

# Persuasive Strategies Used in Religious Argumentative Discourse

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## Abstract

The main goal of persuasion is to influence, support, and modify people's thoughts and beliefs using linguistic signals (Diyi et al., 2019: 3621). The current study sets itself the task of answering the following questions: (1) What are the most prevalent quasilogical persuasive strategies implemented in religious argumentative discourse? (2) What are the most frequent presentational strategies used in this type of discourse? (3) What are the most common analogical strategies used in religious argumentative discourse? Consequently, the present paper aims at: (1) Identifying the most prevalent quasilogical persuasive strategies used in religious argumentative discourse. (2) Finding out the most frequent presentational strategies used in this type of discourse. (3) Pinpointing the most common analogical strategies implemented in religious argumentative discourse. Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that: (1) Rhetorical questions and cause clauses are the most common quasilogical persuasive strategies implemented in this discourse. (2) Imagery, repetition, and simile are the most frequent presentational strategies used in this type of discourse. (3) Words and proverbs of the ancestors and reminding the audience of the tested values are the most common analogical strategies implemented in religious argumentative discourse. To achieve the aims of this work and test its hypotheses, the paper follows Johnston's (2008) model of persuasion to arrive at the most prevalent persuasive strategies implemented in religious argumentative discourse. Findings of the analysis validate the above mentioned hypotheses.

**Keywords:** Persuasion, Religious discourse, Quasilogical strategies, Presentational strategies, Analogical strategies, Argumentative discourse

## 1. Introduction

The main focus of persuasion is typically on verbal cues intended to shape, support, and/or alter people's thoughts and views (Diyi et al., 2019: 3621). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, in spite of the various linguistic studies conducted on argumentative discourse, religious argumentative discourse has not been dealt with thoroughly and comprehensively. Therefore, this study sets itself the task of answering the following questions: (1) What are the most prevalent quasilogical persuasive strategies and techniques implemented in religious argumentative discourse? (2) What are the most frequent presentational strategies and techniques used in this type of discourse? (3) What are the most common analogical strategies and techniques used in religious argumentative discourse?

As such, the present paper aims at: (1) Identifying the most prevalent quasilogical persuasive strategies and techniques used in religious argumentative discourse. (2) Finding out the most frequent presentational strategies and techniques used in this type of discourse. (3) Pinpointing the most common analogical strategies and techniques implemented in religious argumentative discourse.

Consequently, the study hypothesizes that: (1) Rhetorical questions and cause clauses are the most common quasilogical persuasive techniques implemented in this discourse. (2) Imagery, repetition, and simile are the most frequent presentational strategies and techniques used in this type of discourse. (3) Words and proverbs of the ancestors and reminding the audience of the tested values are the most common analogical strategies implemented in religious argumentative discourse.

To achieve the aims of this work and test its hypotheses, the paper follows Johnston's (2008) model of persuasion to arrive at the most prevalent persuasive strategies employed in religious argumentative discourse. This study is limited to the investigation of persuasive strategies used in religious argumentative discourse. More precisely, the religious argumentative debate between Ahmed Deedat and Gary Miller about Christianity and Islam on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1984 has been chosen for analysis.

## 2. Theoretical Underpinnings

### 2.1 *Argumentative Discourse*

Discourse is the collective or public use of written or spoken language, or, to put it another way, communication between two or more people. A wide range of discourse kinds can be included in the broad definition of discourse. They play distinct roles in discourse as a whole and are sometimes also called rhetorical styles. Generally speaking, the word "argument" merely means support for a viewpoint, yet many people associate it with an intense, hostile conflict or emotional dispute. The discourse that primarily consists of one or more persons advancing their opinions or ideas is referred to as argumentative discourse. This type of discourse differs from expository, descriptive, and narrative discourse, among other types of discourse (Web Resource 1).

Argumentative discourse can take many different shapes and manifest itself in various ways. Some are more formal, when authors or speakers systematically elaborate on a core idea with crucial supplementary ideas that are typically derived from technical study. Other forms of argumentative discourse might be more general and depend less on accurate fact-finding and more on emotive or intuitive arguments. Additionally, it has a wide variety of diction and presentation. While dialect and slang may be widely utilized in less formal contexts, the vocabulary used for argumentative speech in more formal settings may be quite complex and technical (Web Resource 2).

