

NELSON MANDELA'S SPEECH ON RELEASE FROM JAIL

ANALYSIS

1. **Language-** reached out to local south africans by cheering with Zulu words such as "amandla awethu" which means "power to the people" or "power is in our hands." It was a political slogan, to boost the moral of people and the audience. Africa has 11 official languages, and the Dutch only allowed locals to speak Dutch (Afrikaans), if you were found speaking another language you were imprisoned and possibly killed. he used english as his speech language however, is because it is a universal language. After his release, Africa added english as one of the former languages. Government is encouraging local use of english in the education system. Sign of freedom and move towards democracy.
2. **Picture-** fist further demonstrates power to the people. call for unity, let's stand together, strong, embrace happiness and freedom. Smile demonstrates warmth. connection to "amandla awethu"
3. **Intended Audience-** a global audience, mostly to the fellow south africans, but the rest of the world was watching, after his release from prison. He salutes several people, organizations- thanking people and encouraging them to keep fighting for their cause- freedom.
4. **Rhetorical problems-** the slow pace and long speech might not have been ideal for a crowd who wanted more enthusiasm and celebration because of his release from prison, but he uses in order to demonstrate the importance and significance of every word and every person mentioned in his speech.
5. **Main Idea/Thesis-** thanking everybody who has supported him and freedom, asking for their continued support, persuading and leading towards an ideal of freedom. Words of encouragement to the people, making people feel important, influential in the struggle. Attempts to engage several dichotomies; black and white, leaders and workers. "Apartheid has no future."
6. **Ethos-** he's been arrested for his passion towards the goal of freedom and equality. He portrays himself as a simply as an instrument for the people. They are the drive behind the struggle towards freedom; he is a "humble servant" rather than a "prophet." He proves his loyalty and selflessness by

addressing the pain and suffering of others involved in the movement rather than concentrating on his own perils behind bars (27 years). He recognizes the controversial views of armed struggle but defends and is in "full agreement" with strategies employed in order to end the violence of apartheid.

On February 11 1990, after being freed from Victor Verster Prison following 27 years of incarceration as a political prisoner, Nelson Mandela delivered his first public address (Mandela, 1990). What follows is a rhetorical analysis of this speech, with particular reference to the relationship between the communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution concepts used in the speech and the outcomes of those concepts.

Communication Concepts

In examining the communication concepts in the speech, this section provides an analysis of the speaker, the audience, the language of the speech, as well specific rhetorical devices that Mandela used.

The Speaker

Nelson Mandela immediately established credibility with an opening that captured the audience's attention. Any great speaker appreciates the importance of the first few moments of a speech (Morgan, 2003). By opening with the refrain, "Amandla! Amandla! i-Afrika, mayibuye!" Mandela not only positioned himself as a fellow African, but he also used the language of his supporters. This is not just about appealing to an audience by using the vernacular, but also the language of the "struggle" with the words, "Power! Power! Africa it is ours!" Mandela proceeded to greet his friends, comrades, fellow South Africans and the world.

Mandela showed great understanding of, what Aristotle referred to as, *ethos* or, the character of the speaker. Character, in the classical Greek comes from an individual's reputation and behavior (Crowley and Hawhee, 2003). At various stages during the speech, Mandela referred to himself not only as a "humble servant" but also as a "loyal and disciplined member of the African National Congress" (A.N.C.). He also went to great lengths to explain that no individual leader would be able to take on the enormous task of leadership in South Africa. He reminded his followers and listeners that, based on the views that leaders presented as possible options for the future, the structures within the organization needed to decide on the way forward.

In concluding his speech, Mandela made reference to the trial of 1964 and to the words that he used during that trial where he spoke about the fact that he had fought against white domination and black domination and that he cherished the idea of a democratic and free society. He ended his speech (probably one of the most significant in the history of South Africa) with an ironic statement that he did not have words of eloquence to offer. It appears as if Mandela was less impressed with making the right statements and more impressed by the fact that it was his *ethos*, his character, combined with his ability to deliver on the promises, that really mattered. He went on to build this *ethos* by stating to his supporters that his remaining days were in the hands of his followers. Mandela comes across as knowledgeable and fair whilst conveying the authority that people would have expected from a man of his reputation who had been silenced for so long.

