

IV. Theoriebereiche und Forschungsfelder moderner Rhetorik

39. Persuasion: Research Areas and Approaches

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Abstract

Aristotle, one of the first persons to undertake a systematic study of rhetoric defined it as "ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion" (Arist. Rhet. 1,2,1). According to Aristotle, persuasion might be achieved by three distinct means: ethos, or the positive image and credibility of the orator; logos, the speech with its logical arguments; and pathos, appeals based on emotion. Because of the relative lack of contemporary social scientific research on credibility, we focus our review primarily on logical and emotional appeals. In addition, we give coverage to two other message features that Aristotle believed to be important, that is, structure and style. Given the breadth and depth of the persuasion literature, our review is necessarily selective. Interested readers are referred to Dillard and Pfau's (2002) Persuasion Handbook: Developments in Theory and Practice for a more detailed treatment of these topics.

1. Appeals to logic

1.1. Traditional tests of evidence

Much persuasion is based on evidence. Although explicating the various forms of evidence and their appropriate tests would require a book-length manuscript, introductory coverage of that material can be found in a number of places (e. g. Lunsford/Ruszkiewicz 1999). Herrick (1998) offers five general tests of evidence that may be posed as questions:

- (i) Is the evidence available? This accessibility criterion asks whether the evidence is available for examination by the message recipient.
- (ii) Is the body of evidence consistent within itself and with the best available evidence from other sources?
- (iii) Is the evidence timely? This recency criterion is sensitive to the degree to which the topic under examination is changing.
- (iv) Is the evidence relevant to the conclusion that it is used to support?

- (v) Is there sufficient evidence to support the claim? The degree of concern one might have regarding the adequacy of an evidentiary base should be founded on the seriousness of the question being decided.

1.2. Subjective message constructs

Morley (1987) contends that individuals typically, and perhaps automatically, engage in cognitive tests of evidence against certain natural standards. These standards, or subjective message constructs, are also three in number. Further, a favorable judgment on each is necessary for belief change to occur (Morley/Walker 1987). The importance construct concerns itself with the centrality and relevance of a datum in relation to a claim. The plausibility judgment reflects the message recipient's subjective estimate of the likelihood that the evidence is true. Evidentiary material is also evaluated with regard to its novelty or the degree to which it is seen as new to the receiver. Although the theory has not inspired a great deal of research, what evidence as does exist is supportive (Morley 1987, Morley/Walker 1987), and the three constructs exhibit considerable intuitive appeal as well as a certain degree of parallelism with standards developed by argumentation theorists. If nothing else, they offer a clear and succinct set of perceptual standards against which message producers and consumers can test the value of evidentiary materials. Individually, each of the three criteria is a necessary condition for the persuasive effectiveness of evidence. Together they are sufficient.

1.3. Testimonial assertions

Testimony is the use of a statement made by another person to support a claim. Both narrative and quantitative reviews agree that testimonial assertions can increase the persuasiveness and perceived credibility of the argument source (Reinard 1988; 1998; R. Reynolds/J. Reynolds 2002). But, it is important to note that although these testimonial assertions add to persuasiveness, inserting sources names but neglecting to indicate who the sources are or including vague references (e. g., *a study found*) is an ineffective path to persuasion (Reinard 1988).

1.4. Justification explicitness

Argumentative explicitness is commonly recognized as a positive quality among argumentation experts. However, some question if explicitness does, in fact, lead to greater persuasiveness (O'Keefe 1998). The literature on justification explicitness contains three message variations that are relevant to this review (O'Keefe 1998). First, information-source citation refers to the degree of explicitness with which the information or opinion source is identified in the message. Second, argument completeness references that fact that messages vary in the extent to which the various components of an argument are themselves spelled out to message recipients. This feature has a reliably positive association with persuasion. The third message feature is quantitative specificity, which refers to the degree of linguistic precision used to describe quantities (e. g., 80% as opposed to *most*).

