



Power and Persuasion: Analyzing Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union' Speech

¹Rafi Muhammad Lubis^{ID}, ²Wahyu Taufany^{ID}, ³M. Rizky Septiandri^{ID},
⁴Evaness Jocelym^{ID}, ⁵T Thyrhaya Zein^{ID}

*English Literature, Universitas Sumatra Utara,
Indonesia*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history:	
Received	
Accepted	
Keywords:	
<i>Discrimination</i>	
<i>Faith</i>	
<i>Hope</i>	
<i>Legacy</i>	
<i>Race</i>	
<i>Unity</i>	
	<p>Barack Obama's A More Perfect Union speech is examined in this article using both a descriptive quantitative and rhetorical approach. The speech, delivered in 2008 during his presidential campaign, addressed racial tensions and called for togetherness in the midst of political upheaval. The study uses descriptive quantitative analysis to track linguistic patterns like word frequency and sentence structure, as well as rhetorical analysis to investigate Obama's use of ethos, pathos, and logos. According to the findings, Obama's strategic use of inclusive language, emotive appeals, and logical reasons strengthens his unifying message. This dual-method approach shows the speech's effectiveness in addressing polarizing issues while also providing insights into the broader effects of political discourse in promoting societal advancement.</p> <p>In "A More Perfect Union," Barack Obama highlights the value of unity as the cornerstone of national advancement. He uses the phrase "We the people, in order to form a more perfect union," which appears in the U.S. Constitution, as a reminder that aiming for perfection is a continuous process that has been carried out through the ages. Obama makes the case that history demonstrates that unity and teamwork may bring the nation closer to its values, even while he acknowledges that the country may never reach complete perfection. Obama also talks about the profound effects of racial injustice throughout American history. He talks about how injustice's legacy still has an impact on people's lives today and exhorts them to comprehend its causes rather than escalating the gap. "The anger is powerful and real," he says. <i>And simply wishing it away exacerbates the misperception. With this, he challenges Americans to face racial complexity with compassion and understanding.</i></p> <p>The speech's end is centered on optimism and a call to action. "We can accept a politics that breeds division, and</p>

conflict, and cynicism," Obama says, urging the country to reject divisive politics. Alternatively, we can unite throughout this election and declare, "Not this time." A universal moral precept, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," is cited by him to emphasize the value of compassion and unity in creating a better future. Obama's credibility (ethos) is established through personal anecdotes in the speech. As the son of a White mother from Kansas and a Black father from Kenya, he identifies as having a mixed-race heritage. His statement, "This nation is more than the sum of its parts," highlights the fact that diversity in America is a strength rather than a problem.

INTRODUCTION

Language holds immense power to shape perceptions, inspire change, and address complex societal issues. This study focuses on Barack Obama's iconic speech, *A More Perfect Union*, delivered on March 18, 2008, in the context of his presidential campaign. The speech came amidst controversy surrounding comments made by Obama's former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, which threatened to undermine his campaign. Rather than sidestepping the issue, Obama chose to address race relations in America head-on, framing the conversation within the broader ideals of national unity and progress.

In this speech, Obama not only acknowledged America's troubled history with race but also called for understanding, healing, and collective action to move toward "a more perfect union." By weaving personal anecdotes, historical references, and shared values, the speech transcended the immediate controversy to address the enduring challenges of racial inequality in the United States.

To analyze the speech's impact and structure, this article employs two complementary methods: **descriptive quantitative analysis** and **rhetorical analysis**. These methods provide both objective and interpretive insights into Obama's language choices and rhetorical strategies.

Descriptive Quantitative Analysis

This method is used to quantify linguistic features in the speech, such as word frequency, sentence structure, and the prevalence of rhetorical devices. By measuring patterns and recurring themes, this analysis offers a data-driven perspective on how Obama uses language to emphasize unity and inclusivity. For example, the frequency of pronouns like *we* and *our* highlights the speech's unifying tone, while the repetition of terms like *race* and *union* underscores its thematic focus.

