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**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES BY PRESIDENT
VLADIMIR PUTIN AND PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA
CONCERNING THE CRIMEAN EVENTS**

The present paper is an attempt to study the Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin's speech on March 18, 2014 announcing the reunion of the Crimea with the Russian Federation, and President of the USA Barack Obama's reaction to the issue two days later on March 20, 2014. The research focuses on how much these speeches have been expressive-emotive-evaluative and persuasive for their audiences, proceeding from statements put forward in Aristotle's rhetorical theory, and taking into consideration the positive and negative impacts these speeches might have made on the listeners.

Key words: Aristotle's rhetorical theory, political discourse, Putin, Obama, the Ukraine, Crimea

In the international journal *Language, Discourse, and Society* /2011/ Professor Celine Marine Pascale claims that language is more than just a tool for communicating with each other. For Pascale, "the language we use both reflects and shapes the kind of the world we create around us." According to this attitude, the Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in the political speeches of President Putin and President Obama referring to the Crimean events, create a world of chaos and make a certain impact on the listeners, consequently leading to different conclusions. Aristotle, who taught Alexander the Great how to properly argue and perform a public speech, wrote down the secret of being a persuasive speaker 2300 years ago. In *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present* /2000: 3/ Bizzell & Herzberg wrote that Aristotle is generally credited with developing the basics of the system of rhetoric that "thereafter served as its touchstone." Thus, since Aristotle's system of developing rhetoric is considered to be the touchstone of the art of rhetoric, I will consider his theory of persuasion to study the speeches of the Russian and the American presidents concerning the Crimean events.

**The Three Pillars of Public Speech Connoted Negatively or Positively
by Russian and American Presidents**

In *Ars Rhetorica* /1959/ Aristotle identified the three methods of persuasion and called them *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*. These forms are the basis of all types of speeches; if the speaker knows well about the secret of rhetoric and follows its rules then he will be able to persuade his listeners and convince them well enough of what he says.

Whether each president has a good moral character revealed through his Ethos or an appealing intellect his Logos has to do with, or he is inclined more towards a sympathetic Pathos, will be discussed below. The ability of President Putin as well as of President Obama to persuade their audiences that the Crimean determination to rejoin Russia, is legal or not, is expressed to a certain extent through the usage of the three Aristotelian notions.

To find an answer to this question I will study the Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in the speeches of both presidents.¹

Starting with the **Ethos**, it should be mentioned that it is a Greek word which indicates to showing a moral character when touching upon political problems, and speaks of establishing a moral credibility in the minds of the audience. According to Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, "if we believe that a speaker has good sense, good moral character, and goodwill, we are inclined to believe what he says" /see Edlund, Pomon 2000: 1/. Moreover, before one can convince an audience to accept anything a public speaker says, "the audience has to respect you, believe you are of good character, believe you are generally trustworthy and an authority on this speech topic."

In the beginning of his speech concerning the subject in question, President Putin says:

We hoped that Russian citizens and Russian speakers in the Ukraine, especially its southeast and the Crimea, would live in a friendly, democratic and civilized state that would protect their rights in line with the norms of international law. However, this is not how the situation developed. Time and time again attempts were made to deprive Russians of their historical memory, even of their language and to subject them to forced assimilation.

According to President Putin, the Russians who live in the Crimea, have so far been deprived of their rights. The Ethos of the president's speech here is very refined indeed, since he is trying to persuade his audience that the Russian reaction to the sufferings of Russian citizens in the Crimea is accounted for by the fact that the Russian population of the Crimea has been persistently subjected to forced assimilation. However, if the Russian citizens lived in Russia, and were deprived of their rights, it would have been the job of the Russian president to give back their rights to them, but if they, living outside Russia, are feeling insecure, then the job of the Russian President should be bringing them home safe and giving them their rights; or else, any citizen living in any country outside its own, would have the military forces of the original country guard his rights in the country welcoming him. Moreover, it is the job of the UN Human Rights Council – an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights – to book the rights of every human being in the world whether living in Russia, the Ukraine, the Crimea or elsewhere.