O'Keefe (1998) found that for both persuasiveness and credibility, all the message variations had positive effects, though not always significant effects. For the information-source citation and argument completeness manipulations, results showed that more explicit justification was significantly more credible and significantly more persuasive than less explicit justification. For the quantitative specificity manipulation, results were positive but not significant. This may be due to the limited number of cases and small statistical power. Overall, then, the research to date does not indicate any negative effect resulting from quantitative specificity.

There are a couple of potentially limiting factors that may influence the persuasive effects of justification explicitness. First, the effects may depend on the quality of the support. There are few studies that vary the quality of the supporting material and the studies that do exist have resulted in inconsistent results. Second, manipulation of multiple justification variations simultaneously may influence the persuasive effect of the manipulation. Independent manipulations have resulted in the best support, yet many studies manipulate multiple message factors leading to reduced or nonsignificant effects.

Overall, justification explicitness could strengthen persuasiveness in two ways. First, explicitness invites careful analysis of a message and, persuasiveness increases as the receiver carefully scrutinizes a solid argument. On the other hand, poor quality messages would diminish persuasiveness. Or, a more heuristic-like process may occur. Explicitness of support is taken as a sign of merit. An individual may not pay attention to the details of the argument but may assume quality as a result of justification explicitness. In this situation, both high- and low-quality messages would be accepted. The avenue taken is a result of involvement in the issue as dictated by the dual-process models.

1.5. Narrative vs. statistical evidence

A distinction is often drawn between narrative and statistical forms of evidence (Reinard 1988, Allen/Preiss 1997). Narrative evidence uses examples or cases to support the argument offered by the source (Allen/Preiss 1997), whereas statistical evidence uses summary information representing a larger group of cases to support the proposed argument.

A meta-analytic review by Allen and Preiss (1997) examines the question of what type of evidence results in the greatest amount of persuasion. The results indicate that messages using statistical evidence are slightly more effective than messages using narrative evidence (Allen/Preiss 1997). Allen and Preiss discuss three issues when considering the meta-analysis results. The first issue is whether a combination of narrative and statistical evidence would be more persuasive than one type individually. They were not able to resolve this issue due to the lack of studies combining narrative and statistical evidence. A second issue is the fact that the studies used in their meta-analysis relied upon data from a single culture, that is, the United States. Other cultures may or may not react in the same way to statistical and narrative evidence.

2. Appeals to emotion

In western cultures, it is widely held that affect and logic exist in an oppositional relationship. Moreover, being in a logical state of mind is generally seen as the superior

approach to message processing. In fact, it is more likely that there are affective components to all persuasive interactions (Jorgensen 1998) and that cognitive and affective processes most often work hand-in-hand to produce attitude change (Nabi 2002). Indeed, it may be impossible to discuss any issue of consequence without arousing one or more emotions. The interested reader can find more extensive analyses of the affect and persuasion literature in Dillard and Meijnders (2002), Jorgensen (1998), and Nabi (2002).

2.1. Fear appeals

Threat appeals are messages that describe the negative consequences that will befall the message recipient should he/she fail to comply with the advocacy. Although such messages may or may not be effective at arousing fear (Dillard 1994, Dillard et al. 1996), that is almost surely the intent of message producers. And, in fact, there is reliable evidence that individuals change their attitudes and behaviors as a function of the degree of fear instilled by a message (Mongeau 1998, Witte/Allen 2000). Thus, it is important to distinguish between message content (i. e., does it contain information that describes a threat?) and message effects (i. e., does the information produce fear?).

Threat appeals are built around two components (Hale/Dillard 1995, Rogers/Mewborn 1976, Witte 1993). The threat component is itself comprised of information describing the susceptibility of the receiver to the negative outcome as well as the severity of that outcome. The action component presents the behavioral solution to the problem defined by the threat component. There are two essential features of the solution. Information regarding response efficacy deals with the extent to which the recommended action will be effective in lessening the threat. Self-efficacy information focuses on the relative ease or difficulty of enacting the behavior by the message recipient. Although it may not be necessary that each of these points are dealt with explicitly in the appeal, skilled persuaders will give careful thought to each one before attempting to implement a threat appeal.

