Nonfluencies and Distraction Theory: A Proattitudinal Approach

1984

Dwight L. Bledsoe

University of Central Florida

Find similar works at: http://stars.library.ucf.edu/rtd

University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

Part of the Communication Commons

STARS Citation


This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact lee.dotson@ucf.edu.
NONFLUENCIES AND DISTRACTION THEORY –
A PROATTITUDINAL APPROACH

BY

DWIGHT L. BLEDSOE
B.S., University of Central Florida, 1983

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree in Communication
in the Graduate Studies Program of The College of Arts and Sciences
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
1984
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfluencies and Credibility.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distraction.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfluencies and Distraction.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEDURE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Response</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications For Future Research</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Credibility

For more than three decades scholars have been studying the effects of source credibility on the persuasiveness of speakers. Research has confirmed that persons perceived to be highly credible are more persuasive than those who have low credibility, (See, for example, Hovland and Weiss, 1952; Kelman and Hovland 1952; Choo 1964; and Hill 1963). In their series of classic studies, Hovland and his associates found no difference in the amount of factual information acquired by subjects as a function of source credibility. In their 1952 study, Hovland and Weiss found a high correlation between credibility and opinion change. In a subsequent experiment, Hovland found that fairness and trustworthiness of the source was more closely related to attitude change than the other components of source credibility, (Hovland, Janis, and Kelly, 1953).

In summary, researchers have found that the source with high credibility is more persuasive than a low credible source.
Nonfluencies and Credibility

Other communication researchers have investigated the effects of the proficiency of a speaker on his/her rating of credibility. Miller and Hewgill (1964) utilized three constructs to determine source credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism. Berlo, Lemert and Mertz (1951) determined in their factor analysis that these three constructs of credibility account for over 97 percent of the variability. Miller and Hewgill (1964) found that nonfluence adversely affected the ratings of a speaker's competence and dynamism, but had no effect on perceived trustworthiness.

Subsequent research examined the effect of variation in speaker's nonfluencies upon audience ratings of attitudes toward the speech topic and speaker's credibility (Sereno and Hawkins, 1967). Their replication of the Miller and Hewgill (1964) study yielded similar results. The authors concluded that trustworthiness was the stabilizing influence for persuasion. Since the rating of trustworthiness did not significantly differ between the various levels of nonfluencies, attitudes did not significantly differ.

To summarize, research has confirmed that speaker's nonfluencies adversely affect ratings of competence and dynamism, but do not affect perceptions of trustworthiness. Since trustworthiness levels were maintained, nonfluencies were reported to have no effect on persuasion.
Distraction

An alternative explanation for the lack of impact of nonfluencies on persuasion in counterattitudinal messages is offered by the distraction theory. Festinger and Maccoby (1964) demonstrated that distraction increases acceptance of a message that is counter to the listener's beliefs. The researchers explained that a person tends to engage in active counterarguing when confronted with a persuasive message with which he or she disagrees, and that distraction would inhibit such counterarguing, thereby weakening resistance to the message.

Pursuing the study of persuasion and distraction, Petty, et. al., found that increasing distraction enhanced persuasion for a message that was readily counterarguable, but reduced persuasion for a message that was hard to counterargue (Petty, Wells, and Brock, 1976). They also demonstrated that when a message is expected to elicit predominantly favorable thoughts, the effect of distraction is to interfere with these favorable thoughts and decrease message acceptance. This study, and similar ones, have shown that the crucial mediator between distraction and immediate attitude change is the recipient's dominant cognitive response to the persuasive message (Osterhouse & Brock, 1970; Kiesler & Mathog, 1968).

Many different methods of distraction have been tested by researchers. Some researchers have used visual distractions such
as irrelevant films (Festinger and Maccoby, 1964), panels of flashing lights (Osterhouse and Brock, 1970), and slides (Lammers, 1982). Other researchers have used auditory distractions such as recorded music (Regan and Cheng, 1973), static on the message tape (Silverman and Regula, 1968), television/teletype noises (Jerome, 1979), and extraneous projector noise (Dougherty, 1983). In general, these studies support the contention that distraction enhances persuasion for a message that is easily counterarguable, but reduces persuasion for a message that is difficult to counterargue.

