



## Handling Questions and Objections Affects Audience Judgments of Speakers

John A. Daly & Madeleine H. Redlick

**To cite this article:** John A. Daly & Madeleine H. Redlick (2016) Handling Questions and Objections Affects Audience Judgments of Speakers, *Communication Education*, 65:2, 164-181, DOI: [10.1080/03634523.2015.1081958](https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2015.1081958)

**To link to this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2015.1081958>



Published online: 15 Sep 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 150



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Handling Questions and Objections Affects Audience Judgments of Speakers

John A. Daly & Madeleine H. Redlick

*Listeners evaluate well-delivered presentations more positively than those that are poorly delivered. In today's world, presenters often face challenging questions and objections from listeners during or after their presentations. Surprisingly, while there are a number of theoretical reasons to anticipate that how presenters respond to objections and questions will affect listeners' evaluations of speakers, little research has examined this. In two studies, we find that how presenters respond to questions and objections affects audience members' evaluations of speakers as much or more than the quality of delivery of the presentation.*

*Keywords:* Presentations; Questions; Objections; Public Speaking

## Introduction

In April of 2004, President George Bush opened an evening press conference with a statement and, following the statement, invited questions. One reporter asked Bush about his biggest mistake as President. Bush spent the next few minutes stumbling for an answer.

I wish you'd have given me this written question ahead of time so I could plan for it ... I'm sure historians will look back and say, gosh, he could've done it better this way or that way. You know, I just—I'm sure something will pop into my head here in the midst of this press conference, with all the pressure of trying to come up with answer, but it hadn't yet ... I don't want to sound like I've made no mistakes ... perhaps I'm not as quick on my feet as I should be in coming up with one ...

Bush's near inability to respond to this question was the lead story on the news the following morning. His fumble received more attention in many media outlets than did his formal statement. Bush is not alone in his struggle. There are many examples

---

John A. Daly and Madeleine H. Redlick are at The University of Texas at Austin. Correspondence to: Madeleine H. Redlick, Department of Communication Studies, The University of Texas at Austin, 2504A Whitis Avenue, CMA 7.114, Austin, TX 78712-0115, U.S.A. Email: [mredlick@utexas.edu](mailto:mredlick@utexas.edu).

of speakers botching answers to questions or weakly responding to objections in the boardroom, in the classroom, or on the podium. What are the consequences for speakers of poorly handling a challenge during or after presentations? In this article, we address this question.

Over the centuries, the nature of presentations has changed (Cohen, 1986; Gherke & Keith, 2014; Sproule, 2012). Generations ago, speakers would declaim and, when finished, sit down to what they hoped would be rapturous applause. Over time, it became more appropriate for audiences to ask and speakers to answer questions. Often, these questions were prepared and politely submitted at the close of presentations. Today, with the exception of very formal presentations, there are almost always questions and often challenging objections raised when speakers finish. Indeed, in many settings, speakers are continually interrupted by questions (e.g., “I’ve already looked at your slides. Just got a few questions.”). Legal lore tells us that attorneys typically have less than a minute to present to the Supreme Court before being interrupted by a Justice with a challenge. From then on the oral argument before the Court becomes all questions and answers. Traditionally, the British House of Commons features an often grueling weekly session known as “Prime Minister’s Questions” where members of the House quiz the Prime Minister on policy issues. Indeed, the U.K. has taken the “Question Time” concept and created an entire BBC show of the same name. It is notorious for embarrassing public officials. As Toby Young (2015) of *The Spectator* says, “There are no opportunities for glory [on the show] but plenty for embarrassment. The most you can hope for is to get through in one piece.” It is fair to say that questions, and often objections, are a major part of many presentations today.

In this article, we examine how effectively answering questions and responding to objections affect listeners’ evaluations of speakers. We conduct two studies examining the evaluative consequences of doing a good or poor job responding to challenges in the context of presentations. We further compare the relative importance of the quality of speakers’ delivery and their ability to handle challenges on audience members’ judgments of the credibility of those speakers.

## Review of Literature

While public speaking texts are filled with intuitively reasonable advice, there is surprisingly little empirical work on what makes a successful presenter. The work that has been done often examines variables that affect audience members’ evaluations of speakers (e.g., Bowers, 1965; Holladay & Coombs, 1994). These studies have examined disfluencies (Carpenter, 2012), disorganization of thoughts (McCroskey & Mehrley, 1969), gaze (Wagner, 2013), smiling, body movement (Hall, Coats, & LeBeau, 2005), and vocal pitch (Tusing & Dillard, 2000), among others. Some work has gone further and contrasted the relative impact of delivery and content on audience members’ evaluations of speakers. Holladay and Coombs (1994), for instance, found that both aspects of a presentation individually predicted ratings of speakers. Delivery, though, accounted for far more of the variability in ratings than content.

The importance of effectively answering questions in shaping listeners' evaluative judgments of the responder has been demonstrated in a variety of different scholarly areas other than oral presentations. In legal trials, there is clear relationship between how witnesses answer questions and jurors' perceptions of their credibility (Cramer, Brodsky, & DeCoster, 2009; Ruva & Bryant, 2004). Work on social media finds that the quality of answers to questions from users affects the credibility of websites (Jeon & Rieh, 2013). In health care settings, the willingness and ability of physicians to effectively answer patients' questions are correlated with their perceived competence (Thom, 2001). Similarly, the ability to handle objections is a vital part of sales effectiveness (Clark, Drew, & Pinch, 1994; Johike, 2006) and, not surprisingly, salespeople who more effectively respond to customers objections receive stronger evaluations (Campbell, Davis, & Skinner, 2006). In political settings, politicians' skill in responding to questions and challenges is positively related to people's perceptions of those politicians (Davis & Holtgraves, 1984).

The results of the studies above lead us to argue that the ability of speakers to capably respond to challenges will affect listeners' judgments of them. Aside from prior empirical work, there are conceptual reasons for anticipating such a link.