### 2.1.1 Language of Argumentation

Argumentation may initially seem to be a clearly defined text type that can be instantiated by texts that fall under some discourse genres but not others. Therefore, one typically expects to see it in a research paper, a court ruling, or an opinion piece, but not in a news article, a recipe, or a tour guide. Although we acknowledge that there is a privileged relationship between the argumentative text type and some discourse genres, we do not believe that the (more or less explicit) presence of argumentation or even the dominance of the argumentative text type can independently identify the genre to which a particular discourse instance belongs. Discourse argumentation does not only occur in specific discourse genres, as academics in the area have lately noted; its presence in a given text, regardless of the discourse genre to which it belongs, depends on its degree (Labinaz and Sbisà 2018: 605).

Argumentation is considered a text type in text linguistics, along with other text types like description, exposition, narrative, and so forth. Text types are used to identify the dominating structure of texts or their portions based on their linguistic qualities or cognitive functions, even when no actual instance of a text completely fits one and only one text type. Argumentation must be in explicit or implicit opposition to an alternative viewpoint (which can also be assumed), regardless of whether it is intended to persuade a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a viewpoint (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004), support the objective of various types of dialogue (such as persuasion dialogue, inquiry dialogue, etc.; Walton 1998), or, more simply, persuade the other(s) of the truth of a thesis (Johnson 2000).

According to Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984: 39), the archetypal structure of an argumentative text from the standpoint of speech-act theory consists of a specific number of "elementary" illocutionary acts, or more precisely, assertive speech acts, that serve to support (or contradict) an opinion that has already been expressed (a statement acting as a claim or conclusion). They contend that the illocutionary force of the "illocutionary act complex" of argument is determined by the sum of these simple illocutionary acts. The primary distinction between the elementary illocutionary acts that make up the illocutionary act complex of argumentation and the former is that the former's communicative function functions at a higher textual level rather than at the sentence level, as the latter does (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984: 34–35).

### 2.1.2 Religious Argumentative Discourse

Liturgical and biblical language are two examples of the numerous forms of religious speech that Crystal and Davy (1969: 45) recognized and analyzed at different levels. They said that religious English has a very unusual vocabulary and that examining it reveals several quite different kinds. It's a feature. There is no information on compelling qualities in this study; it is just stylistic. More precisely, data for a recent research by Taiwo (2007) came mostly from Christian television and radio broadcasts in southwest Nigeria. In this type of media discourse, researchers study how preachers interact with audiences through social roles. She identifies how preachers use a system of moods and modalities to determine sentence forms, with the primary objective of maintaining discourse authority.

Taiwo also looks at preaching as a type of religious discourse (2007). Yes/no questions, wh questions, alternative questions, tag questions, and rhetorical questions to influence the audience are the question kinds that are the focus of this study. The findings indicate that Christian preachers frequently employ and favor three different inquiry formats. Additionally, the study considers a number of useful findings that deviate from the purpose of conventional inquiries.

A diverse range of genres, registers, and text types make up religious discourse. Everything that is classified as religious has something to do with the main goal of religious communication, which is to create, meditate, and reflect ideology in order to convince others that any religion is true. Persuasion is the mainstay of religious writings in both language and extra-linguistic aspects, serving as an efficient means of spreading ideology (Cotterell & Turner 1989: 33).

## 2.2 *Persuasion*

### 2.2.1 The Concept of Persuasion

Verbal signals intended to shape, support, and alter people's thoughts and beliefs are the main emphasis of persuasion. The computational community has focused more on inference than on how language affects people's attitudes and behavior, despite substantial preliminary research in this area (Diyi et al., 2019:3621).

Persuasive discourse has a long history; it was initially used in ancient Greece (Plato and Aristotle) and later in Rome. Becoming a well-known speaker at political events was the primary objective of rhetoric. The study of rhetoric was forgotten after the Roman Empire collapsed in 275 AD, but it was revived as a separate scientific field in the 16th century. Since its inception, rhetoric has frequently been regarded as a component of the language used in religious and political debate. In North America and Europe, writing and public speaking classes influenced by classical rhetoric have been offered since the late 19th century. Many schools and universities now offer debate and debate-based courses (Maija, 2012: 206).

Persuasion is often associated with the concept of discursive power. We might agree that persuasion and power go hand in hand if we consider persuasive discourse, where we

purposefully highlight the influence of language. In fewer words, power is always an element of language use (Ibid.).

### 2.2.2 The Power of Persuasion

Levine (2003: 63) highlights that the persuasive message's substance is only one component of the process; other crucial elements include the way, by whom, and where it is delivered. In addition to being aware of persuasive tactics, speakers should also be aware of paralinguistic tools, which include knowing how to act in oral persuasive situations and what tone and voice to use (Maija, 2012: 207).

