

Persuasion Database



Database	Context	Age Range	Grade in School	# Samples	Location	Special Coding
Persuasion	Pers	USA: 14;8 – 18;9 AU: 12;10 – 18;4	USA: 9-12 AU: N/A	USA: 113 AU: 66	WI Australia	SI, PSS

Introduction

Persuasion is defined as “the use of argumentation to convince another person to perform an act or accept the point of view desired by the persuader” (Nippold, 2007). Persuasion was chosen for the following reasons:

- It figures prominently in academic standards that cut across modes of communication: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (National Governors Association, 2010).
- It is critical to success in college and career and to full participation in social and civic life.
- It challenges students to take into account their audience’s perspective and to use complex language to express complex ideas.

USA Participants

Samples were elicited from typically developing students whose primary language is English. The students were drawn from public schools in two geographic areas of Wisconsin: Milwaukee area school districts, and Madison Metropolitan School District. Students were from a variety of economic backgrounds and ability levels. "Typically developing" was determined by normal progress in school and absence of special education services. Economic background was based on eligibility in the free lunch program (25% qualified for free or reduced lunch). Ability level was determined by GPA scores and teacher reports (4% were low, 25% were average, and 71% were high). The race/ethnicity of the students was similar to that of the geographic area from which they were drawn (63% White, 17% African American, 8% Hispanic, 7% Asian, and 2% Hmong, and 3% unknown). Age, grade, and gender are provided for all samples.

Australian Participants

The Australian dataset contains persuasive samples from typically developing students whose primary language is English. The students attended public schools across the state of Queensland, Australia. Schools were situated in country and metropolitan areas and students were from a range of economic backgrounds. "Typically developing" was determined by normal progress in school and absence of special education services. Economic background was based on the school’s postcode and Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA, 2011) data. Student ability level was determined by the students’ most recent performance in English (~15% obtained a C and 15% an A). The race/ethnicity of the students, as identified on the student consent form was predominantly ‘Australian’. Age and gender are provided for all samples. Grade in school data is not available.

Elicitation Protocol

This protocol provides opportunity for the target speaker to produce a good persuasive argument. Following the script below, the speaker is asked to choose a topic of interest and persuade his/her audience to agree with their argument. The speaker is given a few minutes to select an issue, either from the topics list (*see end of document*) or one of their own choosing. The speaker is then given a few minutes to complete the planning sheet (*see end of document*). Listed next to each point is a brief description of what's covered within that point and space for making notes. Following the planning phase, the speaker is asked to narrate their persuasive argument using their notes. Using this protocol, samples tend to be between 3 - 4 minutes in length.

Elicitation method

The sample may be elicited with the speaker seated near you via a virtual session. Both methods should result in similar outcomes (Manning, et al., 2020, Brennan, et al., 2004). All samples should be recorded for later transcription.

- In-person session: Seat the speaker near you, either across the table or next to you. Have the list of topics and the planning sheet ready to hand over. Record the sample using your phone, tablet, or digital recorder.
- Virtual session: The speaker will need access to the list of topics and the planning sheet. Either send a copy of them to the speaker or display them on your shared screen. Record the sample using your phone, tablet, digital recorder, or the recorder built into the software you are using to host the virtual meeting, e.g., Zoom.

Persuasion Elicitation Script

Today I want to find out how well you can persuade. That's when you talk people into changing their mind and doing something you want. I'm going to make a recording. If you want, you can listen to it when we're finished.

I would like you to pick a rule or situation you would like to see changed in your school, job, or community. Imagine that I am an adult who has the power to make the change that you want. Here are a few examples:

- 1. Pretend I'm the principal of your school and you want to persuade me to provide money for a special event; OR**
- 2. Pretend I'm your boss and you want to persuade me to change your hours or work schedule; OR**
- 3. Pretend I'm a government official and you want me to change the law so that taxes are raised or lowered for a specific purpose.**

I expect you to talk for at least a few minutes, so be sure to pick an issue you know and care about.

