

# Emotional appeals as persuasion techniques in non-profit organization Greenpeace's Twitter account

Bachelor's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tämä kandidaatintutkielma käsittelee tunteisiin vetoavia ja tunteita herättäviä retorisia keinoja, joiden pyrkimyksenä on vakuuttaa yleisöä. Tutkimus kohdistui voittoa tavoittelemattoman järjestön Greenpeacen Twitter-julkaisuihin ja siihen, millaisten tunteisiin vetoavien retoristen keinojen avulla järjestö mahdollisesti pyrkii vakuuttamaan kohdeyleisönsä. Kohdeyleisöksi tutkimuksessa katsottiin Greenpeacen Twitter-tilin seuraajat.</p> <p>Aineisto sisälsi 65 Greenpeacen vuonna 2019 julkaisemaa Twitter-postausta ja niitä analysoitiin kvalitatiivisesti. Aineiston analyysissä keskityttiin tunnistamaan tunteita herättäviä vakuuttamiseen pyrkiviä keinoja sekä löydettyjen keinojen käyttötapoja.</p> <p>Tutkimusmenetelmä sovellettiin kahdesta aikaisemmin toteutetusta tutkimuksesta, jotka tarkastelivat voittoa tavoittelemattomien järjestöjen vakuuttamisstrategioita ja -keinoja kirjoitetun kielenkäytön näkökulmasta. Connorin ja Gladkova (2004) tutkimus keskittyi voittoa tavoittelemattomien järjestöjen varainkeruukirjeisiin ja Nelzenin (2017) tutkimuksessa puolestaan tarkasteltiin eri järjestöjen vakuuttamiskeinoja sosiaalisen median alustoilla.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa todettiin Greenpeacen pyrkivän vakuuttamaan kohdeyleisöään vetoamalla heidän tunteisiinsa. Käytetyimmiksi keinoiksi paljastuivat yleisön arvoihin sekä uskomuksiin vetoaminen sekä retoristen kysymysten käyttäminen julkaisuissa.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Persuasion has been an integral part of our everyday communication ever since the ancient times. In his time, the great philosopher Aristotle (2001) developed the art of rhetoric which then referred to spoken communication. He introduced the three modes of persuasion or appeals *ethos* (credibility), *pathos* (emotion) and *logos* (logic) which are all used when aiming to affect the audiences' beliefs, thinking or behavior. Persuasion has been widely studied especially in the fields of advertising and politics (Halmari and Virtanen 2005:4).

For the present study, the appeals have been separated from each other and the focus is only on the emotional appeal *pathos*. The study focuses on non-profit organization Greenpeace and their persuasive use of language on microblogging site Twitter. The aim of the study is to investigate what type of emotional appeals are found in Greenpeace's Twitter posts or tweets and whether they can be considered persuasive without the presence of the other two appeals. Data for this research was collected from the Twitter account maintained by Greenpeace and it consists of tweets posted in the year 2019.

Greenpeace operates independently without accepting funds from the government or corporations. Their mission is to ensure the sustainability of the earth by, for example, preventing pollution and promoting peace all around the world (Greenpeace 2020). This kind of independence in the operation of non-profit organizations such as Greenpeace, emphasizes the role of their target audience. One of the main functions for non-profit organizations is usually to engage their audience to participate in their work by giving donations or to act on certain, for example, environmental, matters to further their mission. These contributions are essential for the organizations and enable them to continue their work. However, reaching a wide audience can be challenging. In today's world, social media is a notable part of our everyday interaction and communication which is why it is important for non-profit organizations to identify its affordances. The current state of social media offers multiple platforms for new kinds of interactions between participants that are not connected to time or space (Seargeant and Tagg 2014:2). This allows non-profit organizations to increase awareness about their work and to approach and communicate with their target audience and thus reach a wider follower community.

Twitter, as a social media platform, offers a channel for communication between the organizations and their audience. Greenpeace, for instance, uses Twitter actively and posts multiple times a day which can be beneficial for achieving the audience's participation and contributions. Being active on social media provides constant reminders about their existence and their mission to the target audience. Therefore, investigating their language use on Twitter and its emotion evoking features that are used for persuasive purposes is an interesting field of research.

The study is structured into five sections and their subsections. Firstly, the study introduces the concept of rhetoric, persuasive communication and their digital counterparts and presents other studies on *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Secondly, the methodology, which has been drawn from two previous studies demonstrated in the first section focusing on non-profit organization's language use, is explained. The first study conducted by Connor & Gladkov (2004) examines the persuasive appeals found in direct mail letters for non-profit fundraising and the second study by Nelzen (2017) investigates the persuasive strategies non-profit organizations use on social media. This section also presents the research questions and the methods for data collection. Thirdly, the analysis chapter displays the results and lastly, the final section discusses and summarizes the findings and suggests further research.

