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Comparison Rhetorical Analysis Essay

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Self-expression

Language is complicated. It does not matter which language you speak as each one has its own subtleties and quirks to learn and master, but one thing all languages have in common is self-expression. Chi Luu in her articles "[The Linguistic Case for Sh*t hitting the Fan](#)" and "[How to Meme What You Say](#)" look at two different mediums of self-expression and how the pandemic has changed how we express ourselves. Through the use of rhetoric, Chi Luu in "The Linguistic case for Sh*t Hitting the Fan" and "How to Meme What You Say" explains why people use such devices to express themselves and succeed rhetorically, and in doing so makes a case for using such devices.

In the first article, "The Linguistic Case for Sh*t Hitting the Fan," Chi Luu explains that the situation we have found ourselves in like the pandemic and protests calls for the idiomatic expression "sh*t has hit the fan"; however, she asks why we even use such idioms when we could just directly say what we think. She goes through the history of idioms and what they are saying in paragraph 5, "...idioms, though seemingly mundane, are the fossilized poetry of language." Additionally, she states the reasons why we use them as opposed to regular language. After reading the article, I believe the exigence of it is because of the pandemic and protests going on at the time, the idiomatic expression "sh*t has hit the fan" was timely and Chi Luu decided to do an analysis of it.

In the second article, “How to Meme What You Say,” Chi Luu starts off by observing the socially distanced world we inhabit and asks how we are going to express ourselves without using “literal language” (Luu). She goes on to say that memes are one way to solve this problem and goes into how they work and why. In paragraph 10 she says, “...through allusion, the meme can convey far more complex emotional information than its simple linguistic structure might suggest.” (Luu). The exigence of this article is since the pandemic shut down public spaces, people had to find other ways to better express themselves on the internet, so they used memes which provide a better visual of how the person feels.

After analyzing both articles, it is evident that there are similarities between the two. One similarity they share is that they talk about like subjects; being able to express ourselves through different means other than regular language. Another similarity one can see between the two is that the text organization of both articles are the exact same. They both have a bold heading with a subheading, red hyperlinks throughout the article, big twitter hyperlinks, and images throughout to provide a visual. It creates consistency and readers will know what to expect from the author. Furthermore, at the end of both articles, they have a resources section which shows the links Chi Luu used to get her information. This tells the reader that Chi Luu used other sources to back up what she is talking about and shows that she is credible. Another rhetorical decision Chi Luu decides to make is through her word choice and sentence structure. Her decisions on those areas show that she cares for the subject and has had training in writing. An example of this is in paragraph five of “The Linguistic Case of Sh*t Hitting the Fan,” “As [excitable paleoscatologists find value in fossilized excrement](#) of an ancient age, so might we delve into the whys and wherefores of the most disreputable scatologically adjacent idioms.” (Luu). An example of this in “How to Meme What You Say” is, “Idioms are purportedly

well-worn clichés that usually can't be altered without losing their meaning, but the remarkable thing about internet memes is that without constant mutation through wordplay, they become, ahem, meme-ingless—less successful linguistic fads. Stagnant, unfashionable memes eventually go extinct.” (Luu). The impact this has on the reader is that they will be more engaged with the text and want to continue reading.

The next similarity is their use of ethos. After reading up on Chi Luu, it says that she has multiple degrees in theoretical linguistics and literature which makes her qualified to talk about topics like these. Additionally, Chi Luu uses hyperlinks to show the reader she is getting her information from a credible place. An example of hyperlinks from “The Linguistic Case for Sh*t Hitting the Fan” is in paragraph four where she says, “Arbiters of linguistic style often assume that idioms are a kind of [‘exhausted speech’](#) that once meant something but has become a set of lazy linguistic shortcuts to predigested ideas.”(Luu). An example of this in “How to Meme What You Say” is in paragraph 6 where she states, “The more common [reaction gifs can then later take on verbal forms](#) that reference them without the need for the gif itself, such as ‘facepalm’ and ‘side-eye.’” (Luu). The impact on the reader is that they will be able to trust Chi Luu that she didn't make up any information used in the article.

Along with ethos, both articles use pathos to draw the reader in. They use humor in the beginning of the article to catch the attention of the reader which makes them want to read more. An example of this in “The Linguistic Case for Sh*t Hitting the Fan” is, “...appears that, in the words of that popular idiomatic expression, ‘shit has hit the fan.’ This is especially true for those who keep getting the short (or in some circles, shitty) end of the stick.” (Luu). Additionally, an example of this in “How to Meme What You Say” is, “Recently, many curve-flattening countries

began opening up their borders to certain international travelers—but not, alas, to citizens of the United States ... *cries in American*” (Luu).

Moving forward, the way both articles use logos is similar as well. They both use scholarly articles to provide a factual basis for her to elaborate on. As mentioned before, both articles have a resources page which shows what websites she used to gain her knowledge. Furthermore, she uses hyperlinks throughout her articles which show the place she got that knowledge. For both articles, their sense of kairos is similar. The pandemic was still in effect when Chi Luu published these, so the concept of self expression in a time where self expression was more limited is timely and makes sense.

In conclusion, “The Linguistic Case for Sh*t Hitting the Fan” and “How to Meme What You Say” by Chi Luu both succeed rhetorically in getting their message of self-expression across. The use of rhetorical devices like ethos and logos engages the reader and persuades them effectively. After analyzing these two articles, I believe that I can learn from how Chi Luu employed her use of rhetoric and use it in my own writing in the future for my own benefit.

Works Cited

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