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PERCEPTIONS ABOUT RHETORIC DISCOURSE FOR ITS CONTENT QUALITY AND AIM OF EFFECT

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Abstract

Rhetoric, defined as eloquence, is not a decent discourse style according to some people; because in rhetoric discourse there is persuasion, manipulation and deception. On the other hand, some others think that rhetoric discourse assures fluency in both orthography and speech, which leads to an improvment in motivation and creativity. In this study, it is aimed to approach to the subject in that context and the perception of academicians' on rhetoric discourse is measured by ''Rhetoric Discourse Perception Scale'' which is developed by the authors. The survey forms are distributed to the academicans in different universities, in different fields of study and in different academic positions. The data gathered, is analysed by SPSS package programme. The answers of the participants are compared according to the demographical findings and it is aimed to find out if there are statistically meaningful differences among the answers of the participants in the sense of their demographical characteristics.

Keywords: Rhetoric, motivation, effect.

1. Introduction

The word "rhetorikos", which means oratory in Greek language, is the root of the word "rhetoric", the art of oratory (Dürüşken, 1995). As it is obvious from the meaning, while style and effect are primary in the texts or speeches that rhetoric used, content and meaning are not of primary importance. The main aim of using rhetoric, is to effect the audience with a pompous style so as to convince them.

In Western countries, there are three branches of art that is accepted: dialectic, grammar and rhetoric. In dialectic, the aim is to convince people just like in rhetoric. While trying to convince, using conflicting statements is the primary way. In this sense, it can be said that it serves for the same purpose with rhetoric. The concept of "rhetoric", which is widely used in Platon's dialogues, is stated as an art of convincing similar to "dialectic".

On the other hand grammar, states the rules by investigating the sound and sentence structure of a language (Dürüşken, 1995). Formalism in language, draws the attention to the style by aligning the words with coherence. Similarly, in rhetoric discourse, the main aim is to draw attention to the style, not to the concept; thus, manipulating the audience as how it is desired (Aldağ, 2005).

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Definitions of Rhetoric Discourse

Isokrates is known as one of the most effective rhetors in Athens. He states that all the inventions of humanbeing come true by the ability of speech. Speech, mainly language, is also used for convincing the society according to personal aims and this is called rhetoric (Önen, 2013).

Aristotle, defines rhetoric as a means of convincing people in every situation and he also states that no other art constitutes this qualification. Another point that Aristotle states is that for using rhetoric, no knowledge is required in a specific area (Aristotales, 2006).

As for Cicero, he evaluates rhetoric concept in the sense of politics. He states that politics has a scientific system that consists several important components. One of the biggest and the most important component is the art of rhetoric (as cited in Keyinci, 2014).

Nietzsche (1989), on the other hand, defines rhetoric as one of the ways of making "deliberative art". He states that the development in comprehension, instead of development in language, reveals the artistic aspect of the language.

2.2. Examining Rhetoric Discourse in the Sense of Its Effect

As it is afore mentioned, the most important aspect of rhetoric discourse is affecting and manipulating.

2.2.1. Using Rhetoric Discourse in Politics in the Sense of Affecting and Manipulating

Politicians use rhetoric discourse in 3 ways: Judging, criticising and citing. They claim that they are all transparent, without any personal aims and interests, but judge and criticise their rivals by claiming that they are hypocrites and they have personal aims and interests (Mayor & Forti, 1999).

They also cite the discourses that support themselves, or the party as a whole. By doing this, they try to gain support of the society with the help of reality (Önderman, 1999).

2.2.2. Using Rhetoric Discourse in Communication in the Sense of Affecting and Manipulating

It is of great importance to separate daily speech and the art of speech. Daily speech, can be considered as simple, without any elaboration or specific training. On the other hand the art of communication bases on the act of communication. So as to transforming this act into art, some rules are needed. This is how rhetoric, the art of elaborative speech, was born in Ancient Greek (Taşer, 1992). Rhetoric includes the message conveyed, and the best way to convey it at the same time. It also includes what communication is and how good communication can occur (Nelson, Megill, & McCloskey, 2002).

According to Schopenhauer (2012), who states the dark side of rhetoric, human is arrogant and cheatful by birth. Because of this fact, they try to reverse the situation whenever they realise that they are not right in communication process.

2.2.3. Using Rhetorical Discourse About Societal Communities and Minority Groups in the Sense of Affecting and Manipulating

Minority groups are generally perceived as negative in societies. Although it is desired to be used in a positive way, the "rhetoric" that surround these groups cause a negative appearance and stereotype comments (Zbaracki, 1998).

