



## ANGLO-AMERICAN ARGUMENTATION STYLE IN THE LITHUANIAN CONTEXT

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**Research purpose.** The purpose of this research study is to examine the differences in argumentation style between Anglo-American tradition and Lithuania. Literature review revealed that the use and interpretation of rhetorical devices used in argumentation differs in Anglo-American tradition from the other traditions, the so-called “Outer Circle” (coined by Kachru, 1988). The purpose of the study was to examine to what extent Lithuanian students argue using the “ineffective” rhetorical devices in the Anglo-American tradition. Since there are no research studies examining the argumentation style of English learners in Lithuania, the goal is to help fill this gap.

**Keywords:** contrastive rhetoric, language learning, rhetorical devices in argumentation

**Research Methodology.** The literature review revealed clear differences in the use and effectiveness of rhetorical devices used in Anglo-American and the “Outer Circle” argumentation style (Figure 1). The research study was carried out with 70 students studying English at the C1 level at two different universities. During the 6 weeks of English classes (36 hours) students were taught academic argumentation (forming and supporting academic arguments through sources, common rhetoric devices, cultural differences, logical fallacies, and traps to logic). Then, students participated in debates where the use of different rhetorical devices was observed, namely: proverbs and sayings, direct appeal, opposing views, rhetorical questions, and generalizations. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to analyze the results.

**Results / Findings.** The findings reveal that when students introduced the argument (prepared their speech at home), they managed to follow the Anglo –American argumentation strategies more closely. When the debate took free form and students got involved, the analysis revealed that students fell back to argumentation techniques that were more natural for the “Outer Circle” argumentative tradition. Specifically, argumentation through generalizations and rhetorical questions dominated the free debate (Figure 2). This is significant because using generalizations or rhetorical questions equal to losing an argument in an Anglo-American tradition. Furthermore, against Reid’s (2014) observation, students did not use opposing views very successfully showing that this strategy is viewed as counterproductive in argumentation. The students did not use sayings or proverbs at all showing that the knowledge of folklore is either too hard to translate or is not common in debates. Finally, a direct appeal was used very rarely in the sample.

**Originality/Practical implications.** The findings reveal that teachers should stress the importance of specificity and proper support in argumentation as future professionals cannot compete or influence global arguments in English.

<b>Rhetorical devices</b>	<b>Anglo –American tradition</b>	<b>“Outer Circle” tradition</b>
Proverbs/sayings	Proverb authority is questioned and not seen as credible.	Proverbs strengthen the position. Assumes common knowledge. Represents unquestioned support. Avoiding responsibility for the truth value of the proposition.
Direct personal appeal (YOU)	Too personal, not credible	Achieve mutual understanding and solidarity with readers. Give force to the argument.
Opposing view	Long and detailed without sentence-level contradictions. Build credibility	Formulaic as taught in ESL classes Seen as purpose-defeating
Generalizations	Require proof, not credible	Accepted as the writer’s responsibility for the truth and accuracy of a position that can be applied to most audiences
Rhetorical questions	Excessively personal, not credible	Stand in place of thesis statement Assume audience participation and involvement

*Figure 1. Rhetorical devices in Anglo-American and “Outer Circle” tradition*

<b>Rhetorical devices</b>	<b>Number of uses in %</b>
Proverbs/sayings	0%
Direct personal appeal (YOU)	11,4%
Opposing view	42,8%
Generalizations	55,7%
Rhetorical questions	82,8%

*Figure 2. Use of common “Outer Circle” rhetorical devices in free argumentation*