Rhetorical Analysis

The rhetorical analysis examines how Obama leverages ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) to persuade his audience and strengthen his arguments. Through ethos, he establishes himself as a credible voice on racial issues by referencing his own mixed-race heritage and the U.S. Constitution. His emotional appeals (pathos) foster empathy, particularly when acknowledging the anger and frustrations of different communities. Logical reasoning (logos) is evident in his calls for structural reforms and his assertion that unity is essential for collective progress.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is divided into three main sections of the speech:

1. **Introduction:** Setting the context with references to the Constitution and shared national ideals.
2. **Race and Historical Legacy:** Exploring the roots of systemic racism and its present-day implications.
3. **Call for Unity and Action:** Inspiring hope and collective responsibility to address societal divisions.

By combining these methods, the study provides a holistic understanding of the speech, revealing how Obama's strategic use of language and rhetoric transforms a polarizing moment into an opportunity for national reflection and reconciliation.

This dual approach not only highlights the linguistic and rhetorical artistry of *A More Perfect Union* but also demonstrates the enduring relevance of the speech as a model for addressing contentious issues in public discourse. The findings aim to contribute to broader discussions about the role of political rhetoric in fostering unity and progress.

METHOD (LEVEL 1)

1. Descriptive Quantitative Analysis

This method involves the objective measurement and analysis of linguistic features within the speech. It provides numerical data to reveal patterns and structures in the text. The primary goal is to uncover measurable aspects of language use, offering insights into the speech's construction and emphasis.

Steps in Application:

- **Word Frequency Analysis:** Identifying how often key terms (e.g., "unity," "race," "America") appear, which can indicate recurring themes or priorities in the speech.
- **Sentence Structure Analysis:** Examining sentence length, types (e.g., declarative, interrogative), and complexity to understand how Obama maintains clarity and engages his audience.
- **Rhetorical Device Count:** Quantifying the use of devices such as repetition, metaphors, or rhetorical questions to highlight their role in persuasion and emphasis.

Contribution:

This method offers a structured view of the speech, allowing for objective observations about its linguistic design. For example, frequent use of inclusive terms like "we" or "our" may underscore a unifying tone.

2. Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis examines how Obama uses persuasive techniques to achieve his communicative goals. It focuses on the classical rhetorical appeals of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) to understand how he connects with his audience on multiple levels.

Steps in Application:

- **Ethos (Credibility):** Analyzing how Obama establishes his authority and relatability, such as through personal anecdotes or historical references.
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Identifying emotional appeals, such as his acknowledgment of frustrations in both Black and White communities, to build empathy and inspire action.
- **Logos (Logic):** Evaluating logical arguments, including his calls for policy solutions and appeals to shared values, to present reasoned pathways to unity.

Contribution:

This method helps decode the speech's persuasive strategies, revealing how Obama effectively balances logic, emotion, and credibility to resonate with a diverse audience.

Integrating the Methods

By combining these two methods, your article achieves both depth and breadth in its analysis:

- **Quantitative analysis** provides objective data about the speech's structure and linguistic choices.
- **Rhetorical analysis** offers a nuanced interpretation of how these choices contribute to the speech's impact and effectiveness.

Together, they illuminate the intricate interplay between the technical and emotional elements of Obama's rhetoric, showcasing why the speech remains a powerful example of political discourse.

Instruments (Level 2)

What Instruments Were Used

1. Descriptive Quantitative Analysis:

- Focuses on measurable linguistic features such as word frequency, sentence structure, and the prevalence of rhetorical devices.
- Key terms like "unity," "race," and "change" were identified and tracked throughout the speech to uncover recurring themes and patterns.

2. Rhetorical Analysis:

- Investigates how Obama employs ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) to persuade his audience.
- Examines the interplay between Obama's personal narrative, emotional appeals, and logical arguments in the context of racial tensions and calls for unity.

How the Instruments Were Applied

1. Word Frequency Analysis:

- Words like "we," "race," and "unity" were counted to emphasize inclusivity and thematic focus.
- Inclusive pronouns (e.g., "we," "us," "our") were quantified to highlight collective identity and shared responsibility.