## **2 BACKGROUND THEORY**

This section offers a brief description of rhetoric and introduces Aristotle's three modes of persuasion as one of the most essential theories of this thesis. The earlier studies of rhetoric will not be discussed due to Aristotle's perspective being the most relevant for the present study.

Persuasive writing and the concept of digital rhetoric on the field of online communication and social media are also covered following with the introduction of previous research on the topic of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.

### **2.1 Rhetoric and the three modes of persuasion**

In ancient Greece rhetoric was first acknowledged as an art of public speaking which developed from formal occasions such as law courts or deliberative meetings in especially Athenian democracy (Kennedy 2011). Kennedy (2011:3) defines rhetoric as the "power of words and their

potential to affect in situations in which they are used or received''. That is, for example, by trying to influence or persuade others to change their beliefs, thinking or behaviour. According to Rapp, this type of affecting is a matter of persuasiveness which some people manage to do either by accident or as a habit. In other words, people can be persuaded by different types of factors and can sometimes be receptive to things such as flattery or a need to increase one's own advantage (Aristotle 2001: 1; Rapp 2010).

In his work *Rhetoric* (2001), the Greek philosopher Aristotle explained that the function of rhetoric is not to persuade but to see the means of persuasion. According to Rapp (2010) this denotes that rhetoric can be defined as the capability to discover the possible persuasive means in any given case, yet it is not possible to convince all the participants to change their thinking. In order to understand the persuasive issues and why certain matters can be considered as persuasive, the three modes of persuasion or otherwise known as the rhetorical appeals, must be considered. According to Aristotle, there are three primary appeals, *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* that reflect on his belief that speech situations consist of three major factors that are the speaker, the audience, and the speech itself (Aristotle 2001:8; Kennedy 2011: 29). *Ethos* relies on the speaker's credibility and characteristics. This can be explained through effective communication skills that increase the listener's trustworthiness towards the speaker (Stiff & Mongeau 2003: 105-106). *Logos* refers to persuasive messages that use arguments that are either rational or logical when demonstrating a certain matter. This can, for example, be done by making a claim about something. *Pathos*, on the other hand, uses emotional appeals for persuasive purposes. The use of these appeals strives to evoke emotions in order to generate certain types of behavioral responses in the audience (Stiff & Mongeau 2003: 128, 145-147).

In Aristotelian rhetoric the concept of enthymemes is one of the most important and effective means of logical persuasion (Aristotle 2001: 2). Enthymemes, as defined by Kennedy (2011:58), are rhetorical syllogisms that are often in a form of assertion that is supported by a reason. Thus, they are deductive arguments that can be used to convince people with something that is logically proven. Rapp (2010) claims that in this type of logical and argumentative nature of Aristotelian rhetoric it is not necessary to distract the audience with emotional appeals in order to be persuasive. However, as the present study focuses on the use of emotional appeals, the analysis

section (Section 4) later only discusses the appeal *pathos* and other emotion evoking aspects in terms of persuasion. Emotion, as explained by Aristotle, is an experience of either pain or pleasure. They affect the audience's judgment and can consequently lead their decision-making (Aristotle 2001:42).

## **2.2 Persuasive communication**

Persuasion is an integral part of human interaction, but as opposed to the traditional Aristotelian point of view that recognizes persuasion as means of spoken communication and language, Stiff & Mongeau (2003:4) argue that all communicative activities can be of persuasive nature.

However, they limit the definition of persuasive communication into intentional activities and messages that attempt to change, shape, or reinforce the thinking, beliefs, or behavior of the audience. What they mean by this, is that communicative acts are used intentionally to affect the responses of the audience. Rahtu, Shore and Virtanen (2018:7) also claim that in addition to the traditional view that accepts communication only as a means of spoken language, it is necessary, especially after the development of digital communication technologies and social media, to acknowledge the importance of written communication as another core of human interaction and language use. This is supported by the concept of persuasive writing that is introduced by Camp. According to him, practically every written piece has persuasive aspects to it. That is, for example, the capacity to either positively or negatively influence the reader in certain matters or to achieve the desired response (Camp 2007:6). Persuasion can thus, in addition to Aristotle's point of view, happen also through written communication whether it appears in a digital or non-digital field. Written digital communication is introduced more closely in Section 2.3.

