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Public information films, 1946-2006: A content-discourse analysis of emotional appeal usage and construction

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Public information films, 1946-2006: A content-discourse analysis of emotional appeal usage and construction.

ABSTRACT

Research into emotional appeals in a health and safety communications context has tended to focus on small, limited samples and has neglected to investigate the discursive aspects of appeal construction and, in conjunction with this, advice giving. This study used a mixed content-discourse analysis to investigate both appeal usage and construction within 217 archival Public Information Films (PIFs) produced between 1946 and 2006. The content analysis revealed consistently high rates of fear-based emotional appeals, often tempered by the presence of humour. The discourse analysis found a number of different techniques used by message conveyors to construct emotional appeals and give advice, many of which were rooted in their position of authority relative to their audiences. It is concluded that PIFs can be seen as holistic forms of heightened interaction, attempting to accomplish social goals. These findings contrast with earlier work and have implications for the study of emotional appeals and the design of public health and safety communications.

Introduction

If attitudes have historically been, as Allport's (1935) often-repeated assertion suggests, the cornerstone of social psychology, then the manipulation of those attitudes by external agents has been an equally important component. Persuasion research has taken a variety of forms, ranging from the classic cognitive 'route' models (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) through to the indexing of persuasive techniques undertaken by Cialdini (2001). Philosophical insights on persuasion can be traced back further to Aristotle's *The "Art" of Rhetoric* (330 BC/1926) wherein he recognises a key persuasive technique to be the targeting of emotions. In a modern sense, psychology has conceptualised, defined and studied such emotional appeals in a range of contexts, sometimes interpersonal (e.g. Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979) but mostly in relation to forms of mass communication, such as political speeches (e.g. Roseman, Abelson & Ewing, 1986; Brader, 2006), service and product advertising (e.g. Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999) and, as will be the focus here, health and safety communications.

This latter category is of particular interest in that although these communications are situated theoretically in an advertising context alongside the former applications, they differ philosophically because they are not attempting to sell a product, service or image and are in fact often engaging in 'counter-advertising' such as, for example, offsetting the impact of alcohol or tobacco advertising by advising of the dangers of their consumption (Blum, 1994; Agostinelli & Grube, 2002). Earlier research into emotional appeals in this context (and in general) has, by and large, approached them experimentally or cognitively but more recent research suggests the viability of a new approach, in which such appeals can be studied as an element of discourse. Archival work into Public Information Films in the UK – both government and independently led - provides an understudied health and safety data source towards which such an approach can be adopted, as well as being of psychological and historical interest in itself. The following introduction will, therefore, cover previous research into emotional appeals in a health and safety communications context, the work that provides a basis for the adoption of a new discursive approach to emotional appeals and a brief history of the data source.

Emotional Appeals in Health and Safety Communications

In a health and safety context, the most well-studied emotional appeals are negative, focussing on the deleterious outcome that will result if a particular course of action is or is not followed. This potential negative outcome could be aimed at the viewer themselves (fear appeals; Sternthal & Craig, 1974; Witte, 1992; Ruiter, Abraham & Kok, 2001) or could focus on the negative impact that their actions might have on others (guilt appeals; Harman & Murphy, 2008). Content analyses of public health and safety materials indicate high prevalence rates for fear appeals across a range of issues, including HIV/AIDs prevention (Dejong, Wolf and Austin, 2001), breast cancer self-examination (Kline & Mattson, 2000) and smoking (Paek, Kim & Hove, 2010). Nonetheless, the effectiveness of fear and guilt appeals remains debatable (Hale & Dillard, 1995; Witte, 1992; Hastings, Stead, & Webb, 2004; Harman & Murphy, 2008) as does the exact manner in which they work, with a range of theories proposed (Witte & Allen, 2000; Williams, 2012).

Due to this questionable effectiveness, overuse and ethical concerns, alternatives to negative appeals are often sought and recommended (Robberson & Rogers, 1988; Monahan, 1995 cited in Siegel & Lotenberg, 2007; Henley, Donovan & Moorhead, 1998;

Hastings *et al.*, 2004; Atkin, 2004; Lewis, Watson, White & Tay, 2007; Wundersitz, Hutchinson & Woolley, 2010). Positive emotional appeals – which act as "mirror image[s]" (Atkin, 2004, p. 572) of fear appeals by emphasising potential positive outcomes – have been noted and a number of specific alternative appeal types, such as irony, humour, hope, positive role models and straight information have also been discussed as applicable to public health communications (Hastings *et al.*, 2004; Messerlian & Derevensky, 2006). In a road safety context, a content analysis found positive, informational and celebrity appeals to be more commonly used than fear appeals (Slater, 1999) and interestingly, given the findings outlined above, a different content analysis found a similar focus on informational appeals for AIDs communications (Freimuth, Hammond, Edgar & Monahan, 1990). To strike a balance between these two extremes, there has recently been some work on 'mixed' emotional appeals, which employ both positive and negative elements (Carrera, Dolores, Muňoz & Caballero, 2008).

Alternative Perspectives
Despite this wealth of quantitative and cognitive work, there has been only a small amount of qualitative research on the subject of emotional appeals in public health and safety campaigns, largely focussing on the socio-political motivations underlying such campaigns (Lupton, 1993; Brown, 2000; Gagnon, Jacob & Holmes, 2010). An alternative discourse analytic perspective that few, if any, have thus far taken towards public health and safety materials is to analyse the active construction within the relevant texts of the appeals utilised. Precedent for such an approach, however, can be found in Lupton (1999) who notes that, from a social constructionist perspective, 'risk' can be defined "not [as] a static, objective phenomena" but as something that "is constantly constructed and negotiated as part of the network of social interaction and the formation of meaning" (p. 29). This conceptualisation is similar to those found in discursive psychology (DP; Edwards & Potter, 1992), which approaches psychological phenomena as embodied in interaction rather than, for example, as cognitive entities.