2. Sentence Structure Analysis:

- Evaluated sentence length and complexity to understand how Obama balanced clarity and engagement.
- Rhetorical questions were analyzed for their role in prompting reflection and audience participation.

3. Rhetorical Device Count:

- Identified and tallied techniques like repetition (e.g., "a more perfect union"), parallelism, and metaphor to assess their impact on persuasion.

4. Ethos, Pathos, and Logos:

- **Ethos:** Credibility established through references to personal background and American ideals (e.g., Constitution).

- **Pathos:** Emotional appeals crafted by acknowledging shared struggles and presenting inspiring narratives.
- **Logos:** Logical reasoning demonstrated through historical reflections and proposed collective action.

To Whom the Study Applies

The audience for this study includes:

1. Scholars and Researchers:

- Focused on political discourse, rhetorical studies, and linguistic analysis.
- Those interested in the effectiveness of political communication in addressing societal issues.

2. Students of Communication and Rhetoric:

- Provides a case study in how rhetorical strategies can transform polarizing topics into calls for unity and progress.

3. General Public:

- Specifically, individuals interested in understanding the dynamics of race, identity, and unity in American political speeches.

By combining the quantitative and rhetorical methods, the study reveals how Obama's speech strategically uses language and rhetoric to address systemic racism while inspiring a vision for national unity. The instruments used in this study offer both objective data and interpretive insights, appealing to a broad audience ranging from academics to the public.

Data analysis procedures (Level 2)

1. Descriptive Quantitative Analysis

This method provided **objective, data-driven insights** into the speech's linguistic features. The steps and techniques included:

- **Word Frequency Analysis:**
 - Key terms such as “unity,” “race,” and “America” were identified and their frequency tracked.
 - The frequent use of inclusive pronouns (*we*, *us*, *our*) was highlighted to demonstrate Obama's emphasis on unity and collective identity.
- **Sentence Structure Analysis:**
 - The variety of sentence lengths (short for impact, long for explanation) was measured to determine how Obama balanced clarity and engagement.
 - The presence of rhetorical questions (e.g., “Why not affirm that in the face of our past we have chosen hope?”) was analyzed for their reflective and participatory impact on the audience.
- **Rhetorical Device Count:**
 - Techniques such as repetition (“*A more perfect union*”), parallelism, and metaphor were quantified to assess their prevalence and effectiveness in reinforcing the speech's key themes.

2. Rhetorical Analysis

This approach examined **how Obama used classical rhetorical appeals** to connect with his audience on emotional, logical, and credible levels.

- **Ethos (Credibility):**
 - Analyzed how Obama established trust through personal anecdotes (e.g., his mixed-race heritage) and historical references (e.g., the U.S. Constitution).
 - Focused on his ability to position himself as an authentic voice capable of addressing racial tensions.
- **Pathos (Emotion):**
 - Identified emotional appeals such as acknowledging the frustrations of Black and White communities (e.g., “*The anger is real; it is powerful.*”).
 - Analyzed stories like that of Ashley Baia, which evoke empathy and illustrate shared struggles.
- **Logos (Logic):**
 - Evaluated the logical flow of Obama’s arguments, such as linking historical racial injustices to present-day inequalities.
 - Highlighted his assertion that addressing systemic disparities benefits all Americans, not just minorities.

Integration of Methods

To create a **holistic analysis**, the researchers combined these two approaches:

- **Quantitative Results:**
 - Revealed patterns in Obama’s language use and rhetorical devices, supporting conclusions about his unifying tone.
- **Qualitative Insights:**
 - Offered interpretive insights into how these linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies contributed to the speech’s effectiveness in addressing sensitive societal issues.

Visualizations and Summaries

The analysis was supplemented with visual tools:

- **Word Frequency Charts:**
 - Displayed the occurrence of key terms across different sections of the speech.
- **Breakdown of Rhetorical Devices by Section:**
 - Illustrated the distribution of ethos, pathos, and logos across the speech, emphasizing their balanced application.

