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Rhetoric As A Discursive Strategy In Creating Skilled Saudi Graduates: A Case Study Of Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University

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Abstract

This research study assessed the extent to which rhetoric is included in textbooks and the curricula of skills courses and advanced courses of the undergraduate program in English Language and Literature at Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University (PSAU) via a content analysis with a case-based qualitative approach. The findings hinted at significant curricular connections between the study of rhetoric in skills courses and of the advanced level courses. In conclusion, the study recommends designing a separate course track or a module on Rhetoric and align it with the other closely related courses at all levels.

Keywords: Rhetoric, Skilled Courses, Advanced Courses.

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La retórica como estrategia discursiva para crear graduados saudíes expertos: un estudio de caso de la Universidad Prince Sattam Abdulaziz

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación evaluó hasta qué punto se incluye la retórica en los libros de texto y en el plan de estudios de los cursos de habilidades y cursos avanzados del programa de licenciatura en lengua y literatura inglesas en la Universidad Prince Sattam Abdulaziz (PSAU) mediante un análisis de contenido con un enfoque cualitativo basado en casos. Los hallazgos apuntaban a importantes conexiones curriculares entre el estudio de la retórica en los cursos de habilidades y los cursos de nivel avanzado. En conclusión, el estudio recomienda diseñar un curso separado o un módulo en Retórica y alinearlo con los otros cursos estrechamente relacionados en todos los niveles.

Palabras clave: retórica, cursos especializados, cursos avanzados.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric has become that genre of academic discourse which is used in concrete situations; to convince people, help them to interpret and evaluate what others speak or write in a constructive and critical way (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995). It is seen as a discursive strategy and a skill to develop by practicing it. The use of rhetoric can also increase or decrease the cognitive abilities and oral and written expressions of learners and guide them on how to use it in their field of study. Language and texts play a decisive role in developing such rhetoric skills. If a learner has mastered the speaking and writing skills, he can

negotiate well and can become a good decision maker. He can move to advanced skills like analytical and reasoning skills. The stronger their rhetorical abilities, the greater are their prospects of success in their academic and professional endeavors (McLeod, 2017). One who practices rhetoric can convince or persuade others to believe in a proposition; or motivate others to accept or change a new proposition (Miller, 2004). A curriculum of rhetoric, therefore, is meant to develop such linguistics abilities in learners that can assist them to interpret literary texts as well as deliver a rhetorically embedded piece of oratory (Hazrat, 2015). A good curriculum on rhetoric supported by a practice-oriented study plan enables both the teacher and the learners to identify such figures of speech and literary devices that are most significant and effective in developing skills of persuasion and communication.

But a paucity of rhetoric related courses has been felt in the modern curricula of many universities Chien (2007) hinting at the gap between a study of formal rhetoric and its pedagogy. A formal study of rhetoric, therefore, in Engineering, Law, Business Management, or Sciences can develop good argumentative skills, a rational mind, logical and credible personality traits, and ensure a successful completion of their study program. With the growth of education and the increase in the number of universities in Saudi Arabia, there has been felt a need for a morphic resonance Andrews (2014) emphasizing the pedagogy of rhetoric and rhetorical education. This need has been felt at both academic and industry levels. The academia emphasized the strengthening of their curricula of Skills courses and a few

Advanced level courses while the external stakeholders like industry expected a revitalization and revival of the civic and socio-economic mission of universities through improvising the pedagogy of rhetoric.

Hence rhetoric is omnipresent as a need is felt for every person on account of one thing or the other either to persuade or seek feedback or settle an argument, which is all but rhetorical events. This research study was inspired by the advantages of rhetoric in various fields of human life and hence postulated a conceptual framework (Figure 1) which begins with rhetoric strengthening the curricular value of skills courses at Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University (PSAU) and later showing strategic and systematic connections with advanced level courses such as Discourse analysis, Work Ethics, Business Writing, Teaching Methods and Literary Criticism. The framework culminates into two types of applications: first, it motivates teachers and academicians to explore new avenues of application of rhetoric, rather than it remaining only a mere teaching component in language curriculum; second, it provides evidence of the use and application of rhetoric in various fields of human interaction like sales and marketing, business, law, media and communication in addition to academics, for students to take the benefit after their graduation. A formal and structured study of rhetoric can teach them how to interact with others and establish their credibility by modes of persuasion and by practicing rhetorical devices.

1.1. Research problem

In PSAU, there is a paucity of courses focusing exclusively on rhetoric, whether rhetorical history, theory, or practice or its linkages with logic, persuasion and decision making strategies. It is often argued that a text in a curriculum not only influences the skills like speaking and writing but also paves the way for making learners acquire negotiation and decision making skills with the understanding of persuasion strategies but unfortunately these rhetorical focus is missing in the curriculum. Beale (1987) asserts that a rhetorical curriculum aims at developing linguistics abilities in learners but not to interpret literary texts or deliver a rhetoric based piece of oratory to an audience but to carry out their socio-political and economical businesses. Miller (2004) in an empirical survey of the undergraduate courses (core and electives) of 100 four-year institutions also observes a paucity of rhetoric related courses, in both theory and practice. Chien (2007) investigates the role of rhetorical strategy in acquiring English writing skills by the Chinese EFL learners. All these studies are evidence of the gap that has been felt between rhetorical learning and rhetorical pedagogy. In his treatise, The Vocation of a Teacher (1988), Booth attempts to find out the reason for this gap. He discovers that undergraduates take one or two rhetoric courses only, such as writing and public speaking, at their first-year levels, which is insufficient to provide them the exposure to the rhetorical appeals and techniques. He also laments on the finding that even those courses are taught by unskilled, part-time trainers or teaching assistants who lack the knowledge of rhetoric nor have the experience of teaching such courses.

