

A Proposed Framework for Analyzing Aristotle's Three Modes of Persuasion

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Abstract

In qualitative research analytical frameworks are central as most of qualitative research concentrate on exploring human behavior and social phenomena. Qualitative researchers need analytical frameworks to support their analysis, but many of them encounter difficulties either in finding analytical frameworks or in designing them when they investigate social phenomena. One of the social phenomena which has recently become the focus of researchers is persuasion. Persuasion is pertinent and indispensable in our lives. Thus, the intention of this paper is to propose an analytical framework which can be employed by researchers to analyze persuasion as a social phenomenon. Based on a comprehensive literature review of rhetoric and persuasion, this study developed a framework which can be employed by researchers to analyze the three appeals of persuasion; ethos (ethical proofs), logos (logical proofs) and pathos (emotional proofs) which were proposed by Aristotle.

Keywords analytical framework, persuasion, ethos, logos, ethos

Rational of this paper

“The goal of qualitative research is the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) setting, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of all the participants” (Pope & Mays, 1995). Unlike quantitative approaches which are supported by statistical and computational analysis of data, qualitative approaches are not supported by numerical and statistical analysis. Qualitative approaches focus on qualitative aspects of knowledge and social phenomena which is not easy to investigate and measure. Examining social topics is a daunting task since they are broad and vague most of the time. Hence, qualitative approaches require analytical frameworks to support the research validity and reliability. Analytical frameworks help researchers to breakdown the phenomena under investigation and to stick to the intended purpose of the research in order to produce a precise and perfect work. Without a framework the study may provide unnecessary and confusing information which goes beyond the objectives of the research. Persuasion for instance, is a social phenomenon and a tool which is used everywhere, in business, politics, education, and in many other domains in our life. Thus, this paper intends to present a proposed analytical framework for Aristotle's three means of persuasion based on a comprehensive

relevant review. Such framework, can be significant to researchers who are interested in carrying out research on persuasion, specifically; on the three modes of persuasion (ethos, logos, pathos)

Review of relevant literature

Aristotle proposed three essential principles to accomplish persuasion, which he called modes of persuasion. He claims that these three modes of persuasion are indispensable for any orator to influence and persuade his audience (Aristotle in Roberts, 1996). Aristotle named these three modes of persuasion ethos, pathos and logos. By ethos, Aristotle meant the credibility of the speaker. It depends on the character of the speaker. Whenever the speaker appears worthy of credence and able to gain his audience confidence, the audience will accept his ideas and consider his propositions true and credible. The speaker can appear credible through displaying three important things; good sense, good moral character (virtuous character), and goodwill. Hauser (2002) points out some thoughts on the nature of authority based on Sigmund Freud's School. Freud suggests that authority results from the ability to satisfy the human need to believe that someone or something is credible. Corbett (1990) states that the speaker can create his ethical appeal when he is able to make his audience believe that he is a person of sound sense, benevolence and a person of good moral character. In order for the speaker to be able to gain his audience trust, Aristotle in Hall (2001) asserts that the speaker should have three essential qualities. The qualities stated by Aristotle are; good moral character, good sense and goodwill. Hall (2001, p. 27) cites Duane F. stating that "ethos can be understood as an ethical proof based on the demonstration through the speech the rhetor's goodness, goodwill, and moral uprightness, all of which enhance the persuasiveness and perceived truth of the message". Good moral character can be projected by statements that assert your good morality and ethics. Corbett (1990) claims that if a discourse is to manifest the speaker's moral character, it must display an abhorrence of unscrupulous tactics and specious reasoning. Alkhirbash (2014) cited Thomas et al. (2005) who see that good moral character is the attribute of 'virtue' which takes the form of justice, courage, temperance, gentleness, prudence and wisdom. Good sense of the speaker can be evaluated by the audience through assessing the content of the speech. The content of the speech gives the hearers hints about the speaker's knowledge, competence and adequate awareness of the subject being addressed. Goodwill is a very important quality for persuasion. The discourse should reflect the speaker's friendship and should show that the speaker wishes others what he wishes for himself. Generally, a speaker should display his concern in the welfare of others.

