



Getting the Vaccine Now Will Protect You in the Future! A Pragma-Dialectical Analysis of Strategic Maneuvering with Pragmatic Argumentation in Health Brochures

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'Getting the vaccine now will protect you in the future' is an example of pragmatic argumentation in a health brochure aimed at convincing the reader of a piece of health advice in which certain behavior is advocated or discouraged. Pragmatic argumentation is used to justify advice by pointing to the advantageous or disadvantageous effects of that behavior. A brochure writer can be expected to attempt to convince the reader in a reasonable way, while he will also try to select the most convincing arguments and formulate them in the most appealing way. This study aims to explain why a health brochure writer, considering his goals, might choose pragmatic argumentation and how a writer might design the argumentation to convince people to accept his advice. Based on the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation and the notion of strategic maneuvering, it is explained how the conventions of health brochures influence what arguments writers can advance and how they can present them. For example, in this context writers are expected to advance arguments that are relevant for justifying health advice and they should enable readers to make an informed decision. Therefore it is important that the writer takes possible doubt or criticism concerning the standpoint or the argumentation into account. This study shows that pragmatic argumentation can be used for that purpose: four variants of pragmatic argumentation can be discerned which each can contribute to the writer's goals by addressing a specific type of anticipated doubt or criticism.

Examples of English health brochures (e.g. about smoking, vaccination, antibiotics) are used to examine the rhetorical advantages of these variants of pragmatic argumentation in this specific context. A case study of a British HPV vaccination brochure reveals that a particular design can make pragmatic argumentation appear stronger and the advocated behavior more appealing than it perhaps is.