Thus the function of rhetoric has been completely neglected in academic and literary contexts. Rhetoric helps learners not only to excel in their personal and social lives, but also utilize it in the success of their careers, first to secure a good job by convincing or persuading an employer about their qualities and then later as good negotiators and decision makers. But the current teaching modules in the English Program of Prince Sattam University do not lay stress on this sort of applied rhetoric or help learners to develop and evolve their innate faculty of logic or reason. Even teachers of English do not employ any oral or written rhetoric in their teaching style. A formal study of rhetoric with the objective to develop logical abilities and skills of oratory and writing is therefore required to make graduates achieve success in their careers. A need is also felt to introduce a new course in Rhetoric Studies or include rhetoric as a key component of the current curricula.

1.2. Research questions

1. To what extent is the rhetoric focus included in textbooks and the curricula of skills courses like Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing?

2. What are curricular connections between skills courses and advanced courses like Discourse analysis, Work Ethics, Business Writing, Teaching Methods and Literary Criticism?

3. What are the areas of focus like persuasion, resistance to influence, literary discourse, discursive techniques, business & commerce and social rhetoric that need to be evolved in learners?

4. What are the practical implications of teaching rhetoric in the English language curriculum for success in the fields of business and social communication?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical underpinnings

The rhetoric theory has taken on several meanings (Andrews, 2014). Aristotle defined rhetoric as, the faculty of observing, in any given case, the available means of persuasion. The ancient Greeks called rhetoric a techne, a word they used to mean a craft or ability to do something, a creative skill. This can be physical or mental, positive or negative, like that of metalworking or trickery (Shabbir et al., 2018). Several rhetorical theories have been postulated by Greek and Roman academies such as Homer, Gorgias, Isocrates, Aspasia, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian. For instance, Plato defined Rhetoric in comparison to logic which is often described as dialectic, or an art of influencing people through speech, words and expressions, not only in disciplines like law, politics or government, but even in public addresses and private meetings. Aristotle created a rhetorical triangle,

which expects the rhetor or the speaker to make use of three interconnected elements: the subject, the audience, and the speaker. The subject refers to the information that the student puts in his speech or essay, his perspectives about the themes of a novel or a film or reasons of Glorious Revolution, expressed legibly in rhetorical terms. The audience refers to the readers' expectations about the subject from the students' essay or speech, often stated clearly in measurable terms in instructions such as to write a five-paragraph argumentative essay with clear thesis statement or the use of error free prose; directly expecting the student to develop a rhetoric focus in completion of their assignment. Finally, the third element speaker is seen as a character, a persona according to Aristotle, developing in his own speech or writing, reflecting the attitude and understanding of the subject with a familiarity of the audience's expectation (Glenn & Carcasson, 2009). These are evidence that even the ancients felt the need of developing rhetorical skills and techniques through pedagogy.

There are two other theorists of modern times: Conley (1994) who called Rhetoric as the science of discourse, a discipline that describes how and why a writer or a speaker persuades, influences or motivates his audiences; Second, McLuhan (1994), who called the medium is the message (29), a dictum that has highlighted rhetoric in media. In order to teach theoretical rhetoric, Cashin (1995) even went to the extent of suggesting structures for rhetoric questions and predictors and how the students should respond to these questions. Leff and Lunsford (2004) too supported normative models of modern rhetoric which however differs from classical rhetoric postulated by

(Crowley and Hawhee, 2004). In the context of rhetorical writing, social constructionist theories have adopted a cooperative approach, and considered rhetorical writing as functions of a specific discourse community using a distinct language. Social constructionists like Porter (1986) called it intertextuality of language, interdependent learning, shared by people of common interest through mutually acceptable channels of communication; Harris (1989) called it community-driven by individuals who understand discourse communication and are linked together with a distinct language. Thus, the social constructionist approach is quite close to the invitational theory Foss & Griffin (1995) which rests on the principle of invitation to understand through persuasion. Its objective is not to persuade others to accept a speaker's viewpoint but to understand the viewpoint of others (Shabbir et al., 2018).

Another theoretical perspective is that of the post-structuralists like Crowley (2003) who looked at rhetoric as a post-modern ideology, an independent entity, apart from social institutions or individual beliefs. The post-structuralists also considered rhetoric as enabling student interface with the rational world and its various pre-requisites like understanding means of persuasion which gives it a social meaning. In an unpublished doctoral thesis, Afzal (2017) made a successful attempt in theorizing sense making through newspaper editorials that are full of rhetorical devices, and also recommended editorials as specimens for pedagogical purposes or to be used as a pedagogical device. Rhetoric can also be understood in the light of critical discourse analysis (CDA) theories. Wodak (2001) postulated the theory

that the roots of CDA lay in subjects like Classical Rhetoric, Textual linguistics and Sociolinguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. This was an echo of Fairclough for whom language was a social practice (Fairclough (2013) who recommended CDA for linguistic and semiotic analysis practices in social arenas. Fairclough was thus endorsing the idea of amalgamating rhetoric with social and civic education and regarded rhetorical discourse as a social practice to build up a dialectical relationship between events of socio-political importance.

