

# Persuasion strategies and its use in public speeches



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In the universities that existed during the middle ages, rhetoric used to be taught as liberal arts. Eventually as time went by and people started having a better understanding of the depth of the subject, rhetoric began to be recognized as a field in social or human sciences. The historical backdrop of rhetoric itself is as old as the history of any existing language in the world we live in today.

Examples of classical rhetoric can be found almost every day in almost every aspect of our lives. Take for example something as simple as a child trying to convince his/her mother to allow them to attend an excursion from school. Buddha and a large number of religious figures too use classical rhetoric in order to influence and persuade people. The best example can be of those democratic leaders or great leaders in history who through this powerful tool in order to sway the hearts of people by their admirable rhetorical skills.

In his book, "The Art of Rhetoric", Aristotle says that of the methods of persuasion outfitted by the spoken word are of three sorts. The first sort depends solely on the personal character of the speaker; the second is to put the audience in a specific mind frame; the third is the proof which is being made apparent by the speaker himself. Persuasion is usually achieved by trying to figure out the personal character of the speaker himself because we tend to believe fully only good men than the others. This particular aspect of influence ought to be accomplished by what the speaker says, not by what individuals think of his character before he starts to talk.

It isn't valid, as certain writers accept in their treatises on rhetoric, that the individual goodness uncovered by the speaker contributes nothing to his

capacity of influence; despite what might be expected, his character may nearly be known as the best methods for influence he has. Besides, persuasion may get through the listeners, when the discourse blends into their feelings. Our decisions when we are satisfied and friendly are not equivalent to when we are tormented and antagonistic. It is towards creating these impacts, as we keep up, that present-day authors on rhetoric direct the entirety of their endeavors.

Thirdly, persuasion is affected through the discourse itself when we have demonstrated a reality or an apparent truth by methods of persuasive arguments reasonable to the case.

These three points are also referred to as ethos, logos and pathos respectively. The examples of their usage can be clearly understood through the following explanation. The first strategy being ethos is usually incorporated in the commercials which we see that include a celebrity or someone of the sorts in order to coerce us to trust the speaker and therefore it ends up with us investing in the product. The usage of the logos strategy which is associated with reasoned proof is mainly used by the domain of modern science. Lastly, the pathos strategy is used to gather money from us in order to give it to a group of people who have been struck by disasters.

Another rhetoric strategy is the rhetoric triplet. This term has been derived from Greek which originally means three. In other words, a progression of three expressions, sentences or words that works along side by side in rhythm, structure as well as length.

An example of this strategy can be observed in the famous words spoken by the great leader Abraham Lincoln,

“ With malice toward none,

With charity for all,

With firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right...”

Application to a chosen text

Now we will try to apply the three strategies we learnt about in the previous section to a speech text. The text chosen is from the famous speech delivered by Dr Martin Luther King Jnr in 1963 called ‘ I have a Dream’.

Ethos: He begins by saying, “ I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration of freedom in the history of the nation.” Through these lines he is giving a call to everyone to unite and take a stand against discrimination. He also gives an idea to the crowd about what his ambition for the future is and what dreams he envisions along with his people. He paints an image of the future which gives hope to the people and shows them that he is here to eradicate the injustice people had to face. He makes clear his hatred for the fake promises Lincoln made to the black people. All these factors make the crowd believe him fully because of the good in him which people see.

Pathos: As his speech moves further he keeps stirring a variety of emotions in the hearts of people especially anger stemming through the violence committed against them. His words remind them of what they had to face

<https://assignbuster.com/persuasion-strategies-and-its-use-in-public-speeches/>

and how they must stand up against the abuse they faced. He speaks with immense passion and even now if we were to read the speech we would too feel the surge of emotions the crowd must have experienced. In order to achieve that he used phrases with immense magnitude such as, “ seared in flames of withering injustice”. He uses a technique where he contrasts the lives of black people in the dream he envisions for them and their harsh reality. He in no way wishes bad upon the white people but in fact he wants them both, the white and the black, to function harmoniously in a society which treats everyone like a human without discrimination based on something as petty as color.

Logos: The main domains of King’s dream were unity, harmony and equality for all. He wanted to accomplish his dream as fast as possible and he knew the people had dreams too. He gives people strong logic and proof from the past as to how their promises were broken and dreams were crushed and basic rights were violated. He wanted them to take up nonviolent methods in order to show to the white community how peace and success could be achieved by such rational and nonviolent ways.

In short, persuasion is an important tool required in the proceedings of daily life and it is practiced by everyone at every step of their lives. There are certain rules that are required to make your speech powerful and to sway hearts if you intend to influence others. It stems its roots way back in to ancient Greek history and is as old as the history of currently existing languages. Great leaders use this tool to their advantage to gain mass support of a majority. It is a beautiful art if used positively and it is eventually mastered with great knowledge and experience.

<https://assignbuster.com/persuasion-strategies-and-its-use-in-public-speeches/>