One concern in the implementation of a fear appeal is the potential for defensive processing. Fear appeals are often used to warn individuals about some threat to their well-being. But, in many instances, audience members who are most at-risk are those for whom the hazardous behavior produces some benefit. For example, though the dangers of smoking are well-established, benefits such as temporary relaxation and the camaraderie shared by fellow smokers are frequently ignored. To maximize the effectiveness of the fear appeal, the investment that audience members have in the targeted behavior, as well as the costs of complying, may need to be dealt with directly (Rogers 1983).

2.2. Guilt appeals

Feelings of guilt arise when one perceives oneself as having failed to act in accordance with some personal standard (Miceli 1992). And, guilt appeals are those messages in which a source points out a recipient's past or potential failure for the purpose of motivating the recipient to remedy that failure. Such messages are common in both interper-

sonal and mass communication contexts. In fact, Vangelisti, Daly, and Rudnick (1991) report that the most common reason to evoke guilt in another is persuasion.

Guilt appeals vary in their strength, intensity, and explicitness such that some messages softly allude to failure to meet some standard while others are quite direct. As the explicitness of guilt appeals increase, so does the amount of guilt that is aroused (O'Keefe 2000). However, the guilt appeal explicitness is negatively related to persuasiveness. The explanation lies in the fact that messages may induce other emotions than those intended by the message designer. These "collateral emotions" (Dillard/Meijnders 2002) may enhance or inhibit the persuasive effectiveness of the advocacy (Dillard/Peck 2000, Dillard et al. 1996). In all likelihood, persons on the receiving end of a strong guilt appeal feel unfairly pressured by the high guilt message and, therefore, angered by it (cf. Coulter/Pinto 1995). Anger becomes the motivational basis for rejecting the persuasive appeal.

2.3. Mood and message processing

Are people in a good mood more susceptible to persuasion than those in a neutral or bad mood? Over a decade of research indicates that the short answer to this query is yes – individuals process arguments differently as a function of their pre-existing mood. However, this brief confirmation obscures some important qualifications concerning the relationship between mood and social influence. In fact, mood provides the basis for multiple, simultaneous processes all of which play a role in persuasion. But, before outlining those processes, it is necessary to be more specific about the meaning of mood.

The vast majority of studies on mood and persuasion have operationalized mood in terms of a positive-negative distinction. Moods are thought to be good versus bad or happy versus sad. There is, in fact, a compelling case to be made for the idea that a central feature of the experience of affect is a positive-negative dimension (Green/Salovey/Truax 1999). In this respect then moods are simple. Whereas emotions may be conceived of as a relatively complex set of qualitatively distinct states, moods can be profitably seen as a bipolar valence model. Furthermore, where mood is seen as a diffuse, background state of indeterminate origin, emotions are foregrounded in consciousness, arising from readily identifiable events (Parkinson 1995, Dillard 1998). As it turns out, the degree to which a message recipient is aware of the causes of his or her feelings plays a significant part in determining the ultimate impact of mood.

Three major findings emerged from a recent meta-analysis of the mood and persuasion literature (Brentar/Dillard/Smith 1997). First, as positivity of mood increased, so did attitude change. Although this effect characterized the literature generally, it was qualified by the fact that the strength of the mood-persuasion relationship was dependent on features of the message. A stronger mood-attitude correlation was found for topics that were positive in tone, claims that were gain-framed (as opposed to loss-framed), and pro-attitudinal rather than counter attitudinal messages. All of these results suggest that individuals are strategic about message processing, preferring to grant attention and cognitive effort to those appeals that will buoy their affective state (or at least not diminish it).

Second, positive moods led to decreased depth of processing. That is, people in good moods tended to report fewer cognitive responses than those in neutral or negative moods. This relationship was unaffected by any moderator. Thus, it leads to the unquali-

fied conclusion that positive mood works against careful and thorough analysis of the message. However, this general tendency operates in conjunction with the mood-management effect described in the previous paragraph.

Third, the more positive an individual's affective state, the greater the number of favorable cognitive responses. Apparently, mood influences the degree to which an individual is likely to engage in biased processing of the message. Persons in a positive mood have a tendency to see persuasive messages through rose-colored glasses. This too was seen to be a general tendency.

