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Rhetorical Analysis of a Research Paper in Elderly People Driving Behaviors

Does an automatic transmission improve driving behavior in older drivers? An automatic transmission car has the luxury of not shifting gears and not worrying about clutch control while driving. Though in a manual transmission a person has to constantly worry about when to change gears, when to hold in the clutch and when to let go. Multitasking while driving this could make drivers commit a lot of traffic violations and irritate other drivers. Specifically in older drivers making them prone to many obstacles like getting tickets or putting their lives in danger as described in the research paper by Selander, Bolin, & Falkmer (2011). As older drivers continue to drive even as they age and get older this makes them susceptible to road conditions and if they're healthy enough to still drive (Selander et al., 2011). For my rhetorical analysis, I chose this paper because as being part of the younger crowd and having experience in driving both manual and automatic transmission, by far manual transmissions are more hands-on. The purpose of writing this paper is to give a rhetorical analysis of how the author wrote this research paper and how they used different strategies to communicate and accomplish their objective.

The audience of this research paper is predominantly older people that are still driving. I knew this just by reading the abstract section of this paper, specifically the background part

where they discuss the safety of older drivers. Also in the “Kew Words” section, they mention “Older drivers” (Selander et al., 2011). Additionally, from the language used in this article, the audience can be determined easily by the average person because through the simplicity of the author's language use. The authors are pretty much straight up and it's not full of complex terminology to understand who the audience may be. It is like they are all accusing older drivers by giving multiple reasons as to why they may cause a hazard on the road. One such example in the article states, “ In these interactive situations, older drivers have fewer cognitive processing resources than younger drivers. Older drivers crash more frequently in complex traffic environments, e.g. in intersections that involve turning, especially turning across the oncoming lane” (p. 182). The average person after reading this can feel slightly worried about driving when using words like a crash. Throughout this research, everything was predominantly mentioned and compared with older drivers. What I know about the publication of this paper is that it was published on August 25, 2011. The genre of this paper is that it is an original research paper with evidence, questions, results, and answers.

The authors of this research paper are Helena Selander, Ingrid Bolin, and Torbjörn Falkmer. Helena Selander is an affiliate of, School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University, Jönköping and Mobilitetscenter, Gothenburg. Next, Ingrid Bolin works at the Mobilitetscenter, in Gothenburg. Finally, Torbjörn Falkmer is affiliated with the School of Health Sciences, Jönköping University, Jönköping. Also, Falkmer is affiliated with the Rehabilitation Medicine Faculty of Health Sciences at Linköping University in Linköping, Sweden, and School of Occupational Therapy at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Vic. , Australia. She is a professor at these institutions.

The urgency that is driving this research is that the authors want to improve the driving behavior in older drivers. So they compared two different types of drivetrains: an automatic system and the old school manual transmission (Selander et al., 2011). This is made explicit in the document as stated in the abstract section of the results and conclusion part. Older drivers were making more errors than the younger group in both types of drivetrains (Selander et al., 2011). However, on the automatic transmission cars older drivers demonstrated more success with their driving behavior such as safer speeds, good control of the car, and safer lane changes. On the other hand, younger drivers were not as promising and no significant improvements were made (Selander et al., 2011). Driving an automatic transmission is suggested for older drivers due to it being safer and a better quality of transport (Selander et al., 2011).

In this research paper, there is a lot of conventional format of IMRaD. Specifically, the IMRaD formatting usage in this paper. I say this because IMRaD is a writing structure that includes the following introduction(I), research methods(M), results(R), and discussion(D). For example, this document includes the methods and procedure section. In the method section, it states how the younger drivers are the control group (Selander et al., 2011). Also, it includes an analysis where the authors state the number of participants in total, amount of older drivers, and younger drivers including charts and data (Selander et al., 2011). Showing me some of the things that a conventional IMRaD format would use. To add on, it includes a results section where it says the older group made more driving errors in both types of transmissions than the younger groups. It includes graphs which show the differences between younger and older drivers for instance the older group driving an automatic transmission car their driving behavior improved. Whereas the younger group of drivers showed no difference. Making it more clear who the

audience really is for this research paper. Another convention usage of IMRaD is having a discussion section. The authors discuss their results and findings in addition to answering any critic someone would have to say about their research. For instance, how their sample size was pretty small and there was no measurement of interrater (Selander et al., 2011). Also, it includes an abstract where the authors summed up each of the research paper sections in short sentences, as well as including a conclusion, acknowledgments, and references.

The authors use different kinds of appeals to support their persuasive argument. Such as ethos which signifies credibility and knowledge. For instance, ethos is shown in the acknowledgment section where the research paper was funded by The Swedish Transport Administration. Also, ethos is shown in the beginning the affiliations of the authors. Another kind of appeal that is used in this paper is logos, which is a way of persuading the audience with facts and reasoning. Such logos are being used in the results and discussion section, where the authors talk about the facts after accomplishing the experiment, and the results demonstrate that an automatic transmission indefinitely improves driving behavior in older drivers. As stated in the discussion section present study found that older drivers displayed far safer speed adjustments, lane positioning, and better maneuvering skills (Selander et al., 2011). These are facts and reasoning the presentation of the information from the methods and procedures that got them the results. Lastly, pathos is another form of appeal that uses emotions as a way of convincing the audience of an argument. It is not used much in this research paper but more so through credibility, facts, and reasoning. But there were some in the end of the paper specifically the conclusion section. The authors used emotions by saying that it is recommended for older drivers to drive an automatic transmission car because it would maintain safe driving for them

due to their improvements made like safer speeds and safer lane changes (Selander et al., 2011). The authors made it convincing by telling them what they improved at a lot and recommended them to drive an automatic transmission car so that they maintain safe driving.

Ultimately, automatic transmission cars help improve driving behavior in elderly people than in younger individuals. From analyzing this research paper, I have learned a great deal. Starting with the conventional IMRaD format, it has helped me improve my understanding of writing academic papers and making it precise and organized in a structural form. Using the format gives the document a direction to unveiling everything order by order. Also, how effectively the authors communicated with the audience and were straight up and direct about who they are as mentioned in this rhetorical analysis of the document. Most importantly the authors got their research paper acknowledged, backed up, and funded by the Swedish Transport Administration; this shows us that this paper is credible. I intend to use this when writing my own research paper and making sure it's credible and acknowledged giving my paper some importance and relevance.

Reference

Selander, H., Bolin, I., & Falkmer, T. (2012). Does Automatic Transmission Improve Driving Behavior in Older Drivers? *Gerontology*, 58(2), 181–187.
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