These theoretical underpinnings thus suggest that rhetoric penetrates deeper into various aspects of the external world which a student needs to be familiar with. Teachers and orators, therefore, must construct rhetoric embedded lectures and speeches in pedagogical terms. Academically, various theorists have recognized rhetoric as a sociological need, and recommended students to assimilate themselves to rhetorical discourse while at the university instead of finding ways and means to develop it in the industry.

2.2. Rhetoric and Pedagogy

A historical evidence of rhetorical pedagogy appeared first in Homer's Achilles, considered as "a rhetor of speech and a doer of deeds" Glenn & Carcasson (2009: 10) whose eloquent language showed persuasion and whose voice sparked a rhetorical consciousness in early Greek and who made pedagogy the heart of the rhetorical tradition. Aristotle called rhetoric as a mode of persuasion appealing to

a learner's intellect and his cognitive understandings. He established rhetoric as a pedagogical tool since antiquity in both public speaking and in written expression. Plato also referred to rhetoric as dialectic and true instruction. In more recent times, rhetoric is a requirement in multifarious disciplines like media, politics, academia, business, governance, philosophy and every walk of life. Richards (1965), a literary critic and rhetorician, defined rhetoric as "a study of misunderstandings and its remedies" (Richards 1965: 28). Richards also investigated how rhetoric happens or how it can succeed in an educational institution through its curricular patterns.

By the end of the 19th century, several American and European universities had reconfigured their courses and teaching methods to accommodate theology, the study of classics and ancient languages with rhetoric given the status of an epistemological science rather than a component of Language or Communication. This could still not be seen as a revival of rhetoric because students were taught mere Aristotelian principles of ethos, pathos and logos or dialectics in Platonic terms. Rhetoric was also found missing from Oratory or Public Speech courses. Fleming (1998) called it the decline of rhetorical education (1998) despite a rise in graduate rhetoric programs in the fields of politics, cultural studies, law and government. The curricula of these universities also failed to recognize different styles of rhetoric: literary rhetoric, classical rhetoric, rhetoric of drama, media and theatre wherein rhetoric was practiced through appealing to character, reason and emotions in Aristotelian terms. These universities also did not teach rhetoric as a part of language and literature, nor to

analyze texts in order to get an idea of the author's message and understand author's opinion on text and its credibility (Abidin & Haseeb, 2015).

The real renaissance of rhetorical education began by the end of the 20th century when a few universities including University of Iowa, Penn State University, University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, and the University of Maryland introduced graduate programs in rhetoric. Other universities such as Stanford University, University of Denver, University of Colorado, and the University of Memphis introduced rhetoric in their writing courses. In an unpublished thesis, Arp (2014) investigated the writing curricula of the University of Northern Iowa and found students using rhetorical appeals and techniques in their compositions. He emphasized upon the need of teaching rhetoric to undergraduates enabling them to become more effective communicators, in pragmatic terms, in all epistemological contexts and laying a foundation for their future achievements. For this purpose, Arp (2014) made a close reexamination of these appeals and techniques and found them linked with the learning objectives. He also discovered that teachers and instructors too paid a great attention in developing rhetorical skills of learners using various techniques including metacognition and self-learning strategies ideally suiting to develop rhetorical ideas and improving students' expressions about their subjects.

In 2003, the Alliance of Rhetoric Societies (ARS) was formed at north western University to promote rhetorical education and

identify social goals for academic rhetoric in the twenty first century. This alliance received a tremendous response from a number of prominent rhetoricians including Karlyn of Campbell, University of Minnesota, Jerzy Axer, University of Warsaw, Steve Mailloux, University of California-Irvine, and Jackie Royster, Ohio State University. Such academic societies that were already working for the promotion of rhetorical studies such as American Society for the History of Rhetoric, Canadian Society for the History of Rhetoric, Kenneth Burke Society and Rhetoric Society of America agreed to associate with ARS. A conference was organized in the same year which emphasized the need for rhetorical pedagogy and its dynamic use in teaching and learning of skills courses and literary studies as well. Hauser (2004) for instance admonished the academicians and educationists who were advocating the discontinuation of rhetorical scholarship and felt the need to reclaim it in order to capacitate and empower learners and to become competent citizens. Soon after the conference, two anthologies examined rhetorical pedagogy and rhetorical education in America (Jayakumar, 2016). The impact of the conference was also seen in the form of Oral Rhetoric or Rhetorical Focus as learning elements introduced in EFL disciplines to teach Skills courses (Listening & Speaking, Reading and Writing) and also by those who taught other courses like literary criticism, discourse analysis and literary criticism.

Roskelly (2008) argues that rhetoric makes learners successful communicators as it transforms their speaking, reading, and writing skills. He refers to a genre-based teaching where the learners develop

discourse dynamics by following the components of a genre. A genre, according to Roskelly (2008), is a product of social practice and culture and writers and speakers are deeply influenced by it. For example, there are generic explanations of certain writings and speeches that inform learners of the language used; the form as well as the purpose. In this context, Afzal and Harun (2013) carried out an analysis of rhetorical strategies and persuasive devices used in newspaper editorials and media discourses. According to authors, editorials as a genre play the role of persuasive social agents with rich pedagogical opportunities since they adopt and interpret a language in a sociocultural context, representing norms, customs and values of people in the news. They help in forming public opinion and even voicing it in a persuasive way. The authors strongly recommend the use of editorials in classrooms and for teaching and learning of English owing to the rich rhetorical element in them.