Now, if we focus on the effect of Ethos of the US President Obama’s speech on the same issue, we can see that his reaction to the Russian President’s speech is as follows:

The United States today is moving, as we said we would, to impose additional costs on Russia [...] we’re imposing sanctions on more senior officials of the Russian government.

The president’s speech seems to be persuasive since he wants to impose penalties on the Russians for their, as he describes, military existence in the Crimea. Obama’s approach is highly ethical since he is against the idea of war. Besides, he reminds the audience that he has previously promised and he is now keeping his word.

But is that the job of the US president? Why does the US president not leave that to the UN Security Council which is “the most powerful UN unit mandating to keep the peace” (<www.un.org>). Russia is one of the five permanent members of this council along with China, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Why should it not be the job of all the other permanent members of the UN Security Council to interfere in the problem of Russian existence in the Crimea since “all UN members must comply with Security Council decisions” and in case of any chaos “the Council sends peace-keeping forces to restore order when needed” (<www.un.org>). Accordingly, the rules of international law must be imposed not only by the US but by all the member states. Considering this, President Obama does not sound impartial and his Ethos is not persuasive enough.

Thus, the study of the Ethos of both presidents to convince their audiences considering the Crimean events is not persuasive at all since, ethically speaking, it is not their job to interfere in the inner problems of any country. Instead, it is the job of the UN Security Council to do so if there is any need for interference.

Considering **Pathos** in persuasive rhetoric, it should be mentioned that it is the quality of a persuasive presentation which appeals to the emotions of the audience. In *Ethos, Pathos, Logos: 3 Pillars of Public Speaking* /2010: 3/ Andrew Dlugan, who has deeply studied Aristotle, says that what matters most is whether “your words evoke feelings of love, sympathy, or fear? [...] Your visuals evoke feelings of compassion, or envy? [...] Your characterization of the competition evokes feelings of hate or contempt?” According to Dlugan, emotional connection can be created in many ways by a speaker, perhaps most notably by *stories*. The Pathos in President Putin’s speech is revealed indeed when he says:

Everything in the Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptized [...]. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought the Crimea into the Russian empire are also in the Crimea.

President Putin here is telling the story of Ancient Russia (he uses *Ancient Rus* below) and is reminding the Ukrainians that the brave Russian soldiers' graves are in the Crimea, which can lead the Ukrainian people to build confidence in the Russian President and the Russian soldiers who will die to protect them.

Putin continues saying:

Our concerns are understandable because we are not simply close neighbors but, as I have said many times already, we are one people. Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus' is our common source and we cannot live without each other. We want to be friends with the Ukraine and we want the Ukraine to be a strong, sovereign and self-sufficient country... Most importantly, we want peace and harmony to reign in the Ukraine, and we are ready to work together with other countries to do everything possible to facilitate and support this.

The Pathos of President Putin's speech is thus very positive, since he arouses feelings of love and compassion in the Ukrainian people by telling them that the Ukrainians and the Russians are one people and that *Ancient Rus'* is the *common source* of both nations.

In this connection it is worth referring to Aristotle again. He points out that although most people think that we make our decisions based on rational thought, however, "emotions such as anger, pity, fear, and their opposites, powerfully influence our rational judgments" /see Edlund and Pomona, 2000/. Moreover, according to Aristotle, anger is a very powerful motivating force.

Certain emotions are aroused in the audience after the following speech by President Obama:

We've emphasized that Russia still has a different path available -- one that de-escalates the situation, and one that involves Russia pursuing a diplomatic solution with the government in Kyiv, with the support of the international community. The Russian people need to know, and Mr. Putin needs to understand that the Ukrainians shouldn't have to choose between the West and Russia.