Pinto's (2007) discourse analytic work points towards a conceptualization of a speaker's burden of rejoinder in oral exchanges. Pinto, drawing from Kauffeld's (1998) Gricean framework, suggests that conversationally, speakers have an obligation to answer objections to their proposal. To be a good conversational partner, speakers must be prepared to effectively respond to challenges, whether they are questions or objections. More broadly, Grice (1975), along with others, argues that people presume a meaningful relationship between questions and responses. Even when a response is, on its face, nonresponsive, participants in the dialogue will attempt to figure out how it might be responsive. When they are unable to find a way to relate the response to what has been asked, their evaluation of the interaction and conversational partner is more negative (Davis & Holtgraves, 1984).

A more philosophical approach is Walton's (2006) notion of the examination dialogue. Drawing from Aristotle (e.g., *On Sophistical Refutations*) and others (e.g., Anaximenes of Lampsacus' *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*), Walton argues that dialogic examination has two functions: (1) extracting information and then (2) testing the reliability of that information to judge its plausibility. Communicators, when drawn into examination dialogues, must answer questions about their expertise, evidence, consistency, and reliability. Poorly answered questions raise concerns about communicators' biases, trust, and conscientiousness. If speakers fumble their responses to challenges, questioners will doubt their expertise and reliability.

Finally, our conceptual argument about the importance of effectively responding to challenges comes from the confidence heuristic model (Price & Stone, 2004). Drawing from O'Barr's (1982) work in legal environments as well as Ames and Flynn's (2007) research on perceptions of leadership and assertiveness, the model suggests that the confidence with which people deliver oral messages affects an observer's judgment of those people's competence. While there is good evidence for the confidence

heuristic in presentations, it has not been applied to how speakers handle questions and objections.

Given previous research, as well as various conceptual arguments about the importance of delivery in shaping audience members judgments of speakers, we formed our first hypothesis:

H1: Speakers who deliver their presentations well are evaluated more positively than those who exhibit poor delivery.

The only study that addresses the role of question-handling by speakers was conducted by Ragsdale and Mikels (1975) more than 40 years ago. They found that a speaker who effectively answered questions after making a presentation was seen as more credible than one who failed to effectively respond. In line with that finding, we offered a second hypothesis:

H2: Speakers who respond effectively to questions and objections are evaluated more positively than speakers who fumble their responses.

Our project differs from Ragsdale and Mikels in that we varied both the quality of the speaker's presentation as well as the quality of how the speaker responds to challenges. This provides us an opportunity to discover the relative importance of both speech quality and questioning-handling quality. Daly (2012) argues that "the true measure of [speakers'] competency is not how they present their ideas. It is how well they handle what follows." (p. 151). This suggestion led us to explore the relative impact of delivery quality and the ability of speakers to handle challenges on listeners' evaluations of speakers. Thus, we advanced one research question:

RQ1: Will the quality of a speaker's delivery or the quality of how the speaker responds to questions and objections matter more in audiences' evaluations of the speaker?

## Study One

### *Methods*

#### *Participants*

One hundred and thirty three people participated in Study One. They were drawn from Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk, a technology that allows people to participate in research studies in exchange for small monetary rewards (in this study, \$0.50). Mechanical Turk samples have been found to be more diverse, yet equally reliable as traditional Internet and American college samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The mean age of the sample was 39.4 (range = 20–70). Participants were 52% female and 48% male.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Stimuli*

Videos were created where a senior graduate student delivered two persuasive speeches varying only in their delivery quality.<sup>2</sup> The speech argued for an increase in tuition at a specific university (The University of Texas at Austin). The arguments

in both presentations were identical. What varied were delivery variables such as stammering, speech rate, eye contact, excessive use of note cards, awkward pauses, and postural shifts. The length of each speech was approximately 5 minutes. Two videos were then made where the same speaker responded to questions and objections about the presentation. In the low-quality condition, the speaker was rude in responding (scowling, throwing up hands), evasive (challenging the validity of the question rather than responding to it, e.g., “Um, sure, I guess ... that wasn’t really the focus of the speech,” and “it seems obvious to me”), and used many verbal disfluencies. In the high-quality condition, the speaker did the opposite. The questions asked by audience members (participants in the study only saw the back of heads of audience members) were identical in both conditions. The videos were then edited together to form four conditions: (1) low-quality speech, low-quality objection-handling, (2) low-quality speech, high-quality objection-handling, (3) high-quality speech, low-quality objection-handling, and (4) high-quality speech, high-quality objection-handling. The length of each speech plus the question portion was approximately 6.5 minutes.

### *Measures*

After watching one of the four conditions participants rated the speaker using three measures. The scales were coded so that higher values represented more positive evaluations of the speaker on a given dimension.

*Credibility.* Source credibility was measured using McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) semantic differential scale. The scale has been successfully employed in communication research to assess credibility in multiple contexts, including classrooms, workplaces, and interpersonal relations (Graham, 2011). The measure includes 12 items, split between two six-item subscales. The subscales independently assess perceived source competence and perceived source trustworthiness. All items in the scale are preceded by the stem, “Please indicate your impressions of the speaker by choosing the appropriate number between the pairs of adjectives below. The closer the number is to an adjective, the more certain you are of your evaluation.” Example items from the source competence subscale included “intelligent/unintelligent,” (reverse coded) “informed/uninformed” (reverse coded) and “incompetent/competent.” Example items from the trustworthiness subscale included “honest/dishonest,” (reverse coded) “untrustworthy/trustworthy,” and “phony/genuine.” The scale was found to be highly reliable in this study (source credibility—competence:  $\alpha = .87$ ; source credibility—trustworthiness:  $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Persuasiveness.* Participants also rated the speaker using a five-item measure of persuasiveness (Boster, Kotowski, Andrews, & Serota, 2011). The Likert type scale was chosen for both its brevity and its demonstrated ability to assess persuasiveness separately from other related speaker characteristics. Example items included “The speaker was good at thinking of multiple ways to explain his position on the issue,” and “More often than not, I think the speaker would be able to convince others of their position during an argument.” The scale was reliable in this study ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Argument strength.* Participants also completed a nine-item Likert type measure of argument strength (Zhao, Strasser, Lerman, & Fishbein, 2011) which was used as a manipulation check. This scale was chosen for its relative simplicity (when compared with traditional thought-listing procedures used to assess argument strength) and strong internal consistency (Zhao et al., 2011). Example items from this scale included “The speaker gives strong reasons for raising tuition,” “The speaker helped me feel confident about raising tuition,” and “The speaker gave reasons for increasing tuition that are believable.” Reliability of this scale was high ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