2.3. Areas of Rhetorical Focus

There are several studies that have focused on different areas of rhetorical focus including persuasion, (Perloff, 2010), third-person dialogues and communication Andsager & White (2007) and teaching of rhetoric in universities. Perloff (2010) linked persuasive communication with the attitude change, individual behavior and social science perspective on persuasion. While the author examined forces of persuasion in media and interpersonal communication, he also investigated their impact on attitudes toward socio-political and

economic activities Likewise, Andsager and White (2007) discovered the role of third-person effect in events of persuasion in which individuals are found impacted by media and its messages. In addition to these empirical studies, Kurihara (2016) and Kweka & Ndibalema, (2018) brought out a volume on rhetoric to address the issues being faced in the study of rhetoric in universities. Having proved a supplemental resource for university graduates, this volume dealt with contemporary rhetorical theories and criticism. The articles threw much light on the role of rhetoric in shaping the future role of literary discourse, discursive techniques in the field of business and commerce as well as social rhetoric to be evolved in learners. Last, but not least, the volume also fostered interdisciplinary dialogues in the field of rhetoric.

Likewise, Yanga & Yenb (2016) in an empirical study provided evidence of the use and applicability of Aristotelian three modes of persuasion ethos, pathos and logos in the field of jurisprudence. When used in concert, according to the author, these three modes prove very beneficial to lawyers and attorneys and to the society too as a whole. He strongly recommended including Aristotle's rhetorical attributes in the university curricula in order to produce efficient attorneys. Teaching these attributes would allow a wider perspective to the attorneys and help them to build up skills to communicate in more legitimate terms and bring transparency injustice. A similar study was carried out by Afzal (2017) who focused on the element of pathos in forming a social consciousness through media framing, a strong social educational tool.

A study of argumentation techniques as a part of rhetorical pedagogy not only produces able orators but also trained scientists and mathematicians. Argumentation exposes students to learn and apply contrasting ideas, to use their power of reasoning and develop a critical aptitude, which broadens their learning. The use of open-ended questions and restatements of facts and opinions in argumentative discussions further helps develop their use of scientific language, design explanatory and oratory models of their own for their future consumption. While arguing in scientific ways, they also develop an understanding of motives behind arguments; develop their own rationale of supporting a particular argument, and above all become good and active listeners. A new area of focus emerging is the visual rhetoric through the use of images for communication, particularly in the business of advertisements and mass media communication. Rhetorical devices or figures of speech, such as antithesis, allusion, hyperbole, similes and metaphors, analogy, or personification can be implemented in the creation of an artwork. Kress (2010) found visual rhetoric as a strong means to convey meaningful messages each distinct in layout and structure. According to him, these messages have social, political, and cultural connotations and are capable of different rhetorical meanings as per the situation and purpose to get the desired rhetorical effects. The domain of visual rhetoric or use of signs and colors must have human intervention, he added. Similarly, the French theorist Barthes (1977) and various other studies Danesi (2017) also studied the semiotic meanings of images and asserted that visual images carried coded linguistic messages. Moreover, recent scientific and technological advancements have necessitated the use of images

and signs at a large scale in order to attract a large media attention in fields of art, entertainment, business, literature, and popular culture.

2.4. Rhetoric in Business and Social Communication

Roskelly (2008) draws attention to the presence of rhetoric all around in social, business and political environment, in art, movies, advertisements and even in people's gestures; there are several educational institutions that have talked about teaching of rhetoric as citizenship education including Ford Foundation, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, among many others These institutions universally advocated the study of rhetoric as citizenship education, not only to understand the importance of voting and their civic duties for the nation but also to develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, innovative problem solving, making decisions and judgment prior to their completion of graduation. No doubt, most of these skills can be taught as a part of the pedagogy of rhetoric.

Cyphert (2010) feels that there exists an inter-relationship between business, rhetoric, and society and therefore such a rhetorical education could produce individuals that can participate in political and social decision-making processes for the common interest. An example can be seen in a study carried out by Marais (2012) on rhetorical strategies adopted by CEOs of companies for performing corporate social responsibility. This study is one of the critiques that

talk about the need and importance of rhetoric in societal business and in achieving stakeholders' satisfaction. The study was based on press articles and speeches made by CEOs that addressed stakeholders' pressures. The findings witnessed three types of rhetoric in action: values rhetoric aiming at moral legitimacy of employees and stakeholders and their satisfaction levels about products and services; normative rhetoric about norms and regulations that addresses the issues of quality of management, leadership and governance; and finally, the instrumental rhetoric that was found essential to improve the pragmatic legitimacy in the companies.

Another benefit of rhetoric in the corporate world is seen in the use of the past to run businesses. In a recent study, Smith and Simeone (2017) narrate the experience of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) that recommended the use of historical rhetoric to do its transactions. Being the oldest firm founded in1670, the company created what it called heritage infrastructure in all its communication with stakeholders. It used history as a strategic asset specially to get a competitive advantage over other companies. In a similar article, Spinuzzi (2017) talked of innovation as a rhetorical premise in entrepreneurial tasks assigned to individuals employed in various sectors of business. The author believes that people should be convinced and persuaded to take interest and invest in innovative entrepreneurial ideas. For this purpose, there must be adequate learning and education of rhetoric principles.

