THE EFFECT OF COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY AND AUDIENCE ATTITUDE ON PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Traditionally, a speaker's strategic adaptation of his argument to an audience's point of view has been presumed to be determined by his knowledge of the topic and the resources available. In Aristotle's Rhetoric (Cooper, 1932) the implicit assumption of man's rationality dictates consideration of audience adaptability as a function of the rational choice of the appropriate argument. The ability to choose is presumably restricted only by the speaker's knowledge of the "available means" (Cooper, 1932, p. 7). Recent texts in persuasion, although they emphasize the "two-way" nature of persuasion, still assume that given the knowledge of argumentative strategies and access to research in persuasion and attitude change, the speaker will select the "best" means available (Simons, 1976; Samovar & Mills, 1976; Applbaum & Anatol, 1976). This assumption of a speaker's rational ability to gauge the disposition of an audience suggests speakers would vary as a function of their ability to assess the speaking situation and their knowledge of persuasive strategies, but communication research sheds little

light on the possession or development of those abilities by a speaker.

Research in persuasion appears to adopt what might be called an "effect" criterion. Since the primary purpose of persuasion is to change an attitude or to initiate action (Beisecker & Parson, 1972) this focus is understandable. However, the problem left unexplored by this one-sided view is the speaker's disposition to select those specific strategies enumerated by various studies in persuasion as effective.

Although the speaker's attitude toward his audience and his formation of that attitude has been the subject of only limited research, research in perception and impression formation has focused on variables that seem applicable to the speaking situation. Pre-eminent among communication concerns is the process of social perception. Researchers have detailed the fact that within the communication situation we form impressions of the individuals with whom we are involved and that this impression affects our subsequent communications with that individual (Haney, 1974; Berlo, 1960). This study proposes to systematically vary the impression a speaker forms of his audience and to study the strategies he might use to persuade that audience. The focus is on the prior act, the selection of persuasive strategies in light of an impression formed from data garnered about an audience before delivery of the speech. It is expected that differences exist

in the selection of these strategies as a function of audience attitudes and the cognitive complexity of the speaker. As a foundation for consideration of this problem the literature in two areas will be reviewed: 1) communication and 2) cognitive complexity. Hypotheses of the study will be proposed in the third section.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Communication

As previously indicated, communication research has tended to focus on the audience and the effects of a communicator's message rather than the predilections of the communicator. This section will examine research that has considered audience attitude as a factor. Communication research in two areas will be discussed, 1) communicator strategies and audience attitude and 2) communicator strategies and personality.

Communicator Strategies and Audience Attitude

Although research in communication has not focused on whether the communicator intuitively selects specific strategies as a result of his assessment of the audience, research has indicated that specific strategies are more effective with particular audiences (Kiesler & Munson, 1975; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972; Martin & Anderson, 1968; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953). Since one of the primary

concerns of this study was the prior assessment of an audience, it seemed appropriate to examine research that demonstrated that audience attitude determined that one strategy would be preferable to another. Research on the results of using one-sided or two-sided arguments seemed the logical choice since indications are that selection of one of these strategies varies on the basis of audience attitude.

Summaries of research on one-sided vs. two-sided strategies by Fishbein & Ajzen (1972) and Karlins & Abelson (1970) point out that much of this research was conducted prior to the 1970's. Results indicated that one-sided messages are more effective for receivers who initially favor the stand taken by a speaker (Hovland, Lumsdaine & Sheffield, 1949; Thistlethwaite & Kamenetsky, 1955; McGinnes, 1966). Two-sided messages appeared to be more effective when the receivers initially disagreed with the communicator (Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953) and when the audience was more intelligent (Hovland, Lumsdaine & Sheffield, 1949). These studies indicate that a speaker's knowledge of his audience's attitude toward a topic should affect his selection of a one-sided or a two-sided argument. If the audience agreed with the speaker a one-sided argument would be more advantageous. For audiences that opposed the speaker the two-sided argument would be best. The question asked by this study is. Does a speaker intuitively select the most appropriate strategy for an

audience of known disposition?

In a recent study by Hazen & Kiesler (1975) indications were that subjects who had been trained in persuasion did vary their strategy on the basis of their assessment of audience attitudes. Subjects simulating the role of speaker varied their strategy in terms of the audience faced, (very opposed to favorable), and according to whether feedback was expected. Students from debate classes were given arguments for and against federal control of population growth. They were instructed to design a persuasive speech for an audience that was very opposed to the issue, moderately opposed, moderately in favor, or no opposition. Arguments that were designed to be used if the subject wanted to arouse concern were designated as problem arguments; arguments presenting specific solutions as solution arguments. Subjects were also given counter arguments. Results indicated the greater the opposition of the audience, the fewer solution arguments were used.

Although research in the use of one-sided and two-sided strategies would suggest that utilization of counter arguments would have been an effective method of presentation of opposing viewpoints, there was no significant selection of this strategy. However, the selection of problem centered arguments as opposed to solution arguments did indicate that subjects considered the attitude of the audience. In one sense the problem centered argu-

ments did reflect a disposition to counter a hostile point of view since they attempted to arouse fear or concern in the audience that opposed the subject's point of view.

Communicator Strategies and Personality

The flexibility of a speaker's personality might also reflect his ability to adapt his strategies to a specific audience. Although no specific measures have been taken to relate speaker flexibility to the strategies employed, a study by Kline (1971) did attempt to equate a flexible personality with the selection of evidence.

In this study Kline examined the relationship of speaker flexibility to information and type of evidence utilized. Kline identified flexibility as open or closed-mindedness measured by the Rokeach Dogmatism Test. Subjects listened to a lecture giving fairly equal treatment to various kinds of evidence. Two weeks later, each student gave a persuasive speech which utilized evidence from the lecture. Kline found that the open-minded students tended to use significantly more undocumented than documented evidence. Interpretation of these results is somewhat clouded by the fact that subject's speeches were written outside of class so that there might have been some discussion among the subjects before delivery of the speech. However, the results suggest that personality traits of a speaker might affect his selection of evidence and argumentative strategies.

The studies discussed in the last two sections give some indication that speakers do act on their impression of an audience. Whether they intuitively adapt their presentations in the directions suggested by research in persuasion as most effective was the question that was explored in this study. In addition, the question arises; how does a speaker form his impression of an audience and what effect does that impression have on his strategic adaptations?

Impression Formation and Cognitive Complexity

As previously indicated, it is presumed that the impression an individual forms of another person has a great influence on his subsequent communications (Haney, 1974). Cognitive theorists have suggested that individual variations in the formation of impressions might result from differential functioning of an individual's interpersonal construct system (Crockett, 1965). This section will examine the formation of impressions and the concept of cognitive complexity.

Formation of Impressions

Impressions are formed within a social situation just as in an interpersonal situation. Hadley Cantril suggests there is social perception which he defines as "...the functional activity giving rise to the stimulus that has a potentiality of affecting our purposes and being affected by us" (1968, p. 7). He also indicates

that the identifying element of a social situation is that it is a situation in which one must deal with other people. The social situation would differ from the interpersonal only in terms of the number of people involved. The speaker is forming an impression of an audience rather than a single individual.

Analysts of the speaking situation indicate that speakers form an impression of their audience in much the same fashion as one forms an impression of an individual. Allport (1937) indicated we perceive individuals in a global fashion, as a composite of traits. Speech texts suggest that audiences too must first be considered in these global terms. Traditionalist A. Craig Baird (1950) advised the speaker to consider the audience as a "representative" individual evidencing the stereotypic attitudes associated with his reference group. Donald K. Smith (1969) in his more recent advice to the player, suggested the neophyte speaker should ". . .talk to a concept of the way in which the members of certain groups will respond to certain forms of utterance" (1969, p. 16). Elton Abernathy (1974) indicated that the impression of an audience must be integrated in order that a speaker might respond to that audience as he would to another person. The speaker would thus appear to be utilizing cognitive processes in the social situation that have been identified by the impression formation theorists as the assimilation and integration of perceived data. Theorists suggest

that this process is mediated by the individual's cognitive organization. This cognitive organization has been conceptualized by Bieri (1955) and Crockett (1965) in terms of an interdependent organization of interpersonal constructs designated as cognitive complexity.

Cognitive Complexity

Research in the area of cognitive complexity suggests that the level of complexity of an individual has some effect on how he or she perceives others, and could be expected to affect actions relative to that perception. Since this action of differential perception is central to the issues involved in this study, some exploration of 1) the concept of cognitive complexity, 2) cognitive complexity and flexibility and 3) cognitive complexity and social issues is pertinent.