DP and related conversation analysis (CA) work has also provided insights into a number of issues relevant to emotional appeals, such as the discursive practices and problems surrounding threats (Hepburn & Potter, 2011b) and the rhetorical basis of persuasion (Billig, 1996). Work has also focussed on the particular practice of advice-giving and its problematic aspects, such as the asymmetric distribution of power (Ervin-Tripp, 1970; Craven & Potter, 2010; Hepburn & Potter, 2011a). This is relevant inasmuch as one of the key functions that public health and safety communications must fulfil in relation to emotional appeals is to advise on alternative, threat-alleviating courses of action, with Witte's (1992, 1994 cited in Walton, 1996) widely-accepted definition considering this an intrinsic element of a fear appeal and Morrison, Kukafka and Johnson (2005) regarding it as a key structural component in health messages. Taken as a whole, therefore, this previous work highlights the viability of a new analytic approach to the manner in which PIFs accomplish their rhetorical and advisory goals.

Public Information Films
The Central Office of Information (COI) was established in 1946, with the aim of "[driving] best practice... in the way citizens are informed... about issues that affect their lives" (Central Office of Information, 2012). To this end, they have been "uniquely responsible for producing and distributing public information films" on topics such as "health, safety and

welfare" (Central Office of Information, 2012). However, despite being well-archived and a primary means via which governmental information has been conveyed, these films have received little academic attention and seemingly none from a psychological perspective. This subject has been touched upon by Loughlin (2000), who suggests that health communications in the UK are a "vast and untapped resource" (p. 131), a point which, based on a literature search, appears to be even more applicable to materials on safety issues. Loughlin furthermore notes that "AV presentations of health and medicine... present rich opportunity for historical research" (p. 134).

Despite this potential for historical perspective, earlier research into emotional appeals in a health and safety context has typically focussed on 'genres' of this material, based around particular topics such as HIV/AIDS (Freimuth *et al.*, 1990; Dejong *et al.*, 2001) or the effectiveness of individual campaigns (e.g. drink-driving in Elder, Shults, Sleet, Nichols, Thompson, Rajab and Task Force on Community Preventive Services, 2004). For these reasons, previous research has also tended to focus on recent materials and materials from relatively short time spans.

Aims and Research Questions

The objective of the present study, therefore, is to address some of these omissions by harnessing the benefits of an archival, historical data source to analyse emotional appeals. This study will, as such, have implications for the study of both this particular data source and the study of emotional appeals and health and safety communications in general.

Two aims and seven associated research questions will be investigated:

1. To investigate patterns of emotional appeal usage in public information films.
1.1 - How frequently have emotional appeals as a whole been used in PIFs?
1.2 - How frequently have specific types of emotional appeals been used in PIFs?
1.3 - What relationship do other variables have with these patterns?
1.4 - What changes, if any, have occurred to these patterns of emotional appeal usage over time?

2. To analyse emotional appeals as discursively constructed phenomena within public information films.
2.1 – What discursive and rhetorical practices are used in the construction of emotional appeals?
2.2 – How do PIFs fulfil their advisory role in relation to emotional appeals?
2.3 – How are the problems typically associated with these functions, such as power asymmetry, addressed?

Method

Data Selection and Vetting
Materials utilised were Public Information Films (PIFs) produced by the Central Office of Information (COI) produced between 1946 and 2006. These films were drawn from three sources:

1. A DVD collection (Central Office of Information, 2001)
2. An online archive (National Archives, 2006)
3. A reputable online television archive (TV ARK, undated)

The data was vetted to remove films which fell outside the domains of health and safety issues, duplications between data sources and, due to the historically focussed nature of the research, films for which a verifiable year of production could not be obtained. Following the sourcing and vetting procedures, 217 films were considered as data (see appendix). For the purposes of later analysis, the materials were divided into three eras. These eras adhere roughly to those found on the aforementioned archival source (National Archives, 2006), with modifications for simplicity (three eras as opposed to five) and data distribution:

1946-1969 (22 films)
1970-1979 (121 films)
1980 - 2006 (74 films)

Permissions and Copyright
PIFs produced by the COI fall under Crown Copyright and the Open Government License (National Archives, undated). They are therefore available for academic purposes, including transcription, as long as attribution is given and they are not misrepresented in doing so (National Archives, 2011, undated).

Analysis
The analysis uses a sequential (Johnson & Onwuegbozie, 2004) mixed-methodology approach, with a quantitative content analysis followed by a qualitative discourse analysis.

Content Analysis
Codings for the content analysis were influenced by the literature and preliminary observation of the materials. Of particular influence on the methodology were previous content analyses of similar materials, particularly Dejong and Atkin (1995), Slater (1999) and Dejong *et al.* (2001). A pilot analysis was conducted a random sampling of 15% of the data (33 films) to determine intra-rater reliability, with an interval of two weeks between analyses. Kappa reliability for all variables was found to be in either the 'Substantial' or 'Near Perfect' agreement categories outlined by Landis and Koch (1977) (see results for values).

As in previous analyses, each individual film was regarded as a unit of analysis. Coding categories developed were as follows (for full definitions of each coding category, see appendix):

Type of Emotional Appeal
Five 'baseline' emotional appeals were identified based on preliminary observation of the data – *fear*, *shock* [*], *guilt*, *humour* and *positive.* Preliminary observation also made it clear,

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[*]   Although the various debates around the distinction, both semantic and psychological, between the terms 'threat appeal' and 'fear appeal' were noted – see Donovan and Henley (1997) and Ruiter *et al.* (2001) for discussions – it was decided that, for the sake of clarity and scope, the coding names should adhere to the commonly applied definition of a 'fear appeal'.

however, that these baseline appeals could be used in conjunction with each other as 'mixed' appeals, an issue previously noted by Slater (1999) and Carrera *et al.* (2008). Further dyadic coding categories were developed, therefore, by combining these baseline codes (e.g. *fear-humour, humour-guilt*). Remaining coding categories were *other* and *no identifiable emotional appeal.* In coding for emotional appeal, both direct audience address (by, for example, a narrator or presenter) and on-screen visuals (for example, in the case of a fear appeal, illustrating the negative outcome) were considered.

