

# Convictive Communication and Persuasive Communication

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## ABSTRACT

The study starts from the identification of the discourses and conversation, ongoing existence of two ways of communication processes. On the one hand, some processes are structured by concatenating rational arguments; arguments are often natural logic and occasionally may be of formal logic. On the other hand, other processes are directed and developed communication based on emotional arguments. In relation to the type of arguments that are used in communication, we delimit two types of communication: convictive communication and persuasive communication. The two types are found rarely in pure configuration. In the current communication, the two intersect. Convictive or persuasive character of a statement is given by the predominance of one or other type of arguments.

**Keywords:** communication; convictive communication; persuasive communication

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Doug Newsom and Bob Carrell work with an embedding and totalising persuasion concept. They believe that “persuasion is implicit, if not explicit, any time a person tries to communicate with another” (Newsom & Carrell, 2004, p. 59) and that any persuasion needs “efforts of conviction”. “The persuasive speech tries to convince the public about the value of an idea, person or action” (Newsom & Carrell, 2004, p. 373). What is called conviction does not exist, everything is persuasion! The insecurity of a unique persuasion concept which would also include conviction is highlighted when Newsom and Carrell detail its positions. Correctly, they show that people are rational and passionate: they are based both on thinking and on affect. “If they were guided only by logic, then there would be no need for persuasion” emphasize the two authors (Newsom & Carrell, 2004, p. 60). We understand that along with persuasion, there is also another way: “guided by logic”. Although they acknowledge this, Newsom and Carrell do not feel the need of another concept, apart from persuasion (Popova, 2005; Gavrilovici & Oprea, 2013). In our opinion, the necessary concept is conviction, it is “guided by logic”.

The communicative method by which the conviction action occurs is the convictive one. The adjective “convictive” is necessary to be created in Romanian (from conviction) in order to counterbalance in an antonymic way the adjective “persuasive” and thus support the conceptual completion of the communication vocabulary, mainly in delimiting the convictive method, the convictive communication way.

## 2. TWO TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

By its aspects of trust, responsibility, revalidation, conviction conditions the efficiency of communication, even its existence. "To be able to convince – J. B. Grize affirms – it is not sufficient to enumerate phrases – (...) they must be articulated, meaning that we should reason by them" (Grize, 1990, p. 9). From the assumption created, the following question arises: is there communication also without installation of convictions? There is. When communication is not modulated by conviction, it shall be governed by manipulation, falsehoods (sophisms and absurd questions), the argument of force – in one word by "persuasion" (Gavriliuță 2009; Vlad & Coldea, 2011).

On this idea, communication is divided into: convictive communication and persuasive communication. "Persuasion and diplomatic ability – according to A. Berger (Berger, 1976, p. 233) – to a large extent consist in choosing the words, formulas and images showing the facts under a pleasant, favourable light, without necessarily being misleading. By various manoeuvres (seduction, intimidation, persuasive argumentation that is either related to the rhetoric of subtle violence...), somebody succeeds to divert for their own benefit (and eventually for the represented group) the techniques and normal strategies of dialogue thusly counterfeited or obliterated. To persuade = to convince someone to believe, to think or to (want to) do a certain thing (leaves the truth aside). To convince = to make someone adopt an opinion based on evidence and arguments, to make someone admit something as being true (DEX, 1996, 154, p. 681 and p. 194).

An incursion into the etymology of terms convictio and persuasio can underlie a delimitation between the meanings of the two concepts. The first, derived by prefixing from vincere = to conquer with "con" induces the meaning of complete and irrevocable defeat. The communicator fails under the force of the validity of evidence and under the profoundness of the previous speaker's reasoning (Coicaru, 2005; Sălcudean, 2009; Borowski, 2014). They renounce to oppose theirs to it. In this situation, the victory proves to be a victory of subject's cogitation on its own interests, these, which once the evidence is installed, all it would do is to advance against it, injuring the honesty of thought. Not without justification, Chaignet did the following delimitation: "When we are convinced, we are only defeated by ourselves. When we are persuaded, we are always persuaded by another" (Florescu, 1973, p. 44). The term "persuasion", which comes from suadere = to counsel and per, which confers the ability to suggest the idea of "fulfilment" closely related to the existence of a decisive influence, but not restrictive which the previous speaker exercises.

The Latin word "convictio" – "convictionis" has come to us through the French word "conviction" which resulted in Romanian as "convicție", "convicțiune" (conviction, convict) (DEX, 1996, pp. 195-196), synonyms for confidence (firm opinion on a certain matter).

In a Latin Romanian dictionary (Apud Tonoiu V., 1997, p. 156), persuasio is given by: 1. (action of) convincing (someone); 2. conviction, opinion, belief. Here are also the Romanian equivalents of the Latin verb persuadeo (ere, suasi, suasum): 1) to convince, to make (someone) believe; 2) to determine (someone) to do something, to decide, to urge (hence also persuabilis – which can convince, persuasive and persuader – that who induces).

