ABSTRACT

The study attempts to provide a systematic and in-depth exploration of the relationship between Linguistic Contexts (语言环境) and Rhetorical Devices (修辞手段).

Encoders, decoders, third-parties, motives of the intercourse, time when the intercourse is carried out, and the social cultural background of the actual environment where the conversation takes place, form what we called the internal contexts (内部语境). Apart from these, we have also the external contexts (外部语境) which are comprised of the styles of function variety in language (语体风格), the themes (主题), and the contextual texts (上下文). All these elements play a great part in influencing the application of rhetorical devices, which include the polishing of words and phrases, the selection of syntax, and the application of rhetorical formatives.

Comparative analysis is employed to show the nuances among the applications of rhetorical devices that vary with the contexts of situation. Our main materials for this study are drawn from the two famous play scripts of Lao She (老舍), namely “Long Xu Gou” (《龙须沟》) and “Cha Guan” (《茶馆》).
The study finds that linguistic contexts do not play only a negative influence on rhetorical devices, but also a positive influence. On one hand, the contexts post a restriction on the selection of synonymous words and phrases, and the application of the rhetorical formatives. On the other hand, it enables the encoders to reach their motives in the most economic and ideal way through the best application of rhetorical devices, with their better understanding and fully utilization of the linguistic contexts.

To conclude, in a social intercourse, the encoder must be aware of the linguistic contexts and the influence of linguistic contexts on the application of rhetorical devices, so that the conversation can be carried out in smooth and henceforth its objective can be attained.