- In-person session (*speaker is given a copy of the list of suggested topics*):
- Virtual session (*speaker was sent a copy of the list of topics or the list is displayed on a shared screen*):

Take a few minutes to look over this list of suggested issues. You can choose an issue from this list or else pick one of your own. Allow the speaker time to review the suggested issues before asking: **What issue have you picked?**

If the speaker has difficulty choosing an issue, offer assistance. Review the list together. If a proposed topic is not an arguable issue (e.g., strawberry ice cream is better than chocolate), encourage a different choice. If a proposed issue is too narrow, encourage the speaker to modify it. For example, if the speaker wants to argue for a change to his or her individual grade in a particular class, suggest the issue be broadened into an argument for a school-wide change to the grading policy.

Once an appropriate issue has been selected, clarify the intended target of the persuasion, e.g., principal, boss, government official, by asking, **“Who will you be trying to persuade?”**

If there is a mismatch between the issue and the authority figure, help the speaker resolve the problem. For example, if a speaker wishes to convince a boss to raise the minimum wage, help the them understand that this argument is best directed toward a government official. Once a match has been established between issue and authority figure, proceed to the planning directions:

Talk to me as if I’m your [name the appropriate authority, e.g., principal, boss, senator] and tell me everything you can to persuade me. To do your best job, you’ll first need to organize your thoughts.

- In-person session (*speaker is given a printed copy of the planning sheet*):
Here’s a list of points you’ll need to cover to make a complete argument.

Please take the next few minutes to plan by making notes in the blank spaces. But don’t waste time writing sentences. Just jot down some key words to remind you of what you want to say. Do you have any questions? Go ahead and start planning.

If the speaker has difficulty understanding the planning sheet, read the text aloud. Allow enough time for the speaker to write something for each point on the planning sheet. Verify that the speaker has done some planning for each point. If not, prompt with, **“Please do some planning for [insert name(s) of omitted point(s)].”**

- Virtual session (*speaker was sent a copy of planning sheet or the planning sheet is displayed on a shared screen*):

To help you organize your thoughts, here’s a list of points you’ll need to cover to make a complete argument. Please take the next few minutes to plan by making notes on a piece of paper. For each point, write down the name of that point followed by your notes. But don’t waste time writing sentences. Just write some key words to remind you of what you want to say. Do you have any questions? Ok, the first point is “issue Id and desired change - What rule or situation do you want changed? What would you change it to?”. For this point, you should write down “Issue Id and desired change” followed by your notes. Do this for each point.

Go ahead and start planning. Allow enough time for the speaker to write something for each point. When the speaker stops writing, ask, **“Did you write notes for each point?”** If the answer is “no”, prompt with, **“Please do some planning for [insert name(s) of omitted point(s)].”** If the speaker has difficulty reading any portion of the planning sheet, read the unclear portions aloud.

When the speaker has finished planning, continue with: **When I turn on the recorder, you will be doing all the talking. I’m going to listen to what you have to say. Tell me everything you can think of. It’s OK to look at your planning sheet to remind yourself of what you want to say. Feel free to add to what you’ve written. Remember: I expect you to talk for as long as you can.**

Turn on recording device and have the speaker begin. If the speaker finishes before several minutes have elapsed or has not discussed one or more points on the planning sheet, prompt with: **Is there anything else you can tell me?**

When the speaker has finished, turn off the recorder. If possible, review the recording for quality before releasing the speaker.

Examiner's role during the persuasion

Be an attentive listener. Do not engage the speaker in a debate. Use nonverbal cues such as head nodding and smiling to promote continued talking. You can also use prompts such as “uhhuh” and “keep going” if the speaker stops before the task is completed. Asking questions or providing too much information compromises the process of capturing the speaker's true language and ability level.

As stated in the protocol, if the speaker finishes before several minutes have elapsed or has not discussed one or more points on the planning sheet, prompt with, “Is there anything else you can tell me?”. If there is no response, the elicitation is over.

Transcription Notes

The language samples were segmented into Communication Units (C-units). All transcripts were timed and pauses, within and between utterances, of two or more seconds in length, were marked.

Coding Notes

- [EO:word] marks overgeneralization error
- [EP:word] marks pronoun error
- [EW] marks an extraneous or unnecessary word in the utterance that, if omitted, would make the utterance syntactically correct.
- [EW:word] marks other word-level error
- [EU] marks utterance-level error (*also marks utterances with 3 or more errors*)
- [FP] marks filled pause words such as *like*, e.g., *You (like[FP]) get up too early in the morning.*

Subordination Index (SI) and Persuasion Scoring Scheme (PSS) Coding

SI and PSS coding was applied to all samples.