Camp notes (2007) that in order to persuade through writing, the author needs to understand their audience and know the result they aspire to achieve. He claims that in exchange for readers' investment of time they require to gain something of value, and therefore the piece of persuasive writing needs to give the reader a compelling reason to keep reading. It is necessary to strive to engage, stimulate and persuade the reader by making logical assumptions and deductions about them based on the facts the writer is already familiar with. Addressing a wider audience, it can be challenging to identify the relevant information regarding the audience and hence they should be

considered as individuals. This, as Camp (2007:25) explains, can be achieved by, for example, simply referring to the reader with the singular 'you' instead of the plural. When it comes to the intended results, he argues that a piece of writing often fails to persuade if the writer fails to acknowledge what they aim to achieve. Without realizing the influential potential of the text, engaging the target audience is often unsuccessful. The most effective persuasive writing sets a defined and specific goal to be successful (Camp 2007:55-57). An example of this can, for instance, be an email sent out to get donations for abandoned animals. This type of text aims to affect the readers' thinking, behavior, or feelings. As opposed to Rapp (2010), Camp also claims that appealing to a reader on an emotional level is necessary when writing persuasively. He argues that the readers' make decisions not only based on logical arguments but also based on emotion evoking appeals (Camp 2007:37).

Bourse (2019) explains that one instance of studying persuasive communication that aims to evoke emotions in the audience is loaded words or charged language as this thesis later suggests. According to her, loaded words are emotionally charged words that trigger emotional responses in the audience. They can be used to present the matters discussed either in a positive or negative light which can influence the audience's response (Bourse 2019:6,13). She studied loaded words in the field of political discourse and more specifically their persuasive and evocative power on drug reform. Bourse (2019:12) found out that the loaded words used most often have a negative connotation. An example of this is the word "life" that had 30 occurrences in the data and only five of them had a positive connotation. Other examples of most frequently used words were "crisis", "problem" and "dangerous" which all had a negative connotation in the analyzed data and were used to evoke emotions such as fear or sadness (Bourse 2019:7). Therefore, this suggests that in persuasive communication loaded words are used through both positive and negative connotations, but the negative connotations being more frequently used.

### **2.3 Digital communication and rhetoric**

Digital communication is an ever-growing means of communication and its current state is allowing people to stay in contact through different types of media platforms lessening the importance of geographical boundaries, time, and space. In the contemporary world internet and



social network sites have become an essential part of human interaction and the growth of social media has enabled the participation of the users and provided different types of linguistic and communicative patterns for people to engage in (Sergeant and Tagg 2014:2). One example of these media platforms mentioned earlier is a microblogging site Twitter that has over 330 million active monthly users worldwide (Statista 2020). On Twitter the users can publish posts to internet-mediated audiences and so create modern kinds of interactions through the conversation-like exchanges that appear, for example, when the audience members comment, share or like the original publishers' posts. Engaging the audience into conversations is a social activity where the users' bond with others by creating communities of shared values and interests (Zappavigna 2014:139-141). The concept of digital rhetoric can be applied to this kind of digital communication (Eyman 2015).

As mentioned in the previous section, all communication acts can be considered as persuasive, and as Burke puts it "wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric" (Burke 1969 as quoted by Eyman 2015: 12). What this means is that every communication act in which the speaker or the writer aims to intentionally persuade their audience can be considered rhetorical. Eyman (2015) introduces the concept of digital rhetoric which he simply defines as the use of rhetorical theory in digital texts or other digital contexts such as social media or discussion forums. He separates the definitions of the terms *digital*, *text* and *rhetoric* to broaden the traditional view of rhetoric focusing only on spoken communication (Eyman 2015:13-17). According to him, the terms can be explained in the following way. *Digital* has often been used to refer to "electronic" or "computerized" technologies. In addition to that, other non-computer-based systems such as Morse code can also be considered as digital communication. As opposed to digital rhetoric, in traditional rhetorical studies *text* is often recognized as printed texts or transcripts of spoken communication. In the concept of digital rhetoric text is seen as something that is not only formulated by meaningful symbols but also as results of social actions. *Rhetoric* is a complex matter but in order to understand the basis of digital rhetoric, Eyman suggests that it is necessary to explain the tradition of rhetoric (e.g. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*) but it is not necessary to generate a definitive meaning for it (Eyman 2015 13, 18-22).