Persuasion is regarded as a very powerful rhetorical tactic of argumentation. The distinction between the descriptive and emotional meanings of words is regarded as a fundamental element of persuasion, which is based specifically on redefining the descriptive meaning of words while secretly maintaining old, familiar emotional meanings. We demonstrate that the emotional inertia factor is a significant aspect of the process and that using such a definition can be both compelling and misleading (Ibid.).

### 2.2.3 Model of Analysis

According to Johnstone (2008), persuasion must exhibit logic and reason in some circumstances, while emotion is required in others for persuasion to be successful. In this regard, it's critical to understand that a persuasive technique that works in one situation could not work in another. She has offered three strategies of persuasion namely, quasi-logical, presentational, and analogical.

#### 1). Quasilogical Strategy

Using the vocabulary and style of their reasoning, proponents of this tactic strive to convey the idea that their arguments are largely unquestionable. More precisely, the main objective of this tactic is to persuade the recipient to agree with the arguer's points of view out of sheer reason.

According to Johnstone (2008), syllogistic reasoning is one of the quasilogical thinking techniques. One logical characteristic that involves relationships like equality and numerical supremacy is three-stage reasoning. The goal of quasilogicians is to apply the mathematical and formal logic formulations and structures. Quasilogical reasoning is not, however, purely logical. The following is an illustration of a syllogistic logical argument: A entails C if A entails B and B entails C. A type of deductive logic, syllogism is a quasi-logical strategy technique that seeks to reach a conclusion based on two or more presumptively correct concepts or plans.

Syllogism, according to Axelord (2007), is a technique for reasoning that relies on the three propositions. The speaker uses the first and his second to support her third claim. The third is the conclusion, while the first and second are the premises.

Johnstone (2008) demonstrates how the demonstration can connect premises to conclusions in quasi-logical beliefs by using subordinate sentences. In other words, cause, effect, and

condition clauses. A statement that provides justification for a specific conclusion is called a premise. Speakers utilize this to get listeners ready for specific conclusions. Use logical connectors like "since," "when," "provided that," "if," "because," and "for" to construct such arguments.

## **2). Presentational Strategy**

The rhythmic flow of words and sounds typically captivates instructors. Reflecting the arguing party's arguments into the listener's consciousness and thoughts is the ultimate aim of this kind of persuasion. Alliteration, rhetoric, metaphor, and repetition are only a few of the strategies used by presentational persuaders to try to engage the audience. Alliteration uses a steady flow of sounds to captivate listeners. For example, /z/ and /s/, /f/ and /v/, /b/ and /, are examples of adjacent words that are initiated with the same initial consonant or with distinct consonants that have comparable phonetic properties. The use of /p/ is a stylistic technique.

Lakoff refers to the "rhetoric dex" as the ability of arguments in representation to manipulate phrases like "here," "now," and "this." Deixes are words or sentences that cannot be understood without taking the utterance's context into account, according to Rodman (1983). Practically speaking, her Deixes comprise pronouns like his, you, and her. phrases and proper nouns such as "this girl," "this boy," "this student," and "this woman." Now and occasionally, such as last week. local terms like "this country," "that place," and "that space." instructions like before, after, and next.

According to Johnstone (2008), repetition of words and phrases arouses strong emotions in the audience and is therefore a crucial part of the persuasion process. In a similar vein, presentation debaters can strengthen their argument by using metaphors to conjure strong visuals and effectively communicate ideas.

## **3). Analogical Strategy**

The third persuasive strategy presented by Johnstone (2008) is the analogical strategy. Its foundation is either explicit or tacit recollection of conventional wisdom. In a similar vein, fairy tales are frequently used to develop traditional wisdom. One of the basic strategies used by analogy discourse arguments in the persuasive process is teaching by reminding the audience of tried ideals or by using indirect storytelling techniques. Religious beliefs or beliefs might be mentioned in similar ways. We might discuss Bible scriptures and anecdotes, for instance. It is important to note that listeners are frequently tempted to make diversionary leaps between historical events and contemporary situations when engaging in analogical discourse. Below is a table summarizing the techniques implemented in each persuasive strategy.

