

## **Abstract**

In my PhD thesis, I focus on some aspects of argumentation theory, in order to assess the impact of linguistic and cognitive factors for the communication and detection of straw man fallacies. This fallacy aims at creating a more easily attackable version of the opponent's position by misrepresenting it. The concept of straw man as such is a quite recent. Even though there are allusions to this concept in different works from Aristotle to Hamblin, it is not until the 1990s that more specific research has been conducted on that fallacy. In addition, so far most of the work on the straw man fallacy has been conducted from theoretical perspectives only (ranging from philosophical to a pragma-dialectical frameworks), but these theoretical definitions have not been empirically assessed. In order to get a better understanding of the straw man fallacy and to refine the definition of this concept, I will approach it from an experimental point of view. In a first series of experiments, I will analyse the impact of three variables (distorted standpoint vs. distorted argument / with connective vs. without connective / implicit distortion vs. explicit distortion) on the effectiveness of the straw man, defined as the inability of the audience to detect the fallacy. Depending of the results from these experiments, other experimental studies will be conducted to assess further aspects of the straw man fallacy (i.e. the use of different causal connectives; social biases in the communication of straw men; cross-linguistic approach).

## **Keywords**

pragmatics, argumentation, pragma-dialectics, fallacies, straw man, effectiveness, connectives, empirical validation