Recommended action

As noted previously, providing a recommended course of action has been shown to be an important component of emotional appeals (Witte, 1992) and health messages (Morrison *et al.*, 2005) and were previously coded for in Dejong *et al.* (2001). A film was coded as *recommended action* if it featured instructions on what to do, conveyed by direct address or as part of a narrative or visual. This variable was also coded for if guidance was given as to how further information could be obtained, e.g. a phone number on-screen. If no such information was presented, the film was coded as *no recommended action.*

Target Audience

In previous content analyses, target audience was often coded for in relation to the topic of the materials themselves, e.g. sexual orientation for HIV/AIDS communications (Dejong *et al.*, 2001). Because the present research was analysing a broad cross-section of films rather than a specific type of film, however, target audience was defined through a simple age demographic variable, splitting the potential audience into *children/adolescents*, *adults* and *non-specific/intergenerational*. Target audience was coded for based on direct audience address, topic and overall tone.

Topic

Preliminary observation was used to define and group the topics which were focussed upon by PIFs, yielding fifteen codes for this variable.

Discourse Analysis

Edwards (2005) notes that the term 'discourse analysis' (DA) is broad, encompassing linguistic and social approaches, as well as approaches such as conversation analysis which emphasise analysis of "the social actions performed" (p.257) within a text. The approach taken to discourse analysis in this study falls into the latter category, focussing on the manner in which narrators and presenters use discourse to construct emotional appeals and give advice. As such, it avoids both discussion of wider sociocultural context and inferences about internal psychological states, the latter position influenced by DP which, as noted above, rejects such inferences and instead takes a "functionally orientated approach to the analysis of talk and text" (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 27) when dealing with psychological phenomena.

These approaches are adapted as necessary to a body of data where the discourse is scripted and one-sided rather than conversational – as Edwards (2005) notes, although DP can be theoretically applied to any "talk or text" there is nonetheless a "focus... on the kinds of naturally occurring interactional talk... through which people live their lives" (p. 258). Because of this, the analysis draws upon work from a number of related fields,

particularly rhetoric and pragmatics, in addition to DP and conversation analysis.

Ten films were selected for consideration in the discourse analysis, with the aim of using a broad sample in terms of appeal usage, era and topic. Films coded in the content analysis as not having used emotional appeals and purely visual films lacking a discursive element were not considered for this stage of analysis, though this did not preclude the consideration of visuals in use alongside the spoken elements. To prepare the selected films, transcripts were produced using an adapted form of the Jefferson (2004) conventions to convey the prosodic and visual aspects of the films, with particular conventions that would not be of relevance to the one-sided form of the discourse, such as timed pauses and overlap, omitted (see appendix for glossary and selected films).

On the use of a mixed-methodology approach

An apparent incompatibility arises between the quantitative nature of the content analysis and the explicit rejection made by DP and other such methods of "quantifications... and the sorts of theoretical concerns that they mask" (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 27), which can be related to wider historical paradigmatic disagreement over mixed methodologies (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbozie, 2004). There are, nonetheless, a number of justifications for using such a combination here. Proponents of mixed methodologies adhere to the *fundamental principle of mixed research*, the commonly given definition of which is that "methods should be mixed in a way that has complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses" (Johnson & Turner, 2003, p. 299).

In light of this, the content analysis' role can be seen as complimenting the discourse analysis in its ability to index a large, understudied body of data, thus providing scope, generalisability and a more comprehensive overview of the data as a whole (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003).The dominant (Johnson & Onwuegbozie, 2004) paradigm remains qualitative, however, because its role will remain mostly descriptive rather than inferential. In this respect, the methodology resembles summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), in which quantification is first used to "[understand] contextual use of... the content" before "interpretation of content" (p. 1283-1284) is undertaken.

To adapt Johnson and Onwuegbozie's (2004) means of visually representing the sequential and dominance relationships between paradigms, then:

Results

Content Analysis Results
Results are based on crosstabulations produced using SPSS 19.00 (see appendix). Note that two dyadic appeal variants featured in the codebook (*shock-positive* and *positive-guilt*) were not coded and are not taken into account.

Pilot Analysis
The kappa reliabilities for emotional appeal, recommended action, target audience and topic were .77, .67, .95 and .96 (see appendix), respectively.

Overall Appeal Usage
Of the appeals, singular *fear* was most frequently coded for (35%) and *humour* was the second most frequently coded for appeal overall (12%). The stronger variant of the fear appeal, *shock*, accounted for 7.8% of overall appeal usage. Of the dyadic coding categories, *fear-humour* was the most commonly coded appeal type and the third most commonly coded-for appeal overall (10.6%). Other singular and dyadic codes each accounted for less than 10% of the overall emotional appeal usage and the least frequent appeal type overall was *humour-positive* (.9%). 9.7% of films were coded as having *no identifiable appeal*.

Within-Era Appeal Usage
Within each era, *fear* remained the most frequently coded-for appeal (27.3%, 37.5% and 33.3%, respectively). *Humour* remained the second most frequently coded-for appeal in the first and third eras (22.7% and 14.9%) but not in the second era (8.3%) where the dyadic variant, *fear-humour*, was the second most coded for (11.6%).Within the first era, five appeals were not coded for at all (*guilt, fear-guilt, shock-guilt, shock-humour* and *humour-positive*). *Humour-positive* was also not coded for in the second era whereas *guilt-humour* and *shock-humour* were not coded for in the third era.

Recommended Action

81.1% were coded as *recommended action* and 18.9% of films were coded as *no recommended action.* The highest proportions of both recommended action and no recommended action were coded for alongside *fear* (33% and 43.9%, respectively). The second highest proportion of *recommended action* was coded for alongside *humour* (13.6%) and the third highest proportion was coded for alongside *no identifiable appeal* (11.9%). For *no recommended action*, these values were *fear-guilt* (17.1%) and *fear-humour* (12.2%). *No recommended action* was not coded for at all alongside *no identifiable appeal*, *humour-positive*, *shock-guilt* and *fear-positive* whereas *recommended action* was coded for at least once alongside all appeal types.