#### *Analysis of the data*

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the data related to judgments of the speaker (trust, competency, persuasiveness) from Study One was completed to investigate the dimensionality of our questionnaire. It was possible that the three measures all tapped into the same underlying dimension. If so, it would be appropriate to combine them to form a single index. Prior to the EFA, the data were checked for suitability for factor analysis using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .91, which exceeds the minimum required level of .60 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001), and the Bartlett test for sphericity was significant:  $\chi^2(136) = 1781.73, p < .001$ .

Next, a principal-component analysis was undertaken, utilizing an oblique promax rotation. The analysis suggested that three factors could be extracted, which cumulatively explained 73% of the variance. Only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained. An examination of the scree plot also suggested three distinct factors. The factors represented the three dependent variables (competence, trustworthiness, and persuasiveness). All items were retained.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Manipulation checks*

A pilot study was conducted to assess whether the high-quality speech was perceived more positively than the low-quality presentation. Using Mechanical Turk, 25 people were shown the strong-quality speech, while 26 saw the weaker speech. It was crucial for our study that the weak speech be evaluated less positively than the strong speech. The results of a series of one-tailed t-tests revealed this to be true. The strong speech was seen as more credible on the dimension of competence,  $t(49) = 4.72, p < .001, M_{\text{strong}} = 3.40, SD_{\text{strong}} = .69; M_{\text{weak}} = 2.55, SD_{\text{weak}} = .60$ , and more persuasive,  $t(49) = 3.72, p < .001, M_{\text{strong}} = 3.19, SD_{\text{strong}} = .76; M_{\text{weak}} = 2.30, SD_{\text{weak}} = .99$ , than the weaker speech. Perceptions of the speaker’s credibility on the dimension of trustworthiness did not differ significantly across conditions:  $t(49) = .12, ns, M_{\text{strong}} = 2.98, SD_{\text{strong}} = .72; M_{\text{weak}} = 2.96, SD_{\text{weak}} = .56$ . Importantly, participants saw no difference in argument strength between the weak and strong speeches:  $t(47) = 0.19, ns, M_{\text{strong}} = 2.54, SD_{\text{strong}} = 1.00; M_{\text{weak}} = 2.49, SD_{\text{weak}} = .86$ .

A second pilot study was conducted using Mechanical Turk to assess whether people perceived the objection-handling portion of the presentations differently. It was crucial to the study to have differences between the good and poor objection-handling. Participants were told that they would be viewing a speaker responding to

questions about a proposed raise in tuition. Eighty-three people participated via Mechanical Turk. Forty-three participants viewed the strong objection-handling, while 40 watched the weak objection-handling. The only scene participants saw was either the good or bad objection-handling portion. As expected, there was a significant difference between the poor and good objection-handling on ratings of speaker competence,  $t(81) = 6.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $M_{\text{good}} = 3.41$ ,  $SD_{\text{good}} = 1.03$ ;  $M_{\text{bad}} = 2.06$ ,  $SD_{\text{bad}} = .82$ , trustworthiness,  $t(79) = 1.85$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $M_{\text{good}} = 2.64$ ,  $SD_{\text{good}} = .95$ ;  $M_{\text{bad}} = 2.29$ ,  $SD_{\text{bad}} = .72$ , and persuasiveness,  $t(80) = 3.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $M_{\text{good}} = 2.43$ ,  $SD_{\text{good}} = 1.08$ ;  $M_{\text{bad}} = 1.65$ ,  $SD_{\text{bad}} = .85$ . Participants also saw a significant difference between the two conditions on argument strength:  $t(76) = 2.64$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $M_{\text{good}} = 2.36$ ,  $SD_{\text{good}} = .99$ ;  $M_{\text{bad}} = 1.85$ ,  $SD_{\text{bad}} = .70$ .

### Results

A two-way multivariate analysis of variance was calculated using competence, trustworthiness, and persuasiveness as dependent measures. The independent variables were the quality of the speech (weak, strong) and the question and objection-handling (low, high). There was a significant main effect for the quality of the speech:  $F(3, 125) = 5.29$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .11$ . There was also a significant main effect for objection-handling:  $F(3, 125) = 13.70$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .25$ . H1 and H2 received initial support. In regards to RQ1, partial  $\eta^2$  values suggested that question and objection handling played a larger role in determining audiences' evaluations of a speaker than delivery quality. As a follow-up, we computed a series of two-by-two analyses of variance for each of the three dependent measures.

#### Competence

The two-by-two analysis of variance for competence revealed a significant main effect for question and objection handling:  $F(1, 129) = 25.48$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .17$ . There was also a main effect for speech quality:  $F(1, 129) = 5.24$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ . The interaction was nonsignificant. Participants who viewed the strong objection-handling presentation saw the speaker as more competent ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = .88$ ) than those who viewed the weak objection-handling presentation ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = .85$ ). Participants who viewed the strong delivery presentation also saw the speaker as more competent ( $M = 3.04$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) than those who viewed the weak delivery presentation ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). H1 and H2 were supported. In regards to RQ1, partial  $\eta^2$  values suggested that the quality of question and objection handling had a larger effect on audiences' evaluation of a speaker's competence than did the quality of that speaker's delivery.

#### Trustworthiness

The two-by-two analysis of variance for speaker credibility on the dimension of trustworthiness revealed a significant main effect for question and objection handling:  $F(1, 128) = 10.09$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .07$ . The main effects for speech quality and the interaction were nonsignificant. Participants who viewed the strong objection-handling presentation saw the speaker as more trustworthy ( $M = 3.04$ ,  $SD = .98$ ) than those

who viewed the weak objection-handling presentation ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). H1 was not supported, while H2 was supported. In regard to RQ1, the nonsignificant effect of presentation delivery quality on trustworthiness, as compared with the significant effect for question and objection handling, demonstrates the relative value of question and objection handling compared with presentation delivery quality.

