

A Critical Analysis of Global Kpop Star, BTS' RM's speech at the UN General Assembly 2018, with reference to Aristotle's Rhetorical triangle.

-FARHEEN KHAMAR, I MAJ

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TRANSCRIPT:

Kim Nam-joon: (00:10)

Thank you, Mr. Secretary General, UNICEF Executive Director, and all the Excellencies and distinguished guests from across the world. My name is Kim Nam-joon, also known as RM, the leader of the group BTS. It's an incredible honor to be invited to an occasion with such significance for today's young generation. Last November, BTS launched the Love Myself campaign with UNICEF, building on our belief that true love first begins with loving myself.

Kim Nam-joon: (00:41)

We have been partnering with UNICEF's #ENDviolence program to protect children and young people all over the world from violence. Our fans have become a major part of this campaign with their action and with their enthusiasm. We truly have the best fans in the world.

Kim Nam-joon: (01:01)

I would like to begin by talking about myself. I was born in Ilsan, a city near Seoul, South Korea. It's a really beautiful place, with a lake, hills, and even an annual flower festival. I spent a very happy childhood there, and I was just an ordinary boy. I used to look up at the night sky in wonder, and I used to dream the dreams of a boy. I used to imagine that I was a superhero who could save the world.

Kim Nam-joon: (01:35)

In an intro to one of our early albums, there is a line that says, my heart stopped when I was maybe nine or ten. Looking back, I think that's when I began to worry about what other people thought of me and started seeing myself through their eyes. I stopped looking up at the night skies, the stars. I stopped daydreaming. Instead, I just tried to jam myself into the moulds that other people made. Soon, I began to shut out my own voice and started to listen to the voices of others. No one called out my name, and neither did I. My heart stopped and my eyes closed shut. So, like this, I, we, all lost our names. We became like ghosts.

Kim Nam-joon: (02:38)

But I had one sanctuary, and that was music. There was a small voice in me that said, "Wake up, man, and listen to yourself." But it took me quite a long time to hear music calling my real name. Even after

making the decision to join BTS, there were a lot of hurdles. Some people might not believe, but most people thought we were hopeless. And sometimes, I just wanted to quit. But I think I was very lucky that I didn't give it all up. And I'm sure that I, and we, will keep stumbling and falling like this.

Kim Nam-joon: (03:22)

BTS has become artists performing in those huge stadiums and selling millions of albums right now, but I am still an ordinary 24-year-old guy. If there's anything that I've achieved, it was only possible that I have my other BTS members right by my side, and because of the love and support that our ARMY fans all over the world made for us. Maybe I made a mistake yesterday, but yesterday's me is still me. Today, I am who I am with all my faults and my mistakes. Tomorrow, I might be a tiny bit wiser, and that'll be me too. These faults and mistakes are what I am, making up the brightest stars in the constellation of my life. I have come to love myself for who I am, for who I was, and for who I hope to become.

Kim Nam-joon: (04:33)

I would like to say one last thing. After releasing our Love Yourself albums and launching the Love Myself campaign, we started to hear remarkable stories from our fans all over the world, how our message helped them overcome their hardships in life and start loving themselves. Those stories constantly remind us of our responsibility. So, let's all take one more step. We have learned to love ourselves, so now I urge you to speak yourself.

Kim Nam-joon: (05:13)

I'd like to ask all of you, what is your name? What excites you and makes your heart beat? Tell me your story. I want to hear your voice, and I want to hear your conviction. No matter who you are, where you're from, your skin color, your gender identity, just speak yourself. Find your name and find your voice by speaking yourself.

Kim Nam-joon: (05:47)

I'm Kim Nam-joon, and also RM of BTS. I'm an idol and I'm an artist from a small town in Korea. Like most people, I've made many and plenty mistakes in my life. I have many faults and I have many more fears, but I am going to embrace myself as hard as I can, and I'm starting to love myself gradually, just little by little. What is your name? Speak yourself. Thank you very much.

A Critical Analysis of Global Kpop Star, BTS' RM's speech at the UN General Assembly 2018, with reference to Aristotle's Rhetorical triangle.

BTS is a seven-member Korean boy band and is currently one of the most influential artists in the world. Back in 2018, they were invited to speak at the UN General Assembly.

To break it down through the lens of **Ethos**, BTS as a band is credible to speak, because they have a mass influence on the youth of today. This is why they were chosen to speak at the UN's 'Generation Unlimited' programme for 'Youth 2030'. The agenda of this programme was to provide the future generation with the essential needs to encourage success, stability and growth in their lives like providing good quality education, training or employment opportunities. Furthermore, BTS had joined hands with UNICEF to promote an international campaign with the hashtag #ENDviolence that aimed to end violence towards children and young people around the world. This campaign was undertaken during the promotions of their album series called 'Love Myself'.