Concept of Cognitive Complexity

Theories of cognitive complexity are based in the concept of cognitive organization discussed by G. A. Kelly (1955). Kelly theorized that an individual's cognitive organization is formed through past experiences and interaction. This individual construction of reality is not innate, but developed through social contacts in which one feels a need to predict and control the course of events.

Kelly theorized that his developing perceptual

structure was composed of bi-polar elements he termed "constructs". These constructs are defined by a trait and its opposite, and are utilized in predicting the behavior of others. According to Kelly, constructs are progressively developed through social interaction and become increasingly complex in their relations to each other. Beilin (1967) pointed out that the developmental nature of these constructs indicated an individual's construction of reality was ". . .a product of subjective and objective components determined by a particular maturation level" (1967, p. 88).

Subsequent research into the individual construction of reality indicated that construct systems varied in terms of increasing differentiation and hierarchic integration (Scarlett, Press & Crockett, 1971; Dornbusch et. al, 1965; Yarrow and Campbell, 1963; Kohn & Fiedler, 1951). James Bieri (1955) described these individual differences as cognitive complexity. Bieri focused primarily on function, the process of differentiation that must occur in order to construe the socially structured situation.

Walter H. Crockett's view (1965) of complexity included the structural process of differentiation as well as the characteristics of the inter-relationship of constructs that created a hierarchy of integrated constructs. Both Crockett and Bieri indicated that individual construct systems vary along several dimensions. These dimensions,

such as the number of constructs within a system, the type of constructs and the inter-relationships, differ from individual to individual and from situation to situation in terms of individual responses.

Crockett's interpretation of cognitive complexity provides a rationale for these individual differences. His interpretation combined Werner's orthogenetic principle (1957) with Kelly's theory of personal constructs. The orthogenetic principle, according to Werner is as follows:

> Whenever development occurs it proceeds from a state of relative globality and lack of differentiation to a state of increasing differentiation and hierarchic integration. (1957, p. 127)

This conception of the formation of an individual's construct system as developmental suggested that individual differences might occur as a function of the extent to which the personal construct system has developed.

The development of a personal construct system appeared to progress in terms of utilization of an increasing number of constructs and a gradual shift from an ego-centric concrete dimension to a more abstract non-egocentric view. Crockett has indicated that a construct system is cognitively complex when ". . . (a) it contains a relatively large number of elements (constructs) and (b) the elements are integrated hierarchically by relatively extensive bonds of relationship" (1965, p. 49).

Later research designated levels of complexity on the basis of individual variation in the number of constructs utilized (differentiation) and hierarchic integration (Scarlett, Press, & Crockett, 1971; Supnick, 1967; Signell, 1966; Yarrow & Campbell, 1963; Kohn & Fiedler, 1961).

Cognitive Complexity and Flexibility

The level of complexity of an individual's cognitive organization affects flexibility in a social situation in two ways: in the ability to perceive variability and in the integration of inconsistent information. Scott (1962) defines flexibility as follows:

> The flexibility of a cognitive structure may be conceived as the ease with which it permits new views of the object domain to develop in response to appropriate environmental stimuli: it consists in the ready alteration of relations among attributes so that they can intersect the set of object images in new ways. (1962, p. 406)

This ability to develop new views of the "object domain" is especially crucial for a speaker. He must be able to encompass diversity if he is to attempt to persuade.

Studies by Bieri (1955), Campbell (1960) and Rosencrantz & Crockett (1965) demonstrated that the more complex individual was better able to perceive differences and less likely to presume another person was similar to himself. In a study by Tripodi & Bieri (1966) subjects were asked to respond to a social situation in which

conflicting views were represented. Subjects then wrote stories that were ranked for the amount of opposition and conflict they included. Results showed there was a positive association between cognitive complexity and perceived conflict. Individuals of higher complexity utilized more conflicting themes, suggesting their greater ability to report conflicting ideas and opinions.

Persons with complex sets of constructs also appear to better integrate and/or account for inconsistent information (Klyver, Press, & Crockett, 1972; Nidorf & Crockett, 1964; May & Crockett, 1964). This aspect of integration was indicated in the study by Mayo & Crockett which investigated cognitive complexity and primacy-recency effects. After the complexity level of the subjects was assessed, subjects were presented with blocks of information about a specific person. The information was inconsistent since one block of information described primarily positive traits, another primarily negative. All subjects wrote impressions that were substantially the same valence as the first block of information on the initial response. When subjects were given the second block of information of opposite valence, however, subjects lower in complexity switched their impressions to the opposite extreme, while those high in complexity formed ambivalent impressions.

A study by Press, Crockett, & Delia (1975) presented subjects with anecdotes about a young man which included

both socially desirable and socially undesirable actions. Subjects were asked to describe this man to their friend. In the descriptions, subjects of higher complexity linked positive and negative qualities with motivational constructs. Press, Crockett & Delia indicated that complex individuals, ". . .not only develop more extensive sets of personal constructs than noncomplex individuals, but also use those constructs, especially motivational ones, to account for variability in others' behavior" (1975, p. 871).

Cognitive Complexity and Social Issues

One dimension of the speaking situation identified as peculiar to a social situation is the attempt by one individual to influence others, to pursue his purposes with the intention of having others adopt his point of view. Since the persuasion is presumed to be in a situation where an audience has a choice, it would seem that the speaker would attempt to understand the opposing views if only to better ignore them. Research suggests speaker's sets, i.e., being understanding or evaluative, might affect his reaction to his audience.

In the study cited above by Press, Crockett & Delia, complex individuals were more influenced by set than were non-complex subjects. Subjects descriptions were written in no set, evalution set and understanding set. In the evaluation set subjects were told they were to reach an overall evaluation of the man they were describing, in the

understanding set they were told to try to understand why the man acted the way he did.

A study by Crockett, Mahood & Press (1975) suggested that a speaking situation might induce a set that would tend to promote a more complex reaction as the speaker attempted to make the audience understand his point of view. It would seem that complex speakers, concerned with understanding the audience holding opposing views, might consider those opposing views to a greater extent than would the non-complex speaker, and might be more likely to attempt to counter those views rather than ignore them.

A study by Franz Epting (1972) investigated the dimension of complexity and contrasting views in a study which attempted to measure complexity as a function of the construal of social issues. Utilizing the grid system developed by Bannister & Mair (1968) Epting assessed social issue complexity. He selected social issues such as "legalizing abortion in the U.S.," or "increasing teacher's salaries" and provided construct dimensions such as "possible-impossible," "advancement-decline," etc. He administered two additional measuring instruments using different social issues and one that was a classification of attitude scales. Epting found that the level of complexity involved in construing social issues was relatively stable both over time and an array of elements. He found the same characteristics of

higher complexity, differentiation and integration, were evidenced in relation to social issues. Unfortunately, Epting did not correlate a standard measure of complexity with the social issue complexity measures (Seaman & Koenig, 1973). His results do suggest, however, that the construct system may be a factor in the construal of social as well as interpersonal domains.

Other studies relating complexity with social issues indicate the tendency of lower complexity subjects to evaluate in terms of polar dichotomies. Scott (1962) assessed dimensional complexity by noting the number of distinctions made among groupings of similar nations. Indications were that subjects high in complexity, when sorting nations into groups that were similar, included both liked and disliked nations in their grouping. Noncomplex subjects tended to include nations with identical attributes. In an earlier study, Campbell (1960) found subjects high in complexity were less likely to separate people on the basis of polar dichotomies. This tendency of the low complexity subject to find the end dimension of the trait construct more salient could affect the impression formed of an audience. Subjects low in complexity may be more likely to categorize an audience in polar terms as good or bad, like or unlike on the basis of the amount of agreement perceived.

The suggestion of the foregoing studies is that the social situation may invoke a set on the part of a speaker

to understand the audience. If so, subjects of higher complexity would function more flexibly in that they would be more likely to perceive audience variability and integrate conflicting points of view.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of audience attitudes and cognitive complexity on the integration of opposing arguments into a persuasive presentation. In addition, exploration was made of the relationship between complexity and the impression speakers formed of an audience prior to the act of speaking. A situation was constructed in which subjects assumed the role of speaker and formulated a presentation to be made to three kinds of audiences: one that agreed with the subject's view on a specific issue, one that opposed them, and one whose views were unknown. Although this was an area that had not been directly researched before, the foregoing examination of related studies made it possible to state some specific predictions.

