Methods of Persuasion and Influence in the Messages Exchanged Between Imam Ali and his Contemporaries

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of Requirements for the Masters Degree in Arabic Language

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Abstract

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This research aims to study the messages exchanged between Imam Ali and his contemporaries as a separate genre because these letters did not receive the attention to be analyzed or researched. Analyzing this genre is based on the argumentation approach, aided with different theories and methods.

In the beginning the research starts with an introduction that explains the concept of the title and the other connotations that to be mentioned in the paper. Like the exchanged letters being in a solo genre, the argumentation, and the matter of influence and persuasion.

First, the research transfers to the first division which is related to the ethical appeal of the sender labeled as “Ethos” demonstrates the ethical appeal and argumentative strength for the metaphors in the text. In addition, the research supported the Ethos credibility with the other two modes of persuasion “Pathos, and Logos”. It also showed how the correspondents aimed to sabotage the image of the other party instead of building their own, which is known as ad hominem. However, with that method the direct receiver is not affected as much as the general receiver. Lastly, this division was concluded with the existence of prior argument and how its existence or nonexistence would affect the building of the image that the sender desires or have an opposite effect.

In addition, the second division discussed the Pathos which is a method of convincing people with an argument drown out through the emotional response of the receiver. In order to fully understand the pathos method; this division was subdivided to three parts. The first one targets the emotions of the receiver by using the different types of intertextual like religious, literature, and historical intertextual. The second sub-division focused on the theory of receiving through the action of reading and the expectations that the receiver must help the sender persuade the receiver. However, the last part studied the emotional effect to change the course of the dialogue and convince the other party without leading to more complications.
Moreover, the research had a third division that was titled "The Investment of Logic Arguments" which discussed the logos and its definition. Then, moved to the argumentation coherence in the text. Lastly, it studied the sequence of argumentation where the research analyzed two letters, the first was from Moawieh and the second was Imam Ali’s response.

In conclusion the research listed the results and the most important result concluded that the argumentation rarely leads to mutual agreement in the Arabic culture. Actually, it is most common that it leads to separation and war.