The US President here condemns the Russians as they have downscaled the situation in the Ukraine. He condemns them to have created a mode of comparison with the West assuring that the Ukrainians will not have to choose between the two. Thus, the feelings he arouses can be divided into two categories; positive pathos on the Ukrainian citizens and negative pathos on the Russian audience. The president continues:

We want the Ukrainian people to determine their own destiny, and to have good relations with the United States, with Russia, with Europe, with anyone that they choose.

It is obvious that Mr. Obama is "disposing the hearer favorably towards the speaker and unfavorably towards the opponent" /Bizzell & Herzberg 2000: 3/. Contrary to the negative feelings among the Russians, the US president is trying to pathetically arouse positive feelings among the Ukrainians towards the West, convincing them of his good-will.

The study of both presidents' speeches according to Aristotle's concept of **Logos**, which is synonymous with a logical argument, one should ask whether the speaker's message makes sense or is based on facts, statistics, and evidence. In other words, it asks if "your call-to-action leads to the desired outcome that you promise?" /Dlugan, 2010: 4/. Logos is detected in President Putin's speech in the following excerpt where he says:

Some Western politicians are already threatening us with not just sanctions but also the prospect of increasingly serious problems on the domestic front. I would like to know what it is they have in mind exactly: action by a fifth column, this disparate bunch of 'national traitors', or are they hoping to put us in a worsening social and economic situation so as to provoke public discontent? We consider such statements irresponsible and clearly aggressive in tone, and we will respond to them accordingly.

It is evident that President Putin is giving a logical answer to the western politicians who initiate to cause serious social and economic problems. He considers the tone of the US President as aggressive and so he threatens the west to respond accordingly.

On the other hand, responding to President Putin's speech President Obama says:

The world is watching with grave concern as Russia has positioned its military in a way that could lead to further incursions into the southern and eastern Ukraine. For this reason, we've been working closely with our European partners to develop more severe actions that could be taken if Russia continues to escalate the situation.

The US President is threatening to take severe actions towards the Russians. Thinking logically, according to Aristotle's Logos, this might be an indirect way of declaring war against Russia with the excuse of defending the Ukraine.

According to Edlund and Pomon, "for Aristotle, formal arguments are based on what he calls syllogisms." /Edlund and Pomon, 2000: 1/. This is reasoning that takes the form: *All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.*

We consider the following excerpt from President Putin's speech, proceeding from Aristotle's logic of syllogism:

We consider such statements irresponsible and clearly aggressive in tone, and we will respond to them accordingly.

The utterance adduced above can, thus, take the following form: *the USA is aggressive in tone. Aggressive tone leads to war. The USA leads to war.*

Therefore, according to Aristotle's logic, the Logos of President Putin's speech leads to the conclusion that President Putin is condemning the USA for leading the countries (Russia and the Ukraine) to war. The aggressiveness of Mr. Obama's tone, according to Putin, testifies to this.

Towards the end of his speech, President Putin says:

Now, throughout this crisis, we have been very clear about one fundamental principle: the Ukrainian people deserve the opportunity to determine their own future.

Referring to the same issue, President Obama says:

We want the Ukrainian people to determine their own destiny and to have good relations with the United States, with Russia, with Europe, with anyone that they choose.²

As clear from the speeches, both presidents want the Ukrainians to determine their own future. However, President Obama must be arousing anger among the Ukrainian residents of Russian origin – the largest ethnic minority in the Ukraine which forms the largest single Russian diaspora in the world counting 8,334,100 people. They form almost 17.3% of the population of the Ukraine. Moreover, according to the Russian President, these Ukrainian residents themselves have turned to the Russian government for help, and it is obvious that they cannot determine their future on their own. President Putin says:

The residents of the Crimea and Sevastopol turned to Russia for help in defending their rights and lives, in preventing the events that were unfolding and are still underway in Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov and other Ukrainian cities. Naturally, we could not leave this plea unheeded.

It is clear, that though not ethical, the Russian president is trying to give a logical reason for the Russian presence in the Ukraine.

