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Analyzing British Text

To create a persuasive and eloquent speech that will have an enticing effect on the audience, a speaker must employ rhetoric and literary devices. Winston Churchill attained remarkable success in molding his speech into a strong and powerful political narrative. On June 4th, 1940, his speech to the House of Commons about the inexplicable evacuation of Dunkirk, is an example of his well-crafted rhetorical speech. This essay will analyze Winston Churchill's speech "We shall fight on the beaches" and scrutinize rhetorical and literary devices along with genre specification in his oratory.

           Cannadine revealed that Churchill overcomes many difficulties in his speech. He hones his speech by studying speech of many renowned orators. The time and setting of Churchill's speech in the British House of Commons on 4th June were during the unforeseen evacuation of Dunkirk. Churchill's speech is a remarkable example of the rhetoric style. He incorporated key elements of rhetorical style in order to persuade Bruisers that they must surrender to Germany or made peace negotiations. Moreover, he wanted to urge the United States to join Britain as an ally in the Second World War. The speech specifically targeted soldiers to boost their morale and for America, who was watching the war from sidelines (Puputti).

**Rhetoric and Literary devices used in speech**

According to Aristotle, any form of communication either it is written or spoken which aims at persuading the audience, which in case of Churchill’s speech is very well presented, must include three vital elements of rhetorical style that are:

*Logos*: *to give reason and logic in the message to influence the audience's minds.*

*Pathos: It involves emotions and feelings along with the vivid imagery to portray a complete picture of spoken words in front of the onlookers.*

*Ethos: to engage the audience, the speaker must show his credibility and trustworthiness to gain his complete trust.*

Now, in the case of Churchill's speech, all three elements were meant to be in an equal amount, and specifically, he relied on emotional appeal than the logical approach. His choice of choosing an emotional approach over logos is justified. As war with no exceptions, the solution of any problem, so he convinces Britishers to surrender to Germany to end those dark times.

Unlike other politicians, Churchill was an exceptional writer, and he used to write his speeches, which are of great importance to date. In his speech he attempts to prepare his people to the cause of defending their country. He delivered this speech in the direct response of Nazi forces gaining power and control in Europe and moving forward to England and France. He said in his speech that

*“We must defend our country no matter what the consequences will be. We will fight on the beaches, on the land ad we will defend our country with every possible effort. We must surrender and give up to the Germans (Tillotson)”.*

He uses persuasive style to awaken the spirit of his people to fight against Hitler, although British forces retreat from the Dunkirk miserably. In the above mentioned quotation, it can be observed that the use ethos is vivid along with the word "we" that is showing the strength and power of the nation.

**Anaphora**

Many political orators use literary devices in their speeches to strengthen their certain ideas and to make them clear to the audience. The use of anaphora**,** a literary device, is evident in the speech of Winston Churchill.

*“****We shall****not flag or fail.****We shall****go on to the end”.*

The repetition of “we shall” in successive sentences adds unity and emphasis in his speech.

**Alliteration**

It is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the starting of connected words. Such as in the speech of Churchill, he used alliteration.

*“I see****d****ull,****d****rilled and****d****ocile masses of Hun soldiery”.*

**Antistrophe**

He utilized the repetition of words at the end of successive phrases to inculcate his message in his audience.

*“…the love of peace, the toil for peace, the strife for peace…”*

He wanted to sow a seed of peace in the minds of world leaders by delivering his speech at that crucial moment.

**Assonance**

He also used assonance in his historical speech to make it outstanding and interesting so that listeners will not become tedious. He also eliminated the factor of monotony from his speech by using words having the same sound endings.

*“The odious apparatus of Nazi rule.”*

In the above mentioned part of his speech, the use of /əs/ sound is indicating the use of assonance.

**Epizeuxis**

It is the repetition of words that occurs in phrases with no intervening words to affect the tone of the narrative.

*“Never give in­\_\_ never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small…”*

You must have noticed that the immediate occurrence of the word "never" not only shows the determination of the speaker but also to keep the morale high of the listeners. He used this device to make his point clear.