Table 1. Persuasive strategies and techniques

Persuasive Strategy	Techniques
<b>Quasilogical Strategy</b> (arguments based on rationality)	<p>The quasi-logical arguer utilizes the following techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. informal use of Mathematical notion of transitivity or syllogistic reasoning in constructing arguments,</li> <li>b. logical connectives, such as "thus", "hence", "therefore", "accordingly", "consequently", etc.,</li> <li>c. subordinate clauses that relate premises to conclusions, such as "conditional clauses" and "cause clauses",</li> <li>d. enthymeme, and</li> <li>e. rhetorical questions, so as to arrive at a valid logical conclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>Presentational Strategy</b> (arguments based on involvement)	<p>The speaker can create involvement and arouse audience's consciousness by utilizing the following techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. rhythmical flow of words,</li> <li>b. rhythmical flow of sounds or poetic alliteration,</li> <li>c. imagery,</li> <li>d. parallelism,</li> <li>e. repeating claims, paraphrasing them, and calling attention to them,</li> <li>f. visual metaphors ( "look", "see", "behold")</li> <li>g. deixes, such as "here", "now", "this", etc.</li> <li>h. simile, and</li> <li>i. metaphor.</li> </ul>
<b>Analogical Strategy</b> (arguments based on teaching using narrative)	<p>Analogical arguer constructs his argument throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. calling to mind a traditional wisdom in the mode of storytelling,</li> <li>b. reminding audience of the time-tested values,</li> <li>c. making use of formulaic language such as "that reminds me of ...", "you know that what they say",</li> <li>d. utilizing the words and proverbs of the ancestors, and</li> <li>e. referring to timeless past events ("once upon a time...").</li> </ul>

(Johnstone, 2008)



### 3. Data Analysis

#### *3.1 Data Collection and Description*

The data of this study is represented by a religious debate between the Muslim scholar Ahmed Deedat and the Christian scholar Gary Miller held at Durban's Westridge Park Stadium on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1984. The video of the debate is available on (Web Resource 3) and its transcription is retrieved from (web Resource 4). Below is a short biography of the two main speakers in the debate:

Born in 1918, Ahmed Hussein Deedat is a cleric and Islamic preacher. He was brought up in a Muslim household and is of Indian heritage. Deedat is well-known for his ongoing defense of Islam and his theological arguments. In 1986, Ahmed Deedat was given a professorial degree, the King Faisal International Award for Service to Islam, and millions of copies of his books, talks, and films were disseminated. He wrote *Fact or Fiction* in 1985 and *Christ on Christianity and Islam* the following year. He authored almost 20 novels over his career. After battling the illness for nine years until his death on August 8, 2005, Ahmed Deedat became terminally ill in 1996 (Web Resource 5).

Gary Miller is a mathematician and religious scholar from Canada. He studied religion and served as a Christian missionary for 15 years. He frequently wrote to church leaders from various Christian denominations to ask their opinions on a certain Bible verse or how to interpret it, and to present opposing viewpoints.

Miller originally became interested in the Quran about 1977 because he wanted to test it in the same manner. He kept finding that the Quran supported his own convictions and what he considered to be common sense as he read it. He came to the conclusion that, unbeknownst to him, he had already been a Muslim for years. He changed his name to Abdul-Ahad Omar, a Muslim, yet he still went by his original name (Web Resource 6).

#### *3.2 Method of Analysis*

This study looks at data using Johnstone's (2008) model. This model gives a full picture of how people try to convince others. Johnstone splits persuasive methods into three main groups: Quasilogical, Presentational, and Analogical. These groups help us understand how people use words to sway and influence others. The Quasilogical method uses logic and reason. It often includes cause-and-effect and questions that make people think. The Presentational method uses senses and style. It creates strong emotional images that stick in people's minds. It does this with tools like repetition and comparisons. The Analogical method uses shared knowledge from culture, history, and tradition. It uses comparisons and sayings to tap into common values and wisdom. By using this model, the study can take a close look at the many ways language works to persuade in religious talk. It shows in detail how persuasive messages are built and shared.



### 3.3 Data Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Quasilogical Strategies

##### 1). Use of Statistical Data

In the first example, the speaker claims, *"He does not tell us that the Muslim today's number one thousand million and the Christians one thousand two hundred million."* The speaker uses big concrete numbers to base his argument on facts. This method matches what we call quasilogical persuasion in rhetoric. It's when someone uses math-like reasoning to present info as true and hard to argue with. The speaker doesn't explain these numbers. Just mentioning them makes the info seem real and trustworthy. The speaker wants people to believe the claim without questions because it looks backed by solid data.

The statistics presented here serve to build an overarching story about how different religious groups compare in both size and importance. The interpretation of numerical data requires proper context because numbers by themselves can produce misleading conclusions. When analyzing academic material we have to examine the currency of these statistics as well as their source reliability and foundational assumptions. The speaker deliberately avoids complexity by choosing simplification which serves as a typical persuasive rhetoric strategy.

