Rhetorical Analysis of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Impact of Social Media during Pandemic

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Abstract

The current study aimed to conduct the rhetorical analysis of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and impact of social media during pandemic. Recently, a new coronavirus disease COVID-19 has emerged as a respiratory infection with significant concern for global public health hazards. However, with each passing day, more and more confirmed cases are being reported worldwide which has alarmed the global authorities including the World Health Organization (WHO). In this study, the researcher applied the Toulmin model of argumentation as a theoretical framework. The secondary data were obtained from social media, i.e. Twitter and Facebook from 1st March 2020 to 30th April

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2020. Therefore, all the data were based on the current issue of COVID-19. The qualitative approach is used in this study. The findings revealed rhetoric situation led to the construction of the rhetoric message produced in social media. The rhetoric message was the subject of conversation in social media regarding COVID-19, which is produced intentionally to persuade others. However, rhetoric of the current situation in the pandemic COVID-19 cannot be ignored, the role of rhetorical arguments in the digital era, or better known as the digital rhetoric. Social media is responsible for the rhetorical situation today.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

As the COVID-19 outbreak is going on, a wave of fear and worry in the society has arisen. No one wants to get infected with a virus that has a relatively high risk of death. The novel COVID-19 infection has deeply affected globally. With the number of people infected by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which is rapidly increasing worldwide, public anxieties and worries are elevated in many regions Tang et all. Therefore, it is a need to design an effective antistigma program that breaks the misperception in COVID-19, increases the public's knowledge in COVID-19, and spreads encouraging positive and supportive messages. However, it is believed that such a program can be designed with the use of social media, given the high access rate in social media (Tavoschi et al., 2020). Social media through the Internet allows people to communicate without time and space limits, and different platforms of social media have been well developed. With the correct information and knowledge posted on social media, the fear and stigma are likely to be lowered. However, additional related programs or events on social media are needed to overcome the current fear and stigma of COVID-19 globally. Therefore, social media can play a very significant role to persuade people about the infection of COVID-19. The dissemination of information has been detected on social media mostly on Facebook and Twitter. The development of human communications technologies has now penetrated all spheres of life. In

the world, the presence of communication technology is also welcomed. The discourse is produced and then disseminated through social media and to the community through a gadget that provides social media applications. It has been observed that from the beginning of this century the current outbreak of COVID-19 is the third attack. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 seems to be challenging to cope just like the previous coronavirus outbreaks considering the rapid spread via droplets and non-availability of any useful vaccines Sahu et al 2020.

Social media platforms provide direct access to an unprecedented amount of content and may amplify rumors. The online users tend to attain information adhering to their worldviews Bessi et al. (2015), to ignore dissenting information and to form polarized groups around shared narratives Bessi et al 2018. Some studies pointed out that fake news and inaccurate information may spread faster and wider than fact-based news (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

Aristotle defines rhetoric as any means used to persuasion about a topic. According to him, the rhetoric contains three elements, namely: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos concerns the credibility of the communicators. The pathos of the ability to stimulate the emotions, and logos interpreted logical evidence that the nature of the message, the message is based on the arguments and evidence, rationalization discourse is used, with the ability to express arguments in favor of becoming a rational proposition. Aristotle believed that ideally, people will be persuaded by the logos, but he acknowledged that most people are more influenced by what we feel and care, rather than what is believed to be factual evidence. In the process, the rhetoric has a clear persuasive function, at the same epistemic function is a way to discover what is known and what is known about the subject. Therefore, the modern definition, rhetoric is a merely deliberate use of language to influence others. Whenever we use language, we are engaged in the act of rhetoric.

Here, the role of rhetoric arguments plays the role of social networks. This phenomenon has become a new challenge for an epidemic to pandemic (COVID-19) situation in developing the ethos, logos, and pathos, not just to be liked and chosen by the community, but can raise awareness of the public regarding COVID-19.

