

Ethos, Logos and Pathos in University Students' Informal Requests

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ABSTRACT

Persuasion is used in spoken and written communication to convince the audience to take appropriate actions or to support specific viewpoints. The speaker or writer may use statistics and logical arguments, emotions and their character, authority and credibility to convince the audience. The present study examined university students' strategies of persuading their lecturer to grant their request using Aristotle's rhetorical proofs of ethos, logos and pathos as the framework. The data were from 165 students enrolled in an English language course in a Malaysian university. They were asked to write down what they would say to persuade their lecturer to end the class early. Some students used more than one strategy, giving rise to 180 persuasion strategies in total. Analysis of their requests showed that majority of the students used one type of rhetorical appeal to persuade. Emotional appeal (pathos) was the most popular persuasion strategy accounting for over half of the persuasion strategies identified, followed closely by the rational appeal (logos). Appeal to ethos (credibility) was seldom used. Further analysis of the use of personal pronouns showed a clear difference in that self-focus is frequent in appeals to logos whereas other-focus is frequent in appeals to pathos. When students made an appeal to logos in their requests, they used the singular first person pronoun (I, my) more than the second person pronoun because they justified their request for an early class dismissal by using their heavy workload and uncomfortable physical classroom conditions. When the students made emotional appeals, the content of their persuasion revolved around their lecturer and they made frequent use of the second person pronoun. The results suggests that the students can benefit from the teaching of persuasive discourse so that they are able to use the rhetorical appeals more effectively.

Keywords: rhetoric; requests; ethos; logos; pathos

INTRODUCTION

The three modes of persuasion are logos, pathos and ethos. These modes of persuasion work by appealing to rationality, emotions and ethics respectively to convince the audience (Christensen & Hasle, 2007; Roberts, 1954). Ethos is an appeal based on the character of the speaker (Connors, 1979). Persuasion is used in advertisements to convince customers to purchase products and services, and in letters of complaint and request as well as letters to the editor to convince the readers to take specific actions. In spoken situations such as debates and political speeches, the ability to make convincing arguments is vital but in daily conversations, interactants may use rhetorical appeals without realising it.

In the study of persuasive discourse, Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.) rhetoric has been the mainstay since 2500 years ago. Aristotle's principles of persuasion were derived from his observations of speeches, and nowadays his principles have formed the theoretical foundation for research on persuasive discourse in different contexts (e.g., Berlanga, García-García & Victoria, 2013; Emanuel, Rodrigues & Martins, 2015).

Thus far, studies using Aristotle's conception of rhetoric have shown that pathos is used more than logos in persuasive discourse, and ethos is the least used – subject to cultural variations. The information that is available has been obtained based on mainly written formal documents such as complaint letters (Al-Momani, 2014), argumentative essays (Uysal, 2012), advertisements (Ab Rashid et al., 2016; Nair & Ndubisi, 2015) and social media communication (e.g., Androniciuc, 2016), Emanuel et al., 2015; Fife, 2010). However, little is known about rhetorical appeals in requests. Persuasiveness is also needed to increase the chances of having the requests granted. One such study is that of Chakorn (2006) who conducted contrastive analysis of the rhetoric of 80 authentic letters of request written in English by Thai speakers and native English speakers in the Thai business context. Chakorn's (2006) findings showed culture-specific differences in the use of persuasive strategies in that the Thai speakers wrote letters of request using a combination of logos, ethos and pathos whereas the native English speakers' letters were logos-oriented. Chakorn's (2006) results are supported by other studies on rhetoric in persuasive discourse. There is a strong logos in complaint letters written by Americans as compared to letters written by the Japanese (Al-Momani, 2014) and in argumentative essays written by Turkish students in Turkish as compared to their essays written in English (Uysal, 2012). Technical proposals can be considered a request for approval. Beck and Wegner (1992) found that it is relevant to focus on the ethos mode of persuasion to increase the persuasiveness of the proposal but it is not appropriate to use pathos. The requests studied by Chakorn (2016) and Beck and Wegner (1992) are on the formal end of the continuum, involving formal written requests.

Informal spoken requests have not been studied, yet they are no less important because they achieve important goals. In a university context, an example of informal spoken requests are requests for an appointment, a change of class, or an assignment deadline extension. The likelihood of having their requests granted may depend on their ability to use rhetorical appeals, subject to university rules and regulations. The university context offers the space for students to learn how to make effective requests for successful communication in the workplace upon graduation. There is evidence that the choice of request strategies in formal situations do not differ much from those in informal contexts (Daskalovska et al., 2016).

Thus far, research on requests has been in the field of pragmatics and pragmatology. Researchers have focussed on direct and indirect request strategies (Daskalovska, Ivanovska, Kusevska, & Ulanska, 2016; González-Cruz, 2014; Saad, Bidin, & Shabdin, 2017) and cultural variations in the use of request strategies (e.g., Fukushima, 1996; Li, Suleiman, & Sazalie, 2015; Pair, 1996) in the context of pragmatic competence. The attention has been on the realisation of speech acts and the semantic formula used in various request strategy types. In the context of pragmatic competence, the performance of direct and indirect request strategies can explain pragmatic competence and failure. However, there is another angle from which to view pragmatic success and failure, which is via the content of the requests – whether the persuasive appeal works on hearers to make them predisposed to granting the requests. This angle resides in the field of rhetoric.