Target Audience

50.7% of films were coded as being targeted at *adults*, 18.9% at c*hildren/adolescents* and 30.4% at *non-specific/intergenerational*. *Fear* was the most frequently coded for appeal amongst all three audience groups (30%, 56.1% and 30.3%). For *adults*, the joint-second most common appeal types were *fear-guilt* and *fear-humour* (11.8%). For *children/adolescents*, the second most common was *no identifiable appeal* (17.1%) and for *non-specific/intergenerational* it was *humour* (16.7%). *Humour-positive* was not coded for alongside *adults* and *children/adolescents*. *Humour-positive* was not coded for alongside *adults* and *children/adolescents.* Additionally, *guilt, shock-guilt* and *shock-humour* were also not coded for alongside *children/adolescents. Fear-guilt, shock-guilt* and *shock-humour* were not coded for alongside *non-specific/adolescents.*
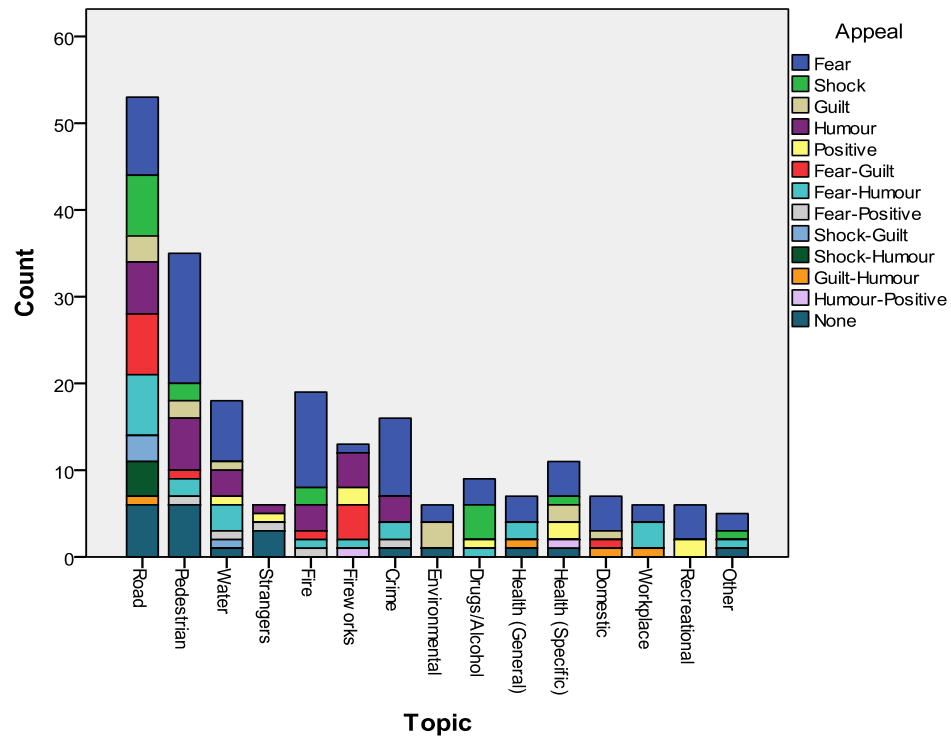
sections is the distribution of power between those carrying out these functions and the audience.

In addition to the aforementioned Jefferson (2004) transcription conventions, the extracts also make use of the acronyms 'vo' (voice over) and 'os' (off-screen) to better convey the interaction between the verbal and visual elements of the films (though not in the case of narrators, where these are assumed). The second set of brackets in extract titles refers to the film number as given in the list (see appendix).

Emotional Appeal Construction

An important concept drawn upon throughout this analysis is Black's (1970/1974) theory of the 'second persona' – the "implied auditor" (p. 295) created by a piece of rhetorical discourse. When reference is made to an audience in the analysis, it is this audience, implicit within the text itself rather than external to it, that is being invoked. This concept also provides an ideal starting point for the analysis because the way in which films initially relate themselves to this persona is important to understanding how they accomplish their ultimate goals. Extracts 1 and 2, taken from a films on the subject of fire and road safety, demonstrate a particularly direct means of addressing the audience.

Extract 1: Tidy Up At Night (1969) (19)

01		((man walking into house))
02	**Narrator:**	When you've come home from work (.) an' decided
03		you're very
04		((man sitting down in front of television))
05	**Narrator:**	ti::red (.) ready for bed.

Extract 2: Overtaking Near Junctions (1978) (121)

01		((first man driving along road))
02		((second man driving car on road behind van))
03	**Narrator:**	You're driving along. (.) Et's a good straight ro:::ad.

Writers on the subject of risk communication have often focussed on the asymmetries that exist between those conveying the risk and the general public (Hayenhjelm, 2006; Möller, 2009). The use of the word 'you've' and 'you're on lines 2 and 3, respectively, exempts the narrators from the category of which those whom they are addressing are a part, demonstrating such an asymmetry and, due to the one-sided nature of the discourse, exacerbating it. The narrators' authoritative positions also place the audience into the narrative that they are creating via their assumed identification with the on-screen characters.

The following two extracts demonstrate how, despite their similar openings, the two films build upon the dynamic they have established in different ways when constructing their fear appeals.

Extract 3: Tidy Up At Night (1969) (19)

01	**Narrator:**	All these (.) are sources of ↑dan↓ger (.) especially at night.
02	**Narrator:**	↑Don't: ga:mble: with lives and property.

03		((house becomes engulfed in flames))
04		((charred, smoking ruins of house))
05	**Narrator:**	You're ↑bound to lose in the >end<.