Discourse is needed to produce public awareness, anger, and appropriate action. The strength or weakness of urgency, depending on the clarity of perception and the level of interest in it, so that the

discourse can remove, or persist despite repeated modified. However, social media should construct a positive message about the current situation. Meanwhile, the characteristics of social media by Antony Mark (2008: 05) there are five, namely: 1). Participation, 2). Openness, 3). Conversations / Chat, 4). Community, and 5). Connectedness. The first character is participation. Social media encourages contributions and feedback (feedback) from any interested person, or are interested in using social media. Social media allow users to easily participate in it, share and create the message. The second character is openness. Almost all social media services open to feedback employing elections, comment, and share information. Rarely encountered restrictions to access and utilize the contents of the message in social media. If no password protection for the contents on social media, then it is likely to be considered strange. The third character is a conversation/ chat. The fourth character is a community. Social media allows the formation of communities quickly and communicate effectively. And the fifth character is connectedness. The majority of social media thrives because it can serve connectivity between users. The ability of facilities obtained through links to websites, sources of information, and other user-users. Social media is media designed to extend human social interaction, using the internet and web technologies.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research focuses basically on Toulmin's argumentation model. Toulmin introduces a layout of argument that is more complex and 'candid' than the traditional, overly simplistic premise/conclusion layout of syllogistic arguments. Still working under a jurisprudential model, he believes we need a more complex set of categories to correspond with the vast array of different types of 'legal utterances' each having its own 'distinct function' (Toulmin, 1958, p. 96). We begin with the first category, a claim that, if challenged, we will need to establish. If a challenger asks 'What have you got to go on?" in response to the claim, we could present our data, "the facts we appeal to as a foundation for our claim" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 97). A challenger could then ask a different type of question, "How do you get there?". This is a request for the "bearing of the data" on the claim rather than "more factual information" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 98). In other words, what is being asked for is an 'inference-license' that shows that the step from

the data to the claim was legitimate. These inference-licenses will take the form of hypothetical statements that authorize the move from data to claim. Such statements are called warrants. "[Warrants] may normally be written very briefly (in the form 'If D, then C')," explains Toulmin (1958), "but for candour's sake, they can profitably be expanded, and made more explicit: 'Data such as D entitle one to draw conclusions, or make claims, such as C'…" (p. 98). Warrants, unlike data, tend to be relied on implicitly and they are established differently from data since they are "general, certifying the soundness of all arguments of the appropriate type" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 100, italics in original). Toulmin (1958) diagrams these components as follows:
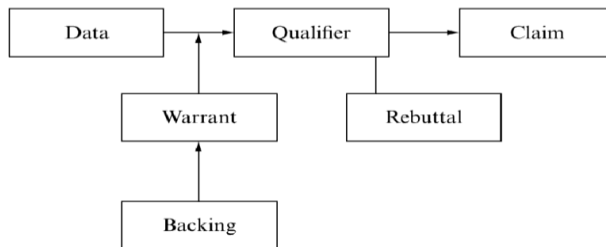

Fig 1: Toulmin Model

The qualifier indicates the strength that the data confer on the claim given the warrant. For example, we may need to qualify our claim with unequivocal terms such as 'necessarily' or more guarded terms like 'probably'. Closely related to the qualifier is the rebuttal which specifies the exceptional circumstances, if any, in which the warrant loses its authority (Toulmin, 1958, p. 101). What remains is the backing, which corresponds to another type of question a challenger could ask, this one about the warrant. After presenting a warrant, a challenger may ask "But why do you think that?". In response to this we would provide information which functions to give the warrant authority. Much like the warrant, the backing is also usually implicit (Toulmin, 1958, p. 103-4).

Rhetoric spectators / audience consist only of those who are able to be influenced by the discourse and be a mediator changed. However, the situation in the rhetoric of social media is blasted by various constraints of beliefs, attitudes, interests and motives that are different from friends on Facebook and Twitter. Here is an interesting point to

prove, how people globally resilience in the face of obstacles in the rhetorical situation.