In summary, distraction research has indicated that the most important determinant of the persuasiveness of a message is the primary cognitive response to a message. Distraction, because it diverts attention from the message and thus requires a greater concentration by the recipient, inhibits the dominant cognitive response to that message.

Nonfluency and Distraction

As stated in a previous section, research on nonfluencies and persuasion indicates that increased nonfluencies neither inhibit attitude change message nor adversely affects ratings of speaker's trustworthiness. Distraction serves to facilitate acceptance of counterattitudinal messages only when the distraction is not so severe as to inhibit reception of the arguments contained in the message.
The findings in distraction research indicate that in a counterattitudinal message distraction serves to inhibit counterarguments and thus increase message acceptance. Distraction also inhibits positive thoughts during a proattitudinal message, thereby decreasing message acceptance.

Previous research efforts have pursued nonfluencies from credibility and attitude change perspectives but not with regard to distraction. Drawing from these previously separate areas of research on distraction and credibility, Cluett and Bledsoe (1984) sought to explain the Sereno and Hawkins (1967) and Miller and Hewgill (1964) findings on the basis that nonfluencies themselves acted as distractors. Cluett and Bledsoe (1984) replicated portions of the study by Sereno and Hawkins (1967), and added the dependent measures of cognitive thought listing, effort, and argument recall from Petty, et. al. (1976). A counterattitudinal message that was easy to counterargue was utilized for this research. Results indicated that as nonfluencies were increased, counterarguments decreased, thus persuasion remained the same despite lowered ratings of the speaker's competence and dynamism. The study strongly supported the distraction theory explanation.

Since this research was limited only to counterattitudinal messages, it failed to answer questions about nonfluencies as distractions in proattitudinal messages. If nonfluencies do act as a source of distraction, acceptance of a proattitudinal message should decrease as nonfluencies increase. Furthermore,
the numbers of positive thoughts listed should decrease with varying levels of nonfluencies since the dominant cognitive response to a proattitudinal message should be favorable.

The purpose of the present study was to test the effects of nonfluencies on attitudes toward source and issue following a proattitudinal message.

On the basis of the previous research, the present investigation will test the following hypotheses.

\( H_1 \) -- As the number of nonfluencies increase, attitude change will decrease.

\( H_2 \) -- As the number of nonfluencies increase, positive thought listing will decrease.

\( H_3 \) -- As the number of nonfluencies increase, irrelevant thought listing will increase.

\( H_4 \) -- As the number of nonfluencies increase, perceptions of speaker-competence and dynamism will decrease significantly.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were based on the results of Petty, et al. (1976), who found that in a proattitudinal message, as the nonfluencies increased, positive thoughts listed were decreased, irrelevant thoughts increased, and attitude change was decreased.

Hypothesis 3 was based on the results of Cluett and Bledsoe's (1984) research. The two authors found that the numbers of irrelevant thoughts increased significantly with an increase in the level of nonfluencies.
Hypothesis 4 was predicated on the results of Sereno and Hawkins (1967) in which ratings of competence and dynamism were adversely affected by varying levels of nonfluencies.

Sereno and Hawkins (1967) and Cluett and Bledsoe (1984) found that ratings of speaker's trustworthiness was not affected by increased nonfluencies. Based on their results, it was anticipated that there would be no significant change in the speaker's ratings of trustworthiness.
METHODOLOGY

A 448-word speech favoring increased state support at Florida universities and community colleges was developed as the stimulus for this study. Nonfluencies were manipulated across three levels using ratios suggested by Sereno and Hawkins (1967). The message was tape-recorded under three different conditions:

1. Zero (0) nonfluencies per 1000 words;
2. 50 nonfluencies per 1000 words; and
3. 100 nonfluencies per 1000 words.

Nonfluencies were operationalized according to Sereno and Hawkins (1967).

1. "Ah" -- The sound /ə/ or /ʌ/ inserted between two words of speech. For example, "We need to offer... 'ah' better placement..."

