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РИТОРИЧЕСКИЕ СТРАТЕГИИ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОГО ТЕКСТА

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN INTERPRETING FICTION

Статья обращает внимание на риторический потенциал изучения художественной литературы и рассмотрения художественного произведения как риторического дискурса. Представляется возможным выделить основные уровни риторического анализа художественного дискурса: интрадискурсивный и экстрадискурсивный, опираясь на диалогическую теорию М. М. Бахтина и принцип диалогизма, теорию нарративных уровней Дж. Ганетта, а также классическую риторическую традицию. В статье предлагается пошаговый алгоритм разноуровневого риторического анализа на примере конкретного литературного материала, изучаемого в рамках курса практической риторики, с рекомендациями по использованию заданий и упражнений на занятиях.

The article highlights the rhetorical potential of fiction and the consideration of a work of fiction as a rhetorical discourse. On the basis of the dialogical theory of M.M. Bakhtin and the principle of dialogism, J. Ganett's theory of narrative levels, as well as the classical rhetorical tradition, it seems possible to single out the main levels of rhetorical analysis of artistic discourse:

intradiegetic and extradiegetic. The article proposes a step-by-step algorithm for a multilevel rhetorical analysis based on the example of a specific literary material studied in the course of Practical Rhetoric, with recommendations for the use of tasks and exercises in the classroom.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: диалогизм; логос; этос; пафос; экстрадиегезис; интрадиегезис; риторический анализ.

К e y w o r d s: dialogism; logos; ethos; pathos; extradiegesis; intradiegesis; rhetorical analysis.

In the context of globalization and multiculturalism, a high level of communicative proficiency is a standard for a linguistics graduate. In the interaction of cultures, a multicultural and multilingual personality should be able to state and argue their point considering the cultural and moral norms of a particular linguistic community, be able to find a compromise and conduct civilized polemics, as well as use communicative tactics and strategies to increase the effectiveness of professional and personal interaction.

To tackle contemporary educational challenges for professional language learners, a course of Practical Rhetoric was developed for 3rd year students of Minsk State Linguistics University to enhance their professional and social-personal competences.

Practical Rhetoric is taught in the tradition of neorhetoric which is based on the principles and components of Aristotle's classical rhetoric and on the theory of dialogue by M. M. Bakhtin recognizing dialogism as manifestation of "the multiplicity of perspectives and voices" [1].

According to Aristotle, mechanisms of persuasion in the classical rhetorical tradition are based on the so-called rhetorical triangle – logos, ethos and pathos, the three categories of rhetorical influence, which together determine the results of communication. Ethos as an appeal to moral principles and value guidelines, logos as an appeal to logic and reason and pathos as an appeal to the listener's feelings and emotions are necessary components of argumentation, and their balance and interaction determine the persuasiveness and success of rhetorical discourse.

As opposed to the classical philosophical tradition based on individual reflection, M. M. Bakhtin's dialogism means a permanent dialogue between different texts and authors. Thus, any spoken or written discourse can be viewed not just as a monologic expression, but also as a dialogic interaction that informs and is continually informed by the previous discourse, making the dialogue extend in both directions. M. M. Bakhtin wrote: "One voice does not end anything and does not allow anything. Two voices: this is the minimum of life, the minimum of being" [2, p. 265].

However, M. M. Bakhtin spoke about the opposition of rhetoric and artistic manifestations, claiming that "Rhetoric, to the extent that it lies, strives to evoke precisely fear and hope. This belongs to the essence of the rhetorical word (classical rhetoric emphasized these effects as well). Art, on the contrary, strive to liberate us

from these feelings” [3, p. 758]. Nevertheless, in the context of current rhetorical studies, persuasive argumentation spreads to a much wider frame of reference and involves the whole range of emotional appeals, far beyond “fear and hope”, which allows us to use literary context as a basis for rhetorical interpretation. Conversely, the dialogic principle becomes an important strategy, approaching the ideas which language contains and communicates as dynamic, predetermined by cultural and situational references and engaged in a process of endless redescriptions of the world.

The emergence and development of rhetorical science is closely related to oral speech and public speaking, but now the categories of rhetoric are used as an effective tool for analyzing various types of written discourse, including a diversity of fictional genres. J. Brax’s ideas that rhetoric is “rather not an approach to language learning, but a function inherent in the language itself” show that logos, ethos and pathos are inherent in any kind of discourse, publicistic, scientific or artistic [4].