The argument is an important component of logical thinking. When debaters engage in argumentation they integrate evidence, claim, and justification in their argument. The quality of the argumentation can be analyzed using frameworks developed by scholars such as Toulmin (1958), this study adopted Toulmin's argument to visualize the rhetoric situation of COVID-19 in social media. The writer believes it is important to use a better strategy to provide an argument, especially in presenting the rhetoric situation of COVID-19 in social media. The writer uses Toulmin's model to investigate the rhetoric situation on social media, particularly on Twitter. The writer chooses Toulmin model because his analysis and instruction are not only providing a method for examining an argument but also introduces structural terms that are clear and useful. Toulmin's model of argumentation is an effective way of getting to the how and why levels of the arguments we read. This model is presented into different parts (like claim, reasons, and evidence), it emphasizes not only claim, reasons, and evidence, but also the social context in which an argument occurs: the attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that people must hold to say that certain reasons are good.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research approach is qualitative using a critical paradigm. In the critical paradigm, a theory is a critique to reveal the actual conditions behind a reality that is observed empirically. The secondary data were used in this study. For this purpose, social media is used, i.e. Twitter and Facebook. The data were collected from 1st March 2020 to 30th April 2020. However, all the data is based on the current issue of COVID-19. The different posts and photographs were selected and included in this study (see appendix). The data were analyzed in the form of tables within the context of rhetoric situation of COVID-19 in social media. According to Kouzy et al (2009), analysis of rhetoric, can be applied to almost any text or graphics, such as speeches, essays, advertising, poetry, photos, web pages, and even stickers. Text analysis becomes an important element in researching aspects of highly interpretive, especially analyst for the effect of the text. It shows the diversity of the research field in rhetoric took a variety of different disciplines.

Basically, in this research Toulmin model of argument is applied. This study is aimed at the implications of theoretical perspectives, the nature of argument fields, and the nature of the elements and uses of the Toulmin model. Thus, the Toulmin model has advanced from its supportive role in rhetoric situation particularly about COCID-19 in social media. Toulmin proposed six basic parts of his model of argumentation. These include a claim, data, warrant, backing, qualifier and rebuttal. The first element of this model is the claim which shows what is being argued. The second component is data and it is the foundation or evidence. The third aspect of the model is based on warrant that infers data to claim. Warrants operate at a higher level of generality than a claim or reason, and they are not normally explicit. While backing supports the validity of warrant. The qualifier signifies the degree of strength that the data deliberate on a claim in virtue of the warrant. The rebuttal consists of exclusions to the applicability of warrant.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Toulmin model is primarily analytical which presents the structure of an argument. However, hashtags on Twitter are based on an argument and the evaluation process can be assessed through strong and fallacious aspects. Toulmin's model of argument is based on six components. Here is the description of Toulmin's model with the evaluation of COVID-19 in social media.

Table 2. Analysis Toulmin Argument

Challenge to US	Claim	Evidence	Warrant	Backing	Rebuttal	Qualifier
The US now leads COVID-19 cases from the rest of the World	The outbreak of COVID-19 in the US	COVID-19 cases increased day by day as Hillary Clinton mocked the situation 'Trump did promise, America First'.	COVID-19 outbreak caused crises.	Emergency declared throughout the US.	People were disappointed in government policies. Trump declared the negative role of media.	US Government announced mega relief packages for the outbreak of COVID-19.
The outbreak of COVID-19 all over the World.	Why Asia looks safer than the US?	A mess in America due to the outbreak of COVID-19.	COVID-19 caused huge tension not only in the US but the rest of the world as well.	-----	The role of social media is observed as controversial in the outbreak of COVID-19.	The whole world is taking effective steps to stop this COVID-19 outbreak.
Medical advice of Trump against COVID-19 outbreak.	Donald Trump Claimed that Hydrooxycholoroquine & Azithromycin real game-changer in the history of medicine.	Trump stated that the 'Food and Drug Administration had just approved the use of an anti-malaria medication called chloroquine to treat patients infected with coronavirus'.	FDA yet to decide the usage of Hydrooxycholoroquine & Azithromycin against the COVID-19.	-----	Hillary Clinton and others opposed the advice of Trump.	There is a huge shortage of Hydroxycholoroquine & Azithromycin medicine after Donald Trump Claim.