### *Speaker Persuasiveness*

The two-by-two analysis of variance for speaker persuasiveness revealed a significant main effect for question and objection handling:  $F(1, 128) = 34.00$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .21$ . The main effect for speech quality was also significant:  $F(1, 128) = 4.72$ ,  $p < .04$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ , while the interaction was nonsignificant. Participants who viewed the strong objection-handling presentation saw the speaker as more persuasive ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) than those who viewed the weak objection-handling presentation ( $M = 2.06$ ,  $SD = .96$ ). Participants who viewed the strong delivery presentation also saw the speaker as more persuasive ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) than those who viewed the weaker presentation in terms of delivery ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = .99$ ). H1 and H2 were both supported. In regard to RQ1, partial  $\eta^2$  values suggested that question and objection-handling played a larger role than did the quality of the speech in determining audiences' evaluations of a speaker's persuasiveness.

### *Discussion*

In Study One, we hypothesized that audiences judge speakers differently based on the quality of their delivery as well as on the way speakers handle questions and objections that follow their presentations. We found that to be largely true. There were significant differences between weak and strong delivery as well as between poor and strong handling of objections and questions.

In addition, we wanted to explore what counted more in terms of audience members' evaluation of speakers: delivery or the handling of questions and objections. When audiences viewed not only the formal presentation but also the speaker handling questions and objections poorly or well, the effect of delivery faded and the effect for question and objection handling was highly significant across measures. The results highlight the vital importance of handling questions and objections in shaping people's judgments of speakers. Regardless of the quality of delivery, if speakers are unable to handle questions and objections well, audiences evaluate them less positively. In the cases where the quality of delivery significantly affected judgments (perceived persuasiveness and competence), the amount of variance accounted for by delivery quality was substantially less than the amount of variance accounted for by question and objection handling.<sup>4</sup>

A competing explanation for our results might be a recency effect. Participants saw objection-handling after viewing the presentation. But in this case, the method we used reflected reality. One cannot easily imagine a situation where speakers would respond to questions and objections prior to making their presentations.

One reason why delivery quality mattered less than objection-handling may be that the topic of the presentation was not especially involving for audience members. The topic was raising tuition at one university (The University of Texas at Austin). The sample for Study One was comprised of adults, and the vast majority of those adults were not living in the state that was referenced in the speech. There is a good amount of research suggesting that the degree to which people are involved in a topic affects how they process information about the topic (Park et al., 2007; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Thus, we conducted a second study incorporating audience involvement. In this study three variables were manipulated: delivery quality, question and objection handling, and audience involvement.

## Study Two

### *Hypotheses*

In Study Two, we added a second research question:

RQ2: Will involvement interact with either or both delivery quality and/or objection-handling to affect judgments of speakers?

### *Methods*

#### *Participants*

Participants in the study were 455 undergraduates enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin. Students were given extra credit points in communication skills classes for participating. The mean age of the sample was 20.0 (range = 17–35). Participants in Study Two were 79% female and 20% male (a few participants failed to report their gender).<sup>5</sup> The measures of source credibility for competence ( $\alpha = .88$ ), trustworthiness ( $\alpha = .88$ ), and speaker persuasiveness ( $\alpha = .92$ ) were all reliable.

#### *Stimuli*

The second study used a two-by-two-by-two design: quality of presentation, question handling, and participant involvement. The dependent variables were the same as in the first study. In addition, we measured people's attitude about the topic.

As a first step, we created different levels of involvement by varying the school that was described in the speech. In the high-involvement condition, participants viewed one of the four conditions used in the first study. That speech used The University of Texas as the place where tuition ought to increase. The University of Texas is the school at which all participants in Study Two were currently enrolled. Four additional conditions were created that referenced the University of Illinois—a school that none of the participants attended. This manipulation of home school versus another school has traditionally been used to enhance involvement (Petty et al., 1981). In addition, the speeches about The University of Texas suggested tuition increases ought to start next

year while the speeches about The University of Illinois suggested tuition increases beginning 10 years hence. This was a second way to manipulate involvement.

The arguments in both presentations were identical. As in the first study, what varied were delivery variables and how the speaker responded to questions and objections. The same speaker was used in all conditions. As a manipulation check we asked participants in the project to respond to three questions tapping involvement (“The issues the speaker talked about is important to me,” “The issue the speaker talked about is relevant to my life,” “The issue the speaker talked about matters to me”). Using a composite of these items, the results suggest the manipulation was effective:  $t(452) = -3.41, p < .001, M_{UTexas} = 3.91, M_{U\text{Illinois}} = 3.61$ .

### Results

A three-way multivariate analysis of variance was calculated using perceived competence, trustworthiness, and persuasiveness as dependent measures. The independent variables were involvement (low, high), the strength of the speech (weak, strong) and the question and objection handling (low, high). There was a significant main effect for the quality of the speech,  $F(3, 442) = 36.14, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .20$ , for objection-handling,  $F(3, 442) = 13.43, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .08$ , and for involvement,  $F(3, 442) = 3.72, p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ . H1 and H2 received initial support. In regards to RQ1, partial  $\eta^2$  values suggested that the quality of the speech played a larger role than question and objection handling in audiences’ evaluations of a speaker. In regards to RQ2, there were no significant interactions between the three independent variables. As a follow-up we computed two-by-two-by-two analyses of variance for each of the three dependent measures.

