

## MASTER'S THESIS

### The argument structure of fund-raising texts

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**THE ARGUMENT STRUCTURE  
OF  
FUND-RAISING TEXTS**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the fundraising texts as a variety of hortatory discourse. Hortatory discourse attempts to influence the conduct. In the case of fund-raising texts, a reader is asked to become a donor and to make contributions. There is a belief that there must be a main or strong argument (or a "Thesis") supported by other arguments (Martin, 1989:16-17) as an important aspect for persuasion. Persuasion is "an attempt to move an audience to accept or identify with a particular point of view" (Rybacki and Rybacki, 2000:3). This study examines the argumentative elements that shape the genre of fundraising texts. In total 6 fundraising texts (i.e. 2 appeal letters and 4 leaflets) collected from charity organizations in Hong Kong are analyzed. A list of types of arguments (narrative-factual, causal, proposal and so on) is developed and then projected onto the discourse moves, i.e. *present problem*, *establish authority*, *issue command*, and *create motivation* developed by Longacre (1992:110). It is trusted that such a contrastive analysis will allow one to make visible how the effect of persuasion comes about, and to establish the particular characteristics of fund-raising texts as a genre.

The analysis from the 6 fundraising texts shows that there is not a major difference among the types of argument used in the data texts, though the frequency of usage may vary. The data also reveals that some particular types of arguments are found predominantly in certain discourse move(s). The overall analysis did yield the result that argumentative moves characterise in fund-raising texts as a unique genre for the intended purpose of persuasion, however these moves might not be arranged in strict canonical order or in a sequential manner.

## 論文摘要

本論文主要探討慈善機構募捐信件的鼓勵話語分析,鼓勵話語意思是"如何影響讀者的行爲"。文中的分析是根據六篇慈善機構中發出的募捐信件,其中兩篇為募捐信件,另四篇為募捐傳單。

本論文對於慈善募捐信件的話語作出了二大方面的分析:(一)篇章結構分析,主要以論元類別為分析單位,及(二)以[鼓勵話語的步論]作其相對之比較,從而顯示如何達至游說的效果。

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