COVID-19 caused Disappointment in Italy.	COVID-19 is not a joke. The people in Italy did not take it seriously.	The medical staff disappointed on the hilarious situation of COVID-19 outbreak in Italy.	The massive death rate shocked the Government and rest of the World as well.	-----	Italy Government and people did not follow as China did in the outbreak of COVID-19.	COVID-19 outbreak is out of control in Italy.
Myth in India	Cow urine and dung cure in fighting COVID-19.	No solid scientific evidence proved till now against the COVID-19 cured with cow urine and dung. According to the BBC, there is no proof of cure against COVID-19 in cow urine.	The excessive use of cow urine and dung may cause disaster.	----	Although, this activity not appreciated by the educated community in India but most of the Hindus still practicing.	The people in the world are mocking on this activity and considered it useless and dangerous.
China defeated the COVID-19	China set a role model before the World in defeating the COVID-19.	The Chinese government, medical staff and cooperation of the public made it possible to defeat the COVID-19 within the limited time.	In China, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 more than 80 thousand people affected.	----	China defeated COVID-19 due to the appropriate steps taken throughout the country.	Now the hustle-bustle of life is going on all over China. A great nation, Great Country.
Pak-China collaborative effort against COVID-19	China and Pakistan helped each other to fight COVID-19.	China sent medical equipment and staff to Pakistan.	Consequently, the situation in Pakistan is under control.	---	----	Pakistani Government and people appreciated China. Both declared as an iron friend.

Aside from analyzing the proof line of the arguments, this study seeks to identify the arguments and claims mostly spread on social media due to COVID-19. Toulmin discusses how a warrant "operates" on data leading to the claim. Nevertheless, the model is permitting the use of logical forms of reasoning, with warrants and backings linking the grounds to the claim. There are seven different claims have been analysed. All the claims have solid warrants which are described in detail. This analysis demonstrates several Toulmin scheme. Firstly, there is a strong relationship among claim, data and warrant. Though, the warrant is considered to be drawn from data. Secondly, warrant is taken to change as the argument unfolds. It is gradually moulded into a shape fitting the case at hand. Thirdly, the functional aspects (backing, qualifier and rebuttal,) are reflected to be discursive procedures. They play a very significant role in warrant construction rather than supporting from data to claim. As Toulmin argues, for example, a qualifier specifies "…a degree of force which our data confer on our claim in virtue of our warrant" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 101). Fourthly, the component of backing is considered in supporting all these steps that are taken to arrive at an applicable warrant.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings explore that the Toulmin's model of argument also depicted the real canvas of persuasion through his modern concept.

Based on such an epidemic to pandemic (COVID-19) situation, we can conclude, social media is a persuasion that is taken into account by the users globally. This is where the role of social networking. Through a status on Facebook / Twitter, news headlines along with the link, it will be read by friends or followers who are connected through social networking. Which can establish a value, if the account owner's integrity and influence. In rhetoric, the integrity of the account owner called ethos.

At present, in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic, all the nations of the world implemented strict self- and forced-quarantine measures across the country. This measure may continue for an unpredictable long time. In the absence of interpersonal communication, depression and anxiety are more likely to occur and worsen. In this situation, social media can play a significant role. For the current COVID-19 crisis, we call for the development of a real-time information sharing system, drawing from analyses of social media platforms and rhetoric situation have a significant role. Social media is responsible for the rhetorical situation today. The rhetoric of the current situation cannot be ignored, the role of rhetorical arguments in the digital era, or better known as the digital rhetoric. Looking at the phenomenon of social media can be used as a means to respond to the situational rhetoric, that social media should be used. On the other hand, the development trend of the science of rhetoric, rhetoric makes should not be identical with the speech. Indeed, social media requires knowledge in using online media, in particular establishing forceful rhetorical arguments in the rhetoric situation. It is rhetorical arguments relate to the situation, where the use of rhetoric discourse construction are uneven in practice the rhetoric, and challenges for researchers to obtain the theory in practice the rhetoric of social media users.

Social media can be harnessed to support the public health response regarding COVID-19. For example, in China during the massive community-wide quarantine it is particularly important to use social media wisely as social media provide an opportunity to communicate the reasons for quarantine, provide reassurance and practical advice to prevent rumors and panic. Digital technologies can overcome the social distancing constraints during mass quarantine, and provide mental health support resources and solidarity with those persons in a lock-down situation. A well-planned analysis of global

online conversations could provide a rapid assessment of the spread and possible changes in public attitudes and behaviors (e.g. self-isolating, hand- washing, accessing health care), awareness about the disease and its symptoms, and the impact of important decisions taken during the outbreak (e.g. quarantine measures, development of new vaccines, internationally coordinated responses) on public perceptions and attitudes.

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