The Main Thesis and Purpose of the Speech

Having watched the speech when it was first delivered, and then relooked at recordings of the speech almost 20 years later, it is clear that Mandela used a slow and deliberate pace that was appropriate for his measured and authoritative delivery. The main idea or thesis of the speech was twofold; (a) to thank those who supported him during his incarceration and (b) to

appeal for a more concerted effort in the dismantling and "complete eradication of apartheid." Mandela is clearly trying to persuade his broader global audience that the actions of the A.N.C. were legitimate. To achieve this aim, Mandela used a combination of rhetorical techniques both in his introduction and throughout the speech in an attempt to appeal to his audience.

The Audience

Mandela extended his gratitude not only to the people of Cape Town but, conscious of the broader audience listening and watching via radio and television, to the nation of South Africa, and to "those in every corner of the globe who have campaigned tirelessly" for his release. In acknowledgement of the tremendous significance of the occasion of his release, Mandela then took time to acknowledge a range of sub-audiences.

The Form and Structure of the Speech

The speech is very simple in its design with a form that complements the content. The form is essentially one of a sweeping introduction, acknowledging a wide range of stakeholders. Mandela then made it clear that he would only make a preliminary statement and would speak in more detail after consultation. Having made that transition, Mandela moved into the main point of his speech that apartheid has no future. He used specific supporting evidence to reinforce that point and highlighted the plight of the homeless and state of the economy as two examples of the effects of apartheid. He then went on to make reference to the process of political normalization and called for greater support. In conclusion he revisited comments he made during his 1964 trial.

Rhetorical Devices

Mandela addressed his sub-audiences by using a rhetorical device called anaphora - the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verse (Banks, n.d.). This technique is used much in the same way as the great speakers such as Martin Luther King in his famous "I have a dream" speech (Luther, 1961) Mandela positioned his greeting by using the term "I salute" on at least seven different occasions, and acknowledged, amongst others, the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo, the South African Communist Party, the United Democratic front, the Black Sash, and even the National Union of South African Students. He ended his greeting and salutations by expressing his appreciation to his beloved wife and family with a very poignant statement, "I am convinced that your pain and suffering was far greater than my own."

It is worth noting that Mandela made a specific point of addressing "white compatriots" directly as he called on them to join him and his party in shaping a new South Africa. He even described the freedom movement as "the political home" for them. When analyzing the recording of the speech, it is evident that the audience in Cape Town, as is traditional in many African political rallies, made use of "call and response" interplay. This is an element of communication made famous by Dr Martin Luther King and shows that the speaker is not only aware of the audience, but also welcomes, and interacts with the audiences' verbal feedback, affirmation and encouragement.

Mandela used other verbal strategies such as figures of speech (schemes and tropes) including the metaphor (he refers to the dark days of history, to the youth as young lions who have energized the struggle, and to the sight of freedom looming on the horizon). He also used terms that the communist league would have been familiar with including "struggle", "liberty", mass mobilization", "working-class", "structures" and "democratic practice."

Mandela also made effective use of both pathos and logos (Aristotle,). Pathos refers to the emotional impact a speech. Mandela used specific phrases that are packed with emotional connotations that would not be lost on his audience, "Difficult circumstances", "unrelenting persecution", "holding the flag of liberty high", "the pride of our movement", and "great heroes." In some sense, it is as if this speech can be divided into two halves, where the first

part of the speech is much more geared towards building pathos and the second half uses the logos techniques.

Logos refers to the logic of an argument. In the second half of the speech, Mandela outlined the objectives, strategies and tactics of the A.N.C. in normalizing the political process. In this section, his speech was more concrete, containing some suggestion of the way forward including: (a) An ending of the state of emergency, (b) the release of all political prisoners, (c) negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid, (d) maintaining sanctions, and (e) the institution of universal suffrage. This brings us to an examination of the conflict resolution and negotiation concepts used in the speech.

Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Concepts

In analyzing this speech, it becomes apparent that the focus was on covering key conflict resolution and negotiation concepts. In this section, these concepts will be identified and outlined within the context of the speech itself.

Conflict Resolution Concepts

Both March and Simon (1958) and Cyert and March (1963) recognized that conflict was a naturally occurring organizational phenomenon with both positive and negative consequences. Conflict resolution involves a willingness to see both parties point of view specifically when the goals of one party are in direct contrast/conflict with the goals of the other (Spoelstra & Pienaar, 1999). Negative conflict resolution behaviour, where the primary strategy is one of overpowering the other party, is viewed as zero-sum or distributive. Positive conflict resolution is more integrative and works from the basis of common ground (Lewicki, Weiss, & Lewin, 1992; Lewicki, Barry, & Saunders, 2007).