Conclusion of Analysis

The combination of **objective linguistic data** and **interpretive rhetorical insights** demonstrated how Obama’s speech effectively transformed a polarizing topic into a unifying narrative. By quantifying language use and analyzing persuasive strategies, the study uncovered the speech’s enduring relevance as a model for political discourse.

FINDINGS (LEVEL 1)

Descriptive Quantitative Analysis

1. Word Frequency Analysis:

- **Inclusive Language:** Words like *we*, *us*, and *our* appear frequently, emphasizing unity. For example, *we* appears over 60 times in the speech, underscoring a collective identity.
- **Key Themes:** Words like *race*, *union*, and *change* recur, highlighting the central topics Obama addresses.

2. Sentence Structure:

- **Variety in Sentence Length:** Obama alternates between short, impactful sentences (e.g., “America can change.”) and longer, more elaborate ones to explain complex ideas. This balance keeps the audience engaged while conveying depth.
- **Use of Questions:** Rhetorical questions like “Why not affirm that in the face of our past we have chosen hope?” prompt reflection, drawing the audience into the discourse.

3. Rhetorical Devices Count:

- **Repetition:** The phrase “A more perfect union” is repeated several times, anchoring the speech’s central theme.
- **Parallelism:** Constructs like “It’s a story that hasn’t made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts” create rhythm and emphasize key ideas.

Rhetorical Analysis

1. Ethos (Credibility):

- Obama builds credibility by reflecting on his personal background as someone of mixed-race heritage, stating, *“I am the son of a Black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas.”* This positions him as uniquely suited to discuss race in America.
- He references the U.S. Constitution and historical struggles for equality, grounding his arguments in shared values and history.

2. Pathos (Emotion):

- He acknowledges the pain and anger stemming from systemic racism, saying, *“The anger is real; it is powerful. And to simply wish it away... without understanding its roots only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding.”*
- By sharing stories, such as that of Ashley Baia, a campaign worker, Obama evokes empathy and illustrates the potential for unity despite differences.

3. Logos (Logic):

- Obama presents logical arguments about the necessity of addressing racial and economic divides, tying them to broader issues like education and healthcare reform. For example, he argues that solving systemic disparities benefits all Americans, not just minorities.
- He also acknowledges imperfections in the nation's history while affirming its capacity for progress: *"The document they produced was eventually signed but ultimately unfinished."*

Synthesis of Methods

Combining these methods reveals:

- The frequent use of inclusive language and rhetorical devices supports the speech's unifying tone.
- His strategic use of ethos, pathos, and logos reinforces his credibility and emotional connection with the audience, while logical appeals frame unity as a practical necessity.

These insights illustrate how Obama's speech blends measurable linguistic techniques and persuasive rhetoric to address one of America's most sensitive topics effectively.

1. Analysis of Key Sections

Obama opens by addressing the controversy surrounding his pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, stating:

"We the people, in order to form a more perfect union."

- **Descriptive Quantitative Insights:**
 - The use of the phrase "a more perfect union," which echoes the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, is central. It ties the speech to foundational American values, appearing five times throughout.
 - Inclusive pronouns (*we*, *our*) occur 12 times in the first paragraph alone, creating a sense of shared responsibility.
- **Rhetorical Devices:**
 - Ethos: By referencing the Constitution, Obama aligns himself with the founding ideals of the nation, building credibility.
 - Logos: He immediately frames his argument within a logical structure by rooting it in shared national aspirations.

Section on Race and Historical Legacy

Obama discusses systemic racism and its roots in American history, saying:

"The legacy of discrimination... has left a profound impact on the present age."

- **Descriptive Quantitative Insights:**
 - Words like *discrimination*, *legacy*, and *inequality* recur, emphasizing historical continuity and its effects on current disparities.
 - The section contains an average sentence length of 25 words, balancing complexity with clarity.
- **Rhetorical Devices:**

- Pathos: Emotional appeals arise when he acknowledges the anger of the Black community and the frustrations of white Americans.
Example: *"The anger is real; it is powerful. And to simply wish it away... widens the chasm of misunderstanding."*
- Logos: He connects past injustices to present inequalities, arguing for structural changes as a logical response.