## 2.4 Previous research on *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*

The previous research regarding the topic of rhetoric and the use of Aristotle's three modes of persuasion or appeals *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* has often focused on persuasiveness in the field of advertising, political campaigns, or public speech situations. The rhetoric of advertising is, for example, studied by Kiholm and Gårdemyr (2017) who examine the theory of persuasion and the strategic use of the appeals in creating effective transformational advertisements. Ekvang (2017), on the other hand, has studied the rhetorical appeals in political public speaking and focused on the persuasiveness of Nelson Mandela's "Cape Town" speech from 1990. A few studies have also been conducted about non-profit organizations or non-profit fundraising that introduce the appeals and investigate their persuasive use. Examples of these are the study by Nelzen (2017) which examines how non-profit organizations use persuasive language in social media and the research by Connor and Gladkov (2004) which focuses on the persuasiveness of direct mail letters in the field of non-profit fundraising.

In their study about the effectiveness of the direct mail letters in non-profit fundraising Connor and Gladkov (2004) investigate the importance of the written text of the letters instead of the visual elements such as images. They argue that the visual elements have been the main emphasis of the previous research considering the fundraising letters, and that writing has not appeared to be as important. The research focuses on the three persuasive appeals *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* and how they are used to persuade the audience through the fundraising letters. The letters investigated were, for example, from the fields of environment, health and human sciences and education. To pursue their goal, they developed an operational system of the appeals including 12 different rational appeals (*logos*) such as Descriptive Example, Comparison and Classification, four credibility appeals (*ethos*) such as First-Hand Experience and Showing Writer's Good Character/Judgement, and three affective or emotional appeals (*pathos*) that are Appealing to the Audience's Views, Vivid Picture and Charged Language (Connor & Gladkov 2004:261).

Nelzen (2017), on the other hand, investigates four different non-profit organizations Oxfam, UNICEF, Greenpeace and WWF and their usage of persuasive language in their online posts on Facebook and Twitter. She examines this by using the typologies created by Connor and Gladkov (2004) with some adjustments for the features such as elaborations or compounds for them to be

more suitable for online communication. In her study Nelzen claims that all three appeals are equally important in order to persuade the audience effectively. However, she also notes that the appeals may be used individually. She focuses on persuasive strategy and social media as a platform for persuasion but does not examine the effectiveness of the posts. Nelzen (2017:28) stated that some posts use all three appeals and others focus on certain features of the appeals. The study showed that all the posts analyzed included at least one of the appeals which indicated that non-profit organizations use persuasive language. She concluded that *pathos* was the most frequently used appeal and was most frequently found in Greenpeace's social media posts. This will be further discussed in Section 5 and compared to the results of the present study. In addition, she noted that organizations seem to struggle using more than two appeals in their posts due to the character limitations in online posts.

### **3 THE PRESENT STUDY**

This section first introduces the aim of the study and presents the research questions that were considered when conducting the research. Following that the methods for data collection and analysis are explained.

#### **3.1 Aim of the study**

As discussed above, some research has been done on the topic of persuasive communication and the rhetorical devices it uses especially in the field of politics and advertising but the persuasive communication on technological fields focusing only on emotive use of language has not yet been as widely studied. The appeals *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* introduced by Aristotle have been studied together in context, but they have not been separated for the topic of non-profit organizations and their language use. The variety of different types of social media platforms offer a modern place for human interaction and allows people to persuade one another through a digital environment. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine whether the non-profit organization Greenpeace uses emotional appeals on their profile on the microblogging site Twitter in order to persuade their target audience. The study also aims to investigate whether the posts can be considered as persuasive without including all three appeals in the research. In this research, the target audience is understood as the followers Greenpeace has on their Twitter

account. The focus of this study will only be on the textual aspects and other features such as images, internet links or hashtags have not been considered in this research. In cases where hashtags have been used as a part of the whole message or tweet, as this research suggests, they have been considered for the meaning to be clear and understandable. This refers to posts where the hashtags are, for example, used in the middle of the tweet and without including them the meaning of the message would be unclear. Other features related to hashtags such as their promoting purposes or other reasons why they may have been used are not relevant for this research. It is also not relevant for this study to investigate what type of emotions the possible appeals appearing in Greenpeace's twitter account evoke in the audience or whether the posts succeed on their persuasion. The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What type of emotional appeals are used to persuade the target audience?
2. What kind of linguistic features evoke emotions in these appeals?

The research questions were considered throughout the data analysis and are further discussed and answered in Section 5.

