



ONTOLOGI

Jurnal Pembelajaran dan Ilmiah Kependidikan

| e-ISSN: [3026-4634](https://doi.org/10.30605/ontologi.v2i2.1234) |

<https://jurnal.rahiscendekiaindonesia.co.id/index.php/ontologi>

HISTORY AND ONTOLOGY OF RHETORIC OF THE GREEK PERIOD

Melly Gunawan¹, Putri Misri Fani², Salsabila Kania Rahma³, Lily Nursa 'adah⁴

¹²³⁴ Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai

KEY WORD

Rhetoric, Greek, Ontology

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR(S):

E-mail: mellygunawan94@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study of rhetoric in ancient Greece reveals a complex interplay between the history and ontology of rhetoric. The main focus is on the development of rhetoric as a communication practice and its influence on philosophical and political thought of the period. This study highlights the important role of rhetoric in the formation of Greek individual and social identities, as well as the construction of their social realities. By analyzing classical texts and historical documents, this study explores how rhetoric was used to strengthen and influence public decisions and shape worldviews. Through an ontological approach, this study also explores the basic concepts of truth, justice, and morality that underlie rhetorical practices of the period. Thus, a historical and ontological understanding of Greek rhetoric provides deep insights into the relationship between language, power, and truth in the context of ancient culture.

INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric means the art of speaking well, which is achieved based on natural talent and technical skills. Today rhetoric is interpreted as the art of speaking well, which is used in the process of communication between humans. This art of speaking is not only speaking fluently without a clear train of thought and without content, but rather an ability to speak and give a speech briefly, clearly, concisely, and impressively (Hendrikus, 2007, p. 14)

Rhetoric was studied as an art starting in the 5th century BC (BCE) when the sophists in Greece moved from one place to another to provide teachings on political science and government with an emphasis especially on the ability to speak, namely with the art of rhetoric. Thus, the art of rhetoric or speech developed and attracted the interest of society at that time to study rhetoric. Rhetoric was studied and implemented in countries that adopted direct democracy, namely Greece and Rome. In this century rhetoric has rivaled the field of study of philosophy, where rhetoric became the art of fostering and leading humans.

Some rhetoricians at that time included Gorgias of Kalungoi (485-380), Protagoras of Abdera (480-410 BC), and Thrasymachus of Chalcedon (430-200 BC) besides that there were also other speech experts such as Socrates (470-399 BC), Socrates who was also an expert in philosophy argued that rhetoric is the art of conveying existing knowledge and its truth has been tested, according to Socrates rhetoric is not just processing and playing with empty words but must be to seek the truth, Socrates' student named Aristotle (384-322 BC), he wrote a famous rhetoric book and until now is still influential in relation to the study of rhetoric. Philosophically, rhetoric can be traced from the values contained in it. The philosopher Aristotle emphasized that human emotions vary and this can be used by an orator or speaker to influence his audience. Aristotle also gave an understanding that rhetoric is an art that has certain values. The values are truth and justice that have power and strength in society. For Aristotle, rhetoric has several functions, namely in-depth knowledge of rhetoric and the exercises that are carried out can prevent rhetoric. (Rajiyem, 2005, p. 144)

Rhetoric does not only cover a person's verbal output when speaking, but also their nonverbal output. The movement of our eyeballs or the direction of our gaze, even what objects we hold when speaking, affect whether or not our words are believed by others. The art of speaking is indeed closely related to the art of influencing others. One of the keys is to know your audience. By knowing who you are talking to, you can predict what and how you should speak, so that your words can be trusted. (Suisyanto, 2020, p. 4)

METHOD

This study uses literature study by analyzing classical texts from philosophers. This study also collects data through primary sources such as ancient Greek philosophical speeches and writings and analyzes the use of rhetoric in the historical context of the Greek period to understand the external factors that influence rhetorical practices and their development in the Greek period.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Definition of Rhetoric