Regarding the three pillars of rhetoric, the research shows that the Ethos of the speeches of both presidents is negative since they both are giving excuses for interfering in the Ukrainian processes. President Obama is using “an aggressive tone” and President Putin is trying to logically persuade his audience in his righteousness for “responding aggressively” in return.

It is worth mentioning what the famous sociolinguist Norman Fairclough (2000) thinks about the problem of variation with reference to people’s performance in political positions, looking at it through the prism of close correlation of people’s performance and social identity – the social class, the cultural and regional community to which they belong, gender, etc. Comparably, it can be stated that President Putin’s language is vernacular regarding the fact that he is condemning and threatening the US in the same tone, thus, speaking a language that has the toughness of his background in his communicative style.

Thus, the Ethos of President Putin’s speech is appropriate, since his compatriots are having a hard times in the Crimea and have asked for the help of Russia. However, it is neither presidents’ job to be a judge in the case; it is the job of the UN Council of Human Rights who is to find a solution to the Crimean problem.

As for the Pathos in both presidents’ speeches, it is obvious that President Putin wants the Ukrainian people to build confidence in him and in the Russian

soldiers whose graves are in the Ukraine and who died to protect the Ukrainians earlier in World War II. Nevertheless, the US President condemning the Russians to have downscaled the situation in the Ukraine is arousing negative feelings among the Russians and is pathetically giving birth to positive feelings among the Ukrainians towards the West, convincing them that the US wants to do them good.

As for the Logos in US President's speech, Mr. Obama considers it logical to impose penalties on the Russians, thus indirectly declaring war against Russia, his excuse being the defense of the Ukraine.

NOTES

1. President Putin's speech in English is taken from the *Prague Post* // Full Text of Putin's Speech on the Crimea // URL: www.praguepst.com (Retrieved March 3, 2016); President Obama's speech is picked out from Press Releases of the White House Office of the Press Secretary // Press Briefings. The White House. whitehouse.gov. JSTOR database Press Releases // URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings> (Retrieved March 3, 2016). The White House Office of the Press Secretary. JSTOR database // URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/press_releases (Retrieved March 3, 2016).
2. See p. 6 of the present paper.

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Վ. ՉԱՓԱՐԵԱՆ – Նախագահներ Վ. Պուտինի և Բ. Օրամայի՝ Ղրիմի իրադարձություններին առնչվող ելույթների քննական վերլուծություն. – Հոդվածում փորձ է արվում արխատտեյյան հռետորաբանության տեսության հիման վրա վերլուծելու Ռուսաստանի Դաշնության նախագահ Վլադիմիր Պուտինի ելույթը՝ 2014թ. մարտի 18-ին և երկու օր անց՝ մարտի 20-ին ԱՄՆ նախագահ Բարաք Օրամայի նույն խնդրին վերաբերող արձագանքը: Հետազոտությունը անդրադառնում է երկու նախագահների դիսկուրսի հուզարտահայտչական-գնահատողական որակներին և դրանցում համոզման գործառույթի իրացմանը՝ կարևորելով այն որակն և բացասական ազդեցությունները, որ այդ ելույթները թողնում են ունկնդրի վրա:

Բանալի բառեր. արխատտեյյան հռետորաբանության տեսություն, քաղաքական դիսկուրս, Պուտին, Օրամա, Ռուրահինա, Ղրիմ

В. ЧАПАРИАН – Критический анализ выступлений президента В. Путина и президента Б. Обамы о событиях в Крыму. – Настоящая статья является попыткой анализа, на основе теории риторики Аристотеля, речи президента Российской Федерации Владимира Путина (18 марта 2014 года) и речи президента США Барака Обамы спустя два дня (20 марта 2014 года) относительно крымских событий. Рассмотрены эмоционально-экспрессивно-оценочные свойства дискурса двух президентов и вопросы реализации функции персуазивности в них.

Ключевые слова: теория риторики Аристотеля, политический дискурс, Путин, Обама, Украина, Крым