### Competence

The two-by-two-by-two analysis of variance for speaker credibility on the dimension of competence revealed a significant main effect for the quality of delivery,  $F(1, 447) = 89.56, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .17$ , question and objection handling,  $F(1, 447) = 36.04, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .08$ , and involvement,  $F(1, 447) = 6.12, p = .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ . There were no significant interactions. Participants who viewed the strong delivery presentation viewed the speaker as more competent ( $M = 3.33, SD = .83$ ) than those who viewed the weak delivery presentation ( $M = 2.65, SD = .77$ ). Participants who viewed the strong question and objection handling viewed the speaker as more competent ( $M = 3.21, SD = .83$ ) than those who viewed weak question and objection handling ( $M = 2.78, SD = .86$ ). Finally, participants who were in the low-involvement condition viewed the speaker as more competent ( $M = 3.09, SD = .92$ ) than those who viewed the high-involvement condition ( $M = 2.90, SD = .81$ ). All hypotheses were supported, and in addressing RQ1, partial  $\eta^2$  values pointed towards the quality of the speech having a larger effect on audiences’ evaluations of a speaker’s competence than question and objection handling.

*Trustworthiness*

The two-by-two-by-two analysis of variance for speaker credibility on the dimension of trustworthiness revealed a significant main effect for the quality of delivery,  $F(1, 444) = 18.66, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ , question and objection handling,  $F(1, 444) = 14.77, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ , and involvement,  $F(1, 444) = 11.18, p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ . There were no significant interactions. Participants who viewed the strong delivery presentation viewed the speaker as more trustworthy ( $M = 3.16, SD = .76$ ) than those who viewed the weak delivery presentation ( $M = 2.86, SD = .71$ ). Participants who viewed strong question and objection handling viewed the speaker as more trustworthy ( $M = 3.14, SD = .72$ ) than those who viewed weak question and objection handling ( $M = 2.89, SD = .76$ ). Finally, participants who were in the low-involvement condition viewed the speaker as more trustworthy ( $M = 3.13, SD = .76$ ) than those who were in the high-involvement condition ( $M = 2.90, SD = .72$ ). All hypotheses were supported. In regard to RQ1, the quality of the speech had a slightly greater impact than question and objection handling on audiences' evaluation of a speaker's trustworthiness.

*Speaker persuasiveness*

The two-by-two-by-two analysis of variance for speaker persuasiveness revealed a significant main effect for quality of delivery,  $F(1, 447) = 29.00, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ , question and objection handling,  $F(1, 447) = 23.00, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ , and involvement,  $F(1, 447) = 4.69, p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ . No interactions were significant. Participants who viewed the strong delivery presentation viewed the speaker as more persuasive ( $M = 2.72, SD = .92$ ) than those who viewed the weak delivery presentation ( $M = 2.27, SD = .91$ ). Participants who viewed strong question and objection handling viewed the speaker as more persuasive ( $M = 2.70, SD = .89$ ) than those who viewed weak question and objection handling ( $M = 2.30, SD = .95$ ). Finally, participants who were in the low-involvement condition viewed the speaker as more persuasive ( $M = 2.59, SD = .93$ ) than those who were in the high-involvement condition ( $M = 2.40, SD = .95$ ). All hypotheses were supported. In this case, when addressing RQ1, the quality of the speech had a slightly greater impact on audiences' evaluation of a speaker's persuasiveness than did question and objection handling.

*Discussion*

The second study reveals again a significant effect for how speakers handled objections. When speakers handled questions and objections well, they were evaluated more positively than those who fumbled questions and objections. This finding buttresses our notion that objection-handling is an important cue in evaluating speakers.

There were also significant effects for delivery quality. In Study One, though, delivery was relatively unimportant compared with objection and question handling. In the second study, delivery mattered as well as objection-handling. Why the difference between the two studies when it comes to delivery? One potential reason may be the differing nature of the two samples. Perhaps adults are more sensitive to

objection-handling than students. In Study Two, we had a significantly younger and more female sample than in the first study. In addition, all the participants in the second study were enrolled in communication classes where communication and presentation skills were regularly discussed. Since communication classes regularly emphasize the importance of delivery perhaps participants in the second study were more attuned to delivery differences than people in the first sample.

We entered this study suspecting that involvement might affect the impact of question handling on people's judgments of speakers. Participants in the low-involvement conditions felt the speaker was more competent, more trustworthy, and more persuasive than those in the high-involvement conditions. These findings are sensible given the research on message involvement. Less involved people are less analytic about messages they process. However, different than we expected, involvement did not interact with either the presentation quality or objection-handling.

### General Discussion

Self-help manuals as well as textbooks that discuss presentation skills often spend hundreds of pages describing how to effectively deliver eloquent, interesting, and persuasive speeches. On the other hand, little attention is spent discussing the place of audience challenges that arise during, or immediately after, presentations. This is surprising given how frequently questions are part of presentations today (Munch & Swasy, 1983).

In the two studies reported in this paper, we consistently find that audiences' evaluations of speakers are significantly and positively affected by how well speakers respond to questions and parry objections. In Study One, using a nonuniversity sample, we found that question and objection handling is significantly related to perceptions of speakers' competence, trustworthiness, and persuasiveness. The delivery of speeches had more modest effects on those ratings. In a second study, this time using college students enrolled in communication classes, we found that both the quality of speakers' delivery and their skills in handling questions and objections independently predicted audience members' evaluations.

Theoretically, our finding that effectively handling questions and objections leads to positive evaluations of speakers fits well within discourse analytic, philosophical, and confidence heuristic models. Each of these conceptual approaches suggests that speakers face an interactive requirement to confidently respond to questions and challenges and when they fail to accomplish this, they are negatively evaluated.

