidence while also addressing the broader sociopolitical implications of the speech. The findings were then synthesized to explain how Anies Baswedan constructs persuasive meanings to encourage equitable public transport policy, illustrating both the form and impact of his rhetorical strategies.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings reveal that Anies Baswedan systematically integrates three primary rhetorical appeals across his TEDxC40Cities speech. The table below classifies examples of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos present in the speech.

Table 1. Classification of Rhetorical Appeals (Ethos, Pathos, Logos) in Anies Baswedan TEDx Speech on Public Transport

Timestamp	Utterance	Rhetorical Appeal	Description of Strategy
0:15–0:24	<i>“Greetings from Jakarta. I believe that the best way to understand a city is using its public transportation system.”</i>	Ethos & Logos	Opens with a welcoming tone (ethos) and a logical proposition that public transport reflects a city's character.
0:24–0:27	<i>“As the largest megacities in the southern hemisphere, we</i>	Logos	Uses demographic data to establish scale and

	<i>have 11 million people.”</i>		emphasize the complexity of the issue.
0:34–0:40	<i>“So our public transport system must meet the demand of a city that is enormous, lively, and hectic.”</i>	Logos & Pathos	Highlights practical needs (logos) and conveys a sense of vibrancy and struggle to evoke empathy.
0:56–1:01	<i>“Two years ago, we were the runner up for the 2020 Sustainable Transport Award from the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, ... ”</i>	Ethos	Cites international recognition to build credibility and authority.
1:13–1:22	<i>“And this year, we took up a notch by taking the top spot in the 2021 Sustainable Transport Award. The back-to-back award stood as an acknowledgement of our commitment... ”</i>	Ethos	Reinforces sustained commitment and excellence as a credible leader.
1:39–1:42	<i>“We challenge ourselves by aiming high. So these are a few goals that we set.”</i>	Logos	Introduces measurable targets, positioning him as strategic and results-driven.
1:48–2:17	<i>“Making sure that everyone can access public transport within 500 meters; increasing mode share to 60% by 2030; converting all city buses to electric; expanding bike lanes... ”</i>	Logos	Provides detailed policy goals and milestones that demonstrate planning and rational solutions.
2:45–2:54	<i>“That was the easy part. The hardest part is making sure that our public transport system is truly and fully integrated.”</i>	Pathos & Logos	Admits difficulty (humanizes the speaker) and logically explains the next challenge.
3:19–3:31	<i>“In the past, handled by different agencies... So we tackled these issues by creating a program called the Jak Lingko.”</i>	Ethos & Logos	Shares leadership role in integrating disparate systems, reinforcing credibility and logical problem-solving.
3:36–3:41	<i>“Jak Lingko is our vision for an integrated public</i>	Ethos	Introduces a flagship program as a credible

	<i>transportation system... ”</i>		and visionary policy initiative.
3:41–3:51	<i>“Integrated in terms of routes, pricing, and management...”</i>	Logos	Breaks down the logical components of integration strategy clearly.
4:17–4:25	<i>“Next stop, we make sure people can move seamlessly between each mode of transportation.”</i>	Pathos	Uses smooth movement imagery to evoke a positive user experience.
4:54–5:09	<i>“We build wide, safe, and comfortable sidewalks. Our aim is to transform walking into an exciting and memorable experience.”</i>	Pathos	Humanizes policy by describing sidewalks as enjoyable spaces, appealing to emotions.
5:23–5:36	<i>“We had tripled daily city bus ridership from 350,000 to one million per day.”</i>	Logos & Ethos	Uses concrete data to demonstrate effectiveness and build credibility.
5:39–5:42	<i>“Transjakarta, our BRT system, is now the largest public bus system in the world.”</i>	Ethos	Cites superlative accomplishment to strengthen authority and pride.
5:49–5:55	<i>“Transforming, improving, and expanding our public transport system has brought social and environmental benefit as well.”</i>	Pathos & Logos	Appeals to communal well-being and environmental responsibility as rational public goods.
6:14–6:17	<i>“Public transport also connects people, where private vehicles often separate us.”</i>	Pathos	Highlights human connections to evoke a sense of unity and shared purpose.
6:37–6:41	<i>“Sustainable public transport is one of the key factors in combating the climate catastrophe.”</i>	Pathos	Uses strong, emotive language around the climate crisis to inspire action.
6:45–6:57	<i>“The latest IPCC report serves as a dire warning for us. We are on a course to reach 1.5°C of global warming within the next two decades.”</i>	Ethos & Logos	References a credible scientific authority to underscore urgency, supported by concrete data.