There is good reason to believe that the findings presented above hold only when individuals are unaware of the source of their affect, that is, when they have not considered why they feel the way they feel. Under conditions in which individuals are prompted to consider the cause of their affect (e. g., bad weather), the relationship between mood valence and persuasion disappears (Sinclair/Mark/Clore 1994). Thus, the mood and persuasion findings are circumscribed along two lines: They apply to circumstances in which (a) the affect is irrelevant to the message (i. e., pre-existing) and (b) message recipients have no reason to de-bias the effects of mood. The skilled persuader should consider the affective state of the audience prior to delivery of the message and factor in these influences accordingly.

3. The structure of persuasive messages

It is traditional to consider persuasive messages in terms of their structure or arrangement. Along these lines one might wish for specific information to questions such as whether one should lead with or end with one's strongest argument. Unfortunately, the empirical research on such questions is surprisingly sparse (Cohen 1964, see for an example). As a consequence, we focus this section on just three, related topics: forewarning, message sidedness, and inoculation.

3.1. Forewarning

Irrespective of the issue or the message, the knowledge that another person wishes to persuade you is consequential. It implies that one's current orientation to the issue, whatever it may be, is in some way faulty or inadequate and, therefore, needs to be changed. Not surprisingly, there is evidence that individuals resist this implied criticism by resisting the message (Benoit 1998). However, Wood and Quinn (2003) report that there is more to forewarning than simple resistance. In fact, their work reveals that, at least prior to presentation of a message, forewarning may enhance or inhibit attitude change. In the short run (i. e., after forewarning, but prior to the message presentation), individuals may change in the direction to be advocated by the counter-attitudinal appeal. This change puts the individual in the position of appearing more open-minded, thus, protecting his or her self-esteem and self-image (McGuire/Millman 1965). This effect was observed only when the challenging position was indicated in the warning, that is, when the forewarning included specific information about the direction of the advocacy and when the topic itself was not especially involving. In contrast, forewarning of intended

persuasion on highly involving topics produced the resistance effect presumably because participants were motivated to defend attitudes that they held dear.

Participant attitudes were also analyzed after receiving the persuasive appeal (Wood/Quinn 2003). Results indicated that individuals, who received a warning, were more resistant to the appeal than individuals who did not. In addition, these groups were compared to a no-treatment control group. This revealed that individuals, who were warned, had more positive attitudes toward the appeal than the control group, indicating that the warned individuals were not immune to the persuasive effects of the message.

These findings indicated an interesting sequence of events when individuals are forewarned and presented with a persuasive appeal (Wood/Quinn 2003). Initial warning of an appeal results in either resistance or preemptive agreement depending on the amount of issue involvement perceived by the individual. If individuals are highly involved with the topic, they are inclined to resist the forthcoming appeal as a result of greater thought involvement. If an individual lacks motivation to consider a topic, they are inclined to preemptively agree with the forthcoming appeal due to a perceived threat to his or her self-image. It is important to keep in mind that this preemptive agreement is limited to the time prior to the appeal because it is low in thought involvement and a strategic move to protect self-image. After the delivery of the persuasive appeal, individuals all have the same response to the appeal: resistance. Hearing the entire message gives individuals a chance to cognitively process the message and solidify their resistance.

The implications here for effective persuasion are quite clear: If you are a message producer, you should strive to avoid creating the perception that you intend to persuade. The usual strategy for doing so is to portray one's mission as informative rather than persuasive. But, knowledge that forewarning reduces persuasion can also be used strategically to deflect the efforts of other counter-persuaders. This observation provided the impetus for research on message sidedness and inoculation, the two topics to which we now turn our attention.

3.2. Sidedness

The essential contrast in this body of work is manifested in the distinction between a one-sided message, which ignores opposing arguments, and a two-sided message, which assumes one of two crucially different forms. The refutational two-sided message acknowledges the existence of opposing arguments and attempts to refute them by attacking the reasoning underlying the claims, questioning the relevance or importance of the evidence, disparaging the credibility of the message source, and so on. The non-refutational two-sided message is more elementary: it merely acknowledges that an alternative exists.

