

Preface

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Though rhetoric has been studied for thousands of years, the fact remains that the art of persuading through speech or the written word is undoubtedly timeless. Indeed, the different forms of persuasive discourse are ever present in our everyday lives: we are exposed to persuasive messages through radio, television or the Internet; our colleagues, friends or relatives are constantly attempting to influence our thoughts and behaviors, achieve consensus or defend their personal self-image. Accordingly, though rhetoric as such is historically ancient, rhetorical practices form part of present-day, real-life communicative practices in a wide variety of contexts and settings and are – needless to say – evidently alive.

The large amount of manuscripts received for this special issue of the *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* clearly shows how lively the field of persuasive discourse has become nowadays. Indeed, the variety of papers sent confirms that persuasion arises in a wide range of discourse types (advertising, media discourse, political propaganda, religious sermons, academese, literary and translation studies, etc.) and can be approached from nearly all social sciences, including communication, sociology, history or political science. As could not be otherwise, the contributions included in this volume reflect this rich variety of approaches which supersede the traditional view of rhetoric and account for the all-embracing nature of persuasive discourse, illustrating different views and methodologies and following the parameters of different conceptual frameworks. Besides, it is worthy of note that the contributions in this volume are not limited to persuasion in English, as some articles treat persuasion-relevant issues in French, Spanish or Thai, which demonstrates that rhetorical practices are often culture-bound and can help our understanding of the nature of persuasive discourse as a whole.

The contributions appearing in this special issue can be divided into different groups, each of them devoted to a specific discourse type in which persuasion plays a crucial role. It should be noted that the division of the papers into centers of thematic interest proposed here merely

aims to offer some sort of orientation to the reader of the volume, as each of the articles included herein has the stamp of its author and its interest in itself, as commented in what follows.

Judging from the papers in the volume, the language of advertising is a breeding ground for the study of persuasive techniques. In fact, five articles are devoted to the role of persuasion in this particular type of discourse. First, the contribution by Victoria Martín de la Rosa entitled “The role of pictorial metaphor in magazine advertising”, following Forceville’s notion of pictorial metaphor, illustrates the role of metaphor as a persuasive resource in the discourse of advertising, its inference patterns and value judgments. In her article, María Martínez Lirola explores the main strategies to create meaning in multimodal texts used by leaflets advertising cosmetic surgery. She attempts to demonstrate that in this type of leaflets women are treated as objects, which, she argues, leads to a new form of gender violence. In the same vein, María Sol Velasco Sacristán’s paper describes how persuasive is the exploitation of image-schematic devices in advertisements selected from an online corpus. She demonstrates that image-schematic devices are used to introduce sexism in advertising, mostly the images schemas of space, force, multiplicity and attribute, and both by means of covert and weakly overt forms of communication.

Like Martínez Lirola’s paper, the contribution entitled “Phraseological Units: Persuasion and Translation” is devoted to cosmetic leaflets. However, Marisa Díez Arroyo adopts here a completely different perspective: she focuses on the persuasive power of phraseological units written either in English or French, together with their translation into French or English respectively, as well as into Spanish. In so doing, Díez Arroyo demonstrates that the occurrence of phraseological units in cosmetic leaflets and their translations has important consequences for rhetoric and stylistics, paying special attention to metaphor as a persuasive mechanism. Finally, drawing on systemic-functional linguistics, Pattama Patpong explores amulet advertisements as examples of persuasive discourse excerpted from Thailand’s best-selling newspaper, in which, she claims, the persuasive goal of advertising is motivated and highlighted by amulet attribution and production. As a whole, in Patpong’s paper amulet advertisements are viewed as examples of persuasive discourses for presenting, enacting and construing the multi-faceted processes of persuasion.