##### 2). Appeal to Value and Affordability

A two thousand-page encyclopedia costs five Rands per copy. The phrase "You will agree with me that's very very cheap." operates on two levels. This approach establishes product affordability through a focused transactional framework. The price appears so minimal that people begin to view it as either a great opportunity or a requirement. The speaker taps into the persuasive value proposition strategy by presenting the product's extremely low cost as a way to boost its perceived value.

The speaker emphasized the deal's extraordinary nature by using the word "very" twice which helped to build the emotional tone of the message. The speaker tries to build audience agreement by claiming "You will agree with me" which implies that their value assessment should be universally accepted because it seems so obvious. The rhetorical technique employs social proof which suggests that people should accept something as valuable if others have deemed it valuable.

##### 3). Use of Subordination and Cause-Effect Relationships

In the examples, "He thought God was with me because he said things like that" and "God doesn't die because that means changing from one state to another," the subordination is used by the speaker in order to logically bring properly together the premise and conclusion. In persuasive communication, subordination is helpful for creating clear relations between different parts of discourse, which is important for logic. The speaker is directing the audience's thoughts in a specific way through the use of the cause and effect relation.

The phrase and argument "because he said he thinks like that is evidence of specific action or a statement" creates the subordination which indicates certain levels of cause and effect

relationships. The same analogy can be used for “God does not die because that means changing from one state to another” – one tries to reason a theological declaration with a metaphysical one. With subordination, a speaker makes his complex ideas easier to grasp and definite. Causality is often sufficient by itself without any complex arguments, so it makes defining the argument a lot easier and more direct than many arguments that require deeper analysis.

Furthermore, these secondary clauses frequently occur within a larger framework of context related to religious governance. The frame set by the speaker suggests an indisputable link that exists between the supernatural and the real world.

#### **4). Rhetorical Questions**

Consider the phrases, “How on earth did they offend him? ...They left him up... up” and “Who prays in such a manner? Is it Christians or Muslims?” Rhetorical questions that aim at actively engaging the audience and encouraging them to think deeper. They do not provide actual answers; rather, they seek to elicit deeper cognitive and emotional connections. These types of questions are a highly useful form of persuasive communication because they allow the audience to make conclusions that are meant to support the speaker.

“How on earth did they offend him?” is a question that deeply critiques those who offended a highly regarded religious figure. This does, in fact, make the audience wonder just how unjust such an action is. The repetition of the phrase, “up ... up” provides a capturing emotion to the speaker’s rhetorical style hoping to incite anger or compassion from the audience.

Like before, the questions around prayer and fasting, “Who prays in that manner, a Christian or a Muslim?” and “Jesus used to fast for over a month, who fasts nowadays, a Christian or a Muslim?” help to juxtapose religion in a manner that enables the audience to connect with the religious affiliation of the speaker. The pronouns “who” and “today” creates a bridge between the past and present suggesting that the real adherents of the faith are those who still practice it in the manner it was supposed to be.

With these rhetorical questions the audience is directed to think in a particular manner and the speaker is cast as someone who can be trusted to give accurate information regarding religion. These questions distant an audience from sophisticated theoretical approach and switch their attention to real, observable actions, which the speaker assumes authenticates the religion.

In the speaker’s use of i.e., quasilogical persuasion, Subordination, and rhetorical questions, one sees an exemplary application of modern linguistic persuasion. The speaker offers statistical data, uses arguments based on religions customs, logic, and economizes the audience’s prepare by asking emotionally involving rhetorical questions to get a one tier simpler to understand argument and leave an expectation of a wide ranging speech slanted to the head and heart.

This style of speaking combines traditional rhetoric strategies with newer persuasive techniques. The focus on emotional, logical, and cultural aspects remembers Aristotle’s

rhetoric concepts of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic), all of which are essential to persuasive rhetoric.

While reviewing these techniques, we must remember the simplifications that the speaker has placed in his argument. The persuasive strategies which include the deployment of statistics and religion for example, are correct, but their factual validity must be examined much more closely for accuracy.

### 3.3.2 Presentational Strategies

#### 1). Simile

*“It is crossing through the body of man like the blood.”*

*“They are things that look like bills but they are only milk sugar, just sugar.”*

Simile (a figure of speech that compares one thing to another using the words “like” or “as”) helps create a stark, often visceral image in the mind of the audience. In the first example, “It is crossing through the body of man like the blood,” the simile bridges a potentially abstract concept with a concrete and familiar element, blood. This might be an analogy that indicates the all-consuming, necessary existence of whatever part of the thing you're writing about is always present and crucial. In saying this, blood is something we can all understand to be essential for life, making the subject matter that much more relevant to the audience. To which the audience's attention get captured through comparing to an axiom, so that audience can understand that which can't be imagined so that a sense of physiology and metaphorical response would be measured to this axiom word or topic discussed.

