

# Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Comparative Rhetorical Analysis: Barack Obama and Mitt Romney

*Barack Hussein Obama* was born in August, 1961. He is America's forty fourth president. However, he became the first African-American president. Additionally, he was born in Hawaii and graduated from Columbia University and Harvard Law School. Surprisingly, he was president of the Harvard Law Review. In history, he was a leader because he worked as a civil right attorney in Chicago, taught constitutional rights, represented the district in the Illinois Senate and also served Americans as a senator. Moreover, he won the noble peace prize laureate in January 2009. Above all, he is also the first American president to publicly support and legalize same sex marriages. On the other hand, Willard *Mitt Romney* was born in March, 1947. Mitt is an American businessman, politician and a nominee of the Republican Party, for the United States presidency in the 2012 elections. Additionally, he was the seventieth governor of Massachusetts. He also participated in his parents' campaigns.

In summary, both Obama and Mitt are individuals with a leadership background and are vying for the presidency seat in 2012. However, there are differences and similarities in the use of ethos, pathos and logos, as well as language, repetitions and oppositions in the Obama and Romney's campaigns.

The use of Ethos in both Obama and Romney's campaigns are evident due to their ethical appeals aimed at convincing voters using their individual characters. Both candidates are charismatic. Ethos is also demonstrated in their individual credibility related to their personas and appeal as orators. Additionally, both leaders exhibit the use of pathos in their campaigns. They present emotional topics for discussion as a way of emotionally connecting to their supporters. This means that both Obama and Romney persuade their supporters by appealing to their emotions. In this regard, they use choice of language hence one can enhance an argument by use of appropriate themes and metaphors. Additionally, the use of logos is also applicable in most of the debates fronted by these candidates. They use logical discussions regarding the economy, security, and governance in an attempt to win support of voters. It is an important technique that can be used inductively or deductively. In summary, both Obama and Romney do use these techniques in order to woo many voters to their side.

Obama is known to be use highly personal in tone. Moreover, he is dialogic in his content and has a light diction which makes him relaxed while making his speeches. This makes him an orator because he uses his facial expressions, gestures and other body languages that demonstrate his oratory skills. Additionally, his personal tone in the speeches is marked by the frequent use of the pronoun “I”. This shows that he voices his personal beliefs, interests, opinions, and biases as proof of his democratic rights. He also uses the pronoun “we” which is inclusive. As a result, this indicates the dialogic nature of his speeches thus invites his audience to his speech. In addition, it invites the audience to think about the discussion regarding the role of democracy and their values. On the other hand, Romney as well is known for his use of metaphor to appeal to his audience’s emotions. For example, in his talk on the voodoo government and the big bird, Romney was able to trigger the emotions of the audience. In summary, both the speeches of Obama and Romney are characterized by the ethos.

Pathos lies in facts and nostalgic opening of Obama’s speeches. For example, he did not mention his partnership with Indonesians but intelligently mentioned his upbringing in Indonesia, in the opening of his speech. Additionally, he said that Indonesia is part of him as he went on to elaborate his childhood experiences. This means that he was able to frame the audience before he could go ahead and talk openly on the partnership Indonesia has with the U.S. and the democratic role of the two nations. Romney’s speeches have pathos in them because he says that he cannot borrow from China in order to pay a debt, hence his government will be cautious on how it spends the money (Robinson 67). In summary, Obama uses his childhood experiences as a sentiment that would engage his audience while Romney uses the big bird story to talk of the government’s expenditure.

Obama appeals to logic or reason. This is because he talks about, religious faith development and democracy which according to him are important to human development. In addition, he argues and counter-argues about these issues, giving real examples in a bid to strengthen his arguments.

For example, Obama has a stand on the economy that sees him repeal the Bush tax cuts. This means that he will formally withdraw this taxation mode. However, he will only withdraw for those who earn more than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Moreover, Obama will also lower taxes on the manufacturing

industry stimulate spending and cut on taxes, for the economy to grow. Romney also does deal with the same issue and his view is that the Bush tax should be permanently eliminated. Additionally, he will lower corporate tax rate across the board to twenty five percent, cut taxes and regulations to encourage economy development and government spending to reduce deficit In summary, both Obama and Romney use logic so that the audience can also understand their ways of reasoning, on the way forward to improving the economy of the states.

Language is essential in every speech made by an individual. Consequently, it is important for Obama and Romney to be cautious on their language use so as to woo many voters. In addition, according to a research conducted on the two candidates, both candidates have the words, 'people,' 'time,' 'America and president' in their speeches. This means that they both put an emphasis on what their campaign is all about. In addition, Obama repeats his Durham speech almost word for word. On the other hand, Romney keeps repeating the truth of the economic state to his audience.

This is because it will keep on reminding the audience on the failures of Obama as the current president, hence could have more supporters.

Additionally, since the two are competitors, it is natural for them to oppose each other while making their speeches. For example; Obama attacked Romney on his stand on issues concerning women's health where Romney states there stances that can moderate abortion. On the other hand, Romney opposes Obama's idea on employers sponsoring their employees with health insurance that will cater for contraceptives. In summary, it is normal for candidates to oppose each other as each tries to win more supporters.

In conclusion, it is important for any individual making a speech to ensure that their speech has ethos, pathos and logos. This acts as a pillar to every speech constructed. Arguably, an audience will only listen if they respect the individual offering the speech as demanded by ethos.

Moreover, emotional connection of a speaker to an audience can be achieved in many ways, just as pathos dictates. It is also important to consider logos, because unless people find meaning in what an individual is saying, it may be difficult to convince them. In summary, Obama and Romney use the above three pillars in

their speeches so as to woo many supporters. Moreover, they exercise proper language use through repetition of some facts in their campaigns.