

Article

The European Renaissance and Michel de Montaigne: A Linguistic Study of Self-Understanding Through Language and Discourse

Umidjon Egamberdiyevich Qurbonov^{*1}

1. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Philosophy, Samarkand Campus, University of Economics and Pedagogy

* Correspondence: umidjonkurbonov1981@mail.ru

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Abstract: The essays of Michel de Montaigne are analysed linguistically and philosophically in this article, which looks at how language is the main way that people comprehend themselves. Montaigne's writings are seen as a singular linguistic experiment in self-representation as well as a philosophical investigation of human nature. According to the study, the essays' central idea is the author's attempt to do "experiments" on his consciousness through discourse, self-narration, and thoughtful language use. Montaigne's writings demonstrate how language expression shapes one's sense of self, reality perception, and intellectual independence.

Keywords: Self-Comprehension, Discourse, Linguistic Identity, Subjectivity, Reflection, Narrative Voice, Skepticism, Renaissance Humanism

1. Introduction

Uzbekistan has evolved to become a democratic society with a fast growing economy since independence. Such changes are particularly evident in the area of education and spirituality, where cultural background and intellectual development is essential. To enhance the national identity and global cultural discourse, it is necessary to rekindle the historical memory and to pay tribute to the works of great thinkers. Of particular importance in this regard is the study of the legacy of humanists in the Renaissance. Along with affecting the development of language, speech, culture and intellectual self-expression, their writings were inspirational to philosophical thought [1], [2].

Of these philosophers, Michel de Montaigne is particularly dear to us [3]. Montaigne remains significant nowadays due to his imaginative application of words and his disdain towards philosophy. His articles are some of the first examples of introspective discourse and language is used to analyse consciousness [4].

The rhetorical strategy, the narrative structure, and the personal voice are all the tools that help to create modern subjectivity by taking a linguistic approach to the interpretation of Montaigne [5].

The twenty-first century is witnessing the beginning of education and research realizing language to be the basis of human intelligence and social development. Language skill is a connecting factor between the spiritual growth, moral responsibility and intellectual culture. Thus, a linguistic analysis of the legacy of Montaigne gives us an opportunity to learn more about the contemporary humanities and Renaissance philosophy.

Even though the philosophical legacy of Montaigne is a matter of significant academic research, the linguistic mechanisms through which the process of self-understanding is created as a result in his *Essays* have been under-researched. A more systematic study is required to grasp the complete influence of discourse structure, narrative voice, and semantic flexibility to form the reflective identity of the author.

Accordingly, this research paper aims at analyzing the application of language and discursive modes in *Essays* by Montaigne as a means of self-awareness. How does language structure the process of self-understanding in Montaigne? The inquiry is based on this issue.

2. Materials and Methods

The paper is a qualitative interpretive study based on a close textual analysis of some of the works of Michel de Montaigne. Parts of the research text convey self-observation, philosophical reasoning and personal identification in a clear and succinct way.

The techniques used in the analysis are quite a few. In the first place, discourse analysis is applied to examine the application of reasoning, narrative structure, and communication techniques in the process of creating meaning [6]. Second, semantic analysis is concerned with important lexical units on experience, self-knowledge and scepticism. Thirdly, the relationship between conceptual thinking and language is explored through a comparative philosophical-linguistic methodology.

The study presents further argument in favour of historicism by the analysis of the language that Montaigne uses in the context of Renaissance humanism. It is in the process of analysis that we find recurring linguistic patterns, judge of their contextual relevance, and relate them to more general philosophical concepts.

Special attention is also paid to finding discursive cues that signal the shifts in self-positioning and introspection. These include modal constructs, evaluative comments, pronouns of the first person, and rhetorical questions. These elements are discussed lexically as well as concerning their functions in the discourse structure at large.

The analysis used a rigorous coding to ensure the uniformity in the analysis. The identified literary passages are divided into narrative, argumentative, or meditative according to the most important language features. This categorization simplifies the interpretation of different speech patterns in promoting self-awareness. Reliability of the data is enhanced with the combination of the structured analysis and qualitative interpretation.

3. Results

The exploration exposes several important linguistic factors that shape self-perception in the *Essays* written by Montaigne.