Hepburn and Potter (2011b) have noted that, in everyday interaction, threats are based on the power of the threat-producer to bring about the proposed negative outcome. In this extract, the threat is still rooted in the narrator's position of power relative to the audience but the source is based epistemically rather than in direct control over the outcome. The narrator here begins to construct the fear appeal at line 1 ('All these (.) are sources of ↑dan↓ger (.) especially at night'). Coupled with the visual illustration (lines 3-4), it is on the narrator's claim that a negative outcome will result that the audience are intended to modify their behaviour.

The focus on the certainty of this negative outcome at line 5 if his advice is not adhered to ('You're ↑bound to lose in the >end<') is of particular interest given that threats are, ordinarily, based on conditionality (Hepburn & Potter, 2011b). His right to make such a certain claim is contingent on his position as an authoritative figure and an assumption of his knowledge that these are, in fact, 'sources of danger', knowledge disparity itself being a key source of asymmetry (Möller, 2009). In summary, this fear appeal is based on the narrator's authority and assumed knowledge, without which the prospect of the negative outcome has no weight.

Extract 4, however, takes a different approach.

Extract 4: Overtaking Near Junctions (1978) (121)

01	**Narrator:**	You can see ahead for mi:::les. No traffic behind you.
02		Nothing coming toward you.
03		((car pulls out and begins to overtake van))
04	**Narrator:**	So: you pull out to overtake.
05		((camera settles on road sign and begins to zoom in))
06	**Narrator:**	There's a junction ahead. >There's a <u>car</u>: pulling <u>out.</u>
07		He <u>can't</u> av seen you. ↑You <u>can't</u> avoid 'im<.
08		((first man attempts to brake to the sound of screeching
09		tyres and smashing glass))
10		((camera pans away from road sign to show wreckage of
11		both cars))

The expectation that the audience take the position of the on screen character noted earlier takes on a greater importance here, with the narrator laying in additional narrative details and description at lines 1-2 ('You can see ahead for mi:::les. No traffic behind you. Nothing coming towards you') to aid them in doing so. The crux of the fear appeal lies in the narrator's increasingly fast prosody from lines 6-7 as he 'builds up' the sense of fear to the negative outcome, marked by a particularly emphatic utterance at line 7 ('↑You <u>can't</u> avoid 'im') followed by an audio-visual illustration from lines 8-11.

As with extract 3, therefore, the construction of this fear appeal is predicated upon the dynamic established at the beginning. Unlike extract 3, however, which drew upon the narrator's epistemic authority to tell the audience that the negative outcome would result,

this extract asks the audience to imagine that it *is* happening to them, using the narrator's position to place them within the narrative of a mundane driving activity before bringing the narrative – and, in turn, the audience who have invested in it – through to the negative outcome. In this sense, the narrator comes to 'embody' fear.

So far, the analysis has focussed upon emotional appeals rooted in authority and power, albeit used to different ends. Extract 5 provides a demonstration of the opposite process.

Extract 5: Chip Pan Fires (1990) (207)

01	**Presenter:**	<↑Hel↓lo dear gastronauts (.)> wel↑<u>come</u> to my humble
02		kitchen (.) tod<u>ay</u> I'n going to show you how to cope with
03		one of those little (.) kitch<u>en</u> disasters: (.) no names (.) no
04		( ) (.) but Clive a <u>big</u> <u>fat</u> close up please::.
05		((camera pans down to uncooked chips))
06	**Presenter (os):**	No ↑<u>NO</u> dearboy not the <u>chips</u> the <u>chip</u> <u>pan</u> gotit?
07		((camera moves across to chip pan, which bursts into
08		flame))
09	**Presenter:**	Thank you:
10		[…]
11	**Presenter:**	Now here's a demonstration which shows you exactly what
12		<u>not</u>
13		((outdoor footage of burning pan labelled 'Hampshire Fire
14		Brigade Training Centre'))
15	**Presenter (vo):**	to do. D<u>on't</u> throw water onto the flames because the
16		water sinks under the oil (.) turns to steam (.)
17		((water is poured onto burning chip pan fire, which
18		expands))
19	**Presenter (vo):**	and puff a recipe for a ↑<u>to</u>↓tal disaster.

The presenter here creates a light-hearted, friendly tone through the use of '**<**hel↓lo dear gastronauts (.)> wel↑<u>come</u> to my humble kitchen:' (line 1) as an opening. A key role of humour in traditional advertising is to increase likeability (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992) and one way in which humour can be used rhetorically is as a means of self-deprecation with the aim of increasing identification with and persuasiveness towards the intended audience (Meyer, 2000). The interplay of 'no ↑<u>NO</u> dearboy not the <u>chips</u> the chip <u>pa:n</u> gotit?' (line 6), with its focus on a mistake and lack of coordination between presenter and cameraman, fulfils these functions, with the humorous effect signposted and enforced via the exaggerated intonation throughout the utterance, highlighting the importance of prosody in the delivery and marking of scripted humour (Purandare & Litman, 2006; Urios-Aparisi & Wagner, 2011). The presenter, then, uses humour and self-deprecation to address the potential asymmetry by creating a more equal basis on which to communicate with the audience, contrasting with extracts 3 and 4 which were predicated upon the higher status of their respective narrators.

Humour in this extract also serves an additional function. The pre-establishment of a light-hearted tone means that when the threat object is presented on lines 14-15 in a realistic, serious manner within a distinct piece of footage, the film is able to treat it as part of a superordinately humorous framework. The presenter himself verbally contributes to this at line 3, calling it "one of those little (.) kitch<u>en</u> disasters:" beforehand, thus minimising the

size of the threat and emphasising its ordinariness (it is only 'one of' several possible disasters) and, therefore, the control that the audience can have over it. In addition to addressing the asymmetry, then, the presenter's humorous persona tempers the fearful aspects of this film, constructing a 'mixed' emotional appeal. Such appeals were shown to be common in the content analysis and extract 6 illustrates another manner in which they can be constructed.