A competence model of conflict management approaches conflict from the basis of three key dimensions, (a) effective communication, (b) relational appropriateness, and (c) situational appropriateness (Gross & Guerro, 2000). Mandela's speech demonstrates an integration of all three dimensions. Effective communication has already been covered in the earlier sections of the paper. Relational appropriateness is characterized by behavior that is pro-social, tactful and constructive. Mandela demonstrates a very competent appreciation of the need for this appropriate Xmas in the way that he engages with all parties. He describes the background to the armed struggle and outlines the factors that necessitated the actions that the A.N.C. took. A dysfunctional conflict is characterized by any interaction between individuals or groups that would hinder the achievement of goals (Spoelstra & Pienaar, 1991). Mandela adopts an approach that is in direct contradiction to dysfunctional conflict resolution, and in so doing, builds his argument on the basis of reciprocal interdependence. As a consequence of years of the A.N.C. being marginalized and restricted, Mandela is also conscious of the fact that he leads a party that has increased group cohesiveness. Whilst he might have been tempted to capitalize on this marginalization, he appears unwilling to escalate conflict through open counter statements of aggression or character assassination. Mandela also takes time in the speech to explain that the formation of the military wing of the A.N.C was a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid. There is therefore broad evidence for situational appropriateness in the way that Mandela approaches to conflict resolution. In assessing his style of communication, Mandela demonstrates an ability to carry on a conversation in a non-aggressive way and to adapt to the needs of his audience or in a given situation. Having examined some of the broad based conflict- resolution concepts contained in the speech, let's turn our attention more specifically now to that related ideas around negotiation contains in Mandela's address.

Negotiation Concepts

Negotiation involves the identifying and diagnosing at least four broad negotiation concepts, (a) the players, (b) the context, (c) the targets, and (d) the scope or broader impact of the negotiation (Thompson & Leonardelli, 2004).

Players and their perceptions.

Mandela showed a broad understanding of the major players involved in the negotiation context. His speech was incredibly inclusive and made reference to a range of stakeholders including, his fellow comrades as well as white South Africans, the working class of the country, the endless heroes of youth, religious communities, traditional leaders, and the "mothers, wives and sisters of nation."

He acknowledged President Mr. F.W. De Klerk specifically and the role that he had played in normalizing the political situation. In doing this, Mandela seemed to demonstrate an astute understanding of the HOISOP negotiation strategy- (Hard on the issue, soft on the person) (Fisher & Ury, 1991). Mandela emphasized that whilst he regarded De Klerk as a man of integrity, he (Mandela) used this international platform to put pressure on De Klerk to carry out his commitments with what some might perceive as a veiled threat when he noted the "dangers of a public figure not honoring his undertakings."

Another important negotiation concept is that of the negotiating parameters or mandate (Kennedy, 1997). Mandela was clear that certain conditions needed to be fulfilled before negotiation could actually begin. This brings us to the notion of context.

Context.

When diagnosing a negotiation context or exigency, it is critical to examine the overarching environmental factors including (a) the balance of power in a negotiation, (b) whether the negotiation works from a positional base or an interest base and (c) any constraints that may be impacting on either party (cultural, religious or decision making processes) (Lewicki, Barry, Saunders & Minton, 2004).

For more than 40 years the National government held the balance of power, actually banning the A.N.C. and the South African Communist Party. During this time, the A.N.C. adopted an approach of armed resistance. Both parties had taken a largely positional base with neither side being willing to make any form of concession. He shows an appreciation that certain constituents or players might find it difficult to understand the reasons for the on going "struggle". The word "struggle" is used at least eight times throughout the speech and refers to the ongoing conflict against apartheid between the African National Congress and the white minority Nationalist government.

As far as negotiation itself is concerned, Mandela went to great pains to explain that he had never entered into negotiations about the future of the country with the National party. This is an important statement. He also made the point that negotiation could only take place when the context was right and the players and the substance of the negotiation had been agreed. Part of understanding negotiation context also involves a deep appreciation for any potentially toxic issues which either need to be dealt with in the context of negotiation or deferred to a later date. In acknowledging all of the players involved in the negotiation, Mandela is also clear in outlining the targets or goals for his constituency.