Especially in media sector, rhetoric is used as a verbal attack. Repetitions and metaphors draw the attention of the audience; thus they are used as a way of manipulation (Van Dijk, 1991).

2.2.4. Using Rhetorical Discourse in Management in the Sense of Affecting and Manipulating

It is widely known that legitimate rhetorical discourses accompany the expansion of management practices (Green, 2004). Actors such as consultants, academicians, business men/women and managers use a rhetorical language in order to affect the audience and make them adopt a specific management practice (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002). In the process of expansion of a specific management practice, three rhetorical strategies are followed (Green, 2004; Abrahamson & Fairchild, 1999; Zbaracki, 1998). Pathos-emotional rhetoric, in order to draw the attention of the audience; logos-rational rhetoric, in order to make the audience adapt the desired practice and ethos-ethical rhetoric, in order to make the management practice a "norm" (Özen, 2009).

3. Research Method

3.1. Research Goal

In this study, it is aimed to approach to the subject in that context. Primarily, conceptual framework of rhetoric is explained. In the following sections, elements of rhetoric are explained and the quality of content of rhetoric and the quality of effectiveness of rhetoric is scrutinized. In the last section of the study,

faculty members are asked to answer a Rhetorical Discourse Perception Scale which is developed by the authors and the results are analysed by using SPSS package programme.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

In the scope of the research a two-part survey was formed. The first part of the survey form involves a 5 dimension Likert Scale, 21 questions regarding rhetorical discourse perception. The second part of the survey includes demographic questions. Relevant survey forms were conveyed to academicians from various universities in Turkey, 200 valid responses were obtained. These survey forms were analysed through SPSS programme.

4. Findings

The socio-demographical data of the participants are as below in Table 1 to 7:

Table 01. Gender

Gender	Frequency	% Frequency
Male	129	50.6
Female	126	49.4
Total	255	100.0

50.6% of participants are male, 49.4% of participants are female (see table 01).

Table 02. Age

Age	Frequency	Frequency (%)
18-29	77	30.2
30-39	95	37.3
40-49	40	15.7
50-59	31	12.2
60+	12	4.7
Total	255	100.0

30.2% of participants are in 18-29 age group, 37.3% are in 30-39 age group, 15.7% are in 40-49 age group, 12.2% are in 50-59 age group and 4.7% are 60 and over (see table 02).

Table 03. Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Married	106	41.6
Single	149	58.4
Total	255	100.0

41.6% of participants are married, 58.4% of participants are single (see table 03).

Table 04. Academic Position

Academic Position	Frequency	Frequency (%)
PhD candidate	86	33.7
PhD	43	16.9
Assistant Prof.	53	20.8
Associate Prof.	30	11.8
Prof.	43	16.9
Total	255	100.0

33.7% of participants are PhD candidates, 16.9% have PhD, 20.8% are assistant professors, 11.8% are associate professors and 16.9% are professors (see table 04).

Table 05. Field of Study

Field of Study	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Social sciences	190	74.5
Natural sciences	59	23.1
Health sciences	6	2.4
Total	255	100.0

74.5% of participants are from social sciences, 23.1% are from natural sciences and 2.4% are from health sciences (see table 05).

Table 06. Income

Income	Frequency	Percent
2000-3000	70	27.5
3001-4000	25	9.8
4001-5000	73	28.6
5001+	87	34.1
Total	255	100.0

27.5% of participants have 2000-3000 TL monthly income, 9.8% have 3001-4000 TL monthly income, 28.6% have 4001-5000 TL monthly income and 34.1% have 5001+ TL monthly income (see table 06).

Table 07. Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percent
0-5years	77	30.2
6-10years	36	14.1
11-15years	52	20.4
16-20years	23	9.0
21+	67	26.3
Total	255	100.0

30.2% of the participants have 0-5 years of experience, 14.1% have 6-10 years, 20.4% have 11-15 years, 9% have 16-20 years and 26.3% have an experience of 21 years and more (see table 07).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics

Items:		Totally Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Totally Disagree	ẍ	Standard Deviation
1.''Rhetoric discourse'' makes a positive impression on me	fi	98	126	24	6	1	4,23	0,74
	Y.fi	38,4	49,4	9,4	2,4	0,4		
2.I coincide with rhetoric discourse frequently in my daily life	fi	51	125	32	39	9	3,67	1,06
	Y.fi	20	49	12,5	14,9	3,5		
3.I believe that rhetoric discourse is a way of persuasion in positive terms	fi	54	153	31	14	3	3,94	0,81
	Y.fi	21,2	60	12,2	5,5	1,2		
4.I believe that rhetoric discourse carries the aim of manipulation	fi	16	33	50	151	5	2,62	0,95
	Y.fi	6,3	12,9	19,6	59,2	2		
5.I believe that in the process of vertical information of organizations it is necessary to use rhetorical discourse	fi	60	158	28	9	0	4,05	0,69
	Y.fi	23,5	62	11	3,5	0		
6. I believe that in the process of horizontal information of organizations it is necessary to use rhetorical discourse	fi	55	149	40	9	2	3,96	0,76
	Y.fi	21,6	58,4	15,7	3,5	0,8		
7.I believe that in social sciences it is necessary to use rhetorical discourse in order to impress the audience	fi	101	137	13	4	0	4,31	0,64
	Y.fi	39,6	53,7	5,1	1,6	0		
8. I believe that it is necessary for politicians to use rhetorical discourse	fi	80	131	22	18	4	4,03	0,9
	Y.fi	31,4	51,4	8,6	7,1	1,6		
9.I believe that politicians use rhetorical discourse in positive terms (ignoring the personal interests)	fi	50	82	81	23	19	3,47	1,12
	Y.fi	19,6	32,2	31,8	9	7,5		
10.I believe that rhetorical discourse is necessary for effective communication	fi	105	129	12	6	3	4,28	0,76
	Y.fi	41,2	50,6	4,7	2,4	1,2		
11.I believe that oratory talent cannot be affective without rhetorical discourse	fi	54	129	48	20	4	3,81	0,9
	Y.fi	21,2	50,6	18,8	7,8	1,6		
12.I believe that the aim of rhetorical discourse is not to persuade, but to touch the feelings of the audience	fi	30	49	138	31	7	3,25	0,91
	Y.fi	11,8	19,2	54,1	12,2	2,7		
13.I believe that the minority groups in societies are evaluated by stereotype discourses	fi	33	59	131	30	2	3,35	0,87
	Y.fi	12,9	23,1	51,4	11,8	0,8		
14.I believe that rhetoric discourse causes people to create prejudices against minority groups by manipulating	fi	18	46	150	36	5	3,14	0,81
	Y.fi	7,1	18	58,8	14,1	2		
15.I believe that it is necessary for academicians to use rhetorical discourse	fi	100	113	27	10	5	4,14	0,9
	Y.fi	39,2	44,3	10,6	3,9	2		
16.I, as an academician, use rhetorical discourse during my classes	fi	61	137	36	14	7	3,9	0,91
	Y.fi	23,9	53,7	14,1	5,5	2,7		
17.I believe that using rhetorical discourse during lessons, increases the attention of the students	fi	77	149	18	7	4	4,12	0,78
	Y.fi	30,2	58,4	7,1	2,7	1,6		
18.I use rhetorical discourse when I attend conferences/seminars as a speaker	fi	105	111	27	7	5	4,19	0,87
	Y.fi	41,2	43,5	10,6	2,7	2		
19.When I attend a conference/seminar as an audience, I pay more attention to the speaker if he/she uses rhetorical discourse	fi	97	131	14	8	5	4,2	0,83
	Y.fi	38	51,4	5,5	3,1	2		
20. I use rhetorical discourse in my written works	fi	78	124	28	15	10	3,96	1
	Y.fi	30,6	48,6	11	5,9	3,9		
21.I believe that academicians' using rhetorical discourse, attracts the attention of the audience and makes positive impression them	fi	99	131	17	5	3	4,24	0,76
	Y.fi	38,8	51,4	6,7	2	1,2		

According to the descriptive statistic findings as shown in Table 8, the most important item for participants is the 7th item, with a mean of, is "Rhetorical discourse is necessary in social sciences for the effect of information on audience". As for the second most important item, which is the 10th item of the scale, the thought of "Rhetoric discourse is necessary for effective communication" has a mean of 4,28. Finally the 1st item is another important item for participants, which is "My perception about Rhetorical discourse is positive", with a mean of 4,23.

On the other hand, according to the participants the least important item is the 4th item, which is the thought of "I believe that rhetorical discourse aims at manipulation", with a mean of 2,62.