As with any project, there are clear limitations to these studies that suggest avenues for future work. The first few revolve around the stimuli we used. First, in this project, participants watched videos of the speech and the question-and-answer session that followed. In future research, it would be helpful to probe the feelings of actual audience members who are present in the room when the speech is delivered, and questions are asked or objections are raised. Perhaps the effect of poor handling of questions is amplified among audience members who actually asked questions. Second, the intra-audience effect (Hocking, Margreiter, & Hylton, 1977) suggests that members

of an audience may be swayed by the reactions of others in the audience. Being copresent with questioners might enhance the impact of good or bad handling of questions and objections. Our decision to use viewers and not actual audience members was to control the nature of the objections and questions. Third, in our studies, audience members did not know the speaker. Perhaps the relationship audience members have with a speaker would affect their judgments of the speaker. Audience members might be harsher than viewers in the evaluation of unknown speakers and more generous in their evaluations of familiar speakers. Fourth, in the current studies, questions and answers arose only after the presentation was completed. In many meetings speakers are, even in the middle of a thought, interrupted by listeners. In future work, it would be useful to discover the best strategies for handling interruptive questions. Finally, the rationale for this study was drawn, in part, from research relating confidence markers to perceived competence (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Cramer et al., 2009; O'Barr, 1982). That research suggests that the relationship between a speaker's confidence and his or her perceived competence is not linear. It is, rather, quadratic with both very low and very high confidence being associated with less positive evaluations. In the current project, we only manipulated two levels of each variable, so we were unable to determine whether a linear or nonlinear model was most appropriate. One could argue that speakers who make a few fumbles in responding to questions and objections may be more endearing to the audience. Alternatively, too many mistakes should result in negative evaluations. Research on the "pratfall" effect (Aronson, Willerman, & Floyd, 1966) hints that this relationship may be affected by the speaker's credibility.

In creating the stimuli, we did not systematically organize the sorts of questions and challenges the listener raised with the speaker. In future research, it would be helpful to systematically organize what people query speakers about, how people raise questions, as well as how they engage in follow-up questions; the notion of pursuit in conversational analysis is relevant here (Romaniuk, 2013). Similarly, how speakers respond to objections and questions merits attention. Zarefsky (2014), for instance, recently laid out some potential ways politicians avoid directly answering questions including, among others, changing the subject, modifying the relevant audience, reframing the argument, and using figures and tropes argumentatively.

Research may also explore the impact of how people respond to those raising challenges. For instance, in the current studies, we focused on listeners' evaluations of speakers. What about listeners' judgments of their peers who ask questions? Ross, Amabile, and Steinmetz (1977) demonstrated an attributional bias in the ways people judge questioner and respondent. Questioners are seen as more competent than those answering questions. They are seen this way because cognitively people fail to adjust to the role-conferred advantage that arises for questioners. Questioners can ask anything they like from all of their experiences and knowledge while respondents are restricted, in their answers, to the specific questions asked. Further, what do audience members think of people who ask good or bad questions? Asking questions is a performance. What about the number of questions? We could hypothesize, from the perspective of audience members, an inverted-U relationship between the number of

questions people asks and their peers' evaluations of them. The questioner who relentlessly asks questions may lose his or her credibility.

Finally, there are any number of practical questions that one encounters when teaching or coaching speakers that could be examined in future work. For example, should presenters leave some questions and objections unanswered so that they can, when questioned, offer well-prepared responses? This is what George Bernard Shaw practiced according to his biographer. Shaw, J.S. Collis says, felt that "a display of facts always impresses an audience during question-time in the same proportion as it bores them during lecture-time." (Ragsdale & Mikels, 1975, p. 302). Alternatively, should speakers engage in what Walton (2008) called proleptic argumentation where they answer, in their presentations, questions and challenges they presume will arise if not discussed? Doing this usurps the questioner's role in raising challenges. Walton describes four different methods speakers might use.

Another inquiry may be whether or not speakers should entertain questions at all. Even when one responds brilliantly to questions is there any advantage? Some speakers, in some settings, tell listeners at the start that there will be no questions. Is that a good idea? We actually have some preliminary data to explore this in the current study. Recollect that we had a control condition in the first study where participants only watched either the well or poorly delivered speech. They were never exposed to any questions or objections. We can compare audience reactions to the speech-only conditions with reactions to speeches where questions were handled well or poorly. That comparison can answer the question of whether there is any evaluative benefit for speakers who have good delivery to seek out and answer questions well.

Our data suggest that, for strong speakers, taking questions and objections may not be wise. When compared with just viewing a well-delivered presentation, viewing a well-delivered presentation followed by well-handled questions and objections does not produce a significant increase in perceptions of speaker credibility on the dimensions of competence or trustworthiness, or on persuasiveness: competence,  $t(83) = .23$ , *ns*; trustworthiness,  $t(83) = .62$ , *ns*; persuasiveness,  $t(83) = 1.08$ , *ns*.

However, there is a significant difference in perceptions of a speaker who gives a strong presentation and a speaker who gives a strong presentation followed by a poor handling of questions and objections: competence,  $t(85) = 3.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $M_{\text{speech}} = 3.55$ ,  $SD_{\text{speech}} = .77$ ,  $M_{\text{speechandquestions}} = 2.92$ ,  $SD_{\text{speechandquestions}} = .72$ ; trustworthiness,  $t(85) = 2.47$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $M_{\text{speech}} = 3.31$ ,  $SD_{\text{speech}} = .81$ ,  $M_{\text{speechandquestions}} = 2.91$ ,  $SD_{\text{speechandquestions}} = .65$ ; persuasiveness,  $t(85) = 3.09$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $M_{\text{speech}} = 3.03$ ,  $SD_{\text{speech}} = .92$ ,  $M_{\text{speechandquestions}} = 2.39$ ,  $SD_{\text{speechandquestions}} = .91$ . A speaker who handles questions poorly after delivering a good presentation received lower evaluations than speakers who just deliver a good speech with no questions. Thus, it appears that in cases when a speech is delivered well, there is no benefit to seeking questions and objections, and inviting questions and objections presents the risk of lowered evaluations of a speaker if the question and objections are handled poorly.

Speakers who give a poorly delivered speech, followed by poor handling of questions and objections, are perceived significantly less well than speakers who give just a poor speech: competence,  $t(83) = 3.16$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $M_{\text{speech}} = 2.92$ ,  $SD_{\text{speech}} = .72$ ,

$M_{\text{speechandquestions}} = 2.38$ ,  $SD_{\text{speechandquestions}} = .72$ ; trustworthiness,  $t(82) = 2.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $M_{\text{speech}} = 3.03$ ,  $SD_{\text{speech}} = .90$ ,  $M_{\text{speechandquestions}} = 2.62$ ,  $SD_{\text{speechandquestions}} = .75$ ; persuasiveness,  $t(83) = 2.78$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $M_{\text{speech}} = 2.58$ ,  $SD_{\text{speech}} = 1.06$ ,  $M_{\text{speechandquestions}} = 1.96$ ,  $SD_{\text{speechandquestions}} = .90$ . However, speakers who give a poor speech are not perceived significantly differently than their counterparts who give a poor speech, but manage to handle questions and objections well: competence:  $t(82) = .78$ , *ns*; trustworthiness:  $t(82) = .90$ , *ns*; persuasiveness:  $t(82) = .60$ , *ns*.