**Hypophora**

This is the technique of asking a question and then answering it immediately. He used this device to show the direction of his thoughts. The orators especially use this technique by addressing a certain issue and then answer to that question in the light of their own proposed solutions.

*“You ask, what is our aim? The answer is Victory. Victory at any cost”.*

**BBC documentary about Grenfell Tower**

The tragedy of Grenfell Tower had engulfed the world for eternal sadness just the way it engulfed the tower with fire. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle had introduced “the art of Rhetoric” in which he introduced ethos, pathos and logos. The use of rhetorical style in the political discourse had a great impact on the relation of speaker and the audience.

Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn visited the scene after the incident took place in the tower. The response of May was way different than Corbyn. While talking to media, she said:

*“We will look into this matter and investigation will be carried out with full responsibility.”*

Her statement lacks emotions and sympathy for victims of the ferocious incident. But her statement was highly logical, that is logos but lack pathos and ethos. People were expecting her to visit the families of victims and the survivors but instead she gave a very political statement which she shouldn’t give at that sensitive moment. People were all mourning around the United Kingdom and she only kept her focus on investigations. She issued a very formal and practical statement that was not comforting at all for the victims. She said:

*An immediate fire report will be produced and police will inquire this incident to acquire the reasons behind the incident.*

The above statement given by May was also very formal. She did not talk about providing shelter to the victims. All the statements of Theresa May’s were empathy free. Her words were really cold which caused an eruption of criticism on her. As a prime minister, she should have issued some moderate statements regarding the unexpected incident.

Jeremy Corbyn has acted opposite to Theresa May. He met survivors and show his condolences to the families of victims. He also met with rescue workers who put themselves in danger and saved so many lives. He showed his gratitude towards relief workers, emergency services and volunteers who helped people from getting out of the building. He showed his anger and disappointment towards Government that they did not take any measures on time to ensure the safety of its residents.

He said:

*“I am really annoyed that fire spread throughout the building and the residents of the building are angry as well. Their questions were not answered by the building management and Government. They ask me to be their voice and I will help them.”*

Furthermore, he ensures to the residents of the burnt building that he would not leave them alone in this hardship. He would himself put forth their demands to Government. The words like “annoyed” are the emotions that showed his anger towards political system and become the way of catharsis for many of the people. He showed concern through his words for his people.

He felt the same as the people of his country were feeling at that moment. He added:

*“There are thousands of residential buildings and every single resident of that building will frightened today. They all must wondering that they can be next. They might be looking for answers for less secured building. Their mental peace would be at risk.”*

His response was very empathetic and strong with reasonable logic and emotions. His speech was fully formed around rhetorical style which can influence its hearers in a very positive manner. His response was full of sentiments and emotions based on humanity (Lahel).

The narrative of survivors from Grenfell Tower incident, is also very heart wrenching. The BBC’s made a documentary on Grenfell which uses personal narratives, social media and the original location to collect authentic material for the documentary. Shahin Sadafi who used to live on fifth floor of the building, said that *the building was our base and concrete fortress*. Another resident said that *I felt very proud while living in that building*. These painful words showed the agony and frustration of the survivors who lost their loved ones in the ferocious incident. The speech of people who outlived that horrible night was deeply polite and respectful during the documentary. Their speech has a way strong effect on the viewers of the documentaries. They narrated their part of the story and viewers piece it down to the full story. By their strong and full of emotions speech which generally lack traditional literary devices, the onlookers were greatly moved. The purpose of this documentary was to evaluate the reasons that give birth to this fierce accident. The other purpose was to arouse feelings of pity in people so that they can show empathy in the common mass. In this way they can help those who had traumatized lives ahead.

**Conclusion**

As shown in the analysis of Winston Churchill’s speech “We shall fight on the beaches” that he had used multiple literary devices and rhetorical devices to influence his audience. He added life into his speech by using evocative vocabulary with the addition of remarkable phrases. As far as BBC documentary on Grenfell is concerned, that was filmed solely to raise feelings of pity in the people to urge them to participate and help in arranging campaigns for relieving the stress and trauma of the survivors by making them talk about the incident. These devices help in producing a versatile and influencing piece of writing.

# **Works Cited**

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