The second simile, “They are things that look like bills but they are only milk sugar, just sugar,” is about superficial appearance vs. interior reality. Here, the simile serves to demystify or deflate the description of the object being described. It relies on the dissonance between expectation (the bills) and the everyday truth (milk sugar). Such a simile aims at disrupting assumptions, inviting the interlocutor to question what is high class or important.

One reason why similes are so effective is that they root abstract or unfamiliar ideas into the sensory realm. They ask the listener to visualize something or feel something that makes the argument seem more accessible. In each case, the similes move toward clearer images that create understanding or foment feelings allowing the speaker to make more evanescent ideas physical.

#### 2). Imagery

*“You see if he was a crazy man he probably believe what they said.”*

*“My child died, the sky went dark.”*

*“If you think that an angel gives the words of God in your ear.”*

The language associated with imagery in rhetoric is purposefully used to create in the mind of that person a sensory experience appealing to the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch. In my second example, “My child died, the sky went dark,” the speaker channels a powerful

visual image that links an emotional experience to a physical event. “The sky went dark” works as a metaphor for an all-consuming sense of grief or despair that may not directly be felt by every listener but is vividly suggested. A jolting, spine-chilling notion, the phrase paints a brutally vivid mental picture that, on top of illustrating the depth of emotional weight loss carries, creates an extra layer of emotional impact to the speaker’s point.

For example, “You see if he was a crazy man he probably believe what they said” the speaker is using an indirect imagery reminiscing “crazy man” behaviour.

However, unlike in the second example, where the image is directly sensory, the image here taps into cultural and psychological imagery about what it means to be “crazy,” indirectly invoking for the audience associations about irrationality and disbelief. The third, “If you think that an angel gives the words of God in your ear,” uses it to question systems of belief and are pervasive perceptions that divine revelation is;

By envisioning an angel softly speaking in one’s ear, the speaker challenges the way people assert they receive divine truths. This imagery encourages doubt, prompting the audience to rethink how “revelation” could be perceived or understood. Imagery, in these instances, amplifies the emotional resonance of the speech. By engaging the audience’s senses and imaginations, the speaker immerses them in the argument, enhancing the emotional weight of the rhetoric.

### 3). Repetition

*“You see you can’t be a liar and a crazy man at the same time.”*

*“Write books and books on the subject of Muhammad and they say, ‘One thing we know for sure, he thought he was a prophet... he was crazy.’”*

*“It’s like saying ‘the part that feeds you is the part that feeds you’ that’s all, it’s a label, it doesn’t answer anything.”*

Repetition is a key rhetorical technique that helps reinforce a specific idea, making it memorable for the audience. In the first example, the phrase “at the same time” emphasizes the speaker’s main argument about the contradiction between being a liar and being insane. This use of repetition highlights the logical inconsistency of such a claim. In the second example, the repeated phrase “write books and books on the subject of Muhammad” emphasizes the vast amount of written material about the Prophet Muhammad. Here, repetition serves as a rhetorical tool to stress the abundance of scholarly work, reinforcing the speaker’s point about the focus on Muhammad’s supposed madness. The repetition of “books and books” conveys a sense of volume and significance, suggesting that the discussion may be excessive or overly simplistic.

The third example, “It’s like saying ‘the part that feeds you is the part that feeds you,’” illustrates the redundancy of a specific argument. The phrase “the part that feeds you” is repeated, emphasizing a point that the speaker believes is either trivial or obvious. This repetition serves to reveal the lack of depth in the argument, ultimately undermining the opposing perspective. Repetition aids the audience in recalling key points and underscores

the significance of those ideas. Additionally, it can be an effective persuasive technique, as repeated statements often lend an air of credibility or make a claim seem more undeniable.

#### 4). Deixis

*“Now he said this book was a revelation.”*

*“And it says about this man that he will never change.”*

*“Somebody said to me before coming in here, he said aaaah... ‘The Muslims make Jesus out... they insult him and so on and so on.’”*

*“Here are three different things you can do, if you can do this, I am wrong, here you are.”*

Deixis refers to words or phrases that need contextual information for full interpretation, often relying on the speaker’s perspective, time, or location of the utterance. In the example, “Now he said this book was a revelation,” the word “now” serves a deictic function, indicating the present moment or altering the frame of reference for the audience. It implies a temporal context that the audience must grasp, making the statement feel more immediate and relevant. In the second example, “And it says about this man that he will never change,” the word “this” is deictic because it points to something or someone specific that has been previously mentioned in the conversation. Deictic expressions help link the speaker’s current narrative with the audience’s understanding, anchoring abstract ideas in the ongoing dialogue.

