Rhetorical Techniques of Frederick Douglas and Malcolm X

ENG 281

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Essay # 1

Linguistics as a whole at this stage of development is characterized by an anthropocentric orientation. The personal aspect focusses on the study of the human I in the analysis of linguistic phenomena is present in almost all theories developed in science. However, despite the diversity of approaches to the problem of personality characteristics of discourse and the wide range of issues raised in this regard, there are still a lot of insufficiently studied aspects in linguistics. In particular, the question of how exactly the influence on the reader is carried out in a particular type of discourse, by what means the author can use, introducing the personality to the autobiography and having the goal of convincing the reader.

The purpose of this work, therefore, is the allocation of rhetorical means by which the autobiographical discourse is organized, and the reader is convinced, as well as an analysis of how they create the overall picture of the subject of discourse, in different autobiographies and characterization of the author & each autobiography. The goal is to reveal the general thing that characterizes the subjects of all the studied autobiographies.

One can only be convinced through the speech activity of the speaker, the speaker should be addressed to the audience or listener. - Rhetoric is always oriented towards the listener, the relations between the audience and the speaker are at the center of it. In this regard, Malcolm X and Fredric Douglass writings will be observed.

Any study of the autobiography corresponds, in one way or another, to the parameters ("valences") of the discourse, ordered by the predicate "to autobiography", to write an autobiography. This is explained by the fact that the study of autobiographies is also a discourse, or rather a metadiscoursal (discourse about discourse). It should be noted that this work is a metadiscoursal, as it examines the autobiography, and is based on the same "valances".

autobiographical discourse, like Who (autobiographer) and How (rhetorical techniques, etc.) in our work are included in the “parameter” About What (we write about the author and his discourse). When answering these questions, “valances” Who? To whom? About what? What? How? What for? we inevitably go into the realm of rhetoric. An autobiographer as an orator (Who?), A person acting in a word, persuading a reader (To whom?), Using certain rhetorical techniques (How?) Organizes his experience and his discourse, describes his life, talks about his work, career, family, friends, achievements and failures (About What?), while expressing his views, ideas, assessments about what he writes about (What?), trying to influence the reader, show him his experience as an example or, on the contrary, warn him against repeating mistakes , that is, to have an educational impact (Why?).

Use of ethos

Malcolm X is one of the most important militant leaders and there is nn need to introduce Fredric Douglass as well. Evaluation from different sources creates a completer and more multifaceted image of the author, confirming the author's self-assessment. The present of credibility in his writing is not questionable and same in the case of Fredric Douglass. both writings are autobiographies and their life experiences. ethos is a lifestyle of a social group, the orientation of its culture, the hierarchy of values ​​adopted in it; in this sense, the ethos goes beyond morality. The ethos, in contrast to morality, concentrates in itself such moral principles that do not manifest themselves in everyday life and indicate the human need for supra-empirical moral order.

Use of pathos

There are many different pathos used in both writings like in Fredric Douglass, he created emotional appeal by saying, “I was now about 12 years …………………..upon my heart(p.102) These lines clearly shows the emotional appeal to readers by saying a 12 years old boy ,who was slave and thinking to be slave for entire year. Again, (I often found myself regretting……………….I should have killed myself , or done something for which I should be killed”(p.103) These strong feelings tells the status and mental approach of a boy or young man who was spending his life under slavery. Another important rhetoric device he applied in his writings is the way how he learned and in which ways he learned.

In Malcom X writings he also used ethos to describe how he learn to read and write.in following passage it is clear. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn’t articulate, I wasn’t even functional. (p.245) Again he says how would I sound writing in slang, the way I would say it, something such as “look daddy”. (p.245)

 Use of logos

The logos are the logical appeals that both the authors used in their writings. Logos tells the readers about the logical value of argument ad convince readers. Maclom X stated at one place that,” the teachings of Mr. Muhammad stressed how history had been “whitened” ……. left out. (p.248). In other article Fredrick Douglass stated that “the idea as to how I might learn to write was suggested to me by being in Durgin and Bailey’s shipyard, and frequently seeing the ship carpenter after …………………………………………..intended(p.104).

Concludingly, both the authors uploaded their writing with rhetoric tools to persuade their readers. Both are autobiographies and tell the stories of both Malcolm X and Fredric Douglass how they learned to read and write through different phases of their life. Both the readings are very encourging and tell rears the simplest ways to learn reading and writing.

References

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Malcolm, X. (1965). Learning to Read. The Autobiography of Malcolm X. Ed. Alex Haley. New

York: Ballantine, 353-61.