FLUENCY EFFECTS:
NEW DOMAINS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR PERSUASION

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of individuals’ subjective experiences of ease and fluency on persuasion. Expanding previous research on ease of retrieval and processing fluency, two studies examined the role of the experiences in ease in articulating information to others. Participants were presented with persuasive information and were asked to articulate it with various degrees of difficulty. The results of two studies confirmed the hypothesis that the more difficult it is for individuals to articulate a message, the less persuaded they are by its content. Providing evidence for its subjective nature, this effect occurred only for individuals who were likely to focus on their internal experiences as measured by the private self-consciousness scale (Study 1 and Study 2) and individuals who were more likely to focus on the self as measured by the self-construal scale (Study 2). Furthermore, the observed effects of articulation difficulty disappeared in the presence of discounting information. These results suggest a new domain of fluency effects and new circumstances under which individuals use their subjective experiences as diagnostic information.