Extract 6: The Fatal Floor (1974) (75)

01		((shots of a woman cleaning a house to upbeat music))
02		((woman looks out of window, sees man exiting car))
03		((woman pats down the edges of a rug and opens the door))
04	**Narrator:**	Polish a floo::r (.) put a rug on it:. You might as
05		↑well: set man trap:
06	**Man:**	((exiting car and walking towards house as women carry
07		baby from back seat)) Hurry up and bring him in the warm
08		(.) I'll put the kettle on ((man walks through front door))
09	**Man (os):**	Whoaw ((thud)).
10		((freeze frame of women's shocked reactions))
11	**Narrator:**	And to think he'd only just come <u>from</u> the hospital.

This film continues the interaction between negative appeals and humour seen in extract 5, the key difference being that it extends the humour to the illustration of the negative outcome itself via a slapstick sequence from lines 8-10. This gives the concluding utterance by the narrator on line 11, 'and to think he'd only just come <u>from</u> the hospital', a dual humour-guilt discursive function. The humour can be seen in the utterance's placement as a 'punchline', providing new information which leads to a reinterpretation of the preceding text (Attardo, 2001) as being a particularly bad piece of luck on the part of the man. The importance of prosody in the delivery of scripted humour (Purandare & Litman, 2006; Urios-Aparisi & Wagner, 2011) is again highlighted, with the punchline reinterpretation enforced by the narrator's intonation on the word '<u>from</u>'. Aside from its comedic function, however, the intonation on this word also acts as a serious invocation of the danger introduced on lines 4-5 ('you might as ↑well: set a man trap:'), the implication being, of course, that the man will now have to go *to* the hospital. Rather than making himself the focal point for the humour, as the presenter in extract 5 did, the narrator here instead constructs a mixed emotional appeal linguistically.

Advice Giving

Extract 7, taken again from *Tidy Up At Night*, illustrates how the issues of power distribution discussed so far in relation to emotional appeal construction are equally as relevant when supplementing these appeals with advice.

Extract 7: Tidy Up At Night (1969) (19)

01	**Narrator:**	Think ↑safe.
02		((man stops as the word 'THINK' appears next to his head))
03	**Narrator:**	Tidy up at night.
04		((man placing coal back into fireplace and placing guard)
05	**Narrator:**	Settle the coals: (.) put the guard in front of the fire

06		((smoking cigarette stub falling from ashtray))
07	**Narrator:**	empty the ↑ashtrays
08		((man moving clothes stand away from boiler))
09	**Narrator:**	If ↑clothes are airing near a boiler (.) remove them
10		[…] ((sequence continues with a number of similar
11		activities))
12		[...]
13	**Narrator:**	So when you're ready
14		((man standing and yawning before the word 'THINK'
15		appears next to his head))
16	**Narrator:**	for bed (.) think.
17		((the words 'TIDY UP AT NIGHT' appear in white against
18		a blue screen))

Interactionally, advice giving can be particularly problematic "in the sense that the advice giver is projected as more knowledgeable, or skilled, than the advice receiver" (Hepburn & Potter, 2011a, p. 217). This problem is demonstrated in this extract, which is comprised largely of imperatives (e.g. 'empty the ↑ashtrays' at line 7) a highly asymmetric form of advice-giving (Ervin-Tripp, 1970; Hudson, 1990; Craven & Potter, 2010) in that they offer "no orientation to the recipient's ability to perform the stated activity" (Craven & Potter, 2010, p. 425). Furthermore, the advice giving is situated before the emotional appeal (extract 3) suggesting that the narrator's advice as initially given is to be heeded even in the absence of an explicit threat object to deal with which raises, again, the inherent asymmetries of risk communication (Hayenhjelm, 2006; Möller, 2009).

The use of the word 'think' to both initiate ('Think ↑safe', line 1) and conclude ('So when you're ready for bed (.) think') the film is, however, of interest from a DP (Edwards & Potter, 1992) perspective in its invocation of a psychological concept to frame the advice within it as something of a reminder rather than being outright instructive. Whilst the form of advice giving remains imperative and, as such, asymmetrical, asking the audience to 'think' beforehand softens this in that it addresses them as agentive, asking them to *consider* the danger rather than passively adhering to a directive. It also asks them to draw upon pre-existing knowledge rather than assuming that it is knowledge that they lack which, again, is a common source of asymmetry (Hepburn & Potter, 2011a).

Even within an ostensibly didactic, imperative sequence, therefore, the narrator has addressed, to some extent, the asymmetry of advice-giving. Extract 8, taken from a 1978 film on road safety, illustrates an even stronger means of doing so.

Extract 8 – Think Bike – Jimmy Hill (1978) (127)

01		((car pulling out of junction as motorbike approaches))
02		((motorbike collides with car))
03	**Presenter**	((behind desk addressing camera)) A tragic (.)
04		nee::dless accident (.) but why did it happen?
05		((inside car with driver))
06	**Presenter (vo):**	The driv↑er checks the traffic on his right (.) the road
07		<u>se::ms</u> to be clear (.)
08		((motorcyclist is thrown across the front of the car))
09	**Presenter (vo):**	and he pulls out.