Therefore, although rhetoric traditionally uses mainly journalistic printed materials or recordings of oral argumentative speech, such as political and judicial debates, teachers of Practical Rhetoric have come to understand the necessity of introducing literary and artistic texts with an argumentative potential in the inventory of study material, as they can be treated as a subspecies of argumentative rhetorical discourse.

Rhetorical analysis of fiction differs from classical literary interpretation in that it is based on the explication of the three categories of rhetorical influence. In literature as an art, emotional appeal is unquestionably a primary tool of communicating messages to the reader. That is why the principal element of the rhetorical structure of a literary work is pathos, ethos and logos synergizing and supporting it.

Literary studies turn out to be helpful in providing the terminology for discussion of rhetorical appeal at different narrative levels. Professor Gerard Genette, in his discussion of the ancient Greek terms such as *mimesis* and *diegesis*, points out that any narrative can be called *diegetic* because literary representation of fictional or real events either by a certain narrator or without them is provided by means of written language [5]. Genette’s theory of narrative (diegetic) levels allows understanding the rhetorical context at the level of diegesis (the level of the characters, their thoughts and actions) and at the level of extradiegesis (the level of the narrative).

In accordance with the theory of the narrative levels and for the purposes of rhetorical analysis, we suggest viewing literary discourse as a two-level structure:

- 1) at the **intradiegetic level**, which presents reality within the fictional world, studying the tactics and strategies of rhetorical interaction of characters within the literary plot;

- 2) at the **extradiegetic level**, which presents the author’s dialogic message, analyzing the impact of the author’s rhetoric on the reader outside the framework of literary reality [6].

Literary material for the course of Practical Rhetoric was selected according to a number of criteria, the most important of which is polemics on socio-political issues. The discussion of political and social issues is based on art-mediated forms with emotional messages. A careful rhetorical analysis allows to elucidate the diversity of rhetorical devices in fiction and assess their impact on the reader.

As part of the course, various works of fiction were tried out for discussion in class, among them novels *Animal Farm* and *1984* by G. Orwell, *The Quiet American* by Gr. Greene, the play *Stuff Happens* by D. Hare, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* by J. F. Garner, which undoubtedly have a significant argumentation potential and are of particular interest for rhetorical analysis.

The general strategy for dealing with fiction in the course of Practical Rhetoric includes an exposition of the plots' historical and social context, analysis of problem issues in the "intensive reading" mode and a final presentation of students' findings. Discussions have shown that literary discourse can be effectively used for scrutiny of various problem matters of rhetoric and argumentation beyond the literary perspective, such as:

- the place of argument in contemporary life;
- strategies for reading arguments (reading as a believer and as a doubter);
- basic concepts of rhetoric (the rhetorical triangle, the enthymeme, the warrant, a genuine argument and a pseudo-argument, etc.);
- means of creating effective pathos and ethos in argumentative discourse;
- audience-based reasoning (appealing to supportive, neutral or resistant audiences);
- logical fallacies in argumentation, etc.

The general approach to the discussion of fiction in the framework of rhetorical analysis is shaping the discussion guide into four logical levels:

1. **Context discussion.** It is important to provide biographical information about the authors, as well as about the historical, societal, and personal factors that influenced the book. It also helps identify the genre, style, tone and other important literary elements that might turn out important while reading this work of fiction. This is the level of general interpretation, or dialogic reflection, according to M. M. Bakhtin.

2. **Study questions.** Discussion guides should come with a number of questions and answers that demonstrate the rhetorical approach to analyzing a text. Each question is open for interpretation and argument, but can also be answered by looking directly at the text for details that can be combined to produce an answer. This is the level of intradiegetic commentary, or explication of rhetorical components (logos, ethos and pathos) as a part of literary characters' interaction.

3. **Author's rhetoric.** This part of literary discussion is focused on sharing view points on the themes, messages, character analysis, symbols and allusions. This is the level of extradiegetic commentary on the impact of the author's rhetoric on the reader – the influence of the author's logos, ethos and pathos on the reader's understanding of the message.

4. **Feedback and follow up.** Finally, it is important to provide opportunities for individual feedback, when students can summarize their response to the literary work in the form of a written rhetorical analysis. This is the level of individual rhetorical response which encourages the reader to join in the dialogue with the writer.

To provide a few practical tips on how to arrange the rhetorical discussion of a literary work, a short account of a rhetorical discussion guide based on *Animal Farm* by George Orwell is given as an example below.

