

Language Analysis: e-books vs hard copy books

The increasing use of e-books in today's world led to much controversies in regards to its benefits and consequences. Retired teacher-librarian Mrs Elliot's speech presented at the opening of "Reading: the future" forum, conveys in an attached tone that while e-reading devices lead to more effortless reading and is gradually revolutionising the way in which people are reading in today's society, the positive benefits of traditional reader still should not be forgotten. In her speech presented to teachers, librarians and senior school students from local schools. Elliot employs informal English language to establish a connection with her audience as she defends the value of hard-copy books using both visual and verbal language to encourage her audience to agree with her style of thinking.

Elliot adopts an affectionate tone to establish rapport with her audience as she first raises awareness about her positive experience in using e-books, asserting that the handling of e-books is both more economical and convenient to use. Her connection with the audience commences immediately from the start of the presentation, when she denotes her audience as "fellow book-lovers", using informal language to appeal to the reader's sense of inclusion in this issue. Elliot further utilises connotations to describe hard copy books as "extremely precious and rare" in the past, thus positioning the senior members to recall the high value of hard-copy books in the past and hence regard Elliot's point of view as relatable. Elliot embeds her presentation with a photograph of a young boy smiling at the usage of his e-book, evoking the audience's sense of positivity about young people's preference of e-books over hard copy books and thus agree with Elliot's argument that the use of e-books is "effortless". Moreover, the boy turning his back against the mountain of books acts weight to Elliot's argument that e-books alleviate "the terrible burden of great big textbooks", attempting to persuade parents that e-books allow their children to "set off to school" in a more carefree manner. By impressing the reader with her open-mindedness and honesty, Elliot persuades both parents and young readers to be more receptive to her next set of comments.

Changing tack, Elliot bridges her argument to elicit the audience's concern about e-books, accentuating that the over-exposure to electronic devices results in serious health concerns. Elliot uses a personal anecdote, mentioning that she "recently saw a TV ad showing a child [who] was viewing computer-generated images of dinosaurs", appealing to the parents' sense of shock and fear about their child's corrective use of e-books and the dangers behind electronic devices that could become uncontrollable. To further emphasise the hidden flaws behind e-books, Elliot directs her attention to parents and librarians by using similes to compare the child's addictive behaviour in the virtual world of e-books to a packet of potato chips that is "empty and unwholesome", appealing to their sense of anxiety that this sort of behaviour must not be tolerated and thus allowing them to think that minimising the use of eBooks is the ideal action to take. To increase the audience's sensitivity about the potential health hazards of e-books, Elliot concludes her argument with a rhetorical question, "do we really think it will be healthy for our kids to spend hours and hours using e-books", appealing to the parents' sense of reason and logic that e-books are both unhealthy and "disturbing" and hence encourages the parents to advocate for traditional book reading to their child.

With an abrupt shift of tone, Elliot employs a more nostalgic tone to endorse to her audience the value and advantages of traditional books. Eliciting the attention of the elder members of the audience, Elliot attempts to recall the audience's memory about the "magic" behind hard-copy books in allowing them "to see impossible or unreal things in [their] imagination", evoking their sense of affection that traditional reader has guided them through half of their lifetime. The visual element of the presentation, with a young person buying a book in the bookstore, complements

with Elliot's assertion that hard-copy books allow "the textbooks [to be] kept permanently". Alongside with the consistent use of inclusive language such as "your textbooks" and "you pay", Elliot attempts to acquire a sense of sarcasm in the image when the book seller sighs that the person can "only keep the book for six months before it vanishes", appealing to the audience's hip-pocket nerve that a large expense is required for the maintenance of e-books. The speaker's argument is further strengthened when Elliot appeals to the notion of egalitarianism by stating that "eBooks might increase the gap between rich and poor", elicit the audience's sense of fear and justice, allowing them to question the accessibility of print technology to the unaffordable people. The juxtaposition between the tangible hard-copy books and e-books sitting "silently on their virtual shelf" again criticises the practicality of e-books, evoking the audience's sense of agreement that the hard-copy books carry both cultural and traditional values are incomparable with the "virtual" e-books.

While retired teacher-librarian Mrs Elliot acknowledges the growing use of e-books are its advantages, yet through a personal and direct approach, Elliot uses various tones, aiming to alert the audience about the serious hazards for children to use e-books and hence encourage her audience to continue to support hard-copy books. Considering the steadfastness of these point of views, it is likely that this issue will spark further debate among students, parents, librarians and other members of the community.

