COM 31800: Prin. Of Persuasion

Module 4: Overview Responses

1. Why is language an important part of persuasion
   1. The language you use can determine the valence of the message you send; it determines how you look in the eyes of your audience. Proper choice of language can either obfuscate or clarify your message.
2. What is Langer’s contribution to language use in persuasion?
   1. Langer developed the concept that the use of symbols and the creation of them is a basic human need.
   2. She also presented the concept of concepts and conceptions, one being a shared communal idea of something, while the latter is our personal idea about the concept.
   3. Langer added on to that with the idea of Signification, Denotation, Connotation, along with discursive symbols and presentational meaning.
3. Describe what Korzybski contributed to our understanding of the effect of language on persuasion
   1. Korzybski discovered that the words that we used, our language, was only a general idea of something that exists. He coined the term **map** to describe our inner perceptions of real-world objects. He stated that these **maps** correlate to real-world objects which he called **territories** which are the real-world objects themselves. This relates to persuasion since it is important for us to understand what is a map, and what isn’t, this way we can communicate more effectively without misunderstanding.
4. What is Burke’s approach to language use in persuasion?
   1. Burke believed in the co-creation of some idea between the persuader and persuade. This would give both parties a common ground to unify under. However, Burke identified that with language we signify that things are, as such this will lead us to signifying what things aren’t. With this **negative** idea, the idea of what things are not, we would develop the word “No”. Which is a shameful and painful word. The idea of shame as a part of our language leads us to have three distinct behavioral patterns, Shame when we displease others, shame that we aren’t as high in the social pecking-order, and shame that we want but can’t be perfect. So, Burke thought that we could use our shame to persuade others, something that advertisers do well. We can use their product to make up for our shortcomings.
5. What is semiotics and why is it important to the study of persuasion?
   1. Semiotics is the study of meaning and how things acquire meaning. Semiotics is important for persuasion because it is how we assign meaning to things, this meaning can be used by persuaders to build a persuasive message. Additionally, by understanding how we assign meaning we can figure out ways to get the audience to assign meaning to our message. However, meaning lies not only in the things that we see, but the things we say and don’t say, how we say it or how we don’t say it. We can understand the motives of persuaders by analyzing these aspects of their speech and discover if they have a persuasive message directed at us.
6. Explain why Larson describes metaphors as the most powerful persuasive tool that require artistic language creativity.
   1. Metaphors are some of the most potent persuasive tools because they require a vast understanding of the meanings, functions, and themes behind words. Additionally, they require an understanding of the audience to whom you speak. In order to create an effective metaphor, you need to describe a tenor and vehicle that work cohesively with one another and can play on their semantic, functional, and/or thematic meaning. This is all while you have figured out a message that will either be archetypally effective or effective with your specific audience.
7. Define and describe the semantic, functional, and thematic dimensions of language
   1. There is the semantic dimension which is the meaning of the words used. There is the functional dimension which describes how the words work and what they do, like how you could pass blame or indicate the presence of an object and identify objects. Then the thematic dimension is the way the word feel, like how the word buzz represents the sound a fly or bee may make, it also refers to the usage of things like Alliteration or assonance.
8. The proper use of metaphors can help explain or represent some idea to the listeners in manners that are easy to understand. Archetypes can help you represent an idea using ideas that are central to all humans, such as light and dark, death and birth, etc. Symbolic expression can be key to a culture, it can represent something they hold dear and something that empowers them. Using that symbolic expression can evoke powerful feelings within the listeners and taking it away can make them weak. Using symbolic expression can help align the listeners with you or make them fear something that would seek to take away their symbols.
9. Understanding the three dimensions of language can help a persuader form metaphors where the vehicle and the tenor both fit one another semantically, functionally, or thematically. The same goes for archetypes and symbolic expressions, it helps you deliver situationally apt metaphors, or archetypes and symbolic expressions.
10. Describe at least one tool for analyzing the functional, semantic, and thematic dimensions of language
    1. Weaver’s grammatical categories is a good tool for examining the functional dimension of a message. It uses the wording and sentence structure used by the speaker to help the audience understand their purposes and thought processes. This ranges from understand their use of simple, compound, or complex sentences to their use of adverbs, nouns, adjectives, and syntax or word order.
11. What is semiotics and how does the process of signification help us study meaning and decode persuasive messages?
    1. Semiotics is the study of the way we assign meaning to signs and concepts
    2. Signification is the process that we undergo to assign something with a sign, while much more in-depth than that. Signification helps us understand meaning because it is how we assign meaning, by understanding the way we assign meaning to objects we understand how we assign meaning to laws and codes that we enforce and follow in our world. Additionally, by understanding the signifieds that go along with signals we can breakdown the meaning of each signal we see to understand the content of some advertising. A great example is the use of color in movies, dark colors tend to represent evil or the dark-side of ourselves, so if we see someone draped in black we know that they are either a villain or someone who has given into their desires and become an Anti-hero.