In an unpublished thesis at Texas Tech University, McLeod (2017) investigated various factors that influenced the rhetoric particularly in the introduction of new IPO and persuading investors to make an investment in it. The author found that in their persuasion narratives, companies employed the rhetorical modes of pathos and ethos to appeal to people's emotions and moral character to make them believe that investment decisions cannot be made in the absence of data and information about the IPO. The companies claimed that their IPO provided all the data, facts, and consequences of investments and thus it was most credible and justified. Hence, they employed the rhetorical mode of logos (logic) too. The author also concludes that language played a big role in designing such narratives that helped the companies to prove the rhetoric fit required to reduce the uncertainty that overpower the minds of the investors in taking decisions.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research study was inspired by the advantages of rhetoric in various fields of human life and hence postulated a conceptual framework (Figure 1) which begins with rhetoric first strengthening the curricular value of skills courses and later showing strategic and systematic connections with advanced level courses such as Discourse analysis, Work Ethics, Business Writing, Teaching Methods and Literary Criticism. The framework culminates into two types of applications: first, in the field of education it motivates teachers and academicians to explore new avenues of application of rhetoric, rather

than its remaining only a mere teaching component in language curriculum; second, it provides evidence of the use and application of rhetoric in various fields of industry like sales and marketing, business, law, media and communication, for students to take the benefit after their graduation.

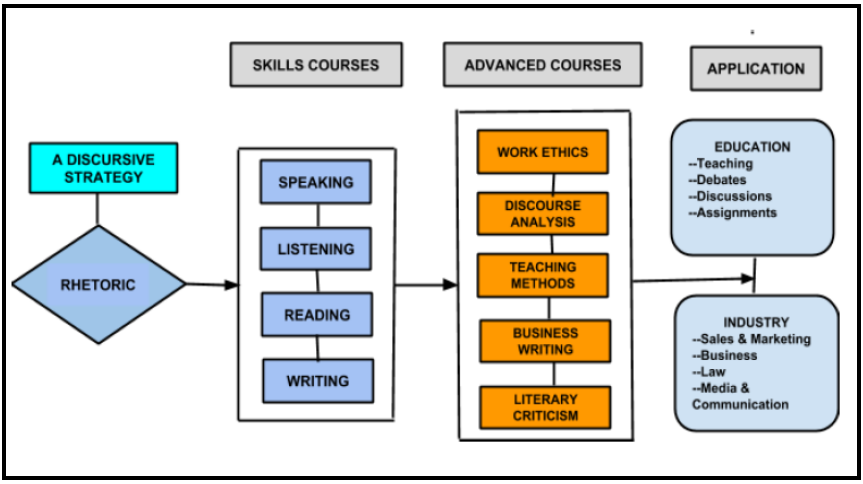

Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing interrelationship of skills and advanced courses and their applications in education and industry

Figure 1 exhibits rhetoric as a discursive strategy and the interrelationship of skills courses and advanced courses ending in applications in both education and industry sectors. The framework was used to investigate the Research Questions stated for this study.

4. METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a curriculum benchmarking approach using the Delphi Method. The current curricula followed at PSAU of the English language Skills courses was carefully examined by internal and external (industrial) experts. The internal experts were a team of researchers among the Faculty of the English Department at PSAU which evaluated the rhetorical focus in the Skills courses. They also examined the rhetoric curricula at various European and American universities and focused on the objectives and outcomes of the rhetoric subjects taught in those universities to set a benchmark for the current study. The external (industry) experts were a few stakeholders from the sampled sectors which graduates of the English Department at PSAU generally chose as career options. Their responses were recorded on the need to study rhetoric as a part of the curriculum.

The questions in this study also raised issues about rhetoric dynamics in the context of Saudi society in order to assess their ability to mesmerize the Saudi audience not only in the academic circles but also the audience in the socio-economic work environments. In this connection, the study also conducted a few interviews with the PSAU faculty and selected informants from five different organizations belonging to five major sectors: Education, Retail, Advertising, Media and Telecom and Sales & Marketing. The responses of these informants validated the findings of the questionnaire that was distributed before these interviews to the students of PSAU. The rationale behind including industry in the sample was to understand the need of implementation of rhetoric dynamics for practical purposes and not just to confine it as rhetorical knowledge in academia**.** A total of 170 students from the Department of English language and literature, both boys and girls sections, participated in the survey. All of

them are majoring in English and most of them have passed at least two introductory writing and grammar courses. Having collected the data through a questionnaire by participants of students of Level 1 to Level 8 studying Skills courses and Advanced level courses, a grounded approach was developed to address the issues and findings. A content analysis with case based qualitative approach was done to assess the feasibility of introducing fresh courses on Rhetoric studies or adding more rhetoric components in the current curricula. The study also highlighted and recommended appropriate teaching methodology to teach rhetoric inconsistent with the need and requirement of the industry.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Rhetoric and Pedagogy: Learning Principles

Rhetoric as a pedagogical element was found in most of the prescribed textbooks for skills courses at PSAU though it was missing in the advanced courses. A common feature of all skills courses textbooks was the rhetorical focus aiming at developing rhetorical skills in daily conversations, readings and writings. Intrinsically, there was a holistic view of knowledge and learning as each text was analyzed for its ethos, pathos, and logos and to understand how rhetorical devices used in all the texts revealed the credibility of the author(s). Each text required students to use rhetoric dynamics in Reading, Listening & Speaking and Writing in order to sharpen their communication skills and their ability to persuade audiences. The

findings of the study for each of the skills courses in connection with rhetorical focus and presence of the rhetoric element in the question patterns and assessment strategies are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Rhetorical Focus and Rhetoric Element in Skills Courses at PSAU