Strategies

The first general hypothesis was that a speaker will intuitively vary counter-argumentative strategies in relation to the attitude of an audience. The specific predictions made were that subjects would use primarily

one-sided arguments when facing an audience that agreed with their point of view and that subjects facing an audience of unknown or opposing view points would construct a counter argumentative strategy that included the opposition arguments as well as supporting arguments.

Cognitive Complexity

If, as suggested by the first hypothesis, variation in argumentative strategy may be an intuitive reaction to the views of an audience, the bases for this intuitive adaptation seemed a fruitful area of investigation. The second general hypothesis of this study was that the inclusion of opposing arguments would vary as a function of complexity.

Studies previously discussed indicated that complex subjects were better able to integrate conflicting information. It would seem that complex speakers thus would be more likely to consider conflicting views and incorporate them in a persuasive presentation. Therefore, it was specifically predicted that the complex subjects would frame counter arguments and use tactics designed to refute the opposition arguments to a greater extent than would the non-complex subjects, especially when facing an audience of opposing or unknown views. The difference between complex and non-complex subjects in their use of opposition arguments was expected to be the smallest when the audience agreed with the subject's point of view,

greatest when the audience disagreed, and intermediate when the audience view was unknown.

Sex of Subject

Although sex of subject is not a primary concern of this study it has been found in several studies of cognitive complexity that female subjects consistently manifested higher levels of complexity than did male subjects (Crockett, 1965; Nidorf & Crockett, 1964). For this reason it was predicted that complex females would use more opposition arguments and would show a greater increase in the inclusion of opposition arguments in relation to the type of audience than would any other group.

Impressions of the Audience

Since it is a speaker's impression of an audience that is suggested as a factor which may influence his or her choice of argumentative strategy, it would seem that complexity would also effect the impression formed of the audiences. The third general hypothesis was that the level of complexity would affect the written impressions subjects had of an audience. The complex subject's tendency to integrate conflicting information and supply motivational constructs should result in an impression of the audience that related their veiwpoint to their role and personality characteristics much more than would an impression written by non-complex subjects.

CHAPTER II

PILOT STUDY

In the pilot study two groups of subjects were asked to write persuasive paragraphs which attempted to persuade an audience to adopt their point of view. Subjects wrote different paragraphs for an audience that agreed with them, disagreed with them and for one whose view was unknown. The hypotheses were that the inclusion of refutation of opposition arguments in the presentation would vary as a function of audience attitude, cognitive complexity of subjects and sex of subjects. It was also hypothesized that the effect of audience attitudes would be greater for complex subjects than for non-complex ones. This section contains the procedures used to collect the data, a report of the results and a discussion of those results.

Procedures

Subjects were told that they were to prepare a public speech to be given to three different audiences: one whose views agreed with their own, one opposed to their view and one whose views they did not know. In preparing these speeches, subjects selected statements from a list

which had been previously developed by active debaters. This list included both affirmative and negative arguments on a specific proposition. One sample, from Avila College, was given the topic, "The Federal Government should regulate the growth and production of tobacco in the United States." The other sample at the University of Kansas was given the topic, "Required courses, other than those in a student's major area of interest, should be eliminated from the curriculum at the University."

Subjects

Subjects were students from communication classes at the University of Kansas, (Human Relations in Group Interaction, Speech 541) and an interpersonal communications class at Avila College in Kansas City, Missouri, (Speech Communications, ST 011C). Student volunteers were tested as a group. There were 29 students from the University of Kansas, 13 males and 16 females. The 16 students from Avila included 14 females and 2 males.

Sequence of Tasks

After the experimenter had been introduced to the class by the instructor the class was addressed as follows.

> My name is _____ and the projects I am asking you to participate in this afternoon (morning) are conducted under the auspices of the Speech Communications-Human Relations Division of Speech and Theatre at the University of Kansas. Persuasion is an area of concern to those engaged in research in communication and in order that we might provide better training for those public speakers interested

> in persuasion, I am asking you to complete some questionnaires. If for some reason you feel you would rather not participate in this experiment after I have described the questionnaires please feel free to leave. Those that choose to participate can feel they are making a unique contribution to the field.
>
> The questionnaires you will be completing this morning will ask you to write a description of two of your peers and to compose a persuasive paragraph on a controversial issue.

Complexity Measure. At this point a shortened version of the Role Category Questionnaire was distributed (Crockett, 1965; Pickett, 1974). Subjects were told this information was confidential and were assured that no attempt would be made to identify the persons they were describing. This questionnaire asks subjects to write two paragraphs, one describing an acquaintance of their own age and sex whom they like and one describing an acquaintance whom they disliked. Subjects were asked to concentrate on their acquaintance's likes and dislikes, habits, mannerisms, beliefs and values. Subjects were allowed four minutes to complete each paragraph.

The descriptions were scored for the total number of interpersonal constructs. Median scores were determined for male and female subjects separately. For each sex, subjects falling below the median were classified as non-complex, those above the median as complex.

Attitude Measure. This scale measured student attitudes on several controversial topics including the two that were used in the study. After completing the attitude measurement, subjects were given the Audience Task Sheets

and the Argument Sheets.

Argument Sheets. For each topic, members of the Debate Squad at the University of Kansas had been asked to generate as many arguments as they could which bore on each question.

These arguments were then submitted to an Interpersonal Communications class at the University of Kansas for evaluation. These students were asked to evaluate approximately twenty arguments for and against one of the topics by ranking the arguments on each side of the question in order of their potential for persuasion. These rankings were tabulated and the top seven arguments for and against each topic were used on the argument sheet.

Subjects at Avila and the University of Kansas were given these arguments sheets with the explanation that they would be asked to write a paragraph on the issue indicated at the top of their sheet. Avila subjects wrote on the question related to federal regulation of tobacco; K.U. students wrote on curriculum revision. They were asked to study the arguments on both sides of the questions for approximately one minute.

Audience Task Sheets. After students had read the argument sheets, the audience task sheets were distributed. At the top of these sheets was a brief paragraph which described the nature of the audience as follows:

> Directions: You have been given a sheet containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select

> the arguments you think would be most effective if you were to address an audience [you knew to be in agreement with your views on the topic, you knew to disagree..., whose point of view is unknown.] After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that [agrees, disagrees, whose point of view is unknown] with him/her.
>
> Write the paragraph here--Remember it is directed toward an audience that [AGREES, DISAGREES, whose point of view is UNKNOWN] with you.

Each subject received three such sheets, one for each type of audience. The order in which the sheets were received was completely random, all six possible sequences were equally represented.

Subjects were given five minutes to prepare each speech. After completing the speech they awaited the experimenter's signal than went on to the next.

After completing these paragraphs, subjects were asked what they felt was the purpose of the experiment, if they had any difficulty with the directions, if they felt any pressure to use certain arguments, and were they interested in the task. Since the instructors hoped to incorporate this experiment into the total learning experience, subjects were told there would be a discussion of the results at a later date. Subjects were thanked for their cooperation and released.

Independent Variables

Two independent variables were analyzed on the Avila

sample, audience (as defined above) and cognitive complexity. On the K.U. sample, sex of subject was also included.

Summary of the Design

The design for the K.U. sample was a 2 x 2 x 3 factorial analysis with repeated measures on one factor. The within subject factor was type of audience, (agree, disagree, unknown). The between subject factors were sex (men and women) and complexity (high-low).

The design for the Avila sample was a 2 x 3 factorial which included the factors of complexity and type of audience. Sex of subject was not included because only 2 males were tested in this sample.

Dependent Variables

Two dependent variables were employed. One of these was the proportion of arguments subjects selected that agreed with their position. As this ratio approaches one, it indicates that subjects used a completely univalent argument reflecting their position. As the ratio approaches .50, it indicates that subjects included both negative and positive arguments in their paragraphs. The second dependent variable was the actual number of positive and negative arguments each subject used in each audience condition.

The two variables are related to each other. They differ, however, in that the second permits one to examine

not only the relative use of positive and negative arguments but the total number of arguments used as well.

The analyses were unweighted means analyses of variance. A harmonic n analysis was necessary since cell sizes were unequal.

Results

Results for the two samples were analyzed separately for two reasons. First, they wrote speeches on different topics; second, men and women were represented in about equal numbers on the University of Kansas sample, while the Avila sample was composed of many more women than men. Sex of subject was included in the analysis of the University of Kansas sample, but not in that of the Avila sample.