This study examined rhetorical appeals in university students' informal requests put forward to their lecturer. The specific aspects examined were: (1) the forms in which the appeal to pathos, logos and ethos take in informal requests; (2) the frequencies of the three types of rhetorical appeal; and (3) the use of linguistic markers, personal pronouns in particular, to express the three types of rhetorical appeal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aristotle's principles of persuasion have been used to study persuasive discourse in presidential speeches. As an example, Mshvenieradze (2013) studied the linguistic markings of the three types of rhetorical appeal in the discourses of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy, the French presidential candidates of 2002 and 2007 elections respectively. Jacques Chirac extensively used "we" to construct himself as a politician who would solve the plural problems of the country with the electorate using actual data and description of his future plans. Sarkozy, on the other hand, used "I" 90% of the time to construct himself as a strong, competent, reliable and serious leader with trustworthy future plans. Both of them won the election, Jacques Chirac in 2002 and Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007, suggesting the persuasiveness of their political discourse. In another study, Mori (2016) analysed three addresses delivered at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 and found that the three rhetorical appeals were employed for different purposes. Mori (2016) reported that Rouhani used ethos to highlight his moral character and piety, and logos to show Iran's righteousness in the face of injustice imposed by the United States and Israel. Netanyahu's address, on the other hand, was full of facts outlining the potential threat posed by Iran (logos) and ends with warnings on the danger from Iran and a description of the miserable history of Jews (pathos). Abbas mostly used pathos to describe the unfortunate situations of Palestinians, and logos and ethos to stress the need to obey international law and agreements.

Aristotle's rhetorical appeals have also been used by researchers to study the effectiveness of argumentation in complaint letters and argumentative essays. Al-Momani (2014) analysed 100 complaint letters from two Jordanian universities, and found that appeal to pathos was the most prevalent persuasion strategy. The second most frequently used persuasion strategy was ethos for private university students and logos for public university students. In their complaint letters, the students resorted to socio-cultural values to achieve their goal for all three types of persuasion strategies. For example, they used religious borrowings, reference to health problems and sickness of parents as an excuse for missing classes. Al-Momani (2014) did not find gender difference in the use of persuasion strategies.

There are, however, cultural differences in use of rhetorical appeals. Americans prefer rational appeals (logos) whereas Japanese prefer affective appeals (pathos) (Kamimura & Oi, 1998; Okabe, 1983, as cited in Uysal, 2012). In Uysal's (2012) study, 18 Turkish native speaker adults living in the United States wrote essays in both Turkish and English. The use of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals was similar in Turkish and English for 89% of the participants. The most frequently used rhetorical appeal was logos, used by 72% of participants in both their essays. However, more participants used logos as a primary appeal when they wrote Turkish essays (94%) compared to English essays (67%). Since the participants wrote both Turkish and English essays, Uysal's (2012) results showed that the language in which the argumentative essay is written influenced the rhetorical appeal used, and this is indicative of cultural influence. Another study on rhetorical appeals in requests present in complaint letters submitted to higher institutions of education yielded similar results on cultural variation. Karatepe (2016) found that the Turkish learners of English were more inclined to omit an explicit request than native speakers of English, thinking that the readers of the complaint letters could interpret their request from the explanation of the problem.

Where advertisements are concerned, they rely on emotional appeal, a conclusion based on studies on how persuasion is achieved in commercials. For example, Nair and Ndubisi's (2015) study involved 440 respondents in New Delhi who watched four television commercials and filled in a questionnaire afterwards. The findings showed that for informative commercials that use a rational appeal, judgements of the credibility, rationality

and emotional appeal are not linked to general beliefs about the brand. Nair and Ndubisi (2015) concluded that providing more information about the brand attributes may not have a positive effect on the consumers' attitude because of their inability to logically analyse the information, and therefore commercials need to use peripheral cues like humour, emotion and fear (pathos) to work. In providing information about brand attributes, it is better to use testimonials, consumer interviews and quality marks rather than factual presentations to get consumers to trust the product – which speak of the use of the appeal to ethos to develop positive attitudes towards the advertisement and, by extension, the brand. Of the three rhetorical appeals, it seems that pathos is the best strategy to ensure that a product name and brand is remembered. Winn (2000) concurs on the key role of pathos in the persuasive power of Web design in e-business. In the context of public service advertisements on health, Robberson and Rogers (1988, p. 277) found that “the traditional negative appeals to health may be more persuasive than positive appeals [and that] people may be persuaded to adopt healthy lifestyles for reasons other than health per se (i.e., to enhance self-esteem)”. Ab Rashid, Jamal, Ibrahim, Yunus, Azmi, Anas, and Mohamed (2016) analysed Facebook status updates of three fitness trainers over six months to investigate how they persuade the public to live a healthy life. One of the trainers achieved the ethos appeal by referring to himself as “Cikgu Fitness” (Teacher of fitness) to show that he had the credibility to talk about healthy lifestyles. The second trainer used the pathos appeal when he wrote that he was so moved by the commitments from the JK1M participants that he almost cried. The third trainer used the logos appeal when she explained how the caffeine in coffee affected her sleep. In advertising, rational appeals refer to the consumers' functional and practical needs, while emotional appeals focus on their psychological needs (Bovee & Arens, 1992, as cited in Nair & Ndubisi, 2015, p. 140).

Of late, researchers have begun to study persuasion in social media communication from a rhetorical perspective – and pathos was found to predominate. For instance, Fife (2010) found appeals to pathos in Facebook profiles. The “about me” and “like me” feature are full of commonly liked quotations from popular songs and movies to appeal to more people. In contrast to the “like me” strategy, another group of people portrayed a “this is me” approach by including distinctive – often less popular – tastes in music, indicative of an appeal to ethos. In another study on social media communication, Emanuel, Rodrigues, and Martins (2015) analysed how three interactive websites appealed to the emotions of visitors to give donations to save flamingos, to take action against global warming, and to persuade people to wear a life jacket whenever they are out at sea – the last from a company that sells life jackets. Political discourse is also found in social media communication. Androniciuc (2016) conducted content analysis of 77 social media posts in an Iohannis campaign and found that the political candidate extensively used pathos to trigger the voters' emotion rather than presenting arguments or focusing on his credibility in the campaign speeches. To Androniciuc (2016), tapping into the emotional dimension of persuasion demonstrates the ability of the candidate to reach out to voter's sensitive side. Arnold (1985, p. 26) argues that “the use of pathos in persuasive messages is not only necessary for those persons specializing in promotional activities, but requisite for all who produce and use persuasion in daily life.” Naksawat, Akkason, and Loi (2016) did not use Aristotle's rhetorical appeals as the theoretical framework but their analysis revealed that the Nigerian 419 scammers exploited basic human desires and needs, trust and appealing to pity in order to deceive recipients into complying. In Aristotle's terms, these persuasion strategies fall under pathos or emotional appeal.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is Aristotle's conception of rhetoric. Aristotle viewed rhetorical appeals to pathos (emotion), logos (reason) and ethos (credibility) as means of persuasion. As Aristotle did not specify the analysis procedures for persuasive communication (Higgins & Walker, 2012), researchers who made use of Aristotle's means of persuasion have constructed their own analysis framework based on the phenomenon being investigated. In the rest of this section, the three types of rhetorical appeals are described.

Pathos is an emotional appeal and involves "putting the audience into a certain frame of mind" (Demirdöğen, 2010, p. 190). Pathos persuades by using security, love, guilt, greed, pity and humour (Gabrielsen & Christiansen, 2010), anger, insult, empathy, fear and confusion (Mshvenieradze, 2013). In an emotional appeal, the speaker shows identification with the "needs, values and desires of the audience" (Higgins & Walker, 2012, p. 198). Thus a good orator should know which emotion to tap into, taking into consideration the social status, age and other features of the audience (Mshvenieradze, 2013). Based on his analysis of complaint letters, Al-Momani (2014) identified the following as examples of persuasive techniques which appeal to emotions: confessing, regretting, making pleas, promising, praising, and thanking. Al-Momani (2014) explained that confession works by drawing on the audience's sympathy but praising and thanking work through manipulation of the audience's feelings to form rapport with the complainant (e.g., I am sure of your wisdom). Following the praise and thanking, the student usually put a plea and a promise not to repeat the offensive action. Metaphors are also commonly used to appeal to the audience's emotions.

Logos is a rational appeal and persuasion is done using "the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself" (Demirdöğen, 2010, p. 190). Logos appeal to reason which makes the "clarity and integrity of the argument" very important (Higgins & Walker, 2012, p. 198). Demirdöğen (2010) cited in Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield (1949) and Larson (1992) show that two-sided messages are more persuasive for a more educated audience who might not agree with the message. In a rhetorical analysis, the appeal to logos can be identified from the use of argumentation, logic, warrants/justification, claims, data, and evidence/examples. These are the substance of logical, rational, critical and analytical discourse. The appeal to reason in student complaint letters analysed by Al-Momani (2014) took the form of questioning, wondering and arguing. An example of a question that relies on reasoning is "how on earth can a person who had cheated get 10/40?". By using either questioning or wondering, the complainer distances himself/herself from the action. Argumentative discourse may use linguistic links such as initially, later and finally (Mshvenieradze, 2013).

Ethos, also known as ethical appeal, is an appeal to the personal character of the speaker (Demirdöğen, 2010). Ethos refers to the "persona, or projected character of a speaker/communicator, including their credibility and trustworthiness" (Higgins & Walker, 2012, p. 197). For researchers intending to delve into the ethos appeal, it is important to distinguish between preliminary ethos (person-specific) and discourse (situation-specific) ethos:

According to Ruth Amossy (second part of 20th century) one of the most popular scientists and linguists, there are two types of Ethos: Preliminary Ethos and Discourse Ethos. Preliminary Ethos is what the audience preliminary knows about the speaker (writer), in other words, what it knows about speaker's authority, marital status and social status. Some orators attempt to ground on it and use such Ethos in his/her favor during a discourse, in case if it is positive. But in case if the Preliminary Ethos is negative the speaker does his/her best to revoke such an impression of people on him/her. As to the

Discourse Ethos, it is the Ethos created immediately for the specific situation and during the discourse. (Amossy, 2000, p. 63, as cited in Mshvenieradze, 2013, p. 1940)