Rhetoric comes from English, rethoric which means the science of speaking, which in its development means the art of speaking in public or speech to create the desired impression. Although there are various opinions about rhetoric, it can be clearly seen that the main purpose of rhetoric is to achieve the purpose of the discussion or to have effective communication. (Effendy, 2003, p. 4)

The art of speaking is called rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, a description that must be brief, clear and convincing, with the beauty of language that is composed for things that are corrective, instructive, suggestive, and defensive. Rhetoric means the art of speaking well, which is achieved based on natural talent (talent), and technical skills. Rhetoric is also often interpreted as the art of speaking well, which is used in the process of communication between humans. This art of speaking does not only mean speaking fluently without a clear train of thought and without content, but rather the ability to speak and give speeches briefly, concisely,

and impressively. Modern rhetoric includes strong memory, many high creations and fantasies, precise expression techniques and the power of proof and precise assessment. Modern rhetoric is a harmonious combination of knowledge, thought, art and speaking ability.

Rhetoric is part of language (linguistics). Especially the science of speech construction (*sprecherziehung*) (Yuana, 2000, p. 43) The starting point of rhetoric is speaking. Speaking means saying words or sentences to someone or a group of people, to achieve a certain goal (for example, motivating or providing information). Speaking is one of the special abilities of humans. Therefore, speakers are as old as the human race.

2. History of the Development of Rhetoric

Fluency in speaking may have first been demonstrated in traditional ceremonies: birth, death, proposal, marriage and so on. Speeches are delivered by people with high status. In the development of civilization, speech covers a wider field. (Rakhmat, 2008, p. 8) The first systematic rhetoric was laid by the Syracuses, a Greek colony on the island of Sicily. For years the colonies were ruled by tyrants. Tyrants anywhere in any era, love to evict people's land. Around 465 BC, the people launched a revolution. The dictator was overthrown and democracy was established. The government returned the people's land to its rightful owners. This is where the difficulty occurs, to take his rights, the landowner must be able to convince the jury in court. At that time, there were no lawyers and no land certificates. Everyone had to convince the court by talking alone. often people failed to get their land back, just because they were not good at talking. To help people win their rights in court, Corax wrote a rhetorical paper, which was named *Techne Logon* (The Art of Words). Although this paper no longer exists, from contemporary writers, we know that in the paper he talked about the "technique of possibility". If we cannot be sure of something, start from the general possibility.

3. Rhetoric in the Greek Era

Rhetoric developed in the Greek era as explained by Aly (1994:12-20), during this period rhetoric experienced its golden peak. This is related to the early history of the existence of the Greeks as nomads who had an adventurous spirit. They migrated because the geographical conditions of the country of Greece located on the Balkan Peninsula were not fertile and provided little yield for its inhabitants, then they migrated to foreign lands and founded new countries around the Aegean Sea and the coast of Asia Minor. In this land of migration, the Greeks experienced economic improvement and were able to buy slaves to take care of their daily work so that they had a lot of free time. Free time was used to strengthen the glory of life with art and thought.

Science also developed which was aimed at finding the truth so that philosophy was born. The Greeks lived in groups in an orderly social system called the Polis or City State. Polis is a political institution that includes autonomous power, self-sufficiency and independence. These three factors are the background to the freedom of thought that helped the emergence of philosophy. Language is a tool to express abstract things clearly and clearly. The concept of society and politics is abstract, namely concerning the

purpose of establishing a state, the system of government, and leadership. The ability to use language is a target for people who want to enter the ranks of the Greek political elite.

The skill of using language received attention from the rulers at that time to seize power and expand their influence. In fact, the rulers hired agitators to strengthen their influence in the eyes of the public. These agitators influenced public opinion by using religious reasons in their statements. In its development, these agitators studied the art of speaking to increase their income because they were paid. Some call these agitators sophists which means people who deceive others by using invalid arguments.

These sophists traveled from one place to another while speaking in public. If traced from the origin of the word, sophist comes from the word *sophos* which means clever because it is an expert in various sciences, including politics, language, and philosophy. Its development became a mockery or a term for those who are good at using words and playing with words when speaking. Its representation is a paid agitator so that a negative connotation arises.