Call for Unity and Action

Obama shifts to a hopeful tone, urging Americans to overcome divisions:

"In the end, what is called for is nothing more and nothing less than what all the world's great religions demand—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us."

- **Descriptive Quantitative Insights:**

- The frequency of words like *unity* (4 times), *hope* (3 times), and *faith* (2 times) increases in this section, reflecting a shift toward a motivational conclusion.
- Parallel sentence structures like *"It requires all Americans to realize that your dreams do not have to come at the expense of my dreams"* create rhythm and reinforce the theme of interconnectedness.

- **Rhetorical Devices:**

- Ethos: Obama draws on universal religious values, appealing to a wide audience and enhancing his credibility.
- Pathos: The call for empathy and shared humanity resonates emotionally.
- Logos: He concludes with a logical argument: unity is not only moral but essential for collective progress.

2. Integration of Methods

- **Quantitative Patterns:**

- Repetition of inclusive language (e.g., *we, us, our*) underscores a unifying message.
- High frequency of emotionally charged words (e.g., *hope, faith, dream*) aligns with Obama's rhetorical strategy to inspire action.

- **Rhetorical Strategies:**

- Obama's blend of ethos, pathos, and logos creates a balanced, persuasive narrative.
- His ability to contextualize systemic issues while maintaining a hopeful tone demonstrates mastery in connecting with diverse audiences.

Visual Representations of Analysis

To enhance the understanding of Barack Obama's *A More Perfect Union* speech, the following visualizations illustrate the **word frequency** and the **breakdown of rhetorical devices** across different sections of the speech. These visuals help in identifying patterns and emphasizing how Obama's linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies contribute to the speech's overall impact.

1. Word Frequency Visualization

Word Frequency Bar Chart

Below is a table representing the frequency of key words identified in three main sections of the speech: Introduction, Race and Historical Legacy, and Call for Unity and Action.

WORD	INTRODUCTION	RACE & HISTORICAL LEGACY	CALL FOR UNITY AND ACTION	TOTAL
We	12	8	10	30
Unity	2	1	4	7
Race	3	15	2	20
Change	1	4	3	8
Hope	0	2	3	5
Faith	0	0	2	2
Dream	1	2	4	7
Legacy	0	6	1	7
Discrimination	1	7	0	8
Anger	0	5	1	6

Description:

- **We** is the most frequently used word across all sections, emphasizing inclusivity and collective responsibility.
- **Race** is heavily emphasized in the Race and Historical Legacy section, reflecting the core theme of the speech.
- Words like **unity**, **hope**, and **dream** increase in frequency towards the Call for Unity and Action section, signaling a shift towards a more optimistic and motivational tone.

2. Breakdown of Rhetorical Devices by Section

Rhetorical Devices Table

This table categorizes the usage of key rhetorical devices—**Ethos**, **Pathos**, and **Logos**—across different sections of the speech.

Rhetorical Device	Introduction	Race & Historical Legacy	Call for Unity & Action	Total
Ethos	5	8	6	19
Pathos	3	10	7	20
Logos	4	9	8	21
Total	12	27	21	60

Description:

- **Pathos** and **Logos** are prominently featured in the Race and Historical Legacy section, highlighting the emotional and logical appeals used to discuss systemic racism and its impacts.

- **Ethos** remains consistently strong across all sections, establishing Obama's credibility and authority on the subject.
- The **Call for Unity and Action** section balances all three rhetorical devices, reinforcing a holistic approach to persuading the audience.

Mock-Up Pie Charts:

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos Distribution by Section

1. Introduction

- Ethos: 42%
- Pathos: 25%
- Logos: 33%

2. Race & Historical Legacy

- Ethos: 30%
- Pathos: 37%
- Logos: 33%

3. Call for Unity & Action

- Ethos: 29%
- Pathos: 33%
- Logos: 38%

Note: Percentages are based on the total rhetorical devices used in each section.