Avila Sample

Table 1 summarizes the analysis of variance for ratio of positive arguments. As may be seen, the only significant effect was for the type of audience ($p < .05$). The means in Table 1a show, as expected, that subjects selected no opposition arguments for the agreeing audience, and selected the most opposition arguments for the audience that disagreed.

Table 2 summarizes the equivalent analysis of variance for the number of positive and negative arguments. The highly significant effect for type of argument reflects

TABLE 1

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

PILOT STUDY - AVILA

Proportion of Positive Arguments to Total

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	47	0.093		
Between	15	0.113		
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	0.132	1.177	
Pooled Ind	14	0.112		
Within	32	0.083		
Audience (AU)	2	0.272	3.722	$p < .05$
CC x AU	2	0.034	0.458	
P I's x AU	28	0.073		

TABLE 1a

Proportion of Positive Arguments for each Type of Audience

Agree	Unknown	Disagree
1.00	0.88	0.74

TABLE 2

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

PILOT STUDY -AVILA

Number of Positive and Negative Arguments

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	95	2.631		
Between	15	1.716		
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	1.760	1.028	
Pooled Ind	14	1.713		
Within	80	2.802		
Audience (AU)	2	0.281	0.822	
CC x AU	2	0.260	0.761	
P I's x AU	28	0.342		
Type (TY)	1	114.844	35.483	$p < .001$
CC x TY	1	0.010	0.003	
P I's x TY	14	3.237		
AU x TY	2	4.906	3.232	$p < .06$
CC x AU x TY	2	0.510	0.336	
P I's x AU x TY	28	1.518		

TABLE 2a

Number of Positive and Negative Arguments

	Agree	Unknown	Disagree
Positive	2.94	2.39	2.69
Negative	0.00	0.44	0.64

the great preponderance of positive arguments over negative ones. The predicted audience effect in this analysis would be reflected in an interaction of audience with type of argument. The corresponding F ratio 3.23, was only marginally significant ($p < .06$).

As may be seen in Table 2a, the mean number of positive arguments decreased consistently from an agreeing audience to the one whose views were unknown, to a disagreeing audience. Conversely, the number of negative arguments increased consistently. There was no significant effect for complexity on either analysis.

University of Kansas Sample

Table 3 summarizes the analysis of variance for the proportion of positive arguments. As in the Avila sample, there was a significant effect for type of audience ($p < .05$). In addition, there was a significant interaction of sex, complexity, and audience ($p < .01$). The means in Table 3a show the expected increase in use of opposition arguments in relation to the type of audience evidenced for the complex male subjects and the non-complex females. Non-complex males and complex females, however, used opposition arguments only in the unknown condition.

The equivalent analysis of variance for number of positive and negative arguments, Table 4, gives further indication of the greater utilization of positive arguments in the highly significant effect for type of argu-

TABLE 3

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

PILOT STUDY - KU

Ratio of Positive to Total

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	86	0.056		
Between	28	0.059		
Sex (SX)	1	0.157	3.173	
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	0.145	2.921	
SX x CC	1	0.110	2.228	
Pooled Ind	25	0.050		
Within	58	0.054		
Audience (AU)	2	0.173	3.968	$p < .05$
SX x AU	2	0.043	0.991	
CC x AU	2	0.042	0.964	
SX x CC x AU	2	0.232	5.324	$p < .01$
P I's x AU	50	0.044		

TABLE 3a

Proportion of Positive Arguments used for each audience

Cognitive Complexity	Male Subjects			Female Subjects		
	Agree	Unknown	Disagree	Agree	Unknown	Disagree
Complex	1.00	0.80	0.57	1.00	0.84	1.00
Noncomplex	1.00	0.83	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.88

TABLE 4

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

PILOT STUDY - KU

Number of Positive and Negative Arguments

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	173	2.640		
Between	28	1.624		
Sex (SX)	1	0.900	0.592	
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	1.081	0.711	
SX x CC	1	4.996	3.286	
Pooled Ind.	25	1.520		
Within	145	2.837		
Audience (AU)	2	0.010	0.019	
SX x AU	2	0.101	0.180	
CC x AU	2	0.838	1.497	
SX x CC x AU	2	0.290	0.518	
P I x AU	50	0.559		
Type (TY)	1	245.802	115.331	$p < .001$
SX x TY	1	0.937	0.440	
CC x TY	1	0.263	0.124	
SX x CC x TY	1	8.817	4.137	
P I x TY	25	2.131		
AU x TY	2	3.444	3.271	$p < .05$
SX x AU x TY	2	1.467	1.393	
CC x AU x TY	2	0.046	0.044	
SX x CC x AU x TY	2	3.785	3.595	$p < .05$
P I x AU x TY	50	1.053		

ment ($p < .001$). The predicted audience effect is indicated by the significant audience by type of argument interaction ($p < .05$). As was indicated by the ratio analysis, the means in Table 4a indicate the slight reversal of the predicted effect. As before, complex males and non-complex females reflected the predicted trend. Complex females reacted by increasing the number of positive arguments used for the hostile audience rather than choosing the rebuttal strategy.

Discussion

Results from the initial study indicated that subjects would vary their inclusion of opposition arguments in relation to the perceived audience attitude. The results also indicated that the complex subject, on the whole, used more total arguments than the non-complex subject and also tended to use opposition arguments to a greater extent. The reversal noted in the complex female group in the University of Kansas sample, did not occur in the Avila sample. As indicated by Table 2a, the total number of negative arguments was greatest at Avila in the disagree condition. This suggests that the reversal noted might be due to experimental conditions or the stimulus material.

There were two possible factors within the experimental condition that might have effected the results. One was the type of class involved in the experiment. This

TABLE 4a

Number of Positive and Negative Arguments for each Audience

		Male			Female		
		Agree	Disagree	Unknown	Agree	Disagree	Unknown
Complex	Positive	2.57	2.27	2.00	3.00	2.75	3.50
	Negative	0.00	0.71	1.00	0.00	0.50	0.00
Noncomplex	Positive	3.67	2.17	3.17	2.38	2.38	1.88
	Negative	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13

class, Human Relations in Group Interaction is a class that concentrates on feelings and changing established communication patterns. Since females already tend to be more involved in the interpersonal area (Crockett, 1965) it may be that the class atmosphere emphasizing "openness" and "caring" tended to minimize the aggressiveness of a persuasive argument. It is also possible that the topic of curriculum changes was more sensitive for the University of Kansas students since it is one that is often discussed.

The stimulus material might have been responsible for the lack of a significant complexity effect although students did not indicate any problems with the material in the discussion following the testing. However, several paragraphs could not be included because they consistently reflected the audience point of view rather than the subjects.

CHAPTER III

EXPERIMENT I

Initial results from the pilot study indicated that further testing with some changes in procedure might result in more definite data. This chapter presents the procedure, results and a discussion of the results from a follow up experiment. This experiment was essentially a replication of the Pilot Study and was designed to test the hypotheses previously indicated in Chapter II.

Procedure

Subjects from Baker University were told they were to prepare a public speech to be given to the three audiences. Subjects in this experiment had slightly different directions on the Audience Task Sheets; in addition both topics were randomly assigned in each testing group.

Subjects

Subjects participating in this experiment were students enrolled in classes in education, communications, and sociology at Baker University, Baldwin City, Kansas. Subjects were volunteers and represented all levels of undergraduates. A total of 82 subjects, 26 males and

56 females participated. Subjects were addressed as previously described in the Pilot Study and were tested as a group in their scheduled classes.

Task Sequence

The task sequence remained as described in the previous study. The only changes were in the assignment of the topic and the directions on the Audience Task Sheets. Both topics were randomly assigned in all groups rather than having all members of one group write on the same topic as in the Pilot Study. The changes in the Audience Task Sheets are detailed below.

Audience Task Sheets. As previously discussed, the slight reversal of expected effects for audience, complexity and sex on the Pilot Study suggested there might be some confusion on the part of the students. Since there was evidence that some subjects might be attempting to present the audience's point of view rather than their own, the directions were rewritten to emphasize the importance of trying to present one's own point of view. The directions read as follows:

> A. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting your own point of view if you were addressing an audience you knew to be in agreement with your views on the topic. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use

them to address the audience that agrees with him/her.

Write the paragraph here - Remember, it presents your own point of view and is directed toward an audience that AGREES with your point of view.

The paragraphs for the disagree and unknown conditions were similarly changed. The basic change was the inclusion of "your own point of view" and the underlining.

Independent Variables

Independent variables were as indicated for the Pilot Study, complexity, (high-low), sex and type of audience, (agree, disagree, unknown). Issue was included as an independent variable to check on effects that might be attributable to the topic.