10	**Presenter:**	But if we look again from the driver's angle ((looks down at
11		television on desk)) we can see his problem.
12		((inside car with driver))
13	**Presenter (vo):**	Visibility <u>isn'</u> good (.)
14		((motorbike emerges into view from behind post))
15	**Presenter (vo):**	but if only he'd checked again (.) he would've see:n the
16		motorcyclist approaching.
17	**Presenter:**	That car driver (.) will be more careful next time (.) for the
18		motorcyclist (.) there isn't going to be:: (.) a next time.
19		So motorists (.) be particularly careful (.) at junctions.
20		Think once (.) think twice (.) think BIKE.
21		((motorcyclist is thrown across front of car as the
22		words 'Think bike' appear on-screen))

This extract opens with a visual shock appeal from lines 1-2. The presenter's first utterance, 'a tragic (.) nee::dless accident' on lines 3-4, acts as verbal reinforcement of the appeal, evidenced by its emphatic prosodic features. Following a slight pause, however, the narrator's prosody changes for his next utterance, 'but why did it happen?' (line 4). This question acts as a 'puzzle-solution' rhetorical device (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986), in which a question is first posed before the solution to the puzzle is given as the "core of the message [the speaker] wishes to get across" (p. 127) – in this case, the recommended action. Rather than situating the audience within the narrative, as was the case in *Tidy Up At Night* and, especially, *Overtaking Near Junctions*, the narrator here is using this device to address the inherent asymmetries of the discourse (Hayenhjelm, 2006; Möller, 2009; Hepburn & Potter, 2011a) by "[inviting] the audience to anticipate or guess" (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986, p. 127) the answer to the question and thus to consider the emotional appeal from without as an analytic object for which the causes can be jointly discerned. Using a question also addresses them on an equal basis, a parity further reflected in the repeated use of the word 'we' at lines 10-11 ('But if we look again from the driver's angle we can see his problem').

The advice itself is conveyed in an indirect way at lines 15-16, 'but if only he'd checked again (.) he would've see:n the motorcyclist approaching'. Hudson (1990) indexes a number of different ways in which advice can be given, ranging from the imperatives demonstrated in the previous extract through to 'conditional' forms, which can make reference to a third party's hypothetical actions using the structure of "'If they verb'… followed by a 'then they verb'" (p. 294). The presenter adapts that structure to this context by making the driver in the shock appeal the third party referent, using the word 'if' to emphasise the contingent nature of the outcome, thus framing the key guidance to 'check again' for motorcyclists as something that *could* be done by the driver (and, therefore, the audience) to avoid it. Emphasising the conditionality of the outcome in this way inverts the process seen in extract 3, where it was the inevitability of the outcome that was emphasised and use of the word 'only' furthermore emphasises the ease with which the outcome could be avoided, thus orienting to the audience's ability to carry out the recommendation action.

This advice is repackaged in a more didactic form in the presenter's concluding utterance at line 20 - 'Think once (.) think twice (.) think BIKE' - which employs anaphoric repetition and a three part list, two devices commonly used in advertising (McQuarrie & Mick, 1999)

and rhetoric (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986) to add emphasis and increase persuasiveness. It is used here, specifically, to create a 'slogan' with which the more intricate advice given earlier can be associated and bears similarity to extract 4, which also employs a slogan at the end - 'think safe' - to encapsulate its advice. The use of the word 'think' is again of note in its orientation to the audience's agency and pre-existing knowledge.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate emotional appeals in a data source comprised of a cross-section of Public Information Films produced by the UK's Central Office of Information between 1946 and 2006. The initial aims established at the beginning of the study were to investigate both overall patterns of emotional appeal usage and the construction of emotional appeals. In addressing the first aim, four research questions were posed.

Research Question 1.1 - How frequently have emotional appeals as a whole been used in PIFs?
Research Question 1.2 - How frequently have specific types of emotional appeals been used in PIFs?
Emotional appeals were used in 90.3% of the data and the most common type of appeal was fear, according with earlier content analyses of materials on specific health and safety topics (Kline & Mattson, 2000; Dejong *et al.*, 2001; Paek *et al.*, 2010). However, films were also found to frequently use humour and 'mixed' negative-positive appeals, suggesting that recommendations for more upbeat appeals (Monahan, 1995 cited in Siegel & Lotenberg, 2007; Hastings *et al.*, 2004; Atkin, 2005; Lewis *et al.*, 2007) have at least some precedent in this pre-existing, historical data source.

Research Question 1.3 – What relationship do other variables have with these patterns?
The three additional variables coded for in the content analysis were *recommended action*, *target audience* and *topic.* Recommended courses of action were common and found alongside all types of emotional appeal, substantiating their importance (Witte, 1992; Morrison *et al.*, 2005). The absence of a recommended action was found to be higher alongside negative appeals, indicating that the more negative appeal types have often been employed as a standalone means to induce behaviour change.

Fear remained the most common appeal type across all three target audiences, though was proportionally highest amongst children and adolescents. However, guilt appeals and their dyadic variants were used rarely with children and intergenerational target audiences compared to adults, which would indicate that guilt is something that was specifically targeted at older audiences. Interestingly, the proportion of films coded as having no identifiable emotional appeal was higher amongst children and adolescents than it was for adults.

Topically, road safety films were the most prevalent in the data. Road safety campaigners and researchers from various countries have often expressed trepidation about the prominent use of fear (Lewis *et al.*, 2007; Wundersitz *et al.*, 2010) but road safety PIFs appear to adhere to this trend, predominantly using fear, fear-guilt and shock, albeit with some use of mixed and positive appeals. These patterns remained fairly consistent across topics, indicating that emotional appeal usage has not historically been adapted to different

subjects in PIFs.

Research Question 1.4 - What changes, if any, have occurred to patterns of emotional appeal usage over time?
The prevalence of fear appeals was found to remain consistent across eras, though they were most strongly represented in the 1970-1979 era. The 1970-1979 era also had the lowest amount of singular humour and positive appeals compared to the other eras, although it was also the era which showed the highest proportion of the fear-humour dyad. The shock variant of the fear appeal was proportionally more prevalent in the 1980-2006 era, indicating that strong or graphic illustrations of the negative outcomes became more frequent over time. This is inverted in the 1946-1969 era, which was found to have both the lowest proportion of fear appeals and the highest proportion of both humour and positive appeals, suggesting that upbeat appeals were more common in the earlier years of PIFs.

The second aim was to investigate the discursive construction of emotional appeals in PIFs, for which three research questions were posed.