2. Sentence correction -- A correction in the choice of word within a sentence. For example, "No funds have been allotted... allocated to improve..."

3. Repetition -- The serial repetition of a word. For example, "Our graduates have... have earned the right..."

Nonfluencies were assigned the following percentages from each category: 50% - "Ah"; 25% - sentence correction; and 25% - repetition.
Five dependent variables were included in the measuring instrument. **Persuasion** was assessed by subject attitude toward the tuition increase and rated on a 15-interval scale with 1 meaning "completely disagree" and 15 meaning "completely agree."

**Speaker credibility** was measured using 12 semantic differential scales, four for each dimension of speaker credibility (see Figure 1).

**Cognitive responses** were rated using a procedure employed by Petty, et. al. (1975). Subjects had 2½ minutes to record their thoughts immediately after listening to the message. The subjects rated the cognitions as favorable to the message (+), unfavorable (−), or irrelevant (0). Two independent judges also rated subject cognitions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Experienced - Inexperienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expert - Ignorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trained - Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competent - Incompetent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Just - Unjust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kind - Cruel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admirable - Contemptible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honest - Dishonest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>Aggressive - Meek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bold - Timid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energetic - Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extroverted - Introverted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Factors and Scales for Source Credibility

*Recall* was measured by subjects listing as many of the nine message arguments recalled within a two-minute time period. The same judges rated the lists independently, discounting argument repetitions and statements not actually made in the message. Subjects self-reported on the level of *effort* expended on the task. This was recorded on a seven-interval semantic differential scale: NO EFFORT to GREAT EFFORT.

The acceptable level of significance for this study was set at $p < .05$. 
PROCEDURE

Subjects were 111 undergraduate students enrolled in four basic speech courses at the University of Central Florida. The students were divided into four groups: 36 in the control group, and 25 in each of the nonfluency treatment groups. The control subjects did not receive the treatment and completed the attitude measure only. The remaining groups heard one of the three taped messages and completed the five dependent measures.
RESULTS

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on each dependent measure. Significant findings were probed using the Newman-Keuls procedure to reveal differences between cells. (See Table 1.)

Persuasion

Hypothesis 1 predicted that as the number of nonfluencies were increased the attitude change toward the acceptance of message would decrease. The results of the ANOVA indicated that the control group's mean attitude differed significantly from the three treatment groups ($F = 8.86, 3/111 \text{ df}, p < .001$). Individual comparisons showed that the zero nonfluency group mean attitude differed significantly from the control group mean ($p < .001$), the 50 nonfluency group means differed from the control group mean ($p < .01$), and the 100 nonfluency group mean also differed ($p < .05$) from the control group. All groups differed significantly from each other ($p < .05$). Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Credibility

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the speaker's ratings of competence and dynamism would decrease as the level of nonfluencies were increased. The results of the ANOVA and probe
TABLE 1
A COMPARISON OF GROUP MEANS ON DEPENDENT MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERSUASION</td>
<td>14.12</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>8.86*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>18.85</td>
<td>28.08*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>14.92</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>21.15</td>
<td>12.18*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COGNITIVE RESPONSES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive (+)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>3.12*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (-)</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant (0)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument Recall</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.87*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

NOTE: 1. Within each row, means with common sub-scripts are not significantly different at p < .05).
2. Higher scores indicate greater persuasion.
3. Higher scores indicate less favorable ratings on credibility factors.
by the Newman-Keuls indicated that competence ($F = 28.08$, 2/75 df, $p < .001$) and dynamism ($F = 12.17$, 2/75 df, $p < .001$) were negatively affected, confirming Hypothesis 2. As expected, trustworthiness ($F = 00.60$) was unaffected by the treatments.
Cognitive Response

Hypothesis 3 predicted that there would be a decrease in positive thoughts listed with increased levels of nonfluencies. The results of the ANOVA indicated that positive thought listing varied significantly ($F = 3.12, 2/75 \text{ df}, p < .05$). Probing with the Newman-Keuls procedure revealed that the 0 nonfluency group had a significantly greater number of positive thoughts than the 50 nonfluency group ($p < .05$), but not the 100 nonfluency group. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that there would be an increase of irrelevant thoughts as the level of nonfluencies increased. The results of the study show that irrelevant thought listing did not vary significantly ($F = 2.49, 2/75 \text{ df}, p < .07$). Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Since the message utilized in the present research was proattitudinal, few negative thoughts were expected and few were received ($F = 0.68$).

