

# **ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ A Study Of Undergraduate And Graduate Students' Argumentation In Learning Contexts Of Higher Education**

*Abstract:* This study sets out to examine to what extent the arguments used by undergraduate and graduate students refer to scientific notions and theories related to the discipline taught in the course. The results of this study indicate that only graduate students advance arguments that refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to the discipline taught in the course, whereas undergraduate students typically advance arguments based on common-sense knowledge and previous personal experience.

*Keywords:* Argumentative Strategies, Higher Education, Pragma-Dialectical Approach, Qualitative Research, Student-Teacher Interaction

## *1. Introduction*

In the learning contexts, argumentation is not a heated exchange between rivals that results in winners and losers, or an effort to reach a mutually beneficial compromise; rather it is a form of "logical discourse whose goal is to tease out the relationship between ideas and evidence" (Duschl et al., 2007, p. 33). Argumentation enables students to engage in knowledge construction, shifting the focus from rote memorization of notions and theories to a complex scientific practice in which they construct and justify knowledge claims (Kelly & Chen, 1999; Sandoval & Reiser, 2004). Notwithstanding, current research indicates that learning how to engage in productive scientific argumentation to propose and justify an explanation through argument is difficult for students. Thus, empirical research that examines how students generate arguments has become an area of major concern for science education research.

The present study intends to provide a further contribution to the line of research on student-generated arguments. It specifically focuses on the learning context of

higher education and sets out to investigate the arguments used by undergraduate and graduate students in Developmental Psychology during the disciplinary discussions with their teacher and with their classmates, i.e., task-related discussions concerning the discipline taught in the course. In particular, the objective of the present study is to verify the following two hypotheses:

1. "Undergraduate students draw their arguments from common sense and personal experience more often than graduate students".
2. "Graduate students put forth arguments that refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to the discipline taught in the course, i.e., Developmental Psychology, more often than undergraduate students".

These two hypotheses will be verified by means of a small-scale corpus study, and this certainly limits the generalizability of the results obtained by the present. A larger database would probably permit more quantitatively reliable data for certain statistical relationships, thus drawing conclusions of general order. However, the careful study of a small number of conversations will allow a more penetrating "data-close" analysis of the argumentative dynamics in the classroom. In order to focus on the arguments used by students, the object of investigation will be the argumentative discussions between students and teacher, as well as among students, occurring during their ordinary lessons, rather than an ad hoc setting created to favour the beginning of argumentative discussions. Tools developed in argumentation theory will be useful in this respect as they can be employed to respond to this need. The analytical approach for the selection of the students' arguments is, in fact, the pragma-dialectical ideal model of a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, 2004).

The paper is structured as follows: in its first part, a concise review of the most relevant literature on argumentation in learning contexts of higher education will be presented. Afterwards, the methodology on which the present study is based and the results of the analyses will be described. In the last part of the article, the results and the conclusions drawn from this study will be discussed.

## *2. Argumentation studies in learning contexts of higher education*

The studies focusing on the argumentative practices in higher education have brought to light relevant insights in the fields of education and argumentation theory. In particular, two main lines of research need to be distinguished within these studies.

The first line of research aims to single out the cognitive skills that can be improved through argumentative practices in the classroom. Overall, the results of these studies indicate that favoring argument debates in the classroom can enhance students' motivation and engagement (Chin & Osborne, 2010; Hatano & Inagaki, 2003), and help them detect and resolve errors (Schwarz et al., 2000). A series of other studies have also shown that engagement in constructing arguments enhances students' knowledge by promoting conceptual change (e.g., Nussbaum & Sinatra, 2003; Wiley & Voss, 1999), and that the engagement in argumentative small- or large-group discussions improves conceptual understanding (Andrews, 2009; Alexopoulou & Driver, 1996; Mason, 1996, 2001).

The second line of research aims at investigating students' argumentative skills, and how such skills can favor or disfavor the learning process. In this respect, the role of argumentation in the academic context is currently stressed by a growing literature that emphasizes how students rarely use criteria that are consistent with the standards of the scientific community to determine which ideas to accept, reject, or modify. For example, the work of Hogan and Maglienti (2001) and Linn and Eylon (2006) suggests that students often rely on inappropriate criteria such as the teacher's authority or consistency with their personal beliefs to evaluate the merits of a scientific explanation. This research suggests that students rarely use criteria based on theories and scientific models. Other research suggests that students often do not use sufficient evidence (Sandoval & Millwood, 2005) or struggle to understand what counts as evidence (Sadler, 2004). Moreover, McNeill and Krajcik (2007) found that if students are confronted with large amounts of data, they often encounter difficulties differentiating between what is relevant and what is irrelevant.

Within the research strand on students' argumentative skills, a series of studies devoted attention to the problem of constructing students' knowledge, taking into account their previous beliefs (Macagno & Konstantinidou, 2013; Sampson & Clark, 2008; Driver et al., 2000; Jiménez-Aleixandre et al., 2000; Kelly & Takao, 2002). For instance, Alexander, Kulikowich, and Schulze (1994) have shown that previous knowledge in the domain is a significant predictor of comprehension of the arguments advanced in support of a scientific theory. In a case study analysis of argumentative discourse among high school science students, von Aufschnaiter et al. (2008) suggest that the quality of argumentation itself is mediated by students' prior knