

A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ON CONCUSSION AWARENESS IN POPULAR MEDIA: A CULTURAL COMPARISON OF ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED STATES

LAUREN JABLON, ELON UNIVERSITY - (DR. JESSIE MOORE, DR. NINA NAMASTE)



Research Questions:

- How is information about concussions relayed to the general public in popular media in Argentina and the U.S.?
- How do rhetorical traditions and cultural contexts (e.g. health care systems, sports trends, etc) impact this information?

Coding Devices Analyzed:

- Key words or studies
- Three modes of appeal
- Kairos (situational context)
- Tone
- Audience adaptation
- First, second, or third person tense
- Visual design elements/ displays
- Length of paragraphs
- Dialogue/ quotes
- Mention of mental health/ disabilities
- Uncertainty

Key Findings:

- Absence of concussion information in pop media in Argentina
- Tone was nearly twice as pessimistic than it was optimistic
- Short paragraphs = more dialogue focused
- General trend of uncertainty
- Predominantly written in 2nd person
- Pathetic appeals most common in discussing child injuries
- Longer paragraphs very rare (only occurred in one)
- Cooccurrence between pessimism and uncertainty (67 times)
- Cooccurrence between dialogue and direct quotes

Existing Scholarship:

- US concussion awareness **dates back to the 1800s.**
- Majority of concussions in U.S. were sustained by contact-sports related injuries (football, soccer, and hockey)
- Majority of injuries in Argentina were from soccer or rugby.
- **2005:** Mike Webster became a turning point in concussion research with the discovery of CTE.
- **2011:** First NFL concussion summit and development of the Head, Neck, and Spine Committee.
- **2022:** FIFA's Suspect and Protect guidelines (both countries).
- **Insufficient coordination between medical education and Argentina's healthcare system.**
- Argentine system rewards **clinical service above research.**
- Argentina's GDP only allocates 4.8% of costs to health.
- Long waiting lists for public health care in Argentina.
- **U.S. has a greater budget allocated to health research.**
- U.S. concussion resources are not always universal (different information regarding gender and more resources for child head trauma than adult trauma).
- Quality of healthcare often unequally distributed in both.

Methodology:

- Collection of U.S. and Argentine sources
- Coding of sources using DeDoose
- Comparing and Analyzing findings

Sample Coding:

■ **As humans, we hit our heads a lot. Our skull is purportedly developed to resist injuries. Not all the hits are relevant. We typically do not have consequences,** says Mayo Clinic neurologist Rodolfo Savica, M.D. But while permanent damage is not very common, it can still happen.

■ Experts gave **Men's Health** a crash course on what to do **when you hit your head.**

- **Red:** Audience Adaptation and First person plural tense- use of "we" and "our"
- **Yellow:** Optimistic tone
- **Purple:** Use of ethos - refers to a well-accredited neurologist's status to build up his credibility
- **Orange:** Uncertainty - lack of confidence on whether damage and lasting impact will occur
- **Blue:** Audience adaptation/ kairos- Inclusion of "Men's Health" makes context and audience clear
- **Green:** Kairos and audience adaptation - Use of "you" and "when you hit your head" to make clear the time of the scene.

Conclusions:

- There is a general theme of pessimism and uncertainty when discussing concussions; this encourages more literature to be focused on positive recovery experiences and more research to be conducted to clarify any gaps/ misunderstandings regarding concussions.
- The lack of concussion informational resources in Argentine popular media is very telling; further research should be dedicated towards understanding why this absence exists.
- If more funds were allocated to exploring this topic in greater depth, interviews may also be carried out with health care/ head injury specialists and professionals in both Argentina and the U.S. Doing so would be very beneficial to better understanding the influence of culture.

References:

