

Teresa Aziz

Eng 2100

Professor Nagales

05/19/23

How The Use of Rhetorical Analysis Can Strengthen an Author's Main Message.

The rhetorical appeal is a very effective approach to persuading your audience. The three main rhetorical strategies are ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos is when the author establishes credibility to establish trust with the audience. Pathos reaches the audience through emotions like empathy. Logos provides the reader with logic and reasoning, usually in the form of facts and research. The rhetorical appeal was originally created by the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

Amy Tan in “Mother Tongue” explains her journey to loving her mothers language as well as the underlying stereotype that society has for people with accents. The connection Tan makes between how we use language and how we see the world is the way to evoke emotions, visual images, and complex ideas. How we see the world is how we describe it in words. If a person sees the world in a good way they will describe it in a beautiful manner, if a person sees the world in a bad way they describe it as ugly. Tan uses her language as a way to express what's around her, and describe the way her Mother's Tongue is. The phrase " Mother Tongue" for Tan has a special meaning/connection with her mom's way of speech. Tan uses "Mother Tongue", as a nostalgic way of her own language, Chinese. It is also referring to the way Tan talks with her mother. It is Tan's first mother language, and everything started with this. It is the language she grew up hearing and it feels native/dear to her. For Tan, ' broken ', or ' fractured' English, refers to

the way her mom talks. Since her family was an immigrant family, her mom's English was 'broken' and because of that, a lot of people made fun of or didn't take her seriously. 'Fractured', or 'broken' English for Tan's mom was the weakness that put her below in society in every matter. Amy Tan successfully uses all three rhetorical devices, logos, ethos, and pathos to show that all forms of English should be appreciated and not undermined in her essay, "Mother Tongue."

Tan uses logos in this essay by explaining the reasoning on why she believes that language does not change your understanding and perception of the world. She explains the unfair treatments that her mother went through in social situations because of her "mother tongue." She then goes on to explain her point. In the essay, when she explains the controversial topic of why immigrant students normally go into engineering or mathematics, she then begins to tie in what she learned from the experiences with her mother in social situations and "thinks out loud" to the reader. In the essay, it says, " And this makes me think that there are other Asian-American students whose English spoken in the home might also be described as "broken " or "limited." And perhaps they also have teachers who are steering them away from writing and into math and science, which also happened to me." She also added information from surveys that she has seen regarding this issue. In the text it says, "But I have noticed in surveys– in fact, just last week – that Asian students, as a whole, always do significantly better on math achievement than in English. By adding this statistic she is now backing up her logic with facts and making it more credible. This also helps the reader understand her logic and adds to the point of the impact that language has not only on social situations but the way how you live and learn.

Amy Tan uses ethos by establishing credibility in the first sentence of this essay. She states, " I am not a scholar of English or literature. I cannot give you much more than personal

opinions on the English language and its variations in this country or others.” By being honest that she is not a scholarly source establishes trust in the audience because of her awareness and openness with the audience. She establishes credibility by telling her own experiences and stating her occupation. She states, “I am a writer.” and also mentions her book in this essay. This gives the reader knowledge on who she is and some of her experiences with language.

Tan uses pathos in her essay by explaining the unfair treatment her mom got from the hospital when her mom was sick. She explains the tumor in her mother's brain. She gives facts on the disease and explains how they did not give her the same medical treatment by losing the cat scan and not apologizing and giving her mother the correct information and treatment that a patient should be entitled to which leads the reader to feeling sympathy. This aspect was very important in helping Tan convey her point because it allows the reader to put themselves in Tan's shoes even if they are not someone who has or knows someone with an accent. No one would want their family to get unfair treatment medically which can impact their life permanently. This use of empathy, as a reader myself, contributed greatly to the overall social lesson in society that Tan is trying to convey.

Amy Tan's essay, “Mother Tongue,” is a great example of how to use ethos pathos and logos. By using logos she is able to bring logic and reasoning to appeal to the reader's mind in a factual manner. By using ethos she is able to appeal to the audience's trust by establishing credibility by mentioning her standpoint in this situation, her experiences and her career. By using pathos she is able to appeal to the audience's emotions by the use of empathy. All of these combined helped Tan successfully convey to the reader about the unfairness and inequality that those with accents and those who speak other languages go through. She also helps the reader understand that all languages should be appreciated and not undermined due to social norms.

Overall, rhetorical devices are an incredibly useful tool when creating persuasive text and Amy Tan took advantage of these aspects to successfully persuade a reader.