### **3.2 Data**

The data consists of 65 tweets collected from the active Twitter account of Greenpeace International with over 1,8 million followers. Greenpeace uses their Twitter page to post multiple tweets throughout the day and hence the tweets analyzed in this research were randomly selected in order to find out whether different types of emotional appeals were frequently used in their posts and if they aimed to evoke emotions using multiple kinds of features. The data was collected from the posts of the year 2019 the earliest being from January and the latest from December.

### **3.3 Methods**

This study is a qualitative research and thus uses a qualitative approach for analysis. The use of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals suggests that rhetorical analysis could be used as a research method for the present study, but because Aristotle did not specify how to analyze persuasive communication, the framework for the analysis is drawn from the typologies of the studies by

Connor and Gladkov (2004) and Nelzen (2017). The concept of digital rhetoric introduced by Eyman (2015) is also applied due to the digital environment where the data was collected. Based on this, the concept of text also includes, for example, the hashtags mentioned above. The method of data analysis consisted of reading the data multiple times and identifying emotional appeals and other emotion evoking features in it. The appropriate findings were further investigated and compared with the qualities of the appeals presented by Connor and Gladkov, and Nelzen. The findings were then matched with the categorizations based on their studies.

Because the present research focuses only on emotional appeal (*pathos*) the other two appeals *ethos* and *logos* are not included in the methodology. Based on the findings, all the affective appeals by Connor & Gladkov presented in Section 1 were used in the analysis due to their high prevalence on the data. The appeals were seen suitable for communication also in the digital fields and thus no adjustments were made. In addition to these appeals, a feature of Rhetorical Question introduced by Nelzen (2017) was also used. Thus, the method of analysis presents the appeal *pathos* with the following four emotion evoking features: *Appealing to the Audience's Views*, *Vivid Picture*, *Charged Language* and *Rhetorical Question*.

## **4 ANALYSIS**

In this section the findings and analysis of the data are presented and discussed. The data indicated different types of emotional appeals and their features which are presented through examples in this section. The examples are tweets posted by Greenpeace on their Twitter page. The section is divided into subsections where each appeal is described and discussed individually.

### **4.1 Appealing to the Audience's Views**

Appealing to the audience's views is an emotional appeal that was most frequently found in the analyzed data. Use of this appeal aims to affect the reader's attitudinal and moral values. In fundraising discourse, Connor and Gladkov (2004:268) introduce an example of this which is directly asking for donations from the audience.

The idea can also be adapted into emotion evoking persuasive techniques Greenpeace uses on their Twitter account. The analysis showed various examples of them asking the audience to sign different types of petitions in order to help them in certain environmental matters. By asking help from the audience Greenpeace aims to arouse emotions that address the reader's attitudinal and moral values. Tweet (1) that was posted on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 shows an example of this direct request.

- (1) We need your help to stop this plastic waste crisis! [Sign our petition](#) - and call for @ASEAN leaders to make a united declaration. #NoSpaceForWaste

The Tweet (1) provides an understanding of a direct request by encouraging the reader to "sign our petition". This example is presented in a form where the reason for signing the petition is explained prior to the actual request. The reason introduced is to act against the plastic waste crisis and through signing the petition affect its future. By making this request Greenpeace aims to especially affect emotionally to those audience members who value the clean environment and are against plastic use. These types of attributes that the members of the target audience consider important and valuable direct their personal behavior. By signing the petition, the target audience feels they have done something significant that is in collaboration with their values, and thus appealing to them is persuasive. Camp (2007) argued that reader's require something of value in exchange for the time they spend on reading a persuasive text, and therefore it is important to mention that by writing this tweet Greenpeace has successfully referred to the goal they aspire to achieve and thus given their audience a valuable reason to keep reading, or as in this case, sign the petition.

Tweet (2) posted on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 presents another example that refers to matters that are valuable and important to the target audience. The matters discussed are clean and healthy air which can be argued to be valuable for many people. As opposed to Tweet (1), Tweet (2) is not requesting the audience to act but making it understandable for them that action is something they can demand. By using the word "demand", Greenpeace creates an image that the choice to act for the environment is in the hands of the audience and not a matter of persuasion which leads to an emotional response and possibly affects their behavior.

(2) Demand your right to clean, healthy air >> <http://act.gp/2HeH0dL>

Therefore, appealing to the audience through their attitudinal or moral values that, in other words, are things that they appreciate and find meaningful, is an effective emotional appeal. In both Tweets (1) and (2) Greenpeace encourages the audience to take part in different types of actions by signing petitions or demanding something through the textual aspects of the posts. This, as explained by Eyman (2015), is a central part of digital rhetoric and increases the persuasiveness of the texts. The emotional responses these examples evoke in the readers channel their thinking and make them believe they are part of a change or that the action they take has a positive impact on the environment. This, as mentioned above, can affect their behavior. Based on these findings, the persuasion happens as the audience starts thinking about their own personal values that evoke emotions in them and whether they find them meaningful or not.