Thus, the advice to less skilled speakers is similar. While avoiding questions after a presentation may have deleterious effects of its own, inviting questions and objections still presents the risk of further damaging perceptions of a speaker's credibility, competence, and persuasiveness if that speaker is not able to respond to their interrogators well. If, by some chance, a speaker is able to recover from a poorly delivered speech and handle questions and objections with skill, it may be too late to produce much effect, as the audience's evaluation of that speaker is not meaningfully changed. Of course, these findings may be shaped by the nature of the experimental manipulation. People watching the presentation may not have anticipated that questions would follow. In the typical speaking event nowadays, though, questions are assumed to be part of the presentation experience. In that case, avoiding questions might have a more negative effect. Future research should explore this.

A third inquiry might focus on different pieces of advice speakers are often given. For instance, how should speakers respond when asked questions they are unable to answer? Admitting incompetence should have some negative evaluative consequences. Traditionally, speakers are told to admit their inability to answer but promise to follow-up with an answer. Is that the right advice? How direct should one be when answering questions? Should speakers use questions as a way of extending their arguments? How should speakers manage difficult questioners?

Perhaps most importantly, given the ubiquity and importance of many presentations and the amount of time spent coaching people on their presentations, it is surprising how little empirical research has been conducted on what makes an effective presentation. Questions are only one aspect of a typical presentation. Many other aspects deserve to be explored.

## Notes

- [1] There were no significant differences on any of the dependent measures due to gender.
- [2] These videos are available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/user/maddie9890/videos>
- [3] A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also conducted on the same data using the program Mplus. Consistent with the EFA, a three-factor model of trustworthiness, competence, and speaker persuasiveness was hypothesized. While the chi-square test of model fit was significant,  $\chi^2(111) = 182.68$ ,  $p < .001$ , other fit indices suggested that the model displayed good (SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .07) to excellent fit (TLI = .95, CFI = .96). The three-factor model was compared with a one-factor model using a chi-square difference test. The one-factor model resulted in a significant loss of fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 571.204$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The three-factor model was also compared with a bi-factor model. The bi-factor model also resulted in a significant loss of fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 86.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and so the three-factor model was chosen as the final model for this study.
- [4] After consulting the recent literature on effect sizes (e.g., Levine, Weber, Park, & Hullett, 2008; Morris & Fritz, 2013; Muthusamy, Levine, & Weber, 2009; Olejnik & Algina, 2000; Richardson,

2011), as well as expert sources in the field, we were unable to find an established test for comparing partial eta squared values. As such, the authors note that the partial eta squared values in this study should be compared against the traditional standards for small (.01), medium (.06), and large (.14) effect sizes, as set forth in Cohen (1988).

- [5] Males saw the speaker as significantly more persuasive than females:  $t(450) = 2.68, p < .01$ . There were no significant differences across sexes in perceptions of the speaker's competence or trustworthiness. There was a significant interaction between sex and speaker persuasiveness,  $F(3, 447) = 3.98, p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ , but no significant interaction between sex and competence or trustworthiness. We also computed Levene's test for equality of variances. It was nonsignificant, suggesting that the variance due to gender was comparable across conditions.

## References

- Ames, D. R., & Flynn, F. J. (2007). What breaks a leader: The curvilinear relation between assertiveness and leadership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*, 307–324. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.2.307
- Aronson, E., Willerman, B., & Floyd, J. (1966). The effect of a pratfall on increasing interpersonal attractiveness. *Psychonomic Science, 4*, 227–228.
- Boster, F. J., Kotowski, M. R., Andrews, K. R., & Serota, K. (2011). Identifying influence: Development and validation of the connectivity, persuasiveness, and maven scales. *Journal of Communication, 61*, 178–196. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01531.x
- Bowers, J. W. (1965). The influence of delivery on attitudes towards concepts and speakers. *Speech Monographs, 32*, 154–158.
- Buhrmester, M., Kwang, T., & Gosling, S. D. (2011). Amazon's mechanical Turk: A new source of inexpensive, yet high-quality, data? *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*, 3–5. doi:10.1177/1745691610393980
- Campbell, K. S., Davis, L., & Skinner, L. (2006). Rapport management during the exploration phase of the salesperson–customer relationship. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, 26*, 359–370. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134260403
- Carpenter, C. J. (2012). A meta-analysis and an experiment investigating the effects of speaker disfluency on persuasion. *Western Journal of Communication, 76*, 552–569. doi:10.1080/10570314.2012.662307
- Clark, C., Drew, P., & Pinch, T. (1994). Managing customer objections' during real-life sales negotiations. *Discourse and Society, 5*, 437–462.
- Cohen, H. (1986). A historical perspective of performance in speech communication. In J. L. Palmer (Ed.), *Communication as performance* (pp. 3–9). Pomona, CA: The Gutenberg Galaxy, Inc.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Cramer, R. J., Brodsky, S. L., & DeCoster, J. (2009). Expert witness confidence and juror personality: Their impact on credibility and persuasion in the courtroom. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law, 37*, 63–74.
- Daly, J. (2012). *Advocacy: Championing ideas and influencing others*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Davis, D., & Holtgraves, T. (1984). Perceptions of unresponsive others: Attributions, attraction, understandability and memory of their utterances. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 20*, 383–408.
- Gherke, P. J., & Keith, W. M. (Eds.). (2014). *A century of communication studies: The unfinished conversation*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Graham, E. E. (2011). Measure of source credibility. In R. Rubin, A. Rubin, E. Graham, E. Perse, & D. Seibold (Eds.), *Communication research measures II* (pp. 201–205). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (Vol. 3, *Speech Acts*) (pp. 41–58). NY: Academic Press.