SI is a measure of syntactic complexity which produces a ratio of the total number of clauses (main and subordinate clauses) to the number of C-units. A clause, whether main or subordinate, is a statement containing both a subject and a predicate. Grammatically, a subject is a noun phrase and a predicate is a verb phrase. Main clauses can stand by themselves. Subordinate clauses depend on the main clause to make sense. They are embedded within an utterance as noun, adjective, pronominal, or adverbial clauses.

The PSS assesses the structure and content of persuasive language, a critical language skill in secondary curriculum, using a scoring rubric consisting of the essential characteristics of a coherent persuasive argument. These characteristics include: 1) issue identification and desired change, 2) supporting reasons, 3) other point of view, 4) compromises, 5) conclusion, 6) cohesion, and 7) effectiveness. The first five characteristics roughly correspond to the topics from the student planning sheet.

Analysis Notes

The SALT group transcribed the samples following the SALT format and performed a series of statistical analyses to describe the dataset for consistency, differences across samples from AU and USA, age-related and gender related changes, as well as topic related changes.

Using SALT to Compare Samples to the Persuasion Database

Use SALT's Database menu to compare your sample with age or grade-matched samples selected from the Persuasion database. SALT looks at the "+ Context" plus line in your transcript to determine which database to pre-select. To pre-select the Persuasion database, include the following plus lines in your transcript:

+ Context: Pers

Although you can type these plus lines into your transcript, the easiest way is to select the correct sampling context (Pers) when first creating a new transcript (by completing the New Transcript Header information dialogue box).

Acknowledgements

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References

- Brennan, D. M., Georgeadis, A. C., Baron, C. R., & Barker, L. M. (2004). The effect of videoconference-based telerehabilitation on story retelling performance by brain-injured subjects and its implications for remote speech-language therapy. *Telemedicine Journal & e-Health*, 10(2), 147-154.
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- National Governors Association. (2010). Common Core State Standards. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Nippold, M. A. (2007). Later language development: School-age children, adolescents, and young adults (3rd ed.). Pro-Ed.

Persuasion Topics List

Changing the time school starts in the morning
Allowing students to leave campus during the school day without special permission
Requiring students to do graded homework
Requiring students to take foreign language classes
Allowing teachers to socialize with students on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, Instagram, etc...
Including grades in physical education classes in students' grade point average
Allowing students to listen to their music using headphones during free periods
Changing the access teenagers have to entertainment that is violent or sexually suggestive; entertainment includes movies, music, and video games
Requiring school uniforms or a dress code for students
Awarding cash or other incentives to students who earn good grades
Replacing traditional textbooks with notebook computers or digital materials
Requiring cities to provide free wireless Internet access in public spaces
Requiring people to get a license in order to become parents
Allowing alternatives to jail, such as counseling or public service, for convicted criminals
Requiring colleges to pay their student athletes a salary for playing
Requiring drug tests for professional athletes
Allowing employers to require drug tests as part of their hiring procedure
Requiring workers to pay for their own work uniforms or equipment
Raising the minimum wage
Changing the minimum age for voting, drinking, driving, or holding a job
Other: Topic of your choice

Name _____ Date _____

I am talking to my _____ *i.e., principal, boss, government official*

What to Talk about When Trying to Persuade Someone

Points	What's Covered	Notes
Issue ID and Desired Change	<p>What rule or situation do you want changed?</p> <p>What would you change it to?</p>	
Supporting Reasons	<p>What facts or values or evidence helps your side?</p> <p>Be sure to include how your change would help or benefit the listener or people the listener cares about.</p>	
Counter Arguments -- Other Point of View	<p>What are some good reasons on the other side?</p>	
Response to Counter Arguments	<p>What can you say to knock down or weaken the reasons on the other side?</p> <p>What reasons on the other side can you agree with, either in whole or in part?</p>	
Compromises	<p>If you can't get your way 100%, what deals would be acceptable so each side wins a little?</p>	
Conclusion	<p>Briefly sum up your position: What do you want?</p> <p>Why do you want it?</p> <p>What are the first steps needed to make the change happen?</p>	

Please use the reverse of this page for an optional diagram or graphic organizer, or for additional notes.