Argument recall varied significantly ($F = 3.87, 2/75 \text{ df}, p < .05$). The results indicated a significant difference between the 0 nonfluency group and the other two nonfluency groups ($p < .05$) but no difference between the 50 and 100 nonfluency groups.

Effort. There was no significant difference in reported subject effort ($F = 0.87$).
DISCUSSION

The proattitudinal content of the message was demonstrated by the relationship of the mean average attitude of the control 11.17 (scale median = 7.5) to the three treatment groups. Each group mean was positioned more towards the high scale 15 - "completely agree" pole, than the control. As predicted, with the proattitudinal message persuasion appeared to be inversely related to the numbers of nonfluencies used. As the number of nonfluencies increased, attitude change decreased.

Scores for the three constructs of credibility were produced by summing the four bipolar semantic scales for each construct and then comparing the three treatment groups. In this case, the higher the mean score the more unfavorable the rating.

Ratings of speaker's competence and dynamism were adversely affected as predicted. The more nonfluencies used the lower the ratings.

The ratings of trustworthiness did not change significantly with varying levels of nonfluencies. These findings correlate well with previous credibility and nonfluency studies, (Miller and Hewgill, 1964 and Sereno and Hawkins, 1967).

Although supportive of the hypothesis, the present results were not compelling in that the analysis of variance for positive cognitions were not significant at all levels. It was predicted that as the number of nonfluencies increased, there would be a decrease in positive cognitive responses. This proved true in
the 0 nonfluency group as the means were compared to the 50 nonfluency group. This result lent support to the notion that nonfluencies act as distractors and inhibit dominant cognitive responses. However, there was no significant difference between the 100 nonfluency group and the other 2 groups. The difference between 0 nonfluency and 100 nonfluency groups fell just short of statistical significance but in the predicted direction (p < 0.08). The results lead the author to conclude that a larger sample would enhance the demonstrable effect of nonfluencies as distraction, and result in significance. The present research, however, does not conclusively demonstrate the validity of Hypothesis 3 at all levels of distraction. Consequently, present findings should only be generalized to the effects of moderate levels of nonfluencies and does not extend to higher levels.

It was predicted that irrelevant thought listing would increase as the level of nonfluencies increased. While the results indicated a trend in support of the hypothesis, the difference in the 2 groups was not statistically significant (p < .07).

This study was designed to test nonfluencies as distraction based on a previous study by Cluett and Bledsoe (1984). Both studies used the same speech with the same arguments. Each contained identical nonfluencies interspersed in the same places, and both were recorded by the same person. The only difference in the proattitudinal and counterattitudinal messages was the
source of revenue to make the improvements at the University. The proattitudinal message recommended using the Florida tourist tax and excess monies from the Governor's Slush Fund while the counterattitudinal message recommended a tuition increase. Table 2 is included as a summary of the results of the Cluett and Bledsoe (1984) study (see Table 2).

The interactive effect of the results of both studies lend support to the notion that nonfluencies act as distractors.

Research on counterattitudinal messages indicates that there should be no change in persuasion as the level of nonfluencies increases, while with proattitudinal messages increased nonfluencies should yield a reduction in persuasion as their level is increased. The results of the present study offers further support for this notion.

The results also indicated that as the level of nonfluencies increased, ratings of speaker's competence and dynamism were adversely affected, but ratings of trustworthiness remained unaffected.