Meta-analytic summaries have yielded some fairly straightforward conclusions concerning the relative efficacy of these message types. Of the lot, the refutational message yields the greatest persuasive effect (Allen 1998; O'Keefe 1999). Non-refutational forms are to be avoided because they produce diminished persuasion relative to one-sided messages. However, if the goal of the episode is not persuasion per se, but credibility enhancement, both refutational and non-refutational messages are successful in promoting favorable source judgments compared to one-sided appeals (O'Keefe 1999).

At present, there is relatively little consensus on the theoretical processes that underlie these effects (Hale/Mongeau/Thomas 1991). Nonetheless, the empirical relationship showing the benefits of two-sided messages appears to be quite reliable (Allen 1998; O'Keefe

1999). If audience members are likely to be exposed to counter persuasion, the skilled message producer can maximize his or her effectiveness by acknowledging the existence of an opposing position, then presenting and refuting the arguments of the other side. Though some early research suggested that this relationship might be limited to intelligent audience members or those who were already favorable to the issue, the best available evidence suggests that such qualifications do not apply (Allen 1998; O’Keefe 1999).

3.3. Inoculation

The majority of persuasion research orients toward understanding attitude and behavior change. A smaller, but no less important literature examines how attitudes and behaviors might be maintained, particularly in the face of efforts to alter them. Since its inception, theory and research on resistance to persuasion have been guided by an inoculation metaphor. As McGuire (1970, 37) explains: “We can develop belief resistance in people as we develop disease resistance in biologically overprotected man or animal; by exposing the person to a weak dose of the attacking material strong enough to stimulate his defense but not strong enough to overwhelm him.”

As the logic of the metaphor suggests, the essential features of the inoculation approach are two. To induce resistance to later persuasive attack, the inoculation message must first threaten the message recipient’s current position. *Threat* is used very specifically here to mean that receivers come to understand that their current position on the topic of interest is vulnerable to attack, that is, there may be compelling reasons for them to change. The knowledge that they may hold an inaccurate or incorrect position provides the motivational basis for more extensive message processing than would otherwise be the case.

The second component of an inoculation message is the *refutation*. In this segment, counter arguments are offered to the information used to create the threat. In other words, the recipient is shown the flaws in the arguments that produced the threat. There is strong evidence from laboratory and field research that these two message components are sufficient to greatly reduce the impact of later persuasive attacks. What is most notable about the technique is that it confers resistance beyond the particular arguments that are pre-empted by the refutation. It is not necessary that every persuasive attack be anticipated and refuted by the inoculation message. Rather, successfully threatening the audience’s original position then refuting those arguments is sufficient to provide protection against those specific arguments as well as others not addressed by the inoculation message (Pfau/Van Bockern/Kang 1992, Pfau/Van Bockern 1994). Thus, the practical advice that concluded the previous section (i. e., on sidedness) extends beyond changing attitudes at the time of message presentation to maintaining attitudes in the face of subsequent attack.

4. The style of persuasive messages

The style of a message is a reflection of the language choices made by the source. Although we have covered certain aspects of language in earlier portions of this chapter (e. g., explicitness), here we review the literature on gain/loss framing and figurative language.

4.1. Gain- and loss-framing

Just as the proverbial glass of water can be viewed as half-full or half-empty, so can a suatory appeal highlight either the advantages of pursuing a course of action or the drawbacks of not pursuing it (Kahneman/Tversky 1979). Gain-framed messages express the benefits that will accrue to the receiver by adopting the recommended behavior (e. g., *Testing your cholesterol level allows problems to be detected early and that, in turn, permits the greatest number of treatment options*). Loss-framed messages, in contrast, emphasize the costs associated with failing to comply with the advocacy (e. g., *If you don't test your cholesterol level, you'll be unable to detect problems early and that, in turn, will severely limit your treatment options*). From a purely logical standpoint, these two message forms convey identical information; one is the logical inverse of the other. But, the question remains: Is one form more persuasive than another? Salovey, Schneider, and Apanovich (2002) contend that the answer to this question is yes. But, they go on to argue that persuasive effectiveness is moderated by the type of behavioral change sought by the message. Prevention behaviors are actions whose purpose is to combat undesirable health consequences. For example, regular exercise, the use of sunscreen, and quitting smoking are all prevention behaviors. Detection behaviors are oriented toward uncovering problems that may already exist: HIV testing, cholesterol testing, and mammography.