7:05–7:18	<i>“To stop the climate crisis, we need equitable access to public transport. However, to further expand and electrify public transport, we will definitely need more funding.”</i>	Logos & Pathos	Appeals to logic with policy requirements and pathos by suggesting moral responsibility for equity.
7:21–7:27	<i>“205 billion dollars is needed every year...”</i>	Logos	Cites a precise financial estimate to stress feasibility and scale of required action.
7:37–7:51	<i>“Long-term and stable government financial support is urgently needed. Without greater investment by all governments, we will not meet our climate goals.”</i>	Logos & Pathos	Uses logical argumentation and dire predictions to motivate political action.
7:54–8:09	<i>“Investing in public transport must be made a priority. Let’s work together and let’s get things done. Thank you very much.”</i>	Pathos & Ethos	Concludes with an emotive call to action and an inclusive tone, reinforcing credibility as a collaborative leader.

Discussion

Analyzing Anies Baswedan’s TEDx speech reveals that the interplay of ethos, pathos, and logos is carefully orchestrated to persuade a diverse international audience invested in urban policy and sustainability. The dominance of logos, as evident through abundant statistics, policy targets, and awards, is consistent with public discourse conventions for global platforms like TED, where factual grounding enhances credibility (Perloff, 2020). These logical appeals establish Anies as a policy-oriented and action-driven leader, which is especially effective in the context of urban transport planning, an inherently data-driven field.

Ethos strategically reinforces this logical structure. Anies refers to international accolades and detailed programs like Jak Lingko to position himself as an experienced, results-driven leader. This resonates with Van Dijk’s (1997) observations that political actors leverage their achievements and institutional backing to legitimize their discourse, particularly when appealing to global bodies and potential funders. The credibility constructed here also reflects the speaker’s awareness of his international audience, which expects proven expertise and a commitment to sustainable progress.

Pathos, meanwhile, subtly underpins the argument by framing public transport as a social and moral imperative. By asserting that “public transport connects people,” Anies personalizes an otherwise technical policy issue, creating an emotional bridge between listener and subject. This emotional layering is crucial for engaging stakeholders who may not be swayed solely by data, thus broadening the speech's persuasive reach. The strategic use of climate crisis references similarly amplifies the urgency of his message, tapping into a shared global anxiety that motivates cooperative action.

Overall, these findings highlight Anies' rhetorical skill in shaping public perception of Jakarta's transit system as both a policy success and a moral duty. The nuanced combination of appeals supports Herrick's (2017) insight that persuasive discourse often integrates diverse appeals to establish a coherent and compelling message. Furthermore, placing this speech in its global political context illustrates its role as both advocacy and a call for investment—essential elements of public rhetoric at the international level.

Implications

This analysis underscores the significance of rhetoric in public policy discourse, especially on platforms that transcend local politics. Beyond supporting Jakarta's public transport ambitions, the speech serves as a case study of how global urban leaders must balance data, credibility, and emotional resonance to secure broader support for their initiatives. Importantly, this rhetorical strategy also speaks to practical outcomes—whether in acquiring international funding, inspiring civic pride, or galvanizing cooperative action among stakeholders.

Contributions and Limitations

This study contributes to discourse and rhetoric studies by demonstrating how a high-profile public official crafts multimodal arguments in a sustainability context. However, the research is limited to one speech and may not reflect rhetorical strategies across different genres or political contexts. Future research could explore a larger corpus of urban policy speeches or conduct comparative analyses across cultures to yield a more comprehensive understanding of rhetoric in public policy discourse.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined Anies Baswedan's strategic use of Aristotelian rhetorical appeals in his TEDx speech to advocate for equitable and sustainable public transportation. The findings indicate that logos plays the most prominent role, supported by ethos and pathos, allowing the speaker to establish credibility, appeal to shared values, and present logical, data-driven arguments. These results highlight the speaker's careful consideration of a global, policy-oriented audience that responds to evidence-based solutions while also appreciating moral commitment and emotional engagement.

However, this research focused on a single speech delivered in a specific political and cultural context, so its conclusions cannot be broadly generalized. Future research could explore speeches from different leaders or diverse international platforms to provide more comparative insight into how rhetorical strategies adapt across contexts. Practically, this study suggests that balancing credible information with human-centered messaging is an effective way for leaders to communicate policy goals, foster public support, and encourage cooperative action, especially when tackling complex social and environmental challenges.

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