- Hall, J. A., Coats, E. J., & LeBeau, L. S. (2005). Nonverbal behavior and the vertical dimension of social relations: a meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *131*, 898–924. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.898
- Hocking, J. E., Margreiter, D. G., & Hylton, C. (1977). Intra-audience effects: A field test. *Human Communication Research*, *3*, 243–249.
- Holladay, S. J., & Coombs, W. T. (1994). Speaking of vision and visions being spoken: An exploration of the effects of content and delivery on perceptions of leader charisma. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *8*, 165–189.
- Jeon, G. Y., & Rieh, S. Y. (2013). Do you trust answers? Credibility judgments in social search using social Q&A sites. CSCW 2013 Workshops on Social Media Question Asking. Retrieved from [http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/events/cscw2013smqaworkshop/credibility\\_social\\_qanda.pdf](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/events/cscw2013smqaworkshop/credibility_social_qanda.pdf)
- Johike, M. C. (2006). Sales presentation skills and salesperson job performance. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, *21*, 311–319. doi:10.1108/08858620610681614
- Kauffeld, F. J. (1998). Presumption and the distribution of argumentative burdens in acts of proposing and accusing. *Argumentation*, *12*, 245–266.
- Levine, T. R., Weber, R., Park, H. S., & Hullett, C. R. (2008). A communication researchers' guide to null hypothesis significance testing and alternatives. *Human Communication Research*, *34*, 188–209.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Mehrley, R. S. (1969). The effects of disorganization and nonfluency on attitude change and source credibility. *Speech Monographs*, *36*, 13–21.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Teven, J. J. (1999). Goodwill: A reexamination of the construct and its measurement. *Communication Monographs*, *66*, 90–103. doi:10.1080/03637759909376464
- Morris, P. E., & Fritz, C. O. (2013). Effect sizes in memory research. *Memory*, *21*, 832–842. doi:10.1080/09658211.2013.763984
- Munch, J. M., & Swasy, J. L. (1983). A conceptual view of questions and questioning in marketing communications. In R.P. Bagozzi & A.M. Tybout (Eds.), *Advances in consumer research* (Vol. 10, pp. 209–214). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.
- Muthusamy, N., Levine, T. R., & Weber, R. (2009). Scaring the already scared: Some problems with HIV/AIDS fear appeals in Namibia. *Journal of Communication*, *59*, 317–344. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01418.x
- O'Barr, W. M. (1982). *Linguistic evidence: Language, power, and strategy in the courtroom*. New York, NY: Pergamon.
- Olejnik, S., & Algina, J. (2000). Measures of effect size for comparative studies: Applications, interpretations, and limitations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *25*, 241–286. doi:10.1006/ceps.2000.1040
- Park, H. S., Levine, T. R., Kingsley-Westerman, C. Y., Orfgen, T., & Foregger, S. (2007). The effects of argument quality and involvement type on attitude formation and attitude change: A test of dual process and social judgment predictions. *Human Communication Research*, *33*, 81–102. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2007.00290.x
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Goldman, R. (1981). Personal involvement as a determinant of argument-based persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *41*, 847–855.
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Schumann, D. (1983). Central and peripheral routes to advertising effectiveness: The moderating role of involvement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *10*, 135–146.
- Pinto, R. C. (2007). Burdens of rejoinder. In R. V. Hansen & R. Pinto (Eds.), *Reason reclaimed* (pp. 75–88). Newport News, VA: Vale Press.
- Price, P. C., & Stone, E. R. (2004). Intuitive evaluation of likelihood judgment producers: Evidence for a confidence heuristic. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, *17*, 39–57. doi:10.1002/bdm.460
- Ragsdale, J. D., & Mikels, A. L. (1975). Effects of question periods on a speaker's credibility with a television audience. *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, *40*, 302–312.

- Richardson, J. T. (2011). Eta squared and partial eta squared as measures of effect size in educational research. *Educational Research Review*, 6, 135–147. doi:10.1016/j.edurev.2010.12.001
- Romaniuk, T. (2013). Pursuing answers to questions in broadcast journalism. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 46, 144–164. doi:10.1080/08351813.2013.780339
- Ross, L. D., Amabile, T. M., & Steinmetz, J. L. (1977). Social roles, social control, and biases in social perception processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 485–494.
- Ruva, C. L. & Bryant, J. B. (2004). The impact of age, speech style, and question form on perceptions of witness credibility and trial outcomes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34, 1919–1944. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb02593.x
- Sproule, J. M. (2012). Inventing public peaking: Rhetoric and the speech book, 1730–1930. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 15, 563–608.
- Tabachnik, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using multivariate statistics* (4th ed). New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Thom, D. H. (2001). Physician behaviors that predict patient trust. *Journal of Family Practice*, 50, 323–328.
- Tusing, K. J., & Dillard, J. P. (2000). The sounds of dominance. *Human Communication Research*, 26, 148–171. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2000.tb00754.x
- Wagner, T. R. (2013). The effects of speaker eye contact and gender on receivers' assessment of the speaker and the speech. *Ohio Communication Journal*, 51, 217–236.
- Walton, D. (2006). Examination dialogue: An argumentation framework for critically questioning an expert opinion. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38, 745–777. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2005.01.016
- Walton, D. (2008). Proleptic argumentation. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 44, 143–154.
- Young, T. (2015). My plan for question time: Mug up and fail anyway. *The Spectator*. Retrieved from <http://www.spectator.co.uk/life/status-anxiety/9460892/im-mugging-up-for-an-appearance-on-question-time/>
- Zarefsky, D. (2014). Strategic maneuvering in political argumentation. In D. Zarefsky (Ed.), *Rhetorical perspectives on argumentation: Selected essays by David Zarefsky* (pp. 87–101). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Zhao, X., Strasser, A., Cappella, J. N., Lerman, C., & Fishbein, M. (2011). A measure of perceived argument strength: Reliability and validity. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 5, 48–75. doi:10.1080/19312458.2010.547822