A recent meta-analysis (O'Keefe/Jensen 2006), which addressed exactly these issues, found the following: First, neither loss- nor gain-framed messages show any general superiority over one another. Although no-difference conclusions are sometimes suspect, one such as this, which is based on 144 studies, must be taken seriously. Second, for appeals that advocated disease prevention, gain framing offers a small advantage over loss framing ($r = .056$). For messages whose purpose is the promotion of disease detection, there was no appreciable difference between gain- and loss-framed messages.

4.2. Figurative language

A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares one concept to another (e. g., *my attorney is a street fighter*). Other figures of speech, such as analogy, simile, and personification, though distinct in surface respects, are cognitively processed in ways similar to metaphor. Therefore, we will briefly review theory and research on metaphor with the expectation that our conclusions extend beyond specific forms of figurative language to the broader category of linguistic comparisons.

A recent meta-analysis provides several empirical generalizations derived from a quantitative summary of the available studies (Sopory/Dillard 2002). The most sweeping conclusion was that metaphor does have persuasive advantages over a literal construction. However, the effect was rather small. Subsequent analysis revealed that a powerful advantage for metaphor over literal messages obtained only when several other conditions were in place. First, consider that all metaphors are of the form *A is B* as in the example above *My attorney is a street fighter*. The A term – *attorney* – is called the *target* while the B term – *street fighter* – is known as the *base*. To the extent that the metaphor works, meaning is transferred from the base to the target. Upon hearing this

utterance, we know that the speaker means to tell us that the attorney possesses some of the characteristics of a street fighter (e. g., *the attorney is pugnacious and has little regard for rules*), not that the attorney engages in street brawls. At minimum, for metaphor to operate effectively as persuasive device it must have a familiar base. Clearly, without an understanding of the base there can be no transfer of meaning from B to A and without comprehension, no persuasion (cf. McGuire 1972).

A second feature essential to the effective application of metaphor is novelty. Contemporary language is littered with husks of expressions that once enlivened the imagination but since have grown empty of meaning (e. g., *He ran like the wind*, and *She kicked the bucket*). Such expressions are ‘frozen’ or ‘dead’ metaphors because they have seen such frequent use that the comparisons no longer reveal anything new. To create opinion change, a metaphor must be novel, a point that echoes Morley’s (1987) assertion that for evidence to be persuasive it must be seen as novel by the audience.

The best available evidence suggests that metaphors achieve their persuasive impact by serving as creative and compact means of organizing one’s thinking about an issue (Read et al. 1990). That is, metaphors simultaneously hide and highlight various features of the topic. In this fashion, metaphors enhance comprehension and suggest implications of viewing the topic in a particular manner. Our claims regarding the importance of base familiarity and novelty align well with this explanation (Sopory/Dillard 2002).

This organizing theory of metaphor effectiveness also implies two additional guidelines for enhancing the potency of persuasive messages, each of which found empirical support in the meta-analysis (Sopory/Dillard 2002). First, the metaphor should appear at or near the beginning of the suasive appeal. Knowing in advance the organizing principle behind a set of arguments is more conducive to learning and understanding than is learning the same principle after the fact. Second, skilled persuaders will avoid the use of multiple metaphors in the same message. Multiple organizational schemes compete with one another thereby lessening the clarity of each.

4.3. Powerful vs. powerless speech

Powerful speech consists of language that expresses the speaker’s confidence in his or her position. In contrast, powerless speech conveys uncertainty or ambivalence. Research on these speech forms indicates a decided advantage for persons using powerful speech. In fact, powerful speech has been shown to exert a substantial and favorable impact on both persuasion and credibility (Burrell/Koper 1998). There is, however, one significant qualification to this generalization: The vast majority of this research has been conducted in the context of courtroom proceedings. A typical study will assess the influence of variations in the speech style of witnesses on judgments of the guilt or innocence of the accused. In efforts to ascertain questions of fact (i. e., beliefs), the certainty with which speakers express themselves should have considerable bearing on the value and impact of the testimony. When issue to be resolved is one of policy, ethics or aesthetics, the observed effects of powerful speech may be significantly smaller. Stated more narrowly, because there is so little variation in context in this research literature it is unclear to what extent the effects can be generalized.