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables remained as previously described for the Pilot Study, ratio and number of positive and negative arguments.

Results

Table 5 summarizes the analysis of variance for the ratio of positive arguments to total. The only significant effect is the interaction of sex, complexity, and audience ($p < .05$). The means in Table 5a indicate that for complex subjects and for noncomplex women opposition arguments were included primarily in the paragraphs

TABLE 5

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

EXPERIMENT I

RATIO OF POSITIVE TO TOTAL

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	245	0.043		
Between	81	0.054		
Sex (SX)	1	0.124	2.488	
Issue (IS)	1	0.000	0.005	
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	0.185	3.715	$p < .10$
SX x IS	1	0.188	2.780	
SX x CC	1	0.003	0.052	
IS x CC	1	0.008	0.165	
SX x IS x CC	1	0.040	0.808	
Pooled Ind.	74	0.050		
Within	164	0.037		
Audience (AU)	2	0.063	1.721	
SX x AU	2	0.009	0.258	
IS x AU	2	0.003	0.074	
CC x AU	2	0.049	1.352	
SX x IS x AU	2	0.013	0.352	
SX x CC x AU	2	0.113	3.102	$p < .05$
IS x CC x AU	2	0.033	0.919	
SX x IS x CC x AU	2	0.042	1.159	
P I x AU	148	0.036		

TABLE 5a

Proportion of Positive Arguments
for each Type of Audience

	Male			Female		
	Agree	Unknown	Disagree	Agree	Unknown	Disagree
Complex	1.00	0.85	0.87	0.90	0.83	0.88
Non-Complex	0.93	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.92	0.85

written for the unknown and disagreeing audiences as knowledge about persuasion suggests. For noncomplex men, however, there was no such tendency; they produced exclusively arguments that favored their own position.

The predicted main effects for sex, audience, and complexity were not significant though the last of these, (complexity) was marginally so ($p < .10$).

There were significant effects for complexity in the total number of arguments used ($p < .001$) as indicated by Table 6 which summarizes the analysis of variance for the number of positive and negative arguments. There was also a significant effect for sex ($p < .05$). The means in Table 6a indicate that complex subjects used more total arguments than noncomplex subjects and that females used more total arguments than males. As before, the significant effect for type of argument ($p < .001$) reflects the greater use of arguments representing the subject's point of view. However, there was no effect of the nature of the audience for this analysis, nor any interaction of other variables with variations in the audience.

Discussion

As before, there was clear confirmation of the hypothesis that subjects would intuitively vary the propostion of opposing arguments included as a function of audience attitude. However, the predicted effect held only for

TABLE 6

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

EXPERIMENT I

Number of Positive and Negative Arguments

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	490	1.609		
Between	81	0.868		
Sex (SX)	1	3.156	4.254	$p < .05$
Issue (IS)	1	0.015	0.020	
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	9.210	12.415	$p < .001$
SX x IS	1	0.516	0.696	
SX x CC	1	0.251	0.338	
IS x CC	1	0.516	0.696	
SX x IS x CC	1	0.015	0.020	
Pooled Ind.	74	0.742		
Within	410	1.756		
Audience (AU)	2	0.516	1.643	
SX x AU	2	0.591	1.882	
IS x AU	2	0.039	0.125	
CC x AU	2	0.399	1.270	
SX x IS x AU	2	0.413	1.315	
SX x CC x AU	2	0.045	0.142	
IS x CC x AU	2	0.003	0.008	
SX x IS x CC x AU	2	0.486	1.546	
P I x AU	148	0.314		
Type (TY)	1	376.742	299.489	$p < .001$
SX x TY	1	0.125	0.099	
IS x TY	1	0.000	0.000	
CC x TY	1	0.694	0.551	
SX x IS x TY	1	0.815	0.648	
SX x CC x TY	1	0.060	0.048	
IS x CC x TY	1	0.355	0.282	
SX x IS x CC x TY	1	1.046	0.831	
P I x TY	74	1.258		
AU x TY	2	1.091	1.747	
SX x AU x TY	2	0.829	1.328	

(Continued on next page)

TABLE 6 CONTINUED

SOURCE	df	MS	F
Within (continued)			
IS x AU x TY	2	0.025	0.039
CC x AU x TY	2	0.371	0.594
SX x IS x AU x TY	2	0.671	1.074
SX x CC x AU x TY	2	1.147	1.837
IS x CC x AU x TY	2	0.546	0.874
SX x IS x CC x AU x TY	2	0.047	0.075
P I x AU x TY	148	0.625	

TABLE 6a

Mean Number of Arguments

Male	Female	Complex	Noncomplex	Positive	Negative
1.12	1.29	1.36	1.05	2.17	0.24

complex men and for women and the expected difference between unknown audiences and hostile audiences did not occur. The significant effect for complexity and sex on total number of arguments suggests there were differences that could be attributed to both sex and complexity in the total number of arguments used.

In post-experimental discussions, some subjects suggested that the strong emphasis upon their presenting their own point of view inhibited their use of opposing arguments. This could have minimized the expected effects by reducing the proportion of opposing arguments. To check on this possibility, still another experiment was conducted.

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIMENT II

This experiment was designed to further test the hypotheses examined in the two previous experiments. The basic design of the experiment was similar to the first two, however, some changes were made in the tasks and the task directions in order to clarify the nature of the subject's task. An additional task was also designed to test the hypothesis that complex subjects would form a more elaborate impression of the audience than would noncomplex subjects.

Procedures

The procedures were basically as described for Experiment I. Subjects that differed in sex and complexity again were asked to write persuasive paragraphs. However, because subjects in previous experiments used almost exclusively favorable arguments when writing for agreeing audiences, that condition was omitted. Paragraphs were written only for the audiences that disagreed with the subject's point of view or audiences whose point of view was unknown. In addition, changes were

introduced into the instructions to make sure that subjects would attempt to persuade others to share their points of view. After each persuasive paragraph, subjects were asked to describe the nature of the audience.

Subjects

Subjects were students from beginning communication classes at the University of Kansas. Out of the total of 50 subjects 18 were male and 32 female. As before, subjects were volunteers and were tested in groups.

Sequence of Tasks

Subjects first completed the Role Category Questionnaire, then the persuasive communications task. Subjects were asked to write only two persuasive arguments, one for an unknown audience and one for an audience whose views disagreed with their own. Changes were also made in the directions to emphasize the need to persuade the audience as well as present their own point of view. The directions for the persuasive paragraphs were as follows:

> B. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting your own point of view as persuasively as possible for an audience you knew to disagree with your point of view. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that disagrees with him/her.
>
> Write the paragraph here - remember it argues for your own point of view and is directed

toward an audience that DISAGREES with your point of view.

The directions for the second paragraph, for the audience whose point of view was unknown was similarly worded. The change was again in the underlining and the addition of "persuasively". The sheets with the arguments remained the same.

Impression of the Audience. In addition to writing the persuasive paragraphs, subjects were asked to write a paragraph describing the audience. These paragraphs were written after each audience condition and asked the subjects what they had thought about the audience as they wrote their persuasive paragraph. Subjects were directed to include in the descriptive paragraph what kind of people the audience might be, what beliefs, attitudes or values they might hold.

Audience Rating Scale. At the bottom of the page upon which they wrote the paragraph about the audience was a six point scale. The subjects indicated the extent to which they felt they considered the audience as they wrote their paragraphs. The scale ranged from "not at all" to "to a great extent".

Independent Variables

The independent variables were as before, sex, complexity (high-low) and attitude of audience (disagree-unknown).

Dependent Variables

As before the two dependent variables, actual number of positive and negative arguments in each condition and the ratio of positive arguments to total were employed. In addition there were two other dependent variables, the extent to which the subject considered the audience and the subject's impression of the audience.

The fourth dependent variable was the subject's impression of the audience. This paragraph was scored from one to four. Scores were based on the overall tone of the paragraph and the type of traits assigned. A one indicated subjects had not described the audience; a two that the audience was characterized according to their position on the issue; category three indicated the paragraph was primarily a role description, i.e., housewife, businessman, student, etc.; paragraphs assigned a four were descriptions which assigned personality traits such as "open," "friendly," and "warm," or "cold". As with the responses to the Role Category Questionnaire, a random sample was scored by an independent judge with a resulting correlation of 94.2%.