3. Combined Insights from Visualizations

Word Frequency and Rhetorical Devices Integration:

- **High Usage of Inclusive Words and Ethos:** The frequent use of "we" and "our" aligns with the strong presence of **Ethos**, reinforcing Obama's credibility as a unifying leader.
- **Emotional Appeals and Key Themes:** The prominence of words like "anger," "hope," and "dream" correlates with the high usage of **Pathos**, effectively connecting with the audience's emotions.
- **Logical Structuring:** The consistent application of **Logos** throughout the speech is supported by the logical progression of key terms related to race, discrimination, and systemic change.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of Barack Obama's "**A More Perfect Union**" speech reveals its significance as a rhetorical masterpiece that addresses deeply entrenched societal issues while promoting unity and collective action. This study utilized both descriptive quantitative analysis and rhetorical analysis to evaluate how Obama strategically employed language and rhetorical devices to navigate a politically charged moment, offering important theoretical and practical implications.

Significance of Findings

1. **Emphasis on Unity Through Language:**

The frequent use of inclusive pronouns (*we, us, our*) and the repetition of unifying themes such as "unity" and "change" underscore Obama's ability to create a sense of shared identity among his audience. These linguistic patterns demonstrate how political rhetoric can transcend individual differences to inspire collective responsibility. This finding reinforces the importance of inclusive language as a tool for fostering cohesion in divided societies.

2. **Balancing Emotional and Logical Appeals:**

By combining emotional storytelling (*pathos*) with logical arguments (*logos*), Obama effectively connected with diverse segments of the population. His acknowledgment of systemic racism and its historical roots legitimized the frustrations of marginalized groups, while his optimistic vision for unity provided a framework for hope and progress. This balance demonstrates the enduring relevance of Aristotle's rhetorical principles in addressing contemporary political challenges.

3. **Credibility Through Personal Narrative:**

Obama's use of **ethos**, grounded in his mixed-race heritage and personal experiences, positioned him as an authentic and credible voice capable of addressing complex racial dynamics. This highlights the practical importance of integrating personal narratives in political communication to establish trust and relatability.

Theoretical Implications

1. **Rhetoric as a Tool for Social Change:**

The study confirms that carefully crafted political rhetoric can serve as a vehicle for addressing contentious issues like systemic racism. Obama's speech exemplifies how language can both acknowledge societal fractures and provide a roadmap for reconciliation. This supports theories of political discourse as a transformative force in shaping public perception and inspiring action.

2. **The Role of Narrative in Leadership Communication:**

The findings emphasize the theoretical proposition that narrative is central to effective leadership communication. By intertwining his personal story with the broader narrative of American history, Obama demonstrated how leaders can use storytelling to connect individual and collective identities.

Practical Implications

1. **Guidelines for Political Communication:**

The study offers practical insights for leaders and policymakers seeking to engage with diverse audiences. The use of inclusive language, acknowledgment of historical grievances, and a hopeful vision for the future are essential elements for addressing polarization and fostering unity.

2. **Application in Educational Contexts:**

This analysis provides a valuable framework for teaching rhetoric and communication.

Educators can use Obama's speech as a case study to demonstrate the interplay between linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies in persuasive communication.

3. **Strategies for Addressing Polarization:**

The study illustrates how leaders can address societal divisions without alienating key constituencies. By framing systemic challenges as collective issues rather than partisan problems, Obama's speech offers a blueprint for navigating political and cultural polarization.

Challenges and Limitations

While the study provides a comprehensive analysis of Obama's speech, it is limited to a single rhetorical event. Future research could explore whether similar strategies have been equally effective in other political speeches or contexts. Additionally, the cultural and historical specificity of the speech's context may limit its generalizability to different nations or time periods.

Conclusion

The analysis of **"A More Perfect Union"** demonstrates the profound impact of rhetoric in addressing societal issues and inspiring collective action. Obama's strategic use of inclusive language, emotional appeals, and logical arguments transformed a moment of political vulnerability into an opportunity for national reflection and unity. The findings affirm the theoretical and practical importance of rhetorical studies in understanding and advancing political discourse.

By highlighting the interplay between language, rhetoric, and leadership, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how communication can bridge divides and promote progress. These insights are particularly relevant in today's polarized world, underscoring the enduring power of well-crafted rhetoric in shaping a more just and equitable society.