The phrase “Somebody said to me before coming in here” sets the stage for the speaker’s claims, linking them to a recent conversation. By using expressions like “before coming in here,” the speaker anchors their words in a specific time and place, which helps make their argument feel more relatable. Similarly, the phrase “Here are three different things you can do, if you can do this, I am wrong, here you are” employs markers like “here” to draw the audience into the current moment, enhancing their connection to the argument being presented. This use of deixis amplifies the persuasive power of the speaker’s message, making it feel more immediate, relevant, and engaging for the audience.

By using these tools, the speaker not only improves the clarity and effectiveness of their message but also strengthens their bond with the audience, inviting them into a story that resonates on both personal and universal levels.

#### 3.3.3 Analogical Strategies

##### 1). The Power of Tradition and Timeless Wisdom

Analogical arguments are based on the premise that if two things share certain similarities, they are likely to share others as well. The person making the argument taps into the audience’s common cultural knowledge, often referencing stories, historical events, or traditional wisdom. By drawing connections between the past and the present, the arguer aims to make their claims more relatable, convincing, and credible.

## 2). Deedat's Use of Analogical Strategies

Deedat often uses analogies by citing well-known religious texts, proverbs, and traditions from both Islam and Christianity. His reliance on established values bolsters his argument by appealing to the authority of historical and religious insights.

### Example 1: The Quranic Verse

In this statement, Deedat references a verse to illustrate that Muslims believe in salvation through their actions. He cites *آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ*, which translates to "belief and good works." By doing so, he employs the Quran as a source of traditional wisdom to challenge a Christian theological stance. This verse from Surah Al-Baqarah serves to highlight common values shared by both religions. By quoting this Quranic phrase, Deedat effectively draws a connection between the core teachings of Islam and Christianity regarding salvation and moral behavior. Utilizing sacred texts from both faiths not only enhances the credibility of his argument but also taps into a deep-rooted religious understanding that resonates with the audience. The comparison between belief and good works stands in stark contrast to the idea of salvation through faith alone, thereby reinforcing his persuasive message.

### Example 2: Quranic Reference to Christians

Deedat refers to the learned individuals of Christianity, as described in the holy Quran with the beautiful words... 'ولتجدن أقربهم مودة للذين آمنوا الذين قالوا إنا نصارى'... In this instance, he uses the Quran as a cultural reference to illustrate the connection between Muslim and Christian communities. By citing this Quranic verse, he emphasizes the Quran's respectful view of Christians and presents it as a credible source for guidance on interfaith relations. The phrase "nearest in love to the believers" indicates a positive bond between Muslims and Christians, which counters negative stereotypes and highlights a shared moral foundation. The analogy is subtle yet powerful—it establishes a link between the teachings of the Quran and the notion of common ground between the two faiths, encouraging his audience to consider these shared values.

### Example 3: Exhortation to Moderation

"يا أهل الكتاب... لا تغلوا في دينكم ولا تقولوا على الله إلا الحق"

Deedat's mention of this Quranic verse highlights the significance of moderation in religious belief. By stating "Do not go to extremes in your religion," he connects it to the historical and theological issues surrounding religious extremism. This analogy not only reflects the traditional wisdom of Islam but also serves as a guide for modern religious discussions. The speaker employs this analogy to challenge extreme perspectives in both Christianity and Islam, urging the audience to adopt a more balanced and reflective approach to their faith.

## 3). Miller's Use of Analogical Strategies

Miller, similar to Deedat, uses analogies that draw from cultural narratives and traditional wisdom to engage his audience. His storytelling incorporates historical events, religious



figures, and ancient scientific explorations, all aimed at fostering an emotional and intellectual bond with the listeners.

### **Example 1: The Story of Ibrahim's Son and the Eclipse**

“One story that’s told is that... When he was an older man, he had a son named إبراهيم or Ibrahim. The son died when the child was two years old, the same day the boy died there was an eclipse of the sun... the sky went dark.”

Here, Miller employs storytelling to express a deeply emotional moment, that is, the death of Ibrahim’s son, while also symbolizing the weight of loss. The comparison between the child's death and the eclipse of the sun implies that these two occurrences are connected and hold significant meaning. The child's passing, alongside the natural event of the eclipse, creates a feeling of cosmic imbalance or divine intervention, enriching the event with deeper significance. By linking human suffering to natural phenomena, Miller effectively conveys the emotional gravity of this moment, making an abstract theological or philosophical idea resonate through a compelling narrative.