In a rhetorical analysis, appeal to preliminary ethos may be indicated by references to the intelligence, character, and goodwill of the person (Connors, 1979). Other examples of persuasive techniques to establish the credibility of the speaker are ingratiation, expertise, self-criticism, inclination to succeed, and consistency (Higgins & Walker, 2012, p. 198). Higgins and Walker (2012) go on to explain that speakers can establish their authority by appealing to their similarities with their audience or by showing deference or respect for the rights and feelings of the audience. The latter is indicated by phrases such as “with your permission”, “in my opinion”, and “join me, if you would” (Higgins & Walker, 2012, p. 198). Appeal to ethos can take a negative form, such as reverse accusation, denial and negation when the purpose is to complain – as found by Al-Momani (2014) in his analysis of complaint letters written by Jordanian university students. For instance, the complainer may assert high morals (e.g., I the cheater) and accuse others (e.g., our professor did not announce the date of the exam). These are examples of situation-specific discourse ethos, as explained by Amossy (2000). In rhetorical analysis, Mshvenieradze’s (2013) study underscores the importance of analysing personal pronouns and other linguistic markers to reveal the ethos of the speakers. The singular first person pronoun reveals the persona of the speaker whereas the plural first person pronoun shows attempts to identify with the audience. In the case of the French presidential candidates, by using the personal pronoun plural deictic “we”, the politician shows that he could lead the government and the people with the audience (Mshvenieradze, 2013).

When it comes to choosing the best of three types of proof, Aristotle (1954, p. 1356a) explains: “... (m)oral character, so to say, constitutes the most effective means of proof” (as cited in Mori, 2016, p.65). However, the studies reviewed in the Introduction section have shown that the ethos dimension of argumentative persuasion is the least popular in various kinds of persuasive discourse.

METHODOLOGY

Ninety-nine requests were collected from students (in their early twenties) from various disciplines in a Malaysian public university, namely, information technology, sciences, engineering, creative arts, social science, cognitive science, and economics and business. The students were enrolled in an English proficiency course, *English in the Media*, which taught students the workings of media texts such as magazine and newspaper articles, as well as advertisements and Letters to the Editor. The 165 students were from five classes taught by the same lecturer over two semesters in the year 2016. They had either scored Band 4 or above in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) or gone through one or two pre-requisite English proficiency courses in their university. Those with MUET Band 4 are English users who have a satisfactory command of the language and the ability to function satisfactorily in the language with occasional inaccuracies (Majlis Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2016).

The requests were produced in response to a set induction task in an English class on the persuasive appeal of advertisements. For this task, small pieces of paper were distributed to students and they were asked to write something to persuade their lecturer to end her class early. The students took about five minutes to write their requests before handing in the pieces of paper. Most of them were a one-sentence request, and some were phrases (“hungry”) The single word “hungry” means “I am hungry and need to go to eat. Can you please let us go earlier?” In writing about the intention of users when posting, Berlanga, García-García and Victoria (2013) stated that “no matter how short the message is, it can still

be rhetorical” and persuade (p. 131). Immediately after the requests were collected from the students, the lecturer typed the requests on the desktop computer and these were projected onto the screen for the subsequent teaching of persuasive appeal using ethos, logos and pathos. These were the responses analysed for the present study.

The lesson continued with the three types of advertising techniques used to convince consumers to buy a product/service and ensure that they are aware of the brand. Examples of advertisements were used to illustrate persuasion using logic (e.g., using inaccurate information), emotional appeal (e.g., using persuasive language such as sensory and emotion-rich words to satisfy needs and solve problems) and endorsement by famous people to show a positive image of the company. See Appendix for examples.

Analysis of rhetorical appeals in the students’ requests occurred through several stages. The requests were initially read to check whether the framework of analysis was adequate for coding purposes. One of the unclear elements which needed to be clarified through a closer reading of the literature on Aristotle’s means of persuasion was ethos – does it refer to only the credibility of the speaker, or does ethos also include mention of the audience’s credibility (as a way of showing deference to the audience)? In the analysis, both were considered as examples of appealing to ethos. Table 1 shows the framework for analysing persuasion in students’ requests based on Aristotle’s conception of rhetoric. Where relevant, the source of the information is indicated. Where reference sources are not indicated, this means that the information is derived from the analysis of data in the present study.

TABLE 1. Framework for analysing persuasive appeals in student requests based on Aristotle’s conception of rhetoric

Appeal	Definition	Indicators	Example
Pathos	Appeal to emotions	Mentioning the feelings, needs, values and desires of the target ¹ or themselves. Confessing, regretting and making pleas ² . Promising, praising, and thanking ² . Using emotive words and adjectives to manipulate feelings. Mentioning values and either their own or the target’s emotional state in order to persuade.	Hi madam, did you get enough sleep last night? You look so tired but still you are the prettiest ever. What if you end class early today so that you can rest?
Logos	Appeal to reason	Using argumentation, logic, warrants/justification, claims, data and evidence/examples. Questioning and wondering ² . Using factual language when mentioning behaviours and actions in order to reason. May use linguistic links such as initially, later and finally for logical reasoning ³ .	Afternoon Dr, I think we should end class early today because the tutorial room is too hot. There is accumulation of carbon dioxide here which makes the temperature rise.
Ethos	Appeal to the credibility and trustworthiness of the speaker or the audience	<u>Positive sense</u> Appealing to their similarities with their audience ¹ . Showing deference or respect for the rights and feelings of the target ¹ . Using ingratiation, expertise and self-criticism ¹ .	We should end class early today because it would show that this note of persuasion has worked and indirectly shown that Dr XYZ’s class of teaching us persuasiveness is very effective.

Negative sense

Using reverse accusation, denying and negation of the credibility and trustworthiness of the target².

Using descriptors that highlight positive or negative attributes of the target.

Note on source of information:

¹Higgins and Walker (2012)

²Al-Momani (2014)

³Mshvenieradze (2013)

Further analysis was carried out to determine the frequency of self- or other-focus in students' requests indicated by the use of personal pronouns and references in order to establish how linguistic markers serve to express the three types of appeal: logos, ethos and pathos. The use of singular first person pronouns (I, my) showed the focus on the student whereas the use of the second person pronoun (you, your) and direct references to the lecturer showed the focus on the lecturer. The frequency for the use of the plural third person pronoun (we, us, our) was also counted but the referents could be the students themselves (exclusive-we) or both the lecturer and students (inclusive-we). Hence, it is presumptuous to assume that the referents are both the lecturer and students as a portion of the use of "we" and "our" could refer to the students themselves. The frequencies should be regarded as over-representing the focus on both the students and lecturer. Despite this limitation, the results on the use of the plural first person pronouns (we, us, our) are presented to differentiate it from the use of the singular first and second person pronouns which have obviously different referents.

The analysis does not include the use of pronouns or references in greetings and expressions of thanks (e.g., Hi Dr, Thank you). Some students used "Madam" or "Dr" in the place of the second personal pronoun (you) due to carryover of politeness practices in Malay speech where it is rude to refer to the interactant directly as "*awak*" or "*anda*" (you), especially when they are of higher status. These were counted as referring to the lecturer, and included in the same category as the use of the second person pronouns.

In this paper, the excerpts are referred to using a code, for example, G2/27 refers to Student Number 27 from Group 2.

RESULTS

Altogether 180 appeals were produced by 165 students in this study. Table 2 shows that a majority of the students used one type of rhetorical appeal to persuade (151 students or 91.52%). A small portion of students used two types of rhetorical appeal (13 or 7.88%) and only one student (0.60%) appealed to pathos, logos and ethos to achieve his persuasive intent. In this results section, the three types of persuasive appeals are described before the frequency of use is presented. The students' requests given as examples have not been edited for language correctness to retain the authenticity of the data.

TABLE 2. Frequency and percentage of students with one to three types of appeals in their requests

	One type of appeal in request		Two types of appeal in request		Three types of appeal in request		Total
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Number of students	151	91.52	13	7.88	1	0.60	165
Number of appeals produced	151	83.89	26	14.44	3	1.67	180

(1) Appeals to ethos, logos and pathos in student informal requests

This sub-section provides examples of the university students' appeal to pathos, logos and ethos to persuade their lecturer to end the class early.

To make an appeal to pathos, some students talked about their own pathetic condition (hot, hungry, sleepy) to get their lecturer's compassion (Excerpt 1). Some other students chose to focus on their lecturer's condition – either the positive (pretty) or the negative (tired, sweaty) to get her to end class early (Excerpts 2 and 3). Examples of appeal to pathos are as follows:

Excerpts 1-3:

1. I'm so **sleepy**. (G2/27)
2. Hi madam, **did you get enough sleep last night? You look so tired but still you are the prettiest ever**. What if you end class early today so that **you can rest?** (G2/4)
3. Dear Prof, **you look so good** in your baju kurung and **you should not ruin it by sitting in a room without air conditioner for a long time period**. Later, you'll start **sweating and become uncomfortable**. I suggest we end the class early so **you'll stay gorgeous and perhaps miss the chance to get stress over uncomfortable situation**. Love, your student. (G14/34)

Excerpts 1 to 3 illustrate appeal to pathos where the students mentioned their own emotional or physical state or that of their lecturer to persuade their lecturer to end the class early. Analysis of the student requests showed that the students were more likely to persuade by manipulating their lecturer's feelings using compliments and expressions of concern rather than highlighting their own negative conditions to elicit their lecturer's sympathy.

In contrast, appeal to logos (reason) mainly focuses on the undesirable classroom condition, and their busy schedule to justify ending the class early. Excerpts 4-8 show examples of appeal to logos:

Excerpts 4-8:

4. Afternoon Dr, I think we should end class early today because **the tutorial room is too hot. There are accumulation of carbon dioxide here which rise the temperature I need to see my supervisor**. (G14/9)
5. **I have a full timetable on Tuesday start from 8 am to 6 pm except 2pm to 4pm free**. Could you please end the class earlier so that I have time to have my lunch before 12pm class start? (G15/16)
6. **Brain active just until 11.30 – shortened doesn't mean empty**. (G2/11)
7. **Because my next class will be started at 12 and even 1 min late, the lecturer might lock all doors**. (G15/23)
8. **Because we already know how to make advertisement and what should have in a good advertisement**. (G11/14)

In Excerpt 4, the student offered a scientific explanation for the unbearable classroom conditions whereas another student talked about her packed schedule resulting her in not having time to eat (Excerpt 5). The details of the schedule were given as evidence to support the argument. Attention span and the need to be punctual for the next class were also used as reasons to argue for a shorter lesson (Excerpts 6 and 7). Undesirable classroom conditions and a busy schedule were common justifications used by the students but only a handful stated that they did not need a long lesson as they had achieved the learning outcomes of the unit (Excerpt 8). The language used for appealing to reason is factual. Appeal to logos is also

characterised by mentioning of actions and activities in a factual manner because the persuasion relies on logic rather than manipulation of feelings.

There were only a few instances of appeal to ethos in the data set. The students described their lecturer as educated (Excerpt 9), effective (Excerpts 10 and 11) and interesting (Excerpt 12). In Excerpt 12, the first part of the request was an appeal to pathos (emotions) but the second part is an appeal to ethos, essentially targeting the lecturer's ego. The students knew that it made their lecturer feel good when told that their lecturers were good at giving lectures. Highlighting the lecturer's good reputation among students would surely soften their lecturer's heart and they would get their request granted, which is an early class dismissal. However, these appeals cannot be categorised as appeals to pathos because the content of their appeal is the character or professional persona of their lecturer. Appeal to ethos works in advertisements by associating products with famous personalities and celebrities, and it is their reputation that sells the products and not the scientific quality of the product.

Excerpts 9-13:

9. Dr this classroom is very hot. **It's not good for an attractive and educated person like yourself.** Let's end it early today. (G6/19)
10. We should end class early today because **it would show that this note of persuasion has worked and indirectly shown that Dr Ting's class of teaching us persuasiveness is very effective.** (G6/30)
11. **Dr XYZ you are the best lecturer in UNIMAS.** (G2/26)
12. Hi and good afternoon pretty Prof, you look stunning in your kebaya. **I'm always look forward to enter your class every week because I love the way you give lecture.** I hope you can end the class early today (love). (G14/10)
13. Dr XYZ, I really hope class will be end early today and **I want to argue about this with you but I realised I love you (as a student) so I decided to agree with what you said until you feel utterly satisfied with my care.** Then class will be end early. Thank you. :) (G15/4)

Excerpt 13 is an exceptional example of how an appeal is made to ethos. Here, the student showed deference or respect for the rights and feelings of her lecturer by explicitly mentioning that she respected her lecturer and would comply with her decision. By explicitly expressing recognition of the lecturer's higher status and power in the class (to decide whether the class would end early), she hoped that her lecturer would feel ingratiated and grant her request. This student could be showing deference or respect for the rights and feelings of the lecturer. This is because the instruction for the task was to write something to persuade their lecturer to end the class early. She could have read the underlying meaning as the lecturer wanting to end the class early and seeking their cooperation to do so.

In this sub-section, I have shown how the content of the student requests are analysed to identify the types of rhetorical appeals used by the students to persuade their lecturer. The content may be facts, emotional states or the target's reputation – giving rise to different types of appeal, namely, appeal to logos, pathos and ethos respectively. The next shows the prevalence of these three types of appeals in student requests.

(2) Prevalence of persuasion strategy in student requests

Table 3 shows the frequency of appeals to pathos, logos and ethos in student requests. Appeal to pathos was the most popular (55.00%), followed by appeal to logos (41.67%). The students hardly used the ethos appeal. The results concur with the Al-Momani's (2014) results on the

preference for pathos appeal in complaint letters written by Jordanian university students. The participants of the present study are also university students of similar age. However, in the present study the students made informal requests in a class setting as part of a set induction activity – unlike the students in Al-Momani’s study who were asked to produce a written formal request. Despite differences in sociocultural backgrounds, formality of request and mode of communication, emotional appeal was the most common persuasion strategy.

TABLE 3. Frequency of appeals to pathos, logos and ethos in student requests

Type of appeal	Frequency	Percentage
Pathos	99	55.00
Logos	75	41.67
Ethos	6	3.33
Total	180	100.00

Table 4 shows the frequency of self- or other-focus in student requests indicated by the use of personal pronouns and references. The results showed similar frequencies for self-focus (180 instances of singular first person pronoun referring to the students) and other-focus (177 instances of the second person pronoun referring to their lecturer). However, there is a clear difference in that self-focus is frequent in appeals to logos (reason) whereas other-focus is frequent in appeal to pathos (emotion); both of which total 125 instances.

TABLE 4. Frequency of requests with focus on students and lecturer

Type of appeal	Students (I, my)		Lecturer (you, your)		Students and lecturer ¹ (we, our)		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	% ²	Freq	%
Pathos	48	23.30	125	60.68	33	16.02	206	100.00
Logos	125	60.10	45	21.63	38	18.27	208	100.00
Ethos	7	38.89	7	38.89	4	22.22	18	100.00
Total	180		177		75		432	

Note:

¹The frequencies are based on the use of the plural first person pronoun (we, us, our) which may refer to only the students (exclusive-we) or the lecturer and students (inclusive-we). Admittedly, it is presumptuous to assume that the referents are both the lecturer and students in the labelling of this table as a portion of the instances could have only the student as the referent. Hence, the frequencies may over-represent the focus on both the students and lecturer.

²The percentages (%) are calculated across the rows and show the percentage of the use of a type of personal pronoun out of the total number of pronouns used to make a particular type of persuasive appeal

When the students made emotional appeals, the content of their persuasion revolved around their lecturer. The student used the second person pronoun (60.68%) more than the singular first person pronoun (21.63%) and the plural first person pronoun (18.27%) combined. Two common examples of requests that appeal to the emotion are “I’m hungry” and “Dr XYZ, today you look beautiful”. The former highlights the student as the subject, and appeals to their lecturer’s sense of compassion to end the class early so that they could gratify their need for food. The latter highlights the lecturer as the subject and takes the form of a compliment so that the lecturer is predisposed towards granting their requests – almost like one good turn for another. Praises can be used to manipulate feelings and form rapport with the target (Al-Momani, 2014). In comparison, more students focused on their lecturer as the subject of their emotional appeal (125 instances of “you” and “your”) rather than themselves (48 instances of “I” and “my”, Table 4). This suggests that in the students’ view flattery may work better than seeking compassion. There were some students who used the plural first person pronoun (we, our, us) to refer to themselves and their lecturer. Through

this, the students showed identification with the lecturer who is also suffering in the hot classroom (e.g., “Doc, little bit hot here. Hehe ... let’s make it short and simple then finish class early”, G2/22). The phrase “let’s” (let us) showed that the student was identifying with their lecturer. However, the use of “we” can signify the student as a group, and excludes the lecturer, as shown in this request: “Dear Dr XYZ, I’m sure that you’re tired today. So does us [do we, sic]... How if we end class early today? So that we can have some rest and lunch before start another schedule for today” (G14/13). The plural first person pronoun “we” was intentionally used in this student’s request instead of “I” and “my”, as if the student was speaking on behalf of all the students in the class to strengthen the request.

When students made an appeal to logos in their requests, they used the singular first person pronoun (I, my) more (60.10%) than the second person pronoun (you, your) (21.63%) as a deictic (Table 4). This indicates the self-focus of logical reasoning. The students are the subject of their requests. For example, “Because (1) I’m hungry, (2) need to get ready to see my supervisor later at 4pm” (G14/18). Note the use of the singular first person pronouns (I, my) in the argument. Sometimes the students appeared to be speaking on behalf of their coursemates, indicated by the use of the plural first person pronoun (we), which accounts for 18.27% of the total number of pronouns used in appeals to logos. For instance, “The reason that we should end our class early because most of the student in this class still didn’t take a breakfast in the morning and we also can have an early lunch” (G15/28). The first “we”, in this case, is suggestive of inclusive-we which refers to both the lecturer and her students. The second “we” was an exclusive-we with students as the referent.

Generally, the students did not appeal to the credibility and trustworthiness of their lecturer (Higgins & Walker, 2012). For the six requests containing an appeal to ethos (Table 3), the self- and other-focus in the requests were similar (Table 4). The students were not in the position to appeal to their similarities with their lecturer to use this strategy to persuade.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study on rhetorical appeals in students’ informal requests gave rise to two points of discussion. First, rhetorical appeals are not only used for persuasion in presidential speeches but also in simple requests by students. Aristotle had identified three types of persuasive appeals (logos, pathos, ethos) and research has shown that these rhetorical appeals were used in combination in addresses delivered at United Nations general assemblies (Mori, 2016), and in argumentative essays (Uysal, 2012), letters of requests and complaints (Chakorn, 2006; Karatepe, 2016). When students were asked to write down an informal request for their lecturer to end the class early, they also used Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals but most of the students used only one type of appeal in their request. Only 14 out of 165 students used more than one type of appeal in combination while a majority relied on one type of appeal. Inevitably, using more than one type of appeal may be more persuasive because if one strategy does not work, another might. Rationale appeals target the consumers’ functional and practical needs whereas emotional appeals target their psychological needs (Bovee & Arens, 1992, as cited in Nair & Ndubisi, 2015, p. 140). Although there is a clear demarcation in the needs appealed to, there are no conventions limiting the appeal to one type.

In the present study, the need is practical which is to have an early class dismissal in view of the hot classroom condition and busy schedule of the students (and lecturer’s, although not announced to students). However, to achieve this practical end, the students need not restrict themselves to using logical reasoning. It is perhaps more persuasive if the request addresses the psychological need for the lecturer to feel good. After receiving the compliments of her students on her attire or after knowing how hungry, tired and sleepy they

were, she might be more predisposed towards granting their request. In fact, a few students were capable of using an ethos appeal by assuring their lecturer that she was good enough to teach them what they needed to learn in a shorter time and some of them had already mastered the required skills. Most of the studies on persuasive discourse have shown that rhetorical appeals were often used in combination, although one type may predominate such as pathos in advertisements (Nair & Ndubisi, 2015; Winn, 2000), political discourse (Androniciuc, 2016; Mshvenieradze, 2013; Mori, 2016) and social media communication (Emanuel et al., 2015; Fife, 2010). In the context of courtroom discourse, May (1979, p. 245) stated that there is “a progression of intensity from logical argumentation to ethical delectation to pathetic persuasion, in rhetorical terms, from logos to ethos to pathos”. In authentic business letters of request, Chakorn (2006) found evidence of three types of appeal in letters written in English by Thai speakers although the letters of the native English speakers were strong on logos. Based on Chakorn’s (2006) findings, it seems apparent that a combination of appeals may work better in the Asian setting but this conjecture needs to be verified in further studies on formal and informal requests made in various authentic settings.

