

**PERSUASION IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE.
COGNITIVE AND FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

Jana Pelclová and Wei-lun Lu, eds.
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Persuasion is a topic that has engaged the attention of scholars and has been of interest in a wide variety of fields, especially in academia, since Aristotle's work (in the 4th century BC) on rhetoric and concepts such as persuasion and logos, pathos and ethos, as Hogan (2012) explains. Persuasion usually involves a communicative event in which its producer (the persuader) tries to have an influence (positive or negative, stronger or weaker) on the addressees of such event; needless to say, the addressees are able to partially or totally accept the message or reject it. This is what this book is about.

In their opening chapter, Jana Pelclová and Wei-lun Lu, editors of the present volume, explain how persuasion can be treated from different viewpoints, within different fields or contexts (e.g., academia, business, health, media, politics), and in various languages (e.g., English, Hungarian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish). This book contains a good number of excellent chapters on the topic of persuasion from a cognitive and functional perspective, as the subtitle states. The editors clearly point out the gap this book aims at filling: how ample and varied the concept of persuasion is within public discourse in diverse contexts but also in terms of multimodal and multidisciplinary methodological approaches. This is a very ambitious aim but the result is positive. Prospective addressees have the opportunity to read thirteen chapters showing this huge variation in the use of persuasion in real-world texts of oral and written public discourse. Some readers

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will confirm views they already have while others will see and learn how the topic of persuasion can be dealt with from perspectives they are not so familiar with.

The first part (“Persuasion from a historical perspective”) includes two chapters. In the first, Agnes Kuna deals with Hungarian texts from the 16th and 17th centuries within medical discourse (recipe collections, herbaria and remedy books), and how patients are persuaded by the development of certain strategies that create positive values. The second chapter addresses a more theoretical and classical view of persuasion. Janja Žmavc revisits classical rhetoric and applies it to a Slovenian Prime Minister-designate’s speech, showing that ethos is one of the most common forms of persuasion.

The second section is devoted to political discourse, and includes studies about Winston Churchill’s speeches, a Catalan president’s investiture speech and a Brazilian propaganda video. In Chapter 3, Jan Sebera and Wei-lun Lu study the use of metaphors to support the leadership discourse of Churchill in some of his Cold War speeches. Then, Gonzalo Calle Rosingana explains how four well-supported conceptual and linguistic phenomena enhance the persuasiveness of the speech delivered by a Catalan president. Finally, in the fifth chapter, Francisco Veloso and Dezheng Feng analyse a political propaganda video used in a Brazilian presidential election, promoting the negative image of one of the candidates, Dilma Rouseff.

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“Persuasion in social context” is the third part comprising chapters 6 and 7 on the positive effects of biodiversity and the negative use of the term ‘Joan of Arc’ in Russian newspapers. The former, authored by Anna Franca Plastina, analyses Vandana Shiva’s honorary doctorate speech delivered at the University of Calabria trying to persuade listeners of beneficial alternative perspectives on biodiversity by means of the organisation of the information and using linguistic strategies as persuasive techniques: emotional appeals, emotive language, and inclusive language. The latter, written by Ludmilla A’Beckett, deals with the negative side of persuasion (dissuasion). It explains how the use of the term Joan of Arc is a way of stigmatizing some Ukrainian and Russian women who take a stance against Putin’s regime and how the readership supports such a view.

Marketing is the main topic of section 4. The first chapter of this part (Chapter 8) is about hoteliers’ responses to negative customer reviews on a very well-known customer review website (TripAdvisor). Christopher Hopkinson’s article addresses saving face online by means of facework and rapport management strategies as means of persuasion, regarding the hoteliers’ responses to the negative reviews as institutional and individual at the same time. In the following chapter (Chapter 9), Carl Jon Way Ng follows a cognitive and functional perspective by means of studying animate and anthropomorphic metaphors. His aim is to analyse the brand

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communication of Singapore's publicly-funded higher education institutions regarding their corporate organizational strategies and practices intended to boost their success.

The following section is devoted to persuasion in academia, and the two articles included look at persuasion from an intercultural standpoint. First, Olga Dontcheva-Navrátilová looks at the cross-cultural variation occurring in academic book reviews written in English and Czech whereas Pilar Mur-Dueñas studies the statements of contribution (the writers' justification of their research) that academic authors include in their research articles when writing in Spanish or in English as a Foreign Language. Both chapters (10 and 11) share the view that the linguacultural background of academic writers is a key factor affecting variation in those genres of academic discourse and, consequently, reflecting the differences between authors.

Finally, the last part focuses on multimodality in the final two chapters (12 and 13). The first, written by Jana Pelclová, regards the marketing field from a multimodal perspective. She looks at the iconicity and strategic alignments of noun phrases (visual and typographic) as well as independent adjectival phrases in print advertisements for food products. The final chapter is written by Mihailo Antović, who develops a conceptual blending theory around musical multimedia. He shows how persuasive it can be to apply familiar music themes to unexpected multimedia contexts, such as those used in Serbian and former-Yugoslavia politicians' campaigns, propaganda videos, or commercials.

This book is a good contribution to the topic of persuasion addressed to a wide range of readers. The volume adopts mainly a cognitive and functional framework, but some other frameworks also support the different studies, such as sociolinguistics, historical pragmatics, or interactional pragmatics, among others. From a methodological viewpoint, the research compiled includes quantitative and qualitative studies, sometimes in combination, and shows the variety of devices and elements that can be persuasive in certain contexts. However, as previously said, the approaches to the topic are varied and eclectic. Readers can find specific examples of Critical Metaphor Analysis, Genre Analysis, Rapport Management, Appraisal Theory, Content Analysis, Framing Theory, and Semiotics.

Additionally, the book addresses an undying topic: political persuasiveness. Some of the studies refer to politics in a direct or indirect way, showing strategies to convince people of a specific position. I would like to highlight a few because of their connotations for today's world and their current validity. Chapter 7 reflects that brave women have opposed Putin's regime since a long time ago and that they have been perversely stigmatised. Other chapters (e.g., 3, 5, or 13) give us examples that can equally apply to the recent events concerning the narratives of power and war.

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The order of the chapters may be questionable as there are some issues that overlap. However, the editors are aware of this and have taken the main concerns of each paper and used them to give more coherence for readers: the papers are classified according to the most salient feature of the studied object or issue, except the last section (part 6), which deals with the (multi)modal character of the objects of study rather than with the research area it could be included in (e.g., advertisements of food products and the use of familiar music in politics or commercial videos). Another issue that might be considered controversial is that some chapters (e.g., 2, 4 or 8) do not follow the well-known IMRD structure (Swales 2004). Nevertheless, the form is not a problem for the content (the main concern) and when this occurs, the reading of the chapter makes it clear why this is.

Overall, the book is a significant contribution to the everlasting topic of persuasion. It is an excellent compilation showing that many diverse approaches and different theoretical frameworks can be combined and complemented, leading to more thorough studies. Some chapters may be slightly difficult for readers unfamiliar with the topic, but at the same time, those chapters can give readers a broad view of the topic that can lead them to delve into persuasion in public discourse.

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Works Cited

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