Targets.

When considering targets in the negotiation it is important to prioritize the overall goals that both parties are driving towards. It is also helpful to be able to identify if any of these goals are shared and if so to what extent they may provide synergy or goodwill in the negotiation process. By identifying both the issues and priorities for each party as well as a clear mandates, the way is cleared for each party to identify a

BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement) (Fisher & Ury, 1991). The stronger a party's BATNA, the more alternatives or leverage they bring to the negotiation. Mandela outlined the fact that negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid would have to address the overwhelming demands for a democratic nonracial and unitary South Africa. For this to take place there would need to be an end to the white monopoly on political power. Quite clearly at this stage of the process, there is no viable alternative other than a bloody civil war. The targets also involve critical timing parameters on the negotiation. Mandela made the point that A.N.C. had waited too long for freedom and could no longer wait. He added that "now is

the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts.” In so doing Mandela revealed that unless their demands were met, the A.N.C. did have the option of a clear and determined walk-away position. This speech, and the conflict resolution and negotiation concepts is sought to address had far reaching consequences and impact for the country, for Africa and for the world. This brings us to the question of negotiation scope.

Scope.

The scope of a negotiation examines the scope broader impact of agreement. This speech set the tone for fundamental restructuring of the political and economic systems of South Africa and set out to demonstrate how by ensuring that the inequalities of apartheid were addressed, South African our society could be thoroughly democratized. The speech therefore had a far- reaching scope with a potentially massive impact on the National Party, the A.N.C. and its allies and all of South Africa. Mandela made this point clearly in the end of his speech, somehow sensing the mood on the fringes of the crowd and appealing to his immediate audience not to do anything that would make others say that his organization could not control their own people.

Zarefsky (2008) showed that any insightful rhetorical analysis should relate the particular rhetorical work to some consideration beyond itself. This leads us to the final section of the paper where we will examine the cause and effect link between the communication concepts outlined and the outcomes of Mandela’s address.

Evidence of Cause-Effect Relationship between Concepts and Outcomes in Communication.

In this paper, I have attempted to show a causal relationship between the way that Mandela’s speech was planned, structured, articulated, and delivered and the eventual outcome of the speech as a communication tool. Rhetorical praxis makes use of what is know as a deliberative arguments about what can, should, or must be

done in certain rhetorical situations, based on persuasion about the future possible effects of such actions. In reinforcing this cause and effect link, I wish to make reference to the STAR technique of rhetorical analysis. STAR refers to whether the rhetoric/speech contains an argument that demonstrates (a) sufficiency, (b) typicality, (c) accuracy of evidence, and (d) relevance (Ramage, Bean & Johnson, 2007).

Sufficiency

Mandela made strong claims these were backed up by his own character, his understanding of his audience, his awareness of the political and global significance of the moment of his release. The examples that he gave were clear, concise and well thought through. This is not the speech of a man simply looking to sway the emotions of his followers and incite them to blind loyalty. Mandela adopted a collaborative, conciliatory tone that set the platform for possible future dialogue.

Typicality

Mandela expressed typicality in his speech, In other words the examples that he uses, the concepts that he shared and the strategy that he laid out are all communicated in a simple, logical way. The examples that he used, in putting forward his argument that apartheid had not future, were representative of the issues of the day. His use of a solid opening, body and closing, the rhetorical devices and the supporting evidence all made the speech easy for his audience to comprehend.

Accuracy of Evidence

Mandela was careful to appeal to the emotions of his audience given the euphoria around his release, but at the same time he was very measured in his message. He reduces his argument to a few key points and avoided using inflammatory or inciteful language that could

have sparked a mass hysteria. He used measured tones and a very logical thought process with accurate evidence thus ensuring that his argument was well presented and though through. The fact that he quotes verbatim from his trial 27 years prior to this moment also reinforces the accuracy of the evidence he provides and offers a strategic thrust to his argument.

Relevance

Relevance is concerned with ensuring that any rhetorical communication is persuasive in the presentation of its argument. Mandela demonstrated tremendous appreciation of the audience's expectations. He also revealed that he was not going to say too much without further consultation.

All of these factors weigh heavily in determining his success in delivering his message and ensuring a duplication of ideas.