Dialogic reflection in the form of context discussion seems to be the most crucial for *Animal Farm*, because further rhetorical analysis is impossible without being knowledgeable about the most important background information about the following issues: 1) George Orwell's literary career, views and contribution to literary world; 2) the genre of *Animal Farm* and its peculiarities; 3) the historical context of the novel. Students are recommended to use the Internet or library resources to find information about G. Orwell's biography and political outlook, G. Orwell's influence on the language (the commentary of "newspeak" and the clichés that are ascribed to this author, such as "cold war"), the genres of anti-utopia and fable, the historical context (the Stalin-Trotsky conflict, the Bloody Sunday, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the fall of Tsar, the Russian Civil War and other events important for understanding messages).

The level of intradiegetic analysis involves a reflection on the events in the narrative and on the characters' interaction. This level encompasses not only the general understanding of the contents, but also the interpretation of the rhetorical components (logos, ethos and pathos) and rhetorical devices as a part of the narrative. In the framework of general discussion, the number of rhetorical issues can be raised. For example, the use of a wide spectrum of logical rhetorical fallacies as a means of manipulation (in the episodes with milking the cows and the disappearance of the milk and the windfalls) and Squealer's role in legalizing the pigs' possession of the windfalls. Secondly, the identification of rhetorical strategies in the correction of the Seven Commandments, the rhetorical power of rewriting history and its role in human self-deception (in the episodes with the pigs' engagement in trade, the abolishment of the song *Beasts of England*).

The level of extradiegetic analysis involves an analysis of the author's voice to reveal the message of the entire work. We believe that the most fruitful discussion is possible when the author's rhetoric is based on the contrast of successful internal, intradiegetic rhetoric and a complete failure of the same rhetorical tactics and strategies in extradiegesis. Explicating the contradiction between the internal effectiveness of the intradiegetic rhetoric and the external comprehension of its deficiency activate the students' critical thinking and emotional involvement caused by injustice, inconsistency, and absurdity of the events described. Interpretation of the rhetorical contrast of intra- and extradiegesis is a powerful strategy of in-class discussion and individual feedback demonstrating the potential of logos, ethos and pathos as strategies

of persuasion in artistic discourse. Logos appears a powerful instrument of *Animal Farm's* extradiegetic rhetoric. The reader is asked to point out and analyze logical gaps, deliberate fallacies, equivocations and sophisms in the pigs' pseudo-logos and manipulative reasoning. For a shrewd reader outside the text, the pigs actions outweigh their pathos-loaded empty rhetoric. Deciphering numerous symbols and allusions to real historical events and figures, the student plunges into an intellectual game and experiences a sense of cultural belonging and involvement, which is also a vital component of the book's extradiegetic pathos. The ethics of universal equality and justice, declared at the beginning of the plot, are always enthusiastically shared in the classroom, but while years pass in the novel, the students' extradiegetic ethos remains unchanged and allows them to trace down how the pigs' priorities and values gradually turn from integrity and egalitarianism into brainwashing and exploitation. Thus, in extradiegetic perspective *Animal Farm* provides enough material for its didactical discussion as a dystopian novel, a work of satire, a grotesque melodrama and a fable.

Writing a critical essay is practiced as a form of individual feedback. Students follow a 7-step plan: 1) brainstorming for ideas that may be used as topics; 2) collecting evidence for support; 3) generating their own effective thesis; 4) writing the introduction presenting the topic, articulating the necessary background and providing the thesis; 5) developing arguments and supporting them with evidence; 6) organizing arguments into body paragraphs according to the chosen argumentative strategy; 7) summarizing the specifics and implications of the topic in a conclusion.

In conclusion it should be noted that the use of artistic text has proven to be a reasonable and productive method in teaching Practical Rhetoric. In the classroom, students show a genuine interest in discussing and analyzing works of fiction rhetorically. Fiction provides a variety of illustrative material for the study of tactics and strategies of argumentation and food for thought on a wide range of sociocultural issues and refutes a widespread misconception that it is exceptionally political and marketing discourse found in advertising and periodic multimedia journalism that can be considered argumentative. The fictional text has no less potential to influence the reader via a wide range of rhetorical persuasion strategies. Thus, introduction of fiction in the corpus of rhetoric study materials allows actualizing interdisciplinary connections between literature, stylistics and rhetoric, thus contributing to the students' general professional advancement and to better understanding of rhetorical strategies manifested in different types of discourse.

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