With this qualification in mind, how can persuaders capitalize on powerful speech? The answer is to speak simply and explicitly, taking care to avoid *overuse* of the following:

- (i) Hedges or Qualifiers (e. g., *sort of; kind of; I guess*)
- (ii) Hesitations and Fillers (e. g., *Uh; Well; You know*)
- (iii) Tag Questions (e. g., ..., *don't you think?*)
- (iv) Disclaimers (e. g., *I'm not an expert, but ...; Others may see it differently, but ...*)
- (v) Intensifiers (e. g., *Very surely; Really; Really, really*)
- (vi) Politeness (e. g., *Please; If you don't mind*).

It is worth noting that all of these speech forms occur in natural dialogue to varying degrees. We are not suggesting that any occurrence of these forms is damaging, but rather that a pattern of frequent usage will produce effect that run counter to the persuader's goal. Although it is likely that certain of the six forms listed above are more damaging than others (Smith/Siltanen/Hosman 1998), the research base is, at present, too small to permit strong generalizations. The best advice that current data permit is to eschew the use of powerless forms to the greatest extent possible.

4.4. Rhetorical questions

Although several studies report data showing the persuasive effectiveness of rhetorical question, a roughly equal number present contradictory results (Roskos-Ewoldsen 2003). A meta-analysis by Gayle, Preiss, and Allen (1998) supports the later assertion in their conclusion that rhetorical questions have no significant effect on the persuasiveness of an argument. There are, however, some issues that may help to contextualize this conclusion. First, the initial attitude of an individual may influence and limit the persuasive effect of rhetorical questions. Second, an individual's motivation to process a message may also limit the persuasive effect of rhetorical questions. Lastly, the positioning of rhetorical questions within a persuasive appeal may influence the persuasive effect of the questions. We believe that all of these issues deserve further research attention before we move with confidence to the conclusion offered by Gayle/Preiss/Allen (1998).

5. Conclusion

Although the social-scientific study of persuasion is only a part of the tradition of rhetoric and stylistics, we judge it to be the most important part (Knape 2003). We hope that this chapter has presented the literature in such a way that readers can reach a conclusion similar to our own.

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40. Argumentationstheorie

1. Grundlegende Definitionen
2. Die Struktur und Funktion von Argumenten
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Abstract

This article briefly introduces some basic concepts and definitions of argumentation theory. Then several logical and functional approaches for the structural description of arguments are outlined and critically discussed. The semantics of arguments is described using their classification according to the abstract types of warrants which guarantee their relevance. Furthermore, the semantics of arguments is studied within differing fields and institutions and the underlying ideology is critically evaluated. A survey of normative approaches to the study of argumentation and recent developments within fallacy theory complete this overview.

1. Grundlegende Definitionen

Am Beginn dieses Überblicks steht die Definition und Abgrenzung grundlegender Begriffe wie z. B. *Argumentation*, *Argumentieren* und *Argument*. Im Anschluss an van Eemeren/Grootendorst/Snoeck Henkemans (1996, 5) kann *Argumentation* als komplexe verbale und interaktive Tätigkeit definiert werden, mittels derer die an der Interaktion beteiligten Personen von der Akzeptabilität bzw. Nicht-Akzeptabilität eines strittigen Standpunkts (einer strittigen These, einer strittigen Konklusion) überzeugt werden sollen. Der zentrale Sprechakt dieser komplexen Tätigkeit ist das *Argumentieren*. Dieser Sprechakt wird vollzogen, indem eine oder mehrere Aussagen zum Ausdruck gebracht werden, die den strittigen Standpunkt stützen oder widerlegen sollen. Diese Aussagen werden als *Argumente* bezeichnet. Den Standpunkt stützende Argumente werden als *Pro-*