The field of politics and ideology constitutes the focus of three papers in the volume. María Josefa Hellín García contributes a long and sound paper on the use of fight metaphors as a persuasive strategy in the speeches by the Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. More specifically, drawing on Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Charteris-Black’s Critical Metaphor Analysis, the article analyses how terrorism is conceptualized via metaphors through the notion of *fight* in political speeches over a three year period (2004-2007). Her findings support evidence for the fact that fight metaphors operate at a cognitive, rhetorical and ideological level to support Rodríguez Zapatero’s anti-terrorism political ideology. Alice Caffarel and Elizabeth Rechniewski offer another paper on political discourse. Following systemic-functional linguistics as a theoretical frame, they propose a methodology for the analysis of ideology and evaluative language in two editorials from French newspapers of contrasting political orientation. Their analysis shows that appraisal resources and transitivity interact in the editorials to convey ideology and persuade the reader to adopt a position towards the event. The third contribution touching on political discourse is Neal Waddel and Bernard McKenna’s “The Colour of Rhetoric in the Contemporary

Agora”. Through the analysis of political rhetoric, the authors establish a case for dividing political utterances into three types of rhetoric: white, grey, and black, and devise a method for classifying these utterances. This classificatory method, they argue, is valuable for journalism in fulfilling their vital Fourth Estate role in parliamentary democracies.

Media discourse is not limited to journalistic language in the volume. Television is the object of study of Antonio García Gómez, who illustrates the relationship between anger and persuasion in TV discourse. This author argues that conflict talk is used both as an ideological vehicle for attitude change and as a powerful force of social cohesion on the audience. By so doing, he suggests that programmes commonly labelled as “trash television” can build normative legitimacy by exemplifying particular values and moral obligations.

Two papers in this volume are devoted to persuasion in academic language. The contribution by Ruth Breeze analyses abstracts from four academic journals and shows that their structure and language reflect legal discourses of persuasion. From a different viewpoint, using a corpus of articles from Marketing, Biology and Mechanical Engineering, Ignacio Vazquez and Diana Giner show that boosting constitutes a crucial aspect of rhetorical persuasion in academic discourse.

Boosting is not only dealt with in the aforementioned paper by Vazquez and Giner. María Francisca Llantada Díaz draws attention to the presence of boosters, hedges and other rhetorical strategies in the introduction and foreword of Joanne Winning’s *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson*. Llantada Ruíz shows how boosters, hedges and the coexistence of self-mention with impersonalization strategies help Winning claim to credibility in the field of Richardson’s studies.

Finally, the contributions by Cristina Garrigós, Carmen Gómez Galisteo and Carme Font Paz provide again evidence for the fact that persuasion may occur in widely disperse spheres of discourse. The first is concerned with the discourse of religious sermons. To be precise, in her article Garrigós demonstrates how *aporia* is used in this type of texts to convince the audience of a truth derived from textual evidence of the Bible. For this purpose, she analyses texts by John Donne, Jonathan Edwards and Laurence Sterne, three preachers who resort to *aporia* in their sermons to manipulate the audience. Religion also plays an important role in Carme Font’s contribution. She focuses on the persuasive nature of prophetic speech in seventeenth-century England and the rhetorical strategies used by women prophets at a time when political, social and religious events allowed the emergence of women into the public sphere. Gómez Galisteo, for her part, examines the rhetorical strategies used by the Spanish conquistador Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and the British explorer John Smith to persuade their readers of their trustworthiness in the account of their experiences in the New World. In sum, the papers included in this volume no doubt illustrate the rich variety of approaches and views in the field of persuasion as well as the diversity of texts in which rhetorical practices may occur. As editor, I hope that by bringing together contrasting examples of persuasion-relevant research drawing upon work in different parts of the world, this issue could raise the reader’s awareness of the relevance of persuasion in a wide range of discourse types and illustrate the current trends in the research on this field.

Finally, I would like to thank the reviewers of the volume for their insightful comments and advice to the authors. I also want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the contributors for their interest in collaborating in the journal and their patience in the long process of editing this special issue.