The second point of discussion which emerged from the findings of this study is the need to teach university students persuasive discourse through collaborative reasoning. Many of the requests were isolated thoughts, for example, “I’m sleepy”. There is no reasoning to lead to the need to finish class early. Another example “Brain active just until 11.30 – shortened doesn’t mean empty” shows two unlinked thoughts. The audience has to read between the lines and fill in the blank on the intended message. Extended writing as shown in some of the longer excerpts in the paper were rare in the dataset. The ability to supply facts does not mean that the students know how to use the facts to reason. Similarly, the ability to use emotive words and adjectives or mention feelings and values does not mean that the students know how to package these into a discourse that can manipulate the feelings of the audience. It can be said that in the present study, the context filled in the gaps in the persuasive discourse. Argumentative discourse is difficult to grasp, even for Americans because it involves higher order thinking (Reznitskaya & Anderson, 2002, p. 319, as cited in Clark et al., 2003, p. 183). In the context of a literature lesson, Clark et al. (2003) believes that collaborative reasoning enables students of different abilities to learn to think in a reasoned manner to take account of diverse views in response to their readings. The collaborative reasoning approach advocated by Clark et al. (2003) consists of seven steps: (1) students reading a story; (2) teacher posing a central question concerning a dilemma faced by a character in the story; (3) students freely explaining their positions on the central question; (4) students expanding on their ideas, adding reasons and supporting evidence from the story and everyday experience; (5) students challenging each other’s thinking and ways of reasoning; (6) polling of stance; and (7) the teacher and students reviewing the discussion and make suggestions on how to improve future discussions. Clark et al. (2003) found evidence that students who have participated in collaborative reasoning sessions wrote longer persuasive essays, with more supporting reasons, use of text evidence, counterarguments and rebuttals. In teaching argument writing, it is also important to teach students how to distinguish between claims and evidence. In Step 4 of the collaborative reasoning, Ferlazzo and Hull-Sypniewski’s (2014) suggestion of providing good and bad examples of claims and evidence for students to examine can be applied. The students can be asked to explain the features that make them good and bad examples (e.g., specific and debatable claims, relevant and sufficient evidence). By teaching persuasive discourse using the collaborative reasoning approach, university students can learn to be more persuasive and the skill is useful in both academic and professional contexts.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that pathos (emotional appeal) was the most popular persuasion strategy in informal requests by university students. The emotional appeal had an other-focus targeting their lecturer, signalled by the frequent use of the second personal pronouns (you, your). The emotional appeals mostly took the form of compliments, with the hope that this would ingratiate their lecturer to grant their request. Logos (rational appeal) was the second most popular rhetorical appeal in the students' informal requests. Logos appeals had a self-focus, indicated by the frequent use of the singular first personal pronoun (I, my). Students reasoned using their heavy workload and undesirable physical classroom conditions to ask their lecturer to end the class earlier than usual. Appeal to ethos (credibility) was seldom used. Aristotle's rhetorical appeals were seldom used in combination. The study showed that, depending on student, emotional appeal and logical reasoning were persuasive for informal requests. If students used emotions and rationality to persuade their lecturer, it is likely that these two types of appeal would also work on them.

However, further studies are needed to investigate the effects of rhetorical appeals in formal and informal requests in other contexts. In the workplace context, for example, requests may take the form of a letter of appeal against a decision or a working paper to request a change of policy or procedures. Although pathos was used more than logos in the student requests in this study, the effectiveness of the rhetorical appeals needs to be studied by researching the reactions of the recipients of the requests as well as the prevalence of the three types of rhetorical appeals as used in formal and informal requests taking place in authentic settings. The language in which the requests are made is another interesting line of inquiry as language carries culturally specific ways of thinking that may influence how requests are made.

This study has developed the field by operationalising Aristotle's rhetorical appeals in the context of requests. Aristotle's principles of persuasion were conceptual and researchers (cited in the Introduction section) have constructed their own analysis framework to suit their studies. However, they did not offer much methodological details in their papers to show how the three rhetorical appeals are operationalised. There is also little information available on the issues faced in using Aristotle's principles of persuasion. In view of the situation, for the present study an exhaustive search of the literature was made to synthesise an initial framework for analysis, which was made more concrete during the analysis of the informal requests. A framework with operational definitions of the three rhetorical appeals is crucial because there is a thin line between the types of appeals. An utterance can be classified as an appeal to logos based on the surface features (i.e., use of numbers and logic) but when the utterance is analysed in the context of the surrounding chunk of text, the numbers and logic can be seen as a means to make an emotional impact. What the present study revealed is that, intention of persuasion can be read into the utterances if the researcher is not careful and therefore, it is necessary to focus on the linguistic indicators of the rhetorical appeals (Berlanga & Martínez, 2010). For example, the use of emotive words and values to appeal to pathos, the use of factual language and linguistic connectors to appeal to logos, and the use of positive or negative descriptors of a person to appeal to ethos. It is hoped that the output of this study, a framework for analysing persuasive appeals in requests based on Aristotle's conception of rhetoric, can advance research on persuasiveness of various types of communication by facilitating comparison of findings across studies and disciplines.

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APPENDIX A

Examples of advertisements were used to illustrate persuasion using logos, pathos and ethos

Advertisement using the logos appeal:



Source: <https://philosophy-culminating-task.weebly.com/unit-1.html>

Advertisement using the pathos appeal:



Source: http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=1484

Advertisement using the ethos appeal:



Source: <http://malaysia-contest.blogspot.my/2010/09/simplysiti-berhari-raya-bersama-dato.html>

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