2.1 – What discursive and rhetorical practices are used in the construction of emotional appeals in PIFs?
2.2 – How do PIFs fulfil their advisory role in relation to emotional appeals?
2.3 – How are the problems typically associated with these functions, such as power asymmetry, addressed?
Within the framework of Black's (1970/1974) theory of the 'second persona', it was demonstrated how narrators in PIFs could separate themselves from audiences through the use of direct forms of address, such as 'you've' and 'you're', thus creating an uneven distribution of power. This was, in turn, shown to be an important discursive practice in the construction of a fear-based emotional appeal, with the credibility of the narrator   rooted in his implied knowledge as to the likelihood of the negative outcome.
The construction of a mixed appeal, conversely, was based upon the opposite process, with a presenter using a self-deprecating form of humour in the rhetorical (Meyer, 2000) and advertising (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992) tradition to attack his own status and make himself more likeable and relatable to the audience, thus creating a light-hearted context in which to present the appeal. These findings complement and extend the work of Hepburn and Potter (2011b) on threats at the interpersonal level into the wider rhetorical domain, which has implications for the debate on the effectiveness of fear in a health and safety context (Hale & Dillard, 1995; Witte, 1992; Hastings *et al.*, 2004; Harman & Murphy, 2008). This debate has thus far been conducted along generally quantitative or experimental lines - for example, questions about a possible 'boomerang effect' (Witte, 1992). The discourse analysis findings, in contrast, provide a new angle from which such issues can be discussed – as a form of heightened interaction in which the threat is not simply being 'used' but constructed, with the attendant problems of power distribution that occur at the interpersonal level (Hepburn & Potter, 2011b) also made relevant rhetorically.

A similar new perspective is provided by the findings for research question 2.2, concerned with the advice-giving role of PIFs. Power asymmetries, often of relevance at the interpersonal level (Craven & Potter, 2010; Hepburn & Potter, 2011a) were prominent within advisory parts of data, with one narrator using highly asymmetric imperatives (Ervin-Tripp, 1970; Hudson, 1990; Craven & Potter, 2010) to impart his guidance. Nonetheless, presenters and narrators could also draw upon a range of resources to address the

asymmetries and attend to the status of the audience. For one narrator, the primary resource was the invocation of a psychological concept (Edwards & Potter, 1992) – 'thinking' – to frame the advice as a reminder whereas another presenter was seen to tackle the root cause of the asymmetry by changing the form in which he initially addressed the audience – 'we' instead of 'you' – and inverting the conditionality of fear-based appeals (Hepburn & Potter, 2011b) to emphasise the contingency and changeability of the negative outcome, using a correspondingly 'conditional' form of advice giving to do so (Hudson, 1990). What is of interest here is that the different forms of advice giving– imperative, conditional and so on – are all drawn from interpersonal contexts, suggesting, as with emotional appeals, that the issues of asymmetry discussed in risk communication (Hayenhjelm, 2006; Möller, 2009) are rooted in the same fundamental problems of power that advice giving presents interpersonally (Hepburn & Potter, 2011a). This has practical implications for the design of public health and safety messages, indicating that they should take into account the social dimensions of the discourse rather than seeing the discourse solely as a channel through which the message can be 'given' to the audience.

So far, this discussion has focussed on the discursive construction within PIFs of emotional appeals and the giving of advice. A particularly interesting additional finding from the discourse analysis, however, was in fact the blurring of the lines between these functions, demonstrated again by the presenter who reconstituted the shock appeal as an analytic object and, in another extract, the narrator placing the advice before the appeal. These findings stand in sharp contrast with earlier work, which has regarded the recommended action as something of a discrete, quantifiable unit (Witte, 1992; Morrison *et al.*, 2005), with Witte's (1994, cited in Walton, 1996) definition going so far as to specify the order in which it is expected to appear in relation to a fear-arousing message. The impression of PIFs yielded from a discursive perspective, however, is not sequential or compartmentalised but holistic, in which appeals and advice are operating symbiotically to produce gestalt pieces of goal-oriented social discourse. This finding has implications for fledgling areas of research where definitions have not yet been clarified, such as mixed emotional appeals. An experimental study on this subject has suggested that such appeals could be structured in "a sequential pattern (i.e. a negative emotion followed by a positive emotion)" (Carrera *et al.*, 2010, p.727). Again, this form of sequential demarcation was not supported by close analysis of the data source, which often constructed mixed appeal in a deeply intertwined manner to the point where a single utterance acted as both a 'punchline' in its placement (Attardo, 2001) and an invocation of guilt semantically and in their prosody. If work is to proceed into this type of appeal, therefore, definitions need to be operationalised in such a way that they take into account the nuances of their construction.

Methodological issues and recommendations for further research
These forms of compartmentalising and quantification were, of course, used as part of this study's descriptive content analysis. The 'recommended action' code, for example, provides an indication of prevalence, without taking into account the social dimension noted above. The discourse analysis' revealing of this interactional nuance, therefore, builds upon and complements it in adherence with the fundamental principle of mixed research (Johnson & Turner, 2003) and the objective outlined at the beginning to survey both usage and construction. There are, nonetheless, a number of methodological issues to be discussed. The use of a methodology that does not provide a specific means to study images has meant that a large, and potentially important, aspect of this data has been inadequately addressed. Building upon the discursive approach outlined here, therefore, further qualitative work in this area should consider the integration of a

methodology more suited to the analysis of image in conjunction with discourse. Further work could also take into account more specific forms of Black's (1970/1974) second persona by, for example, considering the differences of emotional appeal construction when aimed at particular audiences (e.g. parents compared to children).

Relating to the PIF data source in particular, the analysis undertaken here has only scratched the surface of it and further research could address one of the prominent issues with this study by employing a more thoroughly sourced archival sample, particularly where materials from earlier eras are concerned. Further research could also establish a balance between the strict film-as-film approach taken here and the sociocultural approaches seen elsewhere, perhaps using sociocultural shifts and norms as an explanatory variable for some of the patterns of emotional appeal usage noted in this study. Such an approach would bring Loughlin's (2000) recommendations for the use of public health materials as a means of conducting historical research to their full fruition and could be aided via a more intricate analysis of the variables investigated here – for example, recommended courses of action by era as well as appeal.

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