The results of the factor analysis are as follow (Table 9):

Table 09. Dimensions

Dimensions	Items	Explained Variance
Educational Effectiveness	16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	26.11
Social Effectiveness	7, 10, 11, 15	17.62
Organizational Effectiveness	5, 6, 8	15.19
Aimed at Manipulation	4, 14	9.60
Total		68.541

These dimensions are defined as "Educational Effectiveness", "Social Effectiveness", "Organizational Effectiveness" and "Aimed at Manipulation". Items 1, 2, 3, 9, 12 and 13, are left out of measurement because of the fact that they do not fit any of the dimensions. The variances of the dimensions are as follows (Table 10):

Table 10. Factor Analysis

Dimension	Total	% Variance	% Cumulative
1	3.917	26.113	26.113
2	2.644	17.627	43.739
3	2.280	15.197	58.936
4	1.441	9.605	68.541

In order to find out if there are any statistically meaningful differences among participants' answers to the mentioned dimensions, in relation to their socio-demographical characteristics, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis Tests are applied.

Table 11. Comparative Analysis

Variable	Dimension	Test	Test Statistics	P
Gender	Educational Effectiveness	Mann-Whitney U	-1.449	0.147
	Social Effectiveness		-1.129	0.254
	Organizational Effectiveness		-2.927	**0.003**
	Aimed at Manipulation		-0.191	0.849
Marital Status	Educational Effectiveness	Mann-Whitney U	-2.712	0.007
	Social Effectiveness		-1.1579	0.114
	Organizational Effectiveness		-1.728	0.084
	Aimed at Manipulation		-2.020	**0.043**
Age	Educational Effectiveness	Kruskal-Wallis	11.341	0.23
	Social Effectiveness		14.928	**0.005**
	Organizational Effectiveness		6.465	0.167
	Aimed at Manipulation		36.669	**0.000**
Academic Position	Educational Effectiveness	Kruskal-Wallis	12.346	**0.015**
	Social Effectiveness		20.171	**0.000**
	Organizational Effectiveness		3.826	0.430
	Aimed at Manipulation		40.639	**0.000**
Field of Study	Educational Effectiveness	Kruskal-Wallis	5.930	0.052
	Social Effectiveness		2.522	0.283
	Organizational Effectiveness		0.834	0.659
	Aimed at Manipulation		2.263	0.323

Income	Educational Effectiveness	Kruskal-Wallis	15.287	**0.002**
	Social Effectiveness		11.496	**0.009**
	Organizational Effectiveness		4.986	0.173
	Aimed at Manipulation		14.820	**0.002**
Experience	Educational Effectiveness	Kruskal-Wallis	17.833	**0.001**
	Social Effectiveness		7.112	0.130
	Organizational Effectiveness		5.662	0.226
	Aimed at Manipulation		52.222	**0.000**

According to the findings shown in Table 11, in the sense of gender, there are not any statistically meaningful differences in the 1st, 2nd and the 3rd factors (p>0,05). On the other hand, there is statistically meaningful difference in the 4th factor (p<0,05).

As for marital status, while there are statistically meaningful difference in the 1st and the 4th factors (p<0,05) there are no statistically meaningful differences in other dimensions (p>0,05).

In the sense of age, while there are no statistically meaningful difference in the 3rd dimension (p>0,05), there are statistically meaningful differences in other dimensions (p<0,05).

As for the academic position, there are statistically meaningful differences in all dimensions (p<0,05).

In the sense of field of study, while there are no statistically meaningful differences in the 3rd factor (p>0,05), there are statistically meaningful differences in other dimensions (p<0,05).

In the sense of income and experience, while there are no statistically meaningful differences in the 3rd dimension (p>0,05), there are statistically meaningful differences in other dimensions (p<0,05).

5. Conclusion and Discussions

''Rhetoric'' has lost its primary position in western educational system for more than 150 years. It has given its important position to the new disciplines such as linguistic, sociology and psychology. On the other hand, a revival of rhetoric has occurred in the middle of the 20th century. In more recent times, this revival has continued with some directions. For example, a new discipline called "Psychology of Rhetoric" has emerged and studies in this field have been continuing.

We, as the authors of this study, have tried to measure the perceptions of academicians about rhetoric discourse. It has been found that the perceptions of academicians display differences in terms of demographical characteristics, and it is also realized that the mentioned perception is quite a bit superficial among academicians. For further studies, it would be contributive to the literature to make more expanded researches in the sense of rhetoric discourse and its perception among managers, politicians and businessman/women. Furthermore, more informative studies should be published in order to make sure that the target population is aware of the concept of "rhetoric discourse". Thus, this style of discourse may be used more widely, and it would be more easier and contributive both to measure the positive use and negative use of rhetoric discourse among different groups and to measure its effect on the society.

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