### **Example 2: The Ancient Greek Inquiry About Nutrition**

*“In ancient Greece, the Greeks, 25 centuries ago, came to their scientists with a question... They wanted to know ‘which part of what I take in is the part that feeds me?’”*

Miller, here, draws on a historical analogy by referencing an ancient Greek inquiry to introduce the subject of human nourishment. This comparison between the ancient Greek scientists' quest for knowledge about nutrition and today's exploration of the human body emphasizes the enduring nature of human curiosity. By likening the scientific endeavors of the ancient Greeks to modern inquiries, Miller underscores that people throughout history have sought to uncover fundamental truths. However, he also critiques the vague responses given by these scientists, pointing out that the answer, “the part that feeds you is the part that feeds you”, is ultimately meaningless and unhelpful. This analogy serves both a historical and philosophical function, highlighting the necessity for clarity and meaningful answers in both religious and scientific discussions.

### **Example 3: Paul's Teaching About Spiritual Maturity**

*“Paul wrote that in one of his letters, it’s in the Bible, he said let’s go beyond the milk... he says we want to get into the meat.”*

In this analogy, Miller references Paul from the Bible to convey the concept of spiritual maturity. The comparison of “milk” and “meat” symbolizes spiritual development, indicating that those new to the faith are sustained by fundamental, straightforward teachings (milk), while those who are more mature should strive for deeper, more complex truths (meat). This analogy encourages the audience to reflect more deeply on their own spiritual paths, urging them to progress beyond superficial understandings and cultivate a more mature, nuanced relationship with their faith. Miller’s use of this analogy highlights the significance of spiritual growth and the quest for deeper truths, which aligns with his broader argument regarding the nature of religious understanding.



As such, we can see that both Deedat and Miller use analogy in powerful ways, drawing from storytelling, sacred texts, and historical examples to construct their arguments in an effective and persuasive manner.

#### 4. Conclusions

After carefully analyzing the data, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding the persuasive strategies used in religious argumentative discourse:

1. The first hypothesis, which reads “quasilogical strategies, such as rhetorical questions and cause clauses, are the most prevalent persuasive techniques in religious argumentative discourse,” has been confirmed. The analysis shows that these techniques play a crucial role in shaping the persuasive framework of religious arguments. Rhetorical questions act as effective tools for engaging the audience, encouraging reflection, and guiding listeners toward a specific conclusion without needing direct answers. Likewise, the regular use of cause clauses establishes a logical basis for the argument, leading the audience from premise to conclusion through clear cause-and-effect connections.
2. The second hypothesis, stating that “the presentational techniques of imagery, repetition, and simile are the most frequent persuasive techniques used in this type of discourse,” has also been supported by the data analysis. Imagery is essential for creating vivid mental images that engage the audience’s senses and enhance the emotional weight of the argument. Repetition allows speakers to emphasize key ideas and arguments, ensuring that the main message sticks with the audience. Additionally, similes improve the clarity of the message by making direct comparisons to familiar concepts, which helps to make abstract or complex theological ideas easier to understand.
3. The third hypothesis, which suggested that “words and proverbs of the ancestors, reminding the audience of time-tested values, are the most common analogical strategies and techniques used in religious argumentative discourse,” has been confirmed through the analysis. Both speakers examined, Deedat and Miller, often draw on traditional wisdom, proverbs, and references to sacred texts to strengthen their arguments. By invoking culturally and religiously significant phrases and proverbs, they effectively connect the past with the present, engaging the collective memory and shared values of their audience. This analogical method not only legitimizes their arguments through established traditions but also fosters a sense of continuity and moral authority.
4. The examination of persuasive techniques in religious argumentative discourse shows a significant dependence on quasilogical strategies, presentational techniques, and analogical reasoning to engage and persuade the audience. Each of these strategies plays a unique yet interrelated role in the discourse: quasilogical strategies strengthen the logical framework, presentational techniques make the message emotionally

resonant and visually striking, and analogical strategies link the argument to richer cultural and historical contexts.

5. The findings discussed above underscore the complex nature of religious argumentation, where reason, emotion, tradition, and cultural memory come together to form persuasive and impactful discourse.

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### Web Resources

<http://turntoislam.com/community/threads/christianity-and-islam-transcript-deedat-gary.81973/>

<https://themindfulmuslim.com/gary-miller>

<https://www.arageek.com/bio/ahmed-deedat>

<https://www.languagehumanities.org/>

<https://www.languagehumanities.org/what-is-argumentative-discourse.htm#authorBox>

<https://youtu.be/e1aqXGOpd4o?si=AtKiS2AkEf2sWlAT>

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