#### **4.2 Vivid Picture**

The appeal analyzed in this section is called Vivid picture. In their study, Connor and Gladkov (2004:268) explain that by creating a vivid picture in the mind of the audience the writer formulates an impression of presence in the situation they are depicting. It aims to, for example, connect the audience emotionally by temporarily linking them to a certain event.

In Tweet (3), that was posted on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Greenpeace appears to build a vivid picture and evoke emotional responses in the readers by linking them to an upcoming election. In the post the reader is asked to think about ‘‘your children’’ when deciding who to vote prior to the election. It also refers to the climate and the future, which most likely strives to state that by voting in a certain way the future of the reader’s children is protected. It is apparent that this request links the reader to the future where they may not actually be present but get the impression of presence at the time being. Family members and especially children are usually considered important for people and referring to them makes the audience believe, for example, that the writer is familiar with them. This is one feature of a successful persuasive writing (Camp 2007). Therefore, the use of this appeal in this sense, evokes emotions that aim to shape or change how the reader is thinking about acting in the situation.

- (3) Not everybody has a vote, but everybody can raise their voice. You have to think of your children, when you vote in the #EuropeanElection2019! MAKE THIS ELECTION ABOUT CLIMATE AND THE FUTURE! #Europawahl2019 #Austria #Oesterreich #FridaysForFuture @ViennaForFuture #Wien

According to Connor and Gladkov (2004:268), a vivid picture can also be created by putting the statement into a form of a question. This sets the reader to place themselves in the event depicted and makes them look for the correct answer for the question. They also note that the impression of presence uses the reader's sensibility to make them involved emotionally which can be achieved by focusing on details. Tweet (4) posted on 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2019 provides an example of this.

- (4) Did you know? The Amazon supports approximately 40,000 plant species, 427 mammal species, 1,294 bird species, 378 reptile species, 426 amphibian species and 3,000 species of fish. Protect this paradise >>  
<http://act.gp/2ZkRCh3>

In this post Greenpeace asks whether the reader is familiar with the different types of animal and plant species that live in the Amazon rainforest. As mentioned, the statement is formed into a question which, according to Connor and Gladkov (2004:268), makes the reader to look for the answer. By looking for the answer the reader can feel present in the event discussed and, in this case, place themselves in the situation of the Amazon rainforest and its living species. The post categorizes the different species and offers approximate amounts of them living in the rainforest. The numbers provided work as details that involve the audience's sensibility and therefore arouse emotions. By making it clear that the Amazon supports many kinds of plants and animals, Greenpeace creates an impression of presence in the audience and makes them conscious about the matter. It can be assumed that a high number of the audience Greenpeace aims to persuade has never actually visited the Amazon rainforest but by providing these details the audience can feel as if they, in a way, are a part of the event. This can be appealing to especially those readers who find animal and plant protection important.



### 4.3 Charged Language

As suggested above by Bourse (2019), loaded words, or charged language usually aims to evoke emotions in the audience through negative connotations. That is, by, for example, using language that associates the reader to negative things or feelings such as annoyance or anger. By using words that are charged with negative emotions the writer strives to persuade the reader to take a relevant action because of the emotions they have been persuaded to experience (Connor & Gladkov 2004:269). Tweet (5) posted on 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 provides an example of this.

- (5) “It will be an unmanageable problem.” If we don’t take urgent climate action, our oceans will suffer, our planet will suffer, we will suffer. #ActOnClimate

In Tweet (5) the key term is the word “suffer”. In this post the word “we” refers to all the human population of the world. It suggests that if we, humans, are not taking urgent climate action we will suffer alongside with the oceans and the planet. The word suffer is therefore used to create negative connotations to the minds of the audience. These connotations can be assumed to be about, for example, pain or death depending on the personal attributes of the reader. As mentioned before, the aim of this study is not to investigate what type of emotions are evoked in the audience, but in terms of understanding this tweet, it is necessary to provide some examples. Therefore, the relevant emotion that Greenpeace aims to arouse in the reader can, for example, be anything between fear and anger. What this means is that by making the audience fearful or angry about the situation, Greenpeace aims to persuade the audience to act on the climate crisis based on this emotion.