The second mode of persuasion is pathos which depends on the emotions of the audience. In Aristotle's Rhetoric, book II (translated by W. Rhys Roberts) emotion is defined as "all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgments, and accompanied by pleasure and pain such as anger, pity, fear and all similar emotions and their

contraries". Crowley and Hawhee (1999) note that; Aristotle seems to be the first rhetorician to provide a systematic discussion of emotional proofs. They see that Aristotle's definition of emotions is the same as Gorgias' who argues that emotional responses help people to change their minds. When people are angry or scared, they enter new states of minds in which they see things or people in a different light than he or she previously did. Sheldon (2004) states that the speaker should know in advance whether he wants his listeners to experience a feeling of empathy or a feeling of anger, whether he wants them to feel compassion or resentment as a result of an ongoing condition or situation. There are a number of feelings that can be aroused for persuasive speeches such as anger, despair, sorrow, compassion, fear, love, pride and so on. According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005, p. 57) emotion is the "raw material" of rhetoric, because without real emotion, effective persuasion is unlikely to take place, whatever the issue involved. He added that persuaders must feel the emotion they wish to arouse in the listeners. He can achieve this by providing some actualizations such as lexis, abstract categorization, figurative language or any combination of the above. The vital connection depends on the persuader's ability to predict people's emotional response and willingness to engage with the persuasion.

The third mode that Aristotle proposed for persuasion is Logos. Aristotle (translated by Roberts, 2004) defines logos as "what makes the argument of an orator's speech demonstrative and worthy of belief". Lunsford (1999, p. 175) describes logos as "appeals to reason of the message itself with all facts reflecting and affecting the universe". Vancil (1995) sees logos as the general ideas of order, the rationality in the universe and the principles of order that enable us to make sense of the world around us. Covino and Joloffe (1995, p. 64) defines logos according to Aristotle's rhetoric as "thought made manifest in speech, logical proof involves the construction of persuasive examples and enthymemes"

Enthymeme is defined by Axelord (2007, p. 57) as "a means of drawing tentative conclusions from probable premises." Corbett (1990) considers enthymeme as the rhetorical equivalent of the syllogism. Enthymeme is seen to be an argumentative statement that contains only one premise and a conclusion. It is an abbreviated syllogism. According to Aristotle's prior analysis (Book.II), Corbett mentioned that the essential difference between syllogism and enthymeme is that syllogism leads to a necessary conclusion from universally true premises whereas enthymeme leads to a tentative conclusion from probable premises.

To illustrate the difference between syllogism and enthymeme, Corbett provided two examples of deductive reasoning. He said the major premise of the syllogism "all men are mortal" states a universal truth, our history and the evidence of our senses tell us that men must die. The minor premise "Socrates is a man" is a truth that can be highly verified. These two truths allow us to arrive to the infallible conclusion that Socrates will die too. However, Corbett notes that when we say "John will fail his examination because he has not studied", we have an enthymeme. It is a deductive argument based on a probable premise. The truth of the minor premise "John has not studied" could be confirmed. The probable premise is "Anyone who does not study will fail his exam". We know that this proposition is not universally true but we also know that those who do

not study fail their exams. This probability is enough to persuade us that John will fail. Corbett asserts that Aristotle views argument as not only based on what usually happens but on what people believe to happen. So, enthymeme is a kind of syllogism as Aristotle sees it the instrument of deductive reasoning peculiar to the art of rhetoric.

Enthymeme is an effective tool for persuasion since it does not reflect the certainty of absolute truth whereas syllogism is near to absolute truth or absolute certainty. Enthymeme may not be absolutely convincing but it is highly persuasive. For more clarification on the distinction between enthymeme and syllogism let us look at these two examples taken from Axelrod (2007)

1. All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.
2. We will not make our sales quota next quarter because we've spent next to nothing on advertising.

The first example is a syllogism because it is near to absolute truth. As we all know in our life experience that all men have been mortal. If we know Socrates, there is no need for us to be persuaded that he is mortal. We ourselves reach the conclusion that he is mortal. There is an absolute certainty. However, in the second example the argument is based on past experience. It is reasonable to relate the success of sales with good advertising. The lack of advertising may keep sales from attaining the goals. This argument suggests a probable outcome not absolute certainty. But according to what is known, this enthymeme is valid and it can be true. It is highly persuasive. Axelrod (2007, p. 59) asserts that enthymeme is the ideal vehicle for persuasive discourse based on an appeal to reason. It streamlines the logical form of the syllogism so that it can be used in ordinary speech.

Enthymeme provides logical arguments which do not require having absolute certainty. It requires illustrating sufficient and effective justifications for what you claim. Axelrod adds that it is crucial for the speaker to consider the view of his audience. The speaker should make certain that he reaches a level of probability that will persuade his audience by addressing their interests, concerns, problems, worries and desires.