To begin with, the heavy use of the first-person pronoun creates a solid narrative subjectivity. Self-reflection is introduced in the Montaigne text, I am myself the matter of my book, as the key organising feature of discourse.

Second, the structure of the text is discontinuous and non-linear, having digressions and associative thought [7, 8]. This shows that the mind is dynamic and promotes the notion that identity is continuously constructed by means of language.

Third, lexical analysis shows that the repetition of phrases connected with experience, ambiguity and judgement builds a semantic field of self-exploration. As an example, Montaigne often emphasized the uncertainty, when he wrote that nothing is so certain as what we know least of [9].

Lastly, rhetorical questions, comparisons and paradoxes provide the text with a dialogical quality by transforming it into a system of preconceptions into a process of ongoing reflection.

The other significant observation is the interrelation between the reasoning and narrative in the discourse of Montaigne. It has been revealed in the course of the investigation that more general philosophical conclusions tend to be made on the basis of personal anecdotes; this feature has been noted to exist in past evaluations of the approach taken by Montaigne [10]. This fusion of experience and abstract thinking assists in the idea that knowledge is created by means of language expression and not independent reasoning.

The analysis also finds out that reformulation and self-correction are common in the text. Montaigne is constantly contradicting himself or himself, and the meaning-making process continues. This aspect brings out the open-ended nature of his speech. It also helps to sustain the idea that self-knowledge is an ongoing process which is linguistically mediated and not a fixed state.

4. Discussion

The results imply that the Essays by Montaigne are an initial instance of discursive self-construction in the environment of European thought. His writing reinvents the connection between language and knowledge, unlike scholastic traditions, through a mixture of human voice and philosophical inquiry.

Such findings are consistent with the other literature highlighting scepticism and humanism as discussed by Montaigne [11, 12]. But they take this view a step further, focusing on the linguistic aspect of his opinions.

The research indicates that Montaigne considered language as the means of expression, as well as a medium through which thought occurs [13]. This facilitates contemporary linguistic theories that consider discourse as a crucial part of identity and not a representation of it.

In his philosophical understanding of scepticism, Popkin may also consider his scepticism as a semantic instability [14].

The results of this analysis can be applied in the field of linguistic anthropology and discourse analysis in a more abstract theoretical context as they have shown that language is an active cognitive process and identity formation and not a mere medium of reflection. The essays by Montaigne demonstrate how ideas may be formed, modified and negotiated through a conversation that is ongoing. This conforms to the contemporary perspectives that see discourse as constitutive of subjectivity as opposed to a passive description of internal states [13], [14].

The research also highlights the relevance of Montaigne in linguistic practices to the current trends of self-representation, including online discussion. The debate, lack of order, and self-examination that are characteristic of The Essays are also discernible in the modern communication setting. This agrees with earlier assessments of Montaigne philosophical and literary practices [14, 15]. Such an attitude explains why the works of Montaigne can be more relevant beyond the Renaissance and provides new possibilities in studying the difference between the classical literature and the contemporary discourse practices.

5. Conclusion

The Essays by Montaigne are a major philosophical shift and turning point in the intellectual culture in Europe (linguistically). Self-discovery is achieved through the discursive exploration, where discursiveness is the means, as well as the object of research. Narrative reflection constructs human identity as a dynamic construct. The scepticism is used as an instrument of doubt in the fixed beliefs and the voice of the individual is a trusted one in the knowledge.

The legacy of Montaigne demonstrates that self-awareness involves the need to express oneself and his/her thoughts and experiences. His work provided valuable foundations in the field of modern discourse theory, narrative identity and philosophical

linguistics. The timelessness of Montaigne is based on the discovery of the human I as a language and a cognitive power that makes knowledge, experience, and cultural advances.

Nevertheless, there were some limitations in the study. To begin with, the analysis is limited to a number of chosen essays and does not cover the whole Montaigne. Corpus-based or comparative methodology could be adopted in subsequent studies to consider the language tendencies in Renaissance manuscripts.

Irrespective of these shortcomings, the research paper adds to our knowledge of the connection of language, identity and philosophical reflection.

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