Based on the official website of BTS (bts.bighit.com), the campaign raised over 1.6 billion KRW or slightly over \$1.4 million. Moreover, BTS' label named Big Hit Entertainment also reported on their Twitter account that the hashtag #BTSLoveMyself, which was used to promote the 'Love Myself' campaign, has been used around 6.7 million times. After all, BTS is a global artists group doing philanthropic work and using their music to heal and inspire people of all ages around the world.

Now that the qualifications of the speaker are settled, let us take a look at the content itself. The speaker has crafted the speech in such a way that it is centred around his and his band's life story. So the ultimate message of 'Speak Yourself' that he is trying to convey, he illustrates through his own life, therefore emphasising the credibility of his message further. The speaker also references multiple sources; in BTS RM's case, it is his songs that his audience, his fans, will be able to relate to. Some of the songs referenced are:

- "I was a superhero" links with the songs 'Anpanman' and 'Jump'.
- "There were hurdles" is talked about in the song 'Sea'.
- RM himself mentioned the reference to the song in the speech from the album O!RUL8,2? "My heart stopped...I was maybe nine or ten"
- The "mistakes are what I am" and "I have come to love myself" are the messages in the song 'Answer: Love Myself.'
- "I'm a hip-hop idol and an artist" can also be connected to their latest song 'IDOL'.
- "No one called out my name" is the reflection of the song "Whalien 52".

All the songs mentioned are songs with strong messages and it is interesting to see the lyrics of these songs being reflected in his speech. This also means that the speaker is not talking about something new, but something the speaker has built through their songs like a narrative. The speaker, BTS RM, is not just another figurehead who is trying to give a motivational message but someone who genuinely believes in what he is speaking about. And there is no better way to establish ethos.

The other factor of ethos that should be considered is that it was also presented in front of the dignitaries at the UN General Assembly, so it cannot be anything less than credible and genuine. His speech also used great pacing and vocal variety while pausing at the right moments to let important points sink in.

With regards to the rhetoric of **Logos**, i.e. the logic, RM uses a clear logical structure in his speech. He begins the speech by introducing the campaign that they have been working on, which establishes their relation to the UN immediately. He then thanks the fans- his audience, for showing enthusiasm for the campaign and thereby indirectly addressing and including them. He then begins his self-journey by talking about his childhood and the dreams and pains of childhood. Then he proceeds to say how he found music to be his sanctuary. Later as a young adult and band member of BTS, he touches upon their humble beginnings, and then the success of who they are today. This journey made him love himself, but he takes it a step further to say that one should also speak themselves, and voice out their thoughts.

This clear sequence helps the audience understand the logic of his final message- ‘Speak Yourself’. To speak for themselves they must have conviction and courage, and that comes from loving themselves. The use of simple present and simple past tense shows how he spoke about his life now and then, creating a well-structured narrative.

Towards the end, he also answers his own questions before asking them “I’m Kim Nam-Joon, and also RM of BTS” (“What’s your Name”). He admitted that he made mistakes in his life and is going to ‘embrace himself’ as hard as he can (“Love Yourself”). And of course, his whole speech is an example of “Speak Yourself.” This makes the logic of the speech clear and specific.

Coming to the rhetoric of **Pathos**, I believe that the whole speech focuses on relatability through the speaker’s own life experiences. When he spoke of his childhood, it is a relatable aspect for every young person, because we all used to dream as children. But as we grew older, reality hit us and our innocent dreams got shattered because of the cruel world. We would follow and listen to what people and society want us to be. We stopped listening to our hearts and stopped thinking of what we truly wanted. It is a cruel reality and RM pointed out a critical problem.

Additionally, pronouns that are generally identified in the speech are I, You and We, since RM talked about himself, BTS and audiences, to whom he referred with the pronoun ‘You’ to create intimacy.

“..we started to hear remarkable stories from our fans all over the world, how our message helped them overcome their hardships in life and start loving themselves. Those stories constantly remind us of our responsibility.” This in itself shows how the speaker is appealing to the youth as someone who will listen to them, and someone who is just like them. This is significant because we all lack someone who listens and understands us. Since the youth is the future generation, it is no doubt essential for the youth to stand up. They should suppress themselves and should seek their true passions, dreams and identities. This is the message of empowerment from BTS to the dreamers, the hopeless and the suppressed and it undoubtedly appeals to the values and beliefs of people.

The video has gained about 17 million views and many people were touched by the sincerity of such a huge public figure. I believe that the speaker has successfully employed all three aspects of Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle, even with English not being his native language. This, along with the results of the #LoveMyself Campaign proves that the communication was effective.

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