Rhetorical Focus	**Listening and Speaking skills**	**Reading Skills**	**Writing Skills**
Persuasion and Argumentation	- Counter-arguments in speech and discussions - Forming opinions, concessions and refutations - defend an argument in a debate or oration	- Selecting and narrowing a topic - Argumentative organization of ideas - Searching convincing ideas to prove an argument	- Reasons to support an opinion, idea or refutation - Cohesively organizing Facts and opinions - Agreement or disagreement for changes and opinions
Comparison and Contrast	- Focus on reliability and trust in addressing contrasting ideas - Rhetorical questions and credibility, to believe or disbelieve	- Finding reliable sources through search engines - Choose or reject based on similarities and dissimilarities	- Evaluation of reliability of resources - Evidence and information - Highlighting similarities and dissimilarities
Cause and Effect	- Speaking out reasons and factors to get a desired outcome - Speaking in a logical and linear sequence to highlight the Cause-Effect	- moulding readiness to accept outcomes through reading - Searching for linear relationship in topics/ subjects	- Readiness to meet consequences - organization of Cause and effect factors in writing
Reaction and Feedback	- Expression of thoughts as feedback to an action - Evaluation of the topic under discussion - Use of verbal and nonverbal rhetoric	- To analyse and interpret while reading - To determine steps and action plan based on analysis	- To evaluate the topic sentence and build up a critique accordingly - To compose supporting sentences according to the topic
Classification, degree and importance	- Establishing order of importance, degree and size through verbal and non-verbal rhetoric	- To read a text by classifying its content into ranks and categories	- Clustering information for Unity and coherence - Division of ideas into types and categories

The table illustrates how the productive skills (speaking and writing) and the receptive skills (listening and reading) are honed and developed through a rhetorical focus in the Skills courses taught at PSAU. One of the Faculty informants admitted that though these skills form a part of the curriculum they are not linked sequentially to obtain the desired pedagogical impact of rhetoric. As a result, students fail to master not only the rhetorical devices but also cannot learn to read critically and speak and write convincingly. Hence, they fail to classify, analyze and interpret the meaning behind written words and draw conclusions. The informants from the industry also felt this deficiency as they expect students to show the ability of using convincing, credible and well-constructed arguments to persuade their clients and customers These findings are consistent with Roskelly (2008) of University of North Carolina who found that students are evaluated on the basis of their use of rhetorical devices in their analysis of a text and later how well they can interact with the environment in dealing with diverse situations, particularly in business and industry. At Prince Sattam University rhetoric is also taught in small units in advanced courses like Discourse Analysis, Work Ethics, Literary Criticism and Syntax and Morphology. Table 2 exhibits the element of rhetorical focus in these advanced courses.

Table 2. Rhetorical Focus in Advanced Courses at PSAU

Course	**Rhetorical Focus**
Discourse Analysis (ENG:3560)	The course helps learners develop a critical approach; employ distinctive features and structures of interpersonal and ideational discourses through their speaking and writing. It also aims at constructing relationships between speakers/writers and hearers/readers in order to determine the real intended meaning of discourse.

Work Ethics (ENG4280	This course discusses such values and ethics that determine and shape the human behavior (pathos), particularly at the workplace. The use of rhetoric is found in making moral judgments, ethical reasoning (logos) and ethical decision-making (ethos) and credibility shown in issues related to their workplace.
Literary Criticism (ENG2110)	This course teaches such trends and attitudes of literary criticism that develops critical approaches and ability to read and interpret different texts from different literary genres. The learners are expected to develop an analytical and interpretative rhetorical focus in criticizing a text.
Syntax and Morphology (ENG4860)	The course enables the learners to develop a rhetorical focus through a study of different syntactical and morphological categories and functions, their familiarity, in order to analyze, interpret and resolve ambiguities in such structures when they are employed in speaking, reading and writing.
Applied Linguistics (ENG3160)	The rhetoric element here is reflected in principles of teaching methods which are in harmony of thoughts, emotions and beliefs of learners. Through different instructional tools, materials, and teaching aids, the course employs a variety of techniques and principles in language teaching.
Stylistics and Pragmatics (ENG 4120)	The rhetoric of this course helps students know the functional elements, style and expression, the context and meaning of the text. It recommends practicing the analysis of literary texts in order to overcome ambiguity and covert rhetorical messages.
Semantics (ENG 3560)	Rhetorically, this course covers the domain of cognitive semantics to speech acts, perlocution and illocutions, conversational implicatures utterances, proportions, references and sense, politeness, metaphor irony and several other interpersonal sense making properties. It also teachers logic (logos) through propositions connectives, predicative, and derivatives.

Findings reveal that there is a dearth of ESL and ESP courses that could be prepared learners for interaction with the industry, media and business society after they graduate. ESL courses carry such rhetorical element in their curricula that could be a very useful skill in taking a job. These findings are consistent with Lunsford et al. (2004) who identified discourse markers in all those students who studied rhetoric in their writing courses and with Sadeghi (2015) who advocated the use of pedagogical e-practice for developing interactivity and social communication.