Examples also can be used as rhetorical devices to illustrate ideas and develop logical arguments. Zarefsky (2008, p. 163) defines examples as "specific instances that are used to illustrate a more general claim; the inference is that the specific is typical of the general". Aristotle (cited in Crowley and Howhee 1999, p. 37) defines a rhetorical example as "any particular which can be fitted under the heading of a class, and which represents the distinguishing features of that class". Crowley and Howhee also quote Quintilian who defines a rhetorical example as an example that adduces "some past action real or assumed which may serve to persuade the audience of the truth of the point which we are trying to make"

Aristotle emphasized and pointed out that successful examples may be drawn from history since they call up the memories of some events the audience has already experienced and still

remember. For instance, people who opposed the Gulf war in 1991 used the historical example of Vietnam to argue that America should not become involved again in a localized quarrel in which America had no direct involvement. Despite the effectiveness of examples to make argument persuasive, Aristotle preferred enthymemes to examples as a type of proof because enthymemes coincide with his fundamental unit of proof in his logical system (syllogism). But according to Crowley Aristotle again asserted that if there are no enthymemes available it is very important to the rhetor to present and use some examples since they produce persuasion.

Another important persuasive device is rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions are not questions that seek answers but they are used to stimulate listeners' logical thinking. Nelson and Pearson (2005, p. 265) define a rhetorical question as "a question for which you do not expect an oral answer". Verderber et al. (2009, p. 76) see rhetorical questions as "questions phrased to stimulate a mental response rather than an actual spoken response on the part of the audience". They claim that rhetorical questions create common ground by alluding to information which is familiar or shared by the speaker and the audience. Barrett (1987, p. 193) defines a rhetorical question as "a question to which no immediate answer is sought or anticipated". Barrett explains that speakers resort to use rhetorical questions to add variety into their language and to draw listeners to their messages to involve them in the thought. As an example Barrett notes that President Kennedy employed the following rhetorical questions to win his audiences' silent "yes" when he asked:

Can we forge against these enemies (tyranny, poverty, disease, and war) a grand and global alliance, north and south, east and west, that will assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

Axelrod (2007) also emphasizes that rhetorical questions can be useful in shaping the response the speaker wishes to elicit from his audience. He claims that rhetorical questions also make the argument interactive by requiring the audience to think and respond orally. Zarefsky (2008) states that the goal of a rhetorical question is not to expect an answer but rather it makes listeners think about an issue and to quickly reach the obvious answer shared by the speaker and his audience.

Analytical framework for the persuasion

The table below displays a proposed analytical framework for Aristotle's three means of persuasion. Aristotle proposed three means of persuasion because he claims that the speech consists of three things; the speaker, the subject addressed in the speech and the hearer. The three means of persuasion can be found either in the character of the speaker (ethos) or in the argument of the speech (logos) or in the emotional state of the hearer (pathos). This analytical

framework shown below in table (1) was developed and designed based on a comprehensive literature review of rhetoric to be used in analyzing the three appeals of persuasion.

Table: 1

A proposed framework for analyzing Aristotle’s three modes of persuasion

1	Ethos
	<p>Ethos depends on the character of the speaker. Whenever the speaker appears worthy of credence, the audience accept his propositions and consider them true and credible. This can be achieved when his messages reflect three qualities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good sense : this can be achieved when hearers see through the content of the speech that the speaker is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - competent - knowledgeable and well-informed about the addressed issue - clear headed 2. Good moral character (manifesting beliefs and values). The content of the discourse should show the speaker’s moral character. The speech should display that the speaker is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – even-handed and unbiased – straightforward – a person of virtue such as justice, temperance, gentleness, prudence and wisdom. – a person who abhors unscrupulous tactics and specious reasoning 3. Goodwill. The speaker should show that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – he is sincere – he is concerned about the welfare of others – he wishes others what is good for him
2	Logos
	<p>Logos is appeals to reason and logical proof with facts, examples reflecting the universe. Logos can be seen through the speaker’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reasons - facts - enthymemes - examples - rhetorical questions - statistics - statements from authorities as proofs - syllogism
3	Pathos
	<p>Pathos is a persuasive means aims to arouse the emotion of the audience to change their opinion in regard to their judgments. In pathos, the speaker attempts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stir the hearer’s emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make the listener experience a specific kind of feeling that coincides with the on-going situation. - arouse feelings such as empathy, anger, sorrow, compassion, fear, love, and pride.

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