These findings suggest that since distractions inhibit the dominant cognitive responses to a message, negative thought listing decreases in counterattitudinal messages, but does not affect proattitudinal messages. Positive cognitions in proattitudinal messages are adversely affected, but are unaffected in counterattitudinal messages.
# TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persuasion</strong></td>
<td>6.9&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>6.8&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>5.5&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.7&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>18.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence</strong></td>
<td>13.1&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>16.6&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>20.6&lt;sub&gt;c&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9.56*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>14.6&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>16.6&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>23.6&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive (+)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (-)</td>
<td>2.3&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>1.2&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>0.9&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant (0)</td>
<td>0.7&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.9&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.5&lt;sub&gt;c&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8.13*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Arguments     | 4.3    | 4.3    | 3.7    | --      | .04    |
| Effort        | 5.0    | 5.2    | 4.4    | --      | .29    |

* p<.05

**NOTE:**
1. Within each, means with common subscript are not significantly different (p<.05).
2. Higher scores indicate greater persuasion.
3. Higher scores indicate less favorable ratings on credibility factors.
In summary, while the investigations of the impact of nonfluencies on credibility and the studies on the effect of distraction on persuasiveness are established as viable topics for communication research, the present investigation contributes to the synthesis of research from both fields. Specifically, the results indicate that nonfluencies act as distractors and inhibit dominant cognitive responses to persuasive messages.

The findings that nonfluencies do not adversely affect the persuasiveness of some easy-to-counterargue messages and they do adversely affect the speaker's ratings of competence and dynamism, but not trustworthiness, have been established by numerous studies.

Research indicates that distraction enhances the persuasive impact of counterattitudinal messages that are easy to counterargue. Empirical expectations indicate that distraction during a proattitudinal message inhibit positive thoughts, thus decreasing the persuasiveness of the message.

This study confirms the results of previous research in credibility and distraction from a proattitudinal aspect. Cluett and Bledsoe (1984) confirmed results from both areas of research from a counterattitudinal perspective. The interactive effect of these two studies lend evidence to the notion that nonfluencies act as a source of distraction.
There are at least two practical implications of these findings. First, speakers using nonfluencies are not necessarily penalized with regard to immediate attitude change when delivering a counterattitudinal message. The results, however, do not indicate an advantage to the nonfluent speaker. Rather, they demonstrate that fluent and nonfluent speakers are equivalent in persuasion effects, but derive their effectiveness from different mediators.

Secondly, this study indicates that nonfluent speakers are derogated when presenting a proattitudinal message. Practically speaking, there seems to be few, if any, situations in which the message would be counterattitudinal to everyone. Conversely, the majority of messages are delivered to audiences that have a substantial cadre of persons who support the message position. Since fluent speakers exhibit equal persuasive power when compared with nonfluent speakers delivering counterattitudinal messages, and nonfluencies adversely affect persuasion for those listeners who agree with the speakers position, the speaker should prepare his or her delivery to generate maximum persuasiveness. As a matter of fact, counterattitudinal messages that present strong arguments that are hard to counterargue are adversely affected by nonfluencies. This further limits the occasions when nonfluencies are not detrimental to the persuasiveness of messages. Consequently, this research lends
support to the notion that care should be taken to deliver a speech in a clear and relatively error-free manner in order to achieve the greatest attitude change.

Implications For Future Research

Lack of significant results for every level of nonfluencies in positive thought listing suggests that a replication using larger samples is warranted. Additionally, changes could be made in the experimental design that would enhance external validity. For example, the present study restricted its investigation of nonfluencies to vocalized pauses, sentence corrections, and repetitions. Future research could broaden the application of the other forms of nonfluencies. The use of different speakers and topics would also enhance external validity. Finally, different rates of nonfluencies and alternative instruments for assessing persuasion would contribute to a broader understanding of the distraction phenomenon.

Communication research historically has been subdivided into many separate and distinct areas. As the base of knowledge has been expanded through empirical investigations, the diversity of many of these communication fields have become less apparent. Continued research using the high technological advances in measuring instruments and computer processing should demonstrate the inter-relatedness of previously segregated segments of communication research. One aspect of this trend is the present discovery of commonalities between the areas of nonfluencies/credibility and distraction. Hopefully, these areas will continue to be the focus of future research.
APPENDIX

Measuring Book

This booklet contains several sections. Please read the instructions carefully. Questions cannot be answered by the proctor. Each section is timed -- so please -- DO NOT PROCEED TO ANOTHER SECTION UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DO SO. A "BUFFER PAGE" is placed between each section to help prevent accidental viewing. Please ignore the buffer page once you have been told to proceed to the next section.