5.2. Institutions and universities

Rhetoric was found to have a deeper curricular value in the scholarly context and a study of the subject in theory and practice in various university curricula leading to several personal, social and civic benefits. The universities hence play a major role in the accomplishment of such objectives. Evidence was also drawn from universities that taught rhetoric as a core subject. In Saudi Arabia, Umm Al-Qura University has the Department of Classical Arabic Rhetoric and Literary Criticism to teach Rhetoric but in Arabic medium and is very restricted to aspects of theology and religion. In western countries, for instance, North Carolina offers a course on rhetorical studies which examines the use of symbols in different contexts like film, media or public speech. The students learn the use of critical and interpretive methods of different rhetorical devices that can appeal, influence or persuade an audience. At the University of Iowa, Rhetoric is included in all disciplines including Engineering, English or sciences and aims at developing clear thinking, argumentative and logical discussion making skills and the ability to criticize and analyze. The element of rhetoric in these courses contributes to making students reveal interpretation skills and critical thinking in their meaningful and persuasive presentations. It also prepares them for social debates and discussions, arguments and understanding business fallacies, thus preparing them adequately to face the external world. One of the motives of these industry relevant courses is also to prepare students for their future endeavors and

develop productive civic and business practices needed for socio-economic interaction.

Findings also revealed that the Department of Rhetoric at Berkeley runs a course in rhetorical traditions and antiquity, teaching its evolution from the classical to the modern periods. It provides students with a comparative perspective in Rhetoric enabling them to live in a new country, learn a new language and experience another culture. At Texas, the course Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) helps students become proficient writers in preparation for graduate school or the workplace. Students learn to write analytical essays, research reports, technical documents, and multimodal projects by using language both grammatically and stylistically and shape their texts effectively to meet the demands of different audiences. At the University of Dallas, a similar course RHET1302 aims to develop students' writing abilities and provide them training in critical thinking and audience analysis;

5.3. Areas of rhetorical focus

The respondents of this study agreed strongly to the need of the rhetoric focus in the learning objectives of Skills courses (65%) and the Advanced courses (53%). The findings suggest that areas of focus included Aristotelian three modes of persuasion ethos, paths and logos, argumentation, persuasion and influence as a part of pedagogy and discursive techniques and their implications in the fields of business and social rhetoric. A majority (78%) of respondents accepted that

people used rhetoric and its various devices in speeches, conversations (78%); or adopted an argumentative approach (69%); or made use of Persuasion skills (54%) and negotiation skills (69%); made comparison between two similar items (54%) and showed curiosity to find out the cause or reason of something that happened or gave feedback about things (63%).

When asked about the need of learning rhetoric, a large number (81%) agreed that a study of rhetoric would improve their communication skills (53%); or develop their overall personality (89%); or help in developing social relationships (65%); or enhance strong interpersonal and human relations (56%); and develop strong persuasion and influencing skills (56%). Hence, there was a unanimous agreement (93%) about including the teaching of rhetoric and its various forms even in advanced level courses. These findings were validated by the informants of this study in both academia and industry who unanimously agreed to the need and importance of rhetorical scholarship in order to achieve the learning objectives of various courses at various levels. This is consistent with the findings of Nilson (2010) who also recommended a systematic process for learning rhetoric and insisted on focusing on determining learning objectives and learning outcomes. In this study, the author felt the need to study rhetorical questions for each set of learning objectives and learning outcomes. By systematic study, the author meant that questions and their rhetorical patterns must start with basic skills to more advanced skills thus helping students to reach multiple cognitive skill levels.

5.4. Implications in business and social communication

The industry has occupied the position of a big stakeholder in the Saudi education system. Hence these findings are very significant. The five sectors sampled in this study included Education, Retail, Advertising, Media & Telecom and Sales & Marketing. The informants of these five sectors were interviewed with semi-structured questions with questions focusing on the need and utility of rhetoric in the industry and to what extent rhetoric contributes to a successful career of a college graduate. They were also questioned about the practical implications of teaching rhetoric in the English language curriculum for success in the fields of business and social communication.

A large number of respondents (88%) agreed that if student had good rhetorical abilities, they could choose a career in Educational Leadership (e.g. Department Heads), in Law and Politics (as attorneys and legal advisers), in Media and Communications (as Public orators and Radio/ TV anchors); in Sales and Retail sectors (as sellers skilled in the art of negotiation and persuasion). The data had already revealed that rhetoric was taught in courses like Law and Jurisprudence, Media and communication, Politics, and Humanities and social sciences in European and American universities. These courses are supposed to inculcate qualities like clear thinking, judgment, argumentative skills, and logical aptitude in the graduates entering into the industry. A question was also asked whether rhetoric empowered students in the socio-economic roles they play upon joining the industry and whether

it helped in developing positive traits required for the industry. The purpose was to find out how their knowledge of rhetoric helped them to deliver on the job. It was explained to the industry respondents that rhetoric has been taught to them in skills courses and to some extent in advanced courses. The informants expressed the opinion that the use of rhetoric in the industry was not limited only to speaking or writing but several other deliberations such as presentations, dialogues and meeting proceedings where university graduates need to prove their rhetorical abilities and skills. The respondents of the study also felt that the more knowledge they acquire of rhetoric, the greater their understanding of rhetorical attributes, the stronger is their abilities to analyze, to criticize and to deliver presentations and to resolve business issues. Hence, graduates are expected to demonstrate awareness about rhetorical patterns in textual elements and an understanding of their application in the industrial scenario too.