The more "perverse" connotations are also present in the explanations within the dictionary, according to V. Tonoiu (Tonoiu V., 1997, pp. 156-158), which shift persuasion towards semantic fields of the negative valorisation: the questionable verbal skill lacking honesty, which stakes the impure resources of forcing the consent by insinuation, suggestion, stratagem.... As in many other cases, as shown in the same place, we deal with a complex, composite, multilayered meaning, which (nuclearly) gathers and (contextually) performs a

tensioned inner assembly of meanings which pull into different directions and each is loaded every time with this updated/virtualised multivectoriality according to circumstances. As V. Tonoiu emphasizes, raising the common term of persuasion to the rank of technical concept ordered to some research programs or clarifying synthesis projects raises redoubtable issues which are not just related to “words”, but also to “things”, to “words-things” altogether. A spontaneous distressing (dissociate) tendency is already outlined at the level of common usages, which makes the quasi-complete synonymy persuasion-conviction pertinently pass into difference or even opposition (Barker, 2012; Fourie, 2010).

The positive aspects of rational, argumentative, reasonable, honestly cooperative approaches are reserved to conviction, mutually constrictive by mutually acknowledging evidence..., letting the persuasion take over, in their negative form, the connotations of rhetoric, skill, power of suggestion, seduction, insinuation, subterfuge, stratagem, deceit, manipulation... It shall be done in the scholarly extension of this spontaneously dissociate tendency, by also taking advantage of the subtle (therefore persuasive!) suggestions of etymology. Conviction is also another triumph over the universal power of the logos, above the humours and subjective opinions of interlocutors (Convincere, *ere, ici, vinco* – 1). To prove someone as guilty; 2. To clearly show, prove something as wrong or true. Comes from *convincio*, means together with, and *vinco* – to conquer, to triumph, to intrude, to master, to be succeed in proving, to demonstrate, to make give in...).

Persuasion also means giving in under the pressure of a pre-calculated action with a rather unilateral instrumental value. (Per in *Persuadeo* means: through, along, by, by means of, due to, from, from the part of... and *sudeo, ere, suasi, suadum* – to advise, to urge, to invite; the adjective *suadus* also has the connotation of insinuation).

In the case of conviction, the decision is giving up your own thesis. The moment of deliberation, which features the first stage of the rational act, is minimised due to the evidence, because we do not deliberate against it. Trying to explain this fact marked by the deepest and most delicate interpenetrations of logic with psychology fails and we need to be content with assigning an objectively essential virtue, because every normal mind must give in before it. Decision is here, unique and mandatory (Balaban, 2005; Dobrescu & Bârgăoanu, 2003; Tabăra, 2012).

Completely different is the case of persuasion, where deliberation is broad. The subject is the prey of hesitation for a long time, and the decision that follows is the result of a process where experimental psychology nowadays identifies several distinct phases (Pintea, 2013).

Chaim Perelman (Perelman, 1977, pp. 35-36) argues that there is not just a qualitative difference between conviction and persuasion, but also a difference resulting from “the diversity of proof means”. This leads to noticing that if we take into account the means used and not the results, primacy is generally given to conviction. But if we take the results into account, to persuade means more than to convince, because getting the force needed for action is also needed (Sonderling, 2001; Dur, 2012; Dur, 2013).

The results of persuasion are much greater and far more thorough, because that who gives in before it is aware they freely adhered to a thesis, driven not by the elementary evidence, but requested by an axiological transfer of the action of thinking (Grosu, 2009; Louw, 2005). Popular experience has recorded everywhere this force of persuasion in proverbs expressed in almost identical terms. We shall only quote here the ancient one, that of Solomon “A soft tongue can break bones”, which has its equivalent in the Romanian language as “good words cost nothing and are worth much”. In the consciousness of that who has been subject to persuasion, the idea that the thesis which they had been requested at is their thesis has

thoroughly been installed, and the action which they carry as a result does not have an exterior and mandatory feature anymore.

Lacking the evidence as engine of this complicated process does not represent an infirmity, as we would tend to believe and as it has been believed for centuries and, but it rather confers special strength to the action. In order to make this common place in the vast specialised literature be well understood, we shall use an example which we consider to be particularly significant. In the Athenian law fighting pederasty, there is a stipulation which C. Daremberg and E. Saglio did not find any explanation to when registering it in their “Dictionnaire des antiquites grecques et romaines” (1892), and were forced to present it as an “oddtity” of that legislation.

Corrupting the free children – by persuasion was punished harder than the case using violence (Frunză, 2011; Cojocaru, 2012; Frunză 2014). The legislator knew that first of all the deviation from nature could become permanent, thus becoming a social danger. However, by violation, the offender only harmed one person and lacking the firm adhesion, the fact could not generate the vice, and the society was not injured at all. Explained as such, the law which we referred to can no longer be interpreted as an “oddtity”.

The ancient legislator perfectly knew the power of persuasion and its effects and taking into account the priority of interests, they were forced to provide a gradation of punishment in relation to these elements.

Let us take as example the utterances that may be used speaking of a future action before a judge:

- 1) We shall convince him this individual is a crook.
- 2) We shall persuade him this individual is a crook.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Communication does not consist only through simple discursive activity. It requires the communicating subjects to be convincing, to trigger ideas which they support with natural-rational arguments. From this perspective, communication is fundamentally offensive, active, productive. If it has occurred, communication means by itself a human gain, a new atom in creating a better world. It falls into the general communicational circuit, that which largely created the man as it is and which shall make it be more human, whether it wants or not.

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