Rhetoric for Greek society is a lesson that contains the art of speaking. The first founder of the study, review and analysis was Corax from Syracuse (500 BC) which was expressed through his writing entitled *Techne Logon* (the art of words). Corax describes the "technique of possibility" which contains the message that "if we cannot be sure of something, start by thinking about the general possibility". For example, a rich person is brought to court for the first time for stealing. Facing a case as exemplified, then through the technique of possibility, the question that should be considered is "Is it possible for someone who is well-off to sacrifice his honor by stealing?" (Suhandang, 2008, p. 53)

Through his description of the possibility technique, Corax laid the foundations that can be systematically used in compiling speech materials. According to Corax, a speech consists of five parts as follows.

- 1) Poem or introduction to the speech to be delivered.
- 2) Diegesis or Naratio as a part that contains a description of the main issue to be delivered.
- 3) Agon or argument as a part that presents the validity of the main issue delivered.
- 4) Parekbasis or diregsio as a supplementary note that presents other information that is considered necessary.
- 5) Peroratio or the closing part of the speech which is a conclusion and suggestion.

Since the beginning of its development in Ancient Greece, rhetoric has been interpreted differently. The first of these differences concerns the use of elements of stylistics or the style of using language; whether stylistics needs to be used in speech, what are its benefits, what are its advantages or disadvantages. The second concerns the relationship or problem of the relationship between rhetoric and morals; whether in a speech should be considered the moral issues, language ethics, conveying the truth along with evidence or validity. The third thing concerns the issue of education; does the level of education have a significant influence on rhetoric in an effort to

improve a person's morality or moral responsibility. A figure whose influence is no less important, especially for the early development of rhetoric in Greece, is Aristotle (384-332 BC). Through his work entitled "the Five Canons of Rhetoric", Aristotle put forward an understanding of the five stages of composing a speech or argument, namely:

- 1) Inventio or heuresis (discovery). At this stage, the speaker explores the topic and researches the audience to find out the most appropriate method of persuasion (literally; persuasion).
- 2) Dispositio or taxis or oikonomia (composition). At this stage, the speaker composes a speech or organizes the message.
- 3) Elocutio or lexis (style).

At this stage, the speaker chooses words (diction) and uses good and appropriate language to package the message. 4) Memoria (memory). At this stage, the speaker must remember what he wants to convey and what he has put forward, by organizing the materials of his speech. 5) Pronuntiatio, actio or hypokrisis (delivery and presentation).

CONCLUSION

Rhetoric, the art of speaking and persuasion, has deep roots in the history and ontology of Ancient Greece. The Greek period includes several important stages in the development of rhetoric. Rhetoric began to be known in Greece in the 5th century BC, especially in the democratic city of Athens. During this time, rhetoric was used in political and legal contexts. Sophists such as Gorgias and Protagoras are considered the pioneers of rhetoric. They taught the art of speaking as a way to win arguments and gain power. Ontologically, rhetoric in the Greek period was not only considered a means of communication, but also as an art that was fundamental to political and social life. Rhetoric was seen as an essential skill for participation in public life, allowing individuals to persuade and influence their communities. Greek rhetoric reflects a fusion of the art of speaking and moral philosophy, developing structures and principles that have survived and been influential to this day.

REFERENCES

- Effendy, O. U. (2003). *Ilmu, Teori dan Filsafat Komunikasi*. Bandung: Citra Aditya.
- Hendrikus, D. W. (2007). *Retorika Terampil Berpidato, Berdiskusi*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius.
- Rajiyem. (2005). *Sejarah Dan Perkembangan Retorika*.
- Rakhmat, J. (2008). *Retorika Modern Pendekatan Praktis*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya.
- Suhandang, K. (2008). *Retorika: Strategi, Teknik dan Taktik Pidato*. Bandung: Nuansa.
- Suisyanto. (2020). *Retorika Dakwah dalam Perspektif Al-Quran*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Samudra Biru.
- Yuana, H. (2000). *Efektifitas Penguasaan Retorika dan Kepercayaan Diri*