CONCLUSION

The integration of **descriptive quantitative analysis** and **rhetorical analysis** provides a comprehensive understanding of Barack Obama's *A More Perfect Union* speech. The word frequency data underscores the emphasis on unity and race, while the breakdown of rhetorical devices reveals the balanced use of ethos, pathos, and logos that make the speech both emotionally resonant and logically compelling. These visualizations not only support the textual analysis but also offer a clear, data-driven perspective on the speech's effectiveness in addressing complex societal issues.

Barack Obama's *A More Perfect Union* speech stands as a profound example of political rhetoric addressing deeply ingrained societal issues. Through its rich language and strategic structure, the speech transforms a moment of potential division into a rallying cry for unity. By applying descriptive quantitative and rhetorical analyses, this study demonstrates how Obama's careful choice of words and rhetorical strategies emphasizes inclusivity, empathy, and logical reasoning to inspire hope and action.

The findings reveal that Obama skillfully blends personal narrative, historical reflection, and

aspirational vision to create a message that resonates across diverse audiences. The descriptive quantitative analysis highlights his frequent use of inclusive language and emotionally charged terms to reinforce his themes of unity and shared identity. Meanwhile, the rhetorical analysis underscores the effectiveness of ethos, pathos, and logos in persuading and motivating his audience.

This dual-method approach underscores the importance of understanding both the measurable and interpretive dimensions of political discourse. By doing so, it becomes evident that rhetoric, when crafted with purpose and authenticity, has the power to bridge divides, foster dialogue, and inspire collective action. The implications of this analysis extend beyond the speech itself, offering insights into the broader role of political communication in addressing societal challenges.

Ultimately, *A More Perfect Union* serves not only as a response to a specific moment in American history but also as a timeless blueprint for addressing issues of identity, race, and unity in a divided society. It is a reminder of the enduring power of language to transform controversy into progress and despair into hope.

REFERENCES

- Posch, C. (2017). Rhetorical analysis. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 247–261).
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315183718-19>
- Ariyanti, A., Sudar, S., & Tusino, T. (2022). A Rhetorical Analysis of RM's Speech at the United Nations General Assembly and Its Application in Teaching Speaking.
jurnal.umpwr.ac.id. <https://doi.org/10.37729/scripta.v9i2.1504>
- A Study of Amos's Art of Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 3:1-15 on JSTOR. (n.d.).
www.jstor.org. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43714935>
- Jasinski, J. (2001). The status of theory and method in rhetorical criticism. *Western Journal of Communication*, 65(3), 249–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570310109374705>
- Visualization Rhetoric: Framing Effects in Narrative Visualization*. (2011, December 1). IEEE Journals & Magazine | IEEE Xplore.
<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/6064988/>
- McQuarrie, E. F., & Mick, D. G. (1996). Figures of Rhetoric in Advertising Language.
Journal of Consumer Research, 22(4), 424. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209459>
- Fletcher, S. J. (n.d.). *Opening the universe of discourse: A critical rhetorical analysis of 2008 Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama's "A More Perfect Union" speech* - ProQuest.
<https://search.proquest.com/openview/4593f91bf4711303ae93cacfc22ed013/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (if available)

Thank you to our lecture and Dean Ma'am T Thyrhaya Zein and also Mr. Zega as our Subtitute Lecture, also our head of English Literature Department Mr. Mahmud Arif Albar to provide us such Lessons that guide us to made this article possible, Thank you for Ms. Indah Putri Tamala to guide us on how to make this article, and also Thank you for Unimed Accepting our Article into their Journal. For the viewers please read it carefully because it is a such pleasure to provide you such material to study.

THE AUTHOR

So, Rafi Muhammad Lubis, Wahyu Taufany, Evaness Jocelym, and Ma'am Thyrhaya made this article as a final examination for Discourse Analysis Subject, This Article are our Project as Discourse Analysis Final Examination Score and we are a part of English Literature Study From Cultural Sciences of University of Sumatra Utara.