Results

Table 7 summarizes the analysis of variance for the ratio of positive to total arguments. As evidenced, the only significant effect was for complexity ($p < .001$). In

TABLE 7

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

EXPERIMENT II

Ratio of Positive to Total

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	99	0.054		
Between	49	0.073		
Sex (SX)	1	0.000	0.008	
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	1.155	22.268	$p < .001$
SX x CC	1	0.029	0.558	
Pooled Ind.	46	0.052		
Within	50	0.035		
Audience (AU)	1	0.028	0.842	
SX x AU	1	0.000	0.011	
CC x AU	1	0.101	3.000	
SX x CC x AU	1	0.028	0.842	
P I x AU	46	0.034		

addition, the complexity by audience interaction approached significance ($p < .10$). The means in Table 7a indicate there was a substantial difference in the proportion of opposition arguments included. Complex subjects included more opposition arguments than noncomplex subjects, especially in the disagree condition. In addition, complex subjects used a much lower proportion of positive arguments when speaking to a disagreeing audience than when speaking to one whose views were unknown; noncomplex subjects did not (Table 7a).

The analysis of variance for total number of arguments summarized in Table 8 also shows a significant main effect for complexity ($p < .001$) indicating complex subjects used more arguments than noncomplex ones. The significant effect for type of argument ($p < .001$) indicates the preponderance of arguments representing the subjects point of view used even when the agree condition was eliminated. The complexity by audience by type interaction and the larger interaction, sex by complexity by audience by type both approached significance ($p < .07$). The means in Table 8a indicate that for both types of audiences, complex subjects used many more negative arguments than did noncomplex subjects, however, complex males and noncomplex females used more negative arguments in the disagree condition than in the unknown condition, but for complex females, the reverse effect was obtained.

Analysis of variance of subjects' description of

TABLE 7a

Proportion of Positive Arguments for each Audience as a Function of Complexity

	Unknown	Disagree	Mean
Complex	0.81	0.71	.76
Noncomplex	1.00	0.97	.98
Mean	.89	.85	

TABLE 8

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

EXPERIMENT II

Number of Positive and Negative Arguments

SOURCE	df	MS	F	
Total	199	1.721		
Between	49	1.306		
Sex (SX)	1	0.750	0.726	
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	13.829	13.373	$p < .001$
SX x CC	1	0.007	0.007	
Pooled Ind.	46	1.034		
Within	150	1.857		
Audience (AU)	1	0.645	2.046	
SX x AU	1	0.645	1.046	
CC x AU	1	0.986	3.130	
SX x CC x AU	1	0.004	0.013	
P I x AU	46	0.315		
Type (TY)	1	144.536	96.088	$p < .001$
SX x TY	1	0.197	0.131	
CC x TY	1	0.087	0.058	
SX x CC x TY	1	0.088	0.058	
P I x TY	46	1.504		
AU x TY	1	0.350	0.647	
SX x AU x TY	1	0.029	0.053	
CC x AU x TY	1	2.004	3.707	$p < .07$
SX x CC x AU x TY	1	1.772	3.277	$p < .08$
P I x AU x TY	46	0.541		

TABLE 8a

Mean Number of Positive and Negative Arguments for each Type of Audience

		Males		Females	
		Unknown	Disagree	Unknown	Disagree
Complex	Positive	2.00	2.50	2.19	2.81
	Negative	0.50	0.75	0.81	0.50
Non-Complex	Positive	1.70	1.90	2.19	1.69
	Negative	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19

the audience (Table 9) and of the extent to which the subjects considered the audience (Table 10) yielded no significant effects.

Discussion

The results of this experiment substantially demonstrated that subjects will vary presentation of arguments when faced with audiences of unknown or hostile disposition. There was also clear corroboration of the predicted effect for complexity as complex subjects not only used more opposition arguments, but more total arguments as well. Although there was no significant main effect for audience, this could have been expected since the major differences in audience occurred in the agree condition, which was eliminated. The differences between the disagree and unknown conditions were still evidenced, however, the variation was not enough to reach significance.

Perhaps the most interesting effect in this study is the reappearance of the reversal in the complex female group. As in the previous studies, the complex females used more rebuttal arguments and more total arguments than noncomplex females; however, as before, more negative arguments were used in the unknown audience condition than in the hostile condition.

The lack of significance in subjects' statements about the audience may be due to several factors. It

TABLE 9

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

EXPERIMENT II

Description of Audience

SOURCE	df	MS	F
Total	99	1.224	
Between	49	1.656	
Sex (SX)	1	0.725	0.447
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	2.368	1.459
SX x CC	1	5.225	3.219
Pooled Ind.	46	1.623	
Within	50	0.800	
Audience (AU)	1	1.393	1.725
SX x AU	1	0.536	0.664
CC x AU	1	0.188	0.232
SX x CC x AU	1	0.831	1.029
Pooled I AU	46	0.807	

TABLE 10

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

EXPERIMENT II

Extent to Which Paid Attention to Audience

SOURCE	df	MS	F
Total	89	2.065	
Between	44	2.973	
Sex (SX)	1	1.804	0.575
Cognitive Complexity (CC)	1	0.035	0.011
SX x CC	1	0.226	0.072
Pooled Ind.	41	3.137	
Within	45	1.178	
Audience (AU)	1	0.827	0.684
SX x AU	1	0.782	0.646
CC x AU	1	2.166	1.791
SX x CC x AU	1	0.616	0.509
P I x AU	41	1.210	

may be simple that the laboratory situation precludes visualization of the audience in the terms suggested. The results of the Hazen-Kiesler study (1975) indicated that the expectancy of direct feedback increased the subjects' use of evidence and the amount of time they estimated they would spend in preparation. It may be that some type of direct feedback would need to be built into this experience in order for the subject to be conscious of the audience consideration that has already been evidenced by the variations in strategy.

In discussions following the testing, subjects reported feeling that they needed to concentrate on the topic, and although they had thought about the audience, they were not able to verbalize exactly in what terms they had considered them. The scores on the Audience Rating Scale indicated that subjects thought about the audience mostly as a result of the experimental suggestion that they do so. The mean rating on the scale indicating the extent to which they considered their audience was only 2.6 for the first description. However, subjects indicated they considered their audience to a greater extent ($\bar{x}$ 3.6) the second time they wrote the audience description.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Jones and DeCharms (1958) suggested that participants come to a decision about the nature of the social situation before acting in that situation. It may well be that the basis of the decision made by a public speaker about the appropriate strategy to use is more a function of his cognitive organization than of his knowledge of the best means available. This study examined the adjustments a speaker makes to audience viewpoints and the effect that cognitive complexity might have on those adjustments. Subjects differing in complexity and sex wrote a persuasive paragraph intended for an audience that agreed with them, one for an audience that disagreed with them and one for an audience whose views were unknown. This chapter presents a synthesis of the results of three experiments conducted and implications for further research.

Synthesis

This section will examine the overall pattern of the results from the three studies. The discussion will

deal with the three major areas: audience adaptation, complexity, and impressions of the audience.

Audience Adaptation

The major prediction in this area, that subjects would intuitively adapt to their audience in the direction suggested by research in persuasion was corroborated in some degree by all three studies. The differentiation made by the subjects between audiences was along the lines suggested by research in one-way and two-way arguments (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1949). That is, subjects writing a persuasive paragraph for an audience that agreed with them did not ordinarily introduce counter arguments. However, when the subjects knew the audience to be opposed to their position, although they still included arguments in support of their position, they sometimes introduced arguments that were a direct refutation of the arguments opposing their position given on their argument sheet.

The hypothesis that subjects would use the greatest number of counter arguments in the hostile audience condition and an intermediate number of counter arguments in the unknown condition was greatly affected by the directions given the subjects. The initial study indicated the countering of opposition arguments increased as predicted for the hostile audience (with the exception of the complex female group). A change in the directions in the first experiment resulted in a

reversal of that phenomenon. In this study an increase of rebuttal arguments occurred in the unknown condition. However, the predicted increase for the hostile audience appeared in the final experiment when the directions were reworded to emphasize the importance of persuasion. This seems to indicate basic corroboration of this hypothesis with the interesting exception of the results for the complex females which will be discussed later.

As mentioned previously, sex did not show consistent main effects in this study. The prediction was that since females were generally found to be of higher complexity than males, female subjects should use more negative arguments than males and complex females should use more than any other group. While female subjects did use significantly more arguments than males in one study (Experiment I) there was no consistent difference between males and females in the use of negative arguments for unknown or hostile audiences.