The findings revealed three types of rhetorical categories that are required in the industry: one employees' values rhetoric that requires morals and ethics; second, regulatory rhetoric aiming to improve credibility; and third, pragmatics rhetoric for the enhancement of contextual patterns. Employees' value rhetoric was linked with employees or other stakeholders including customers and distributors. This type of rhetoric was found increasing when respondents of this study unanimously agreed that its success depended upon the organizations' financial performance, its business strategies, products and services. The second type, regulatory rhetoric was shown as a variable norm that fluctuated with stakeholders' satisfaction, CSR

evidence, Quality of service and governance. The third type, pragmatics rhetoric was mainly contextual and which was related to stakeholders' satisfaction on the financial performance of the organization. A new type of rhetoric was also discovered in the findings, known as visual rhetoric that was commonly used in advertisements, TV commercials, posters, or any contextual images that used colour, texture or graphics. Such a use of visual rhetoric was interestingly persuasive as it draws its techniques from semiotics and structure of a visual image that makes a lasting influence on the audience.

This study, however, restricted its focus to rhetorical patterns in oral and written texts conceding them having knowledge of the rhetoric focus they had studied in Skills courses and other Advanced courses at the university. It was found that fresh graduates entered into the industry with almost no practical awareness of rhetorical patterns, oral or written, despite their study of rhetoric formally in the university. They show a lack of interpretive and analytical abilities required to address different situations identified through textual elements in their day to day activities or even in discussions, debates and group conversations. These findings are consistent with Zachry (2009) who asserts that an individual can react to a text only if there is a presence of a certain element which will help him to experience the text and also analyze it in a particular way. Most texts, according to Zachry (2009), have multiple features, so a graduate entering into the industry without much knowledge of rhetoric will be unable to analyze the text as well

as understand the cumulative effects of such texts on his working patterns.

Rhetoric in industry, informants shared, is a necessity almost every day. It is required to persuade others to accept their viewpoint or agree to a project idea. Not only in behavioral and intangible occasions, the rhetorical element is also visible in all tangible and concrete images—over all types of billboards, posters, commercials, advertisements portraying one or other form of rhetoric. In a few of these, companies used statistics or satisfaction rates as evidence, trying to switch individuals from their current buying habits and preferences; to persuade them to buy their company products or services; claiming that their products or services are better. For instance, an official from the telecom company sampled for this study admitted that they used rhetoric in highlighting their product and services such as a robust modem, high speed Wi-Fi, post-sale customer care among a few specifications that gave them a competitive edge over their close rival companies and also lured the customer to buy their products. A similar admittance was made by officials from Retail and the Sales sectors which proved an evidence of this study showing how rhetoric played a significant role in fields of business and commerce.

There are several instances seen in different fields like when a religious organization boasts of securing a place in heaven if one uses its services is an example of persuasion using rhetoric; or when a medicine company uses the logical fallacy stating that a satisfied customer will never speak for its effectiveness unlike their competitor;

or when airlines sells insurance to only those customers who wish to protect their lives. These examples have the rhetoric embedded in the expressions and the listeners are persuaded and convinced to believe in them. An interesting example of rhetoric can be cited from the field of politics and governance, which prefers to call illegal immigrants as undocumented workers. This rhetorical expression is popularly used in media to help remove the stigma that the label illegal carried on such individuals and motivated them to complete their documentation such a rhetorical pattern would also help in future legislation as these individuals would at least have some status and not illegal. The findings are consistent with an empirical study by Lunsford et al. (2004) who reflected that rhetoric and its curriculum prepared students to strengthen their voices on the public platform and empower them to build their identities, plan their roles and define their interests in order to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

6. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Rhetoric has come to be known as the art of persuasion, commonly required in speaking and writing. It prepares the student for challenges of higher education and advanced learning courses enabling them to develop logical thinking skills, differentiate between right and wrong, between strong and weak arguments in debates and discussions. A good practice of rhetorical principles also develops

confidence and a pragmatic approach in students that helps them to overcome their public speaking phobias and develop confidence. Moreover, they can also be successful professionals in careers like Law, business, governance, media and communication.

One of the objectives of the study was to find curricular connections between skills courses and these advanced level courses. The evidence retrieved from the course descriptions of these courses did not reveal any emphasis being given on rhetoric focus of aspects like persuasion, resistance to influence, pedagogy, literary discourse, discursive techniques, business & commerce and social and ethical rhetoric that need to be evolved in learners through teaching. Saudi Arabia needs such qualified professionals who can be skilled in the art of rhetoric and public speech to build up an ethos, a credibility of both the nation and the community at intentional levels. In the current scenario, when Saudi Arabia needs to convince the world community of her economic reforms, a study of rhetoric in a systematic manner at the university will help students to develop clear and unbiased thinking, good argumentative skills, and logical mindsets to understand and resolve issues of national and global importance. The better are their oral and written presentations, the more significant are their ideas on national and international forums; the stronger their presentations, the greater will be their leadership; the more they learn how to persuade and influence others, the stronger are their analytical skills and decision making skills. Last, but not the least, a study of rhetoric will increase prospects of students' success in international tests like TOEFL and IELTS as there are exercises that require the advanced

level of analytical and interpretation skills. A formal study of rhetoric will be a great benefit to the Saudi graduates who aspire for higher qualifications at foreign universities.

Based on findings and discussions, it is recommended to design and develop a new course on rhetoric studies in the prospective study plan and align it with the academic program of study currently in force at Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University. The researchers have already added the component rhetoric in business in the new track of Translation and Interpretation under review. This new module carries 4 credits and will play an assistive role for graduates to get a job and also to deliver it efficiently. At the same time, it has been suggested to the New Study Plan Committee to review the current curricula of courses like Discourse Analysis. Literary criticism and Interpretation and explore the possibility of including modules on rhetoric and its social and practical application. In the alumni meets too, the researchers have also emphasized upon developing skills within the respective academic disciplines.

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