

Language analysis (Not about sex)

The opinion piece 'Not about sex' written by Robyn Riley was published in the Herald Sun on the 7th of October 2007. The opinion piece is accompanied by an image taken by Brianne Makin. It was written in response to the assumption that parents are not allowing their daughters to have the [Gardasil](#) vaccine because they are worried that it will make their daughters promiscuous. The author contends that parents who refuse the vaccine are irresponsible and are potentially putting their daughter's health in jeopardy. She supports this contention through the use of experts, inclusive language, an attack and an image.

People are more likely to agree with a reader's contention if the piece contains information from an expert in a particular field. In this piece Riley has employed the use of experts in order to add more weight to her argument and persuade the readers to believe that [the gardasil](#) vaccine is a good thing. Riley has used the [informed](#) opinion of Natalie Jenkins, 'the chair of the Gynaecological Awareness information Network' who agreed with Dr Edith Weisberg (a reproductive health research expert). She says that educating children about sex makes them more responsible as they get older. By using the opinions of people who are experts in this particular field, it aims to make the reader feel as if the argument being put forward by the author is more logical and important because experts agree with what the author is saying. The author also includes the opinion of Tony Abbot (Federal health minister). Tony Abbot is known for his strong religious views and by showing that he supports the use of Gardasil it makes the reader more likely to see the vaccine as a good thing, rather than something that will cause promiscuity. This in turn persuades the reader to see parents who don't allow their daughters to have the vaccine as ignorant people, because they are going against the advice and informed opinions of experts. The use of experts encourages readers to support the author's opinion that those parents who do not allow their daughters to have the vaccine are irresponsible and potentially harming their daughter's wellbeing.

People will think differently about an issue if they feel as if they are going to be affected by it or are part of it. The author has used inclusive language throughout this piece as a way of inviting the reader to agree with the author's contention. In this piece the author has used, 'we don't live in the dark ages.' By using this it aims to make the reader believe that they are part of the 80% allowing their daughters to have the vaccine while the 20% of parents not allowing their daughter to have the vaccine are ignorant people who are living in the past and have not caught up to the 21st century. This encourages the reader to want to be seen as a logical individual who does not live in the past. Furthermore the author uses a distinct 'us and them' mentality' throughout the piece. The reader wants to appear as though they are part of the 'us' rather than being seen as supporting the suggested minority that do not agree with Riley. Throughout the piece Riley presents her own opinions before including her audience such as when she says 'I am gobsmacked. We don't live in the dark ages.' This technique encourages the reader to believe that because they are agreeing with the contention they should agree with everything that the author says even when it is simply the author's own opinion. Because she has used inclusive language the reader is persuaded to agree with every point that Riley makes. Riley's use of inclusive language helps to encourage people to believe that they do not want to be in the small minority that the author is claiming are ignorant and irresponsible.

Making an opposing argument seem negative and thoughtless can help to make readers support the author's point of view. In this piece Riley has used an attack of parents not allowing the vaccine in order to make her contention seem more legitimate and thought through. Riley states, 'It is ignorant, disrespectful and, I think, bordering on a form of abuse.' No parent would like to think that their actions around their children are akin to child abuse, therefore this attack manipulates the readers to Riley's argument, that not giving gardasil to teenage girls is wrong. The use of this attack aims to confirm for readers that the author's contention is the more logical and reasonable argument. The author employs an outraged and at times sarcastic tone which borders on condescending; this also encourages readers to adopt the author's point of view for fear of being seen as irrational and illogical. People do not want to be the target of Riley's anger and it reinforces for the reader that they have the correct point of view in agreeing with Riley's contention. The use of an attack persuades the reader to feel that any view other than the author's is irrational and thoughtless.

Visual aids enable the author to reinforce their contention for the reader. This Opinion Piece is supported by an image to help support the contention that Gardasil is something that all young women should be receiving. The image, by Herald Sun photographer Briane Makin is of Professor Ian Frazer (the vaccine pioneer) about to give Gardasil to a teenage girl Therese Raft. They are placed in front of a black backdrop which gives the impression that the situation is staged while both have smiles on their faces suggesting that the vaccine is a good thing which will benefit many young women and is something that they will be grateful for. In addition Therese looks happy with unblemished skin and shiny dark hair. She is portrayed as young, healthy and happy. All parents want healthy and happy children and this image supports the argument within the text. The use of this image encourages the reader to see that Gardasil is something that will value many young women and potentially save lives. It aims to make the 20% of parents refusing the vaccine feel guilty that they are denying their daughters this opportunity while persuading the other 80% that they have absolutely done the right thing. The image helps to support the author's contention that parents not allowing their daughters to have the vaccine are ignorant and irresponsible for believing that it will make their daughters promiscuous.

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In the Opinion Piece published in the Herald Sun on October 7th 2007 the author Robyn Riley employs a number of persuasive strategies to persuade readers to support her contention. She contends that parents not allowing their daughter to have the Gardasil vaccine, for fears that it will make them promiscuous, are ignorant and irresponsible. In an outraged and at times sarcastic tone, the author uses expert opinions to add more weight to her argument and encourage readers to believe that the argument is more reliable. In addition she uses inclusive language as well as a distinct 'us and them mentality' to persuade readers to support the author's contention rather than support a suggested minority. Furthermore, the author uses an attack which aims to make readers see the author's argument as more logical and rational. Finally the author 's contention is supported by an image which helps to reinforce the soundness of the author's contention that parents refusing the vaccine are irresponsible and potentially putting their daughters wellbeing at risk.

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