Cognitive Complexity

The confirmation of the hypothesis that the tendency to refute opposition arguments would vary as a function of cognitive complexity was significantly confirmed in Experiments I and II. Complex subjects exhibited a propensity toward counter argumentation as well as increasing the total number of arguments used in the hostile and unknown conditions. However, the predicted relation-

ship of complexity, sex and audience attitude, although significant, exhibited the reversal in the complex female group mentioned above. This tendency would appear to be significant since it was a persistent effect for the complex females in both the Pilot Study and in Experiment II. There are several possible explanations for this effect, but there was some evidence in these experiments that emotional involvement, either in the issue or in the task, might have been the cause of the reversal of effects noted.

Research in complexity has indicated that a complex person may not always respond at a high level of complexity. Such things as emotional involvement, (Rosenbach, Crockett, & Wapner, 1973) and set (Crockett, Mahood & Press, 1975) among other things effect the construal of a situation. Written descriptions of the hostile audience by complex females in this experiment indicated more involvement on the part of this group than any other. Many female subjects wrote paragraphs for the hostile audience that contained sarcasm and invective, a tendency not observed for female subjects of low complexity or by male subjects. This might indicate that the female subjects were reacting to the emotional involvement induced by the experimental condition by evaluating their audience rather than attempting to understand their point of view.

Crockett, Mahood and Press (1975) indicated that

this evaluative set might impede functioning at a higher level of complexity. In a study of the effects of set, these authors found that subjects wrote significantly less differentiated impressions under the evaluative set for speakers with whom they disagreed. The set did not affect the degree of differentiation of impressions for the speakers with whom they agreed. This might explain why the complex females would operate at a higher level of complexity, i.e., include more opposition arguments, for the unknown audience since this audience could have been characterized either as agreeing with the subject or, at least, containing some members in agreement with the subject's point of view. This lack of differentiation might have resulted in a univalent argument, the less complex reaction to the hostile audience.

A second indication that the complex females may have been emotionally involved is indicated by the main effect for sex in the analysis of total number of arguments for Experiment I. The females increased the number of arguments used in the hostile audience conditions, but did not significantly increase the opposition arguments. This might be described as a bolstering reaction. Bolstering, the piling up of arguments supporting your position is anticipated since there is evidence that supportive information is preferred (Sears & Freedman, 1972) and the piling up of arguments could help resolve the tension of facing an opposing view. This defensive

action would seem to indicate the presence of some emotional involvement.

Another problem that may have clouded the complexity results was the wording of the arguments supplied the subjects. Examination of many of the arguments reveals they contained a rebuttal statement within the argument structure. For example, one argument on the tobacco issue listed as an argument opposing government control stated that, "2(e). Tobacco isn't harmful; other variables cause the harm such as paper, etc." This argument counters the affirmative argument on the page that states governmental control is necessary because tobacco causes cancer. This was not true of all the arguments; however, a "purification" of the arguments might intensify the effects.

Impressions of the Audience

In general, the hypotheses relating to the impression of the audience were not supported. There was no evidence that different levels of complexity or differences in sex had any substantial effect on how the subjects viewed their audience.

As previously discussed, consideration of the audience seemed to be an artifact of the testing situation. However, the variation of presentations in relation to audience attitudes indicates there was a consideration of audiences at least in respect to the issue involved. Delia (1972) noted that the level of organization of im-

pressions did not differ as a function of complexity when the subjects were writing about persons within a social group about whom the subjects held negative stereotypes. It may be that the identification of the audience in terms of specific attitudes fostered a stereotypic reaction. There was no measure that would indicate this; however, descriptions did tend to categorize the audience as either "for" or "against" the topic. The hostile audience was generally cast in roles which students might view in a negative stereotypic fashion; roles such as "teachers" and "businessmen".

Implications for Future Research

The discussion of the results suggests some areas that need further clarification as well as the possibility of a direction for communication research that has been largely unexplored; the propensity of the speaker to select strategies of persuasion and intuitive responses to audiences.

The reactions to the directions that were noted in the discussion, as well as the possibility that the wording of the arguments influenced the subjects, suggests that a refinement of the stimulus material might result in more definitive data. The method of assessing the impression of the audience needs revision. In addition, the interesting question of the reversal of the data for

the complex females needs further exploration to determine if emotional reaction to the issues induced an evaluative set and effected the level of cognitive functioning. If this is so, the question that must be asked is why the complex females were the group that was primarily effected.

The implications for communication research are tentative, however these results seem to indicate that a consideration of the actor and his propensity to act might be as fruitful as the continued concentration on the effects of the act. Some questions posed by the findings reported here are whether the intuitive selection of the "correct" argument would occur with other argumentative strategies. This tendency to select an argumentative pattern as a function of cognitive organization also suggests that consideration about the nature of persuasion might well include a consideration of the individual inclination toward the form of an argument as well as the content. Rhetoricians such as Karlyn Campbell (1972) suggest that a man's words provide the key to understanding his view of the world. This study would suggest that a man's view of the world may be the key to understanding the structure of his words.

Summary

Three experiments were performed to test the effects

of cognitive complexity, sex and audience attitudes on the strategic variation of arguments. The experimental sessions required subjects from the University of Kansas, Avila College and Baker University to write persuasive paragraphs using arguments provided for them. These paragraphs were to present the speaker's point of view to an audience that agreed with him, disagreed with him or whose views were unknown.

The major findings were that subjects intuitively selected the strategy indicated as most effective by research on one-way and two-way argumentative strategies. Subjects tended to use only arguments supporting their point of view when the audience agreed with them and to counter opposing arguments primarily in the conditions where the audience was known to be hostile or to hold an unknown point of view.

Second, it was found that subjects do differ significantly in their use of total number of arguments as a function of complexity. Third, there was an indication that an increased use of counter arguments for the hostile and unknown audiences varies as a function of complexity.

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APPENDIX A

ROLE CATEGORY QUESTIONNAIRE

ROLE CATEGORY QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME_____ SEX_____

Our interest in this questionnaire is to learn how people describe others whom they know. We are interested in knowing, in your own terms, the characteristics which a set of individuals have--those which set one person off from another as an individual, and those characteristics which they share in common.

Our concern here is with the habits, ideas, mannerisms--in general, with the personal characteristics, rather than the physical traits--which characterize a number of different people.

In order to make sure that you are describing real people, we have set down a list of two different categories of people. In the blank space beside each category below, please write the initials, nicknames, or some identifying symbol for a person of your acquaintance who fits that category. Be sure to use a different person for each category.

1. A person your own age and sex whom you like_____
2. A person your own age and sex whom you dislike_____

Spend a few moments looking over this list, mentally comparing and contrasting the people you have in mind for each category. Think of their habits, their beliefs, their mannerisms, their relations to others, any characteristics they have which you might use to describe them to other people.

If you have any questions about the kinds of characteristics we are interested in, please ask them.

Do not turn the page until instructed to do so.

Please look back to the first sheet and place the symbol you have used to designate the person in category 1 here_____.

Now describe this person as fully as you can. Write down as many defining characeristics as you can. Pay particular attention to his/her habits, beliefs, ways of treating others, mannerisms, and similar attributes. Remember, describe him/her as completely as you can, so that a stranger might be able to determine the kind of person her/she is from your description. Use the back of this page if necessary.

This person is:

Please look back to the first sheet and place the symbol you have used to designate the person in category 2 here_____.

Now describe this person as fully as you can. Write down as many defining characteristics as you can. Pay particular attention to his/her habits, beliefs, ways of treating others, mannerisms, and similar attributes. Remember, describe him/her as completely as you can, so that a stranger might be able to determine the kind of person he/she is from your description. Use the back of this page if necessary.

This person is:

APPENDIX B

ATTITUDE SURVEY INDEX

ATTITUDE SURVEY INDEX

For each of the statements given below will you please circle the position on the scale that most nearly represents your attitude on the topic.

1. Bussing to achieve integration in the public schools.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Very much against	Against	Mildly against	Mildly for	In favor of	Very much favor

2. Elimination of required courses except in major areas of interest at the University.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Very much against	Against	Mildly against	Mildly for	In favor of	Very much favor

3. Passing a constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion on demand.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Very much against	Against	Mildly against	Mildly for	In favor of	Very much favor

4. Government regulation of the growth and production of tobacco.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Very much against	Against	Mildly against	Mildly for	In favor of	Very much favor

5. Passing new legislation increasing social security benefits.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Very much against	Against	Mildly against	Mildly for	In favor of	Very much favor

APPENDIX C

ARGUMENT SHEET

ARGUMENTS

Proposition: Required courses, other than those in a student's major area of interest, should be eliminated from the curriculum at the University.

1. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSITION

   a. A narrow education limits possibilities of individual growth and development since an individual grows in terms of exposure to new ideas.

   b. No required courses limits a department's possibilities of obtaining majors and limits their ability to attract good faculty as it requires limitation of the number of courses in the department.

   c. A general educational background improves the ability to communicate with others. Job training alone will not provide the informed citizenry necessary for a democratic form of government.

   d. Universities now have the discretion to enforce the requirements individually. Students can "test" cut or ask for an exception so those who do not need the required course are not obligated to take it.

   e. The state has an obligation to ensure that students graduating from its institutions meet a minimum level of education.

   f. No requirements would allow students to choose only courses known as "easy" and they could graduate lacking any real education.

   g. Required courses teach self discipline. Everyone must learn to face the reality of life that we can never do only as we please.

2. ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSITION

   a. Required courses not in a student's major area of interest do not contribute to the student's goals. With no interest in the course, the student is not motivated to learn and will gain nothing.

   b. Required courses limit the money available to hire faculty members resulting in unnecessary expense. (Additional faculty-student expenses)

c. The required courses create resentment and thus promote cheating fraud and college dropouts.

d. Students pay for college and are entitled to choose what they pay for.

e. Classes which contained only students interested in an area would provide an incentive for better teaching.

f. Required courses unfairly test a student having no interest in that area, resulting in grades below his capabilities.

g. College is a vocational activity; courses outside a student's vocational interests are unnecessary.

ARGUMENT SHEET

Proposition: The Federal Government should regulate the growth and production of tobacco in the United States.

1. ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSITION

   a. Government regulation would reduce inflated prices of a luxury product now under monopolistic control of giant corporations.

   b. If government controlled the supply of tobacco it could regulate distribution, reducing the number of cigarettes available and thus reducing smoking.

   c. Federal regulations would help eliminate current abuses in cigarette taxing by state governments and provide uniform taxation, eliminating bootlegging of cigarettes from one state to another to avoid taxes.

   d. Food is in short supply world wide and authorities predict famine (widespread) within the next ten years. Land now devoted to tobacco, through government regulation, could be released for food production.

   e. Tobacco kills thousands through lung cancer. Since the health and welfare of its citizens is of concern to the government, it should be the agency that regulates growth of tobacco in order that amounts of cancerous substances in cigarettes could be controlled.

   f. Federal control of sales of tobacco would yield significant amounts of government revenue and could help reduce income taxes.

   g. Federal regulation would provide better basis for the enforcement of laws governing use and purchase of cigarettes. Better enforcement would mean fewer juveniles smoking.

2. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSITION

   a. Smokers would simply switch to other vices if tobacco was less available and these might be more harmful; drugs, etc.

   b. There is no real justification for federal regulation since regulation can and is being done by the tobacco companies themselves.

c. Restriction of production and restriction on marketing of tobacco products might increase unemployment and escalate inflation.

d. Government regulations would not reduce "smuggling" of cigarettes from one state to another; it would simply increase it and develop a black market for cigarettes where supply was limited.

e. Tobacco isn't harmful; other variables cause the harm such as paper, etc.

f. Restriction of personal freedom on the basis of governmental protection or paternalistic governmental ideals is never justified.

g. Monopolistic price fixing should be dealt with in the usual fashion through anti-trust action, not by a government "take-over."

APPENDIX D

AUDIENCE TASK SHEET

PILOT STUDY

AUDIENCE TASK SHEETS

Directions: You have been given sheets which contain arguments for and against a stated proposition. In addition, the sheets contained in this task will give you specific directions about an hypothetical audience's point of view. You are to presume you might be a speaker faced with persuading that audience, utilizing the arguments available on the argument sheets. You will be writing three short paragraphs presuming you are representing your own point of view on the topic listed at the beginning of each sheet.

Are there any questions? If not turn to the first page and follow the directions as written.

PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

AUDIENCE REACTION TASK SHEET

A. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective if you were addressing an audience you knew to be in agreement with your views on the topic. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that agrees with him/her.

Write the paragraph here - Remember it is directed toward an audience that AGREES with your point of view.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

B. Directions: You have been given a sheet containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective if you were addressing an audience you knew to <u>disagree</u> with your views on the topic. This audience view would be reflected by the arguments which oppose your point of view. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that disagrees with him/her.

Write the paragraph here - remember it is directed toward an audience that DISAGREES with your point of view.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

C. Directions: You have been given a sheet containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective if you were to address an audience whose point of view is unknown. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments when your audience view toward your subject is unknown, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them.

Write the paragraph here - remember it is directed toward an audience whose point of view is UNKNOWN

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

APPENDIX E

AUDIENCE TASK SHEET

EXPERIMENT I

AUDIENCE TASK SHEETS

Directions: You have been given sheets which contain arguments for and against a stated proposition. In addition, the sheets contained in this task will give you specific directions about a hypothetical audience's point of view. You are to presume you might be a speaker faced with persuading that audience, utilizing the arguments available on the argument sheets. You will be writing three short paragraphs presuming you are representing your own point of view on the topic listed at the beginning of each sheet.

Are there any questions? If not turn to the first page and follow the directions as written.

PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

AUDIENCE REACTION TASK SHEET

A. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting your own point of view if you were addressing an audience you knew to be in agreement with your views on the topic. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that agrees with him/her.

Write the paragraph here - remember, it presents your own point of view and is directed toward an audience that AGREES with your point of view.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

AUDIENCE REACTION TASK SHEET

B. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting your own point of view if you were addressing an audience you knew to disagree with your views on the topic. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that disagrees with him/her.

Write the paragraph here - remember it presents your point of view and is directed toward an audience that DISAGREES with your point of view.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

AUDIENCE REACTION TASK SHEET

C. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting your own point of view if you were addressing an audience whose point of view you do not know. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments when your audience view toward your subject is unknown, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address an audience whose point of view he/she does not know.

Write the paragraph here - remember it presents your own point of view and is directed toward an audience whose point of view you do not know.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

APPENDIX F

AUDIENCE TASK SHEET

EXPERIMENT II

AUDIENCE TASK SHEETS

Directions: You have been given sheets which contain arguments for and against a stated proposition. In addition, the sheets contained in this task will give you specific directions about an hypothetical audience's point of view. You are to presume you might be a speaker faced with persuading that audience, utilizing the arguments available on the argument sheets. You will be writing two short paragraphs presuming you are representing your own point of view on the topic listed at the beginning of each sheet.

Are there any questions? If not, turn to the first page and follow the directions as written. PLEASE do not go on to the next page until told to do so.

B. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting your own point of view as persuasively as possible if you were addressing an audience you knew to disagree with your views on the topic. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address the audience that disagrees with him/her.

Write the paragraph here - remember it argues for your own point of view and is directed toward an audience that DISAGREES with your point of view.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

Now that you've written your speech, we're interested in what impression, if any, you formed of the people in the audience. When you were writing your argument, what kind of characteristics did you think a typical person or persons in this audience might possess? In other words, if someone asked you what the people in this audience were like, what would you tell them? Write as detailed an impression as possible of the thoughts that went through your head about a typical person or the people in this kind of audience when you wrote your speech. If you did not think about what the people in the audience were like as you wrote your speech, or selected the arguments, please indicate this instead.

To what extent did you form an impression of the people in the audience as you composed your speech?

Not at all _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ To a great extent

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

C. Directions: You have been given sheets containing arguments for and against a stated proposition. You are to select the arguments you think would be most effective in presenting <u>your own point of view</u> as persuasively as possible, if you were addressing an audience whose point of view you do not know. After you have selected what you believe to be the most effective arguments when your audience view toward your subject is unknown, write a short paragraph containing these arguments as a speaker might use them to address an audience whose point of view he/she does not know.

Write the paragraph here - remember it argues for your own point of view and is directed toward an audience whose point of view you do not know.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

Now that you've written your speech, we're interested in what impression, if any, you formed of the people in the audience. When you were writing your argument, what kind of characteristics did you think a typical person or persons in this audience might possess? In other words, if someone asked you what the people in this audience were like, what would you tell them? Write as detailed an impression as possible of the thoughts that went through your head about a typical person or the people in this kind of audience when you wrote your speech. If you did not think about what the people in the audience were like as you wrote your speech, or selected the arguments, please indicate this instead.

To what extent did you form an impression of the people in the audience as you composed your speech?

Not at all _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ To a great extent

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.