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English 110

Mr.Velez

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**Cover Letter**

During this phase of the course I watched Safwat Saleems Ted talk and analyzed it for persuasive tactics. During my second and third time watching it, I was able to notice things I didn’t get the first time as I was considering the concept of appealing to pathos and ethos.

The audience for my essay is my teacher and peers, whom are aware of these rhetoric features but may not remember Safwats story. I tailored my essay to them by giving a brief summary of Safwats story before I honed in on his persuasive techniques. Understanding his story is crucial to understanding the rhetorical situation surrounding the speech.

Through this analysis I’ve learned that appealing to logos, pathos, and ethos is crucial to being an effective persuader. After watching the Ted talk the first time, I found myself agreeing with Safwat without even considering why or what techniques he used. Now I realize that these techniques go unnoticed when done correctly and I should incorporate them in my own life.

This assignment forced me to recognize rhetorical strategies. When listening to the Ted talk I considered the idea of appealing to ethos, logos, and pathos and the purpose behind each sentence and idea. I also summarized and interpreted the Ted talk.

**Rhetorical Analysis of Safwat Saleem’s Ted talk**

Safwat Saleem’a Ted talk responded to criticism of his accent in his line of work, voice acting, and in turn questioned the idea normality. He believes that we should challenge the idea of normality for the betterment of society or we risk losing our unique identities. During this Ted talk Safwat uses many rhetoric features to appeal to the reader. He effectively titled his speech, “Why I keep speaking up, even when people mock my accent”. He incorporates his credentials to get the audience to trust him. He appeals to the audience members emotions so they can “feel” his message. He presents logical and reason-based facts. Lastly, he chose an effective outlet to broadcast his message in order to persuade his audience.

The construct of normality became apparent to him when reflecting on comments about his voice on his videos. He realized that normality is simply just what one is familiar with, which left him with two options; accept the construct of normality and continue living in it or to actively challenge it within his line of work. Thus, this Ted talk is his pitch that we should all challenge normality. I believe Ted talk was the appropriate outlet to amplify his message because it is a slightly liberal leaning organization. As stated by Ted talk themselves, the audience consists of designers, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and artists. These individuals are more willing to consider the idea that their normal is a construct and work against it.

Safwat appeals to pathos using his own experiences told as anecdotes. One of these anecdotes was about a nightmare he had, in which he was asked his name and couldn’t say it. The chatter gets louder and he just panics and is unable to say anything (Saleem 0:10- 1:00). This anecdote makes the listener feel sympathetic towards him while staying relevant to the topic. He tells another story about criticism to his videos. On a video he voice acted, the comments criticized his accent, saying it wasn’t normal and he sounded like he had peanut butter in his mouth. This anecdote is much more powerful in appealing to pathos as it isn’t a dream, and is recent and involves his livelihood. Both of these anecdotes may specifically appeal to the liberal audience of Ted Talk as they tend to be more empathetic, especially towards a mental health issue like a panic attack.

Lastly, Safwat appeals to ethos through showing his credentials towards this topic. Safwat grew up having speaking problems so this issue is very personal towards him. Later in life criticism of his voice lead to him withdrawing his voice from his own work. Not only was he forcefully confronted with the construct of normality, he was punished for accepting it. The construct of normality in terms of voice acting was intertwined with his life. He dedicates the first section of his speech to introducing his past with this issue. This allows viewers to feel as though he is qualified to speak on this issue accurately. It appeals to the Ted talk audience as they are seeking to be educated on a topic by an expert.

In conclusion, Safwat used different rhetorical tools to persuade his listeners. He appealed to ethos using his past with the idea of normality in voice acting. He appealed to pathos through emotional anecdotes. And he picked the Ted talk publication, because it would broadcast his message to a considerate audience.