In the box below, please write in a number of at least four digits which you will remember. (Many people choose birthdates, portions of addresses or telephone numbers, social security number digits, etc. -- just a number that has some personal significance -- one you will remember.)

---------------------------------------------------------------

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR GENDER (circle one):  FEMALE  MALE

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

"State support for Florida universities and community colleges should be increased."

NOT  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11  12  13  14  15 COMPLETELY AT ALL  (circle the appropriate number)  AGREE

When you have completed this page, please turn to the next page and answer the questions by circling the appropriate choice.

PLEASE PROCEED TO THE NEXT PAGE (but do not go beyond until you are instructed to do so)---------------------------------------------

23
PLEASE DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SECTION.
We are now interested in what you were thinking about during the presentation of the message on the tape. You might have had ideas all favorable to the recommendation on the tape, all opposed, all irrelevant to the recommendation on the tape, or a mixture of the three. Any case is fine; simply list what it is you were thinking during the tape presentation. The next page contains the form we have prepared for you to use to record your thoughts and ideas. Simply write down the first idea you had in the first box, the second idea in the second box, etc. Please put only one idea or thought in a box. You should try to record only those ideas you were thinking during the message. Please state your thoughts and ideas as concisely as possible...a phrase is sufficient. IGNORE SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND PUNCTUATION. You will have 3 minutes to write your thoughts. We have deliberately provided more space than we think most people will need to insure that everyone would have plenty of room to write the ideas they had during the message. So don't worry if you don't fill every space. Just write down whatever your thoughts were during the message. Please be completely honest and list all of the thoughts that you had.

PLEASE PROCEED TO THE NEXT PAGE-----------------------------}
PLEASE LIST EACH THOUGHT IN A BOX BELOW

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

DO NOT PROCEED BEYOND THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.
We would like for you to turn back to the page on which you wrote your thoughts again. But this time, we would like you to rate each of the ideas you wrote down by a different way. In the left margin beside each idea that you wrote down, we would like to know if that idea was: (+) favorable toward the recommendation of the speaker; (-) unfavorable to the recommendation; or (0) neither favorable nor unfavorable (e.g., irrelevant). If the idea you wrote down seemed to be favorable to the recommendation, you should place a plus (+) in the left margin beside your thought; if the thought you wrote down seems unfavorable toward the recommendation, you should put a minus (-) in the left margin, or if your thought had nothing to do with it, you should put a zero (0) in the left margin. Please go back now and rate each idea listed by putting a +, -, or 0 in the left margin. Be sure to rate each thought that you wrote down. Please also be honest in your ratings. Remember, there are no correct answers.

"+" -- favorable toward the recommendation made in the lecture.
"-" -- unfavorable toward the recommendation made in the lecture.
"0" -- irrelevant toward the recommendation made in the lecture.
We are now interested in those arguments from the tape that you remember. Please write all of the arguments favoring the use of tourist tax and Governor's Slush Fund that you remember in the spaces below. Once again, SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND PUNCTUATION ARE NOT IMPORTANT. A phrase is usually sufficient to let us know that you remember a particular argument.
HOW MUCH EFFORT DID YOU PUT INTO EVALUATING THE RATIONALE PROVIDED FOR THE RECOMMENDATION BY THE SPEAKER?

NONE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 VERY MUCH

PLEASE RATE THE SPEAKER ON THE FOLLOWING BY CIRCLING ONE NUMBER:

EXPERIENCED

EXPERT

TRAINED

COMPETENT

JUST

KIND

ADMIRABLE

HONEST

AGGRESSIVE

BOLD

ENERGETIC

EXTROVERTED

INEXPERIENCED

IGNORANT

UNTRAINED

INCOMPETENT

UNJUST

CRUEL

CONTEMPTIBLE

DISHONEST

MEEK

TIMID

TIRED

INTROVERTED
REFERENCES