Another example of charged language is presented in Tweet (6) posted on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019. As Connor & Gladkov (2004:269) explained, the emotions the writer desires to evoke in the audience, are the ones that influence their responses and lead to relevant action. However, it is not necessarily only negative connotations that the use of charged language creates. As Camp (2007:6) argued, persuasive writing aims to achieve the desired response in the audience through both positive and negative resources. This also became apparent in Bourse’s (2019) research. Thus, Tweet (6) introduces how positive connotations may affect the audience’s responses.

- (6) It's hard to count all the protests that have taken over our streets this year. Together we are stronger, and we will not be ignored. Let's never give up the fight and make 2020 a year of action - a year of hope, and a year of change. Join us in #TheAgeOfProtest

This tweet was posted towards the end of the year 2019 and one of its main actions is to keep the target audience engaged also in the upcoming year. It states that ‘‘together we are stronger’’, referring to Greenpeace as an organization and to the audience. This is most likely used to create positive connotations about power and togetherness and how by acting against the climate crisis as a group it is possible to make a change. Greenpeace then changes the point of view into the future by explaining how together with the audience they can also make the upcoming year 2020 a year of ‘‘action’’, ‘‘hope’’ and ‘‘change’’. The word hope, for example, is often associated with positive outcomes such as better future or happiness. The word change, in this sense, indicates to making a difference. By using these terms, Greenpeace therefore aims to persuade the audience by arousing positive emotional responses in them. This finding then proves that the word choices Greenpeace makes on their Twitter account are not just descriptive but also aspire to create a deeper link between the reader and the word used.

#### 4.4 Rhetorical Question

Questions are not only used to create a vivid picture in the mind of the audience. Rhetorical question, as defined by Halmari (2005:116), is a question that engages the audience but does not expect an answer. Therefore, as opposed to creating a vivid picture, rhetorical questions are not requiring the audience to look for the answer. In fact, often the answer is provided by the writer themselves in order to appear more persuasive and lead the audience to a mutual agreement (ibid.). Thus, these types of questions can be used as an individual emotion evoking appeals as Nelzen (2017) suggests in her research. Nelzen's view of rhetorical questions as a feature of *pathos* was applied to the present study based on their high prevalence on the data. Tweet (7) provides a simple example of this.

- (7) And what are you doing on September 27th? Also going on strike for the climate #ClimateStrike

In this example, Greenpeace asks a rhetorical question ‘‘what are you doing on September 27<sup>th</sup>?’’ and directly after provides an answer ‘‘also going on strike for the climate’’. The aim of this question is to specifically persuade the audience to agree with the statement and evoke an emotional response which leads them to be part of the strike. The use of the word ‘‘also’’ may be used to indicate that in addition to Greenpeace, other people will be a part of the climate strike which possibly makes the reader feel that they as well need to participate in order to belong to the group. Tweet (8) presents another example of a rhetorical question.

(8) People know we're in a #climateemergency and they know who to blame: @BP\_plc, @Exxon, @OMV, @Chevron #PeopleVsOil Are you on board?

This post aims to evoke a different kind of emotional response in the audience. The rhetorical question ‘‘are you on board?’’ refers to a fight against the climate emergency of which Greenpeace puts the blame on the four companies that all are familiar producers of oil and gas. This can be concluded from the hashtag on the tweet. The main purposes of this post can be assumed to be to engage the audience to agree with Greenpeace about the commitment of these oil companies but also to construct negative emotions towards them. By directly blaming certain companies of the climate emergency, Greenpeace transmits this idea to the readers which conducts them to create negative connotations about their action. By giving a specific reason for the climate emergency, Greenpeace may also increase the positive images and connotations that the audience has about them as an organization. Engaging the audience this way therefore increases the persuasiveness of the post.

## **5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study was to investigate if the non-profit organization Greenpeace uses emotional appeals on their Twitter account for persuasive purposes. Additionally, the study aimed to examine what type of persuasive linguistic features evoke emotions in the appeals used. This was achieved by finding answers for the following questions: *What type of emotional appeals are used to persuade the target audience?* and *What kind of linguistic features evoke emotions in*

*these appeals?* To understand the persuasiveness of Greenpeace's twitter posts, the three modes of persuasion by Aristotle were introduced and separated from each other due to the focus of the study being on the emotive use of language. Based on this, the appeal *pathos* was the only mode of persuasion considered in this research.

