

Rhetorically analyzing a bumper sticker

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Bumper stickers are an interesting place to conduct a rhetorical analysis – they must communicate their point in incredibly few words, and often must rely on visual elements to get their points across. They must be one of the most efficient forms of rhetoric, because of the limited space they are allotted. The bumper sticker “ I should not have to press 1 for English” succeeds in some ways and fails in others as a rhetorical device.

Bumper sticker succeeds in that it draws the viewers attention to a great number of connected ideas that this person probably also believes – things about language rights, (presumably this person does not believe any schools should teach entirely in Spanish, or that the Spanish pledge of allegiance or Spanish version of the Star-Spangled banner are acceptable). It uses a small amount of text to clearly announce opinions on a variety of views.

This bumper sticker also has its failings, however. Firstly, it does not actually make an argument of any sort, but merely states an opinion. A bumper sticker could also say “ I don’t think I should have to stop at a red light” – a clearly ridiculous notion – and carry the same weight because neither provides proof or evidence. Likewise, this bumper sticker is not entertaining.