The methodology for this study was drawn from the typologies of two previous studies that examined the persuasiveness of non-profit organizations and their language use through Aristotle's appeals. Following the framework by Connor and Gladkov (2004), the emotional appeals further investigated in this study were Appealing to the audience's views, Vivid picture and Charged language. The data analyzed indicated that the operational system created by Connor and Gladkov was a suitable framework for also investigating the emotional appeals in non-profit organization's persuasive language use on Twitter. This may base on the fact that even if their study examined the persuasive use of the appeals in non-profit fundraising mail letters, the main purposes for non-profit organizations are usually to engage the audience to act on certain matters or give donations. Based on the data, it can be argued that one of Greenpeace's main aim for persuading their audience is to engage them to act on different types of environmental matters. The similarity between these aspired actions suggests that the persuasive techniques used are very similar and thus their categorization was eligible with this study. However, the data also showed many instances of rhetorical questions and because Connor and Gladkov (2004) did not acknowledge this as an appeal, it was adapted from the study conducted by Nelzen (2017).

In the process of data analysis, it became apparent that Greenpeace often uses arguments that take a form of a question on their Twitter posts when aiming to evoke emotions in their audience. In Connor and Gladkov's (2004) framework questions were used for creating a vivid picture in the mind of the audience but it was noted that some of the questions in Greenpeace's Twitter posts did not match with this categorization. Therefore, the appeal of Rhetorical question was, as opposed to Connor and Gladkov (2004), identified as an individual appeal. In fact, Rhetorical questions were, together with Appealing to the audience's views, the most frequently found appeal in the data. However, the data presented that, resembling the framework of Connor and Gladkov (2004), Greenpeace also uses questions for creating a vivid picture in the mind of the audience which is why it can be argued that arguments that take a form of a question are an effective emotion evoking feature in persuasive communication. It can be assumed that questions,

for example, engage the audience and channel their thinking or behavior, and therefore arouse emotional responses in them which can be the reason for their high prevalence on the data.

The most frequently found appeal in the data, appealing to the audience's views, aims to affect the values and beliefs of the audience. The reason for the high prevalence of the appeal in the data may be because non-profit organizations usually operate through donations and the engagement of the audience which suggests that the values of the organization and their target audience, which in this case was Greenpeace's Twitter followers, align with each other.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the audience members who do not share the values presented by Greenpeace would not follow them on Twitter. Based on the findings, appealing to the audience's emotions through their values seems to be an effective way to engage them to act on certain matters and therefore be persuaded.

What also became apparent from the data was that it included many features that effective persuasive writing uses. It became clear that Greenpeace tried to build a connection between themselves and the reader by, for example, showing that they are familiar with their audience. Many of the posts were also written with an explicit goal in mind through which the audience was being engaged and thus persuaded. Data showed that these types of features of persuasive writing were, for example, achieved through word choices Greenpeace made in the posts. For example, the aspired emotional responses were channeled through arousing both positive and negative connotations which lead the audience to behave or feel a certain way. The appeal Charged language, for example, provided multiple instances of the word choices and how they were used for influencing the emotional responses in the audience. These types of communicative acts are usually intentional which, according to Stiff and Mongeau (2003), make them persuasive.

The range of appeals recognized in the data suggests that emotional appeals are often used by Greenpeace. This is also supported by the findings of Nelzen (2017) which showed that *pathos* was the most frequently used appeal not only in comparison between all four non-profit organizations examined but also in Greenpeace's own social media accounts (Nelzen 2017:18). In her study, Nelzen found out that non-profit organizations seem to struggle using more than one appeal in their social media posts due to the character limitations. As this study did not look for instances of *ethos* and *pathos*, the results are not comparable when it comes to using the three modes of persuasion. However, in the present study it was noted that Greenpeace occasionally

uses multiple emotion evoking appeals in one post. For example, there was instances of Rhetorical question and Charged language appearing in the same post. This may enhance the emotional responses experienced by the audience and thus make the post even more persuasive.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that Greenpeace in fact aims to arouse emotions and emotional responses in their audience by using emotional appeals in their writing and therefore it can also be argued that the language use of Greenpeace's Twitter account can be considered persuasive.

As suggestions for further research, a study that examines what kind of emotions are evoked in the target audience could be conducted. This could, for example, be achieved by creating a survey in which the audience could describe the emotions the posts evoke in them. Another suggestion could be including the other features besides textual aspects in the research. It could be studied whether, for example, the images that Greenpeace posts on their Twitter account also affect the emotional responses of the audience. In this research the focus was on the language use and its effect on evoking emotions and therefore the images were not considered in this study. For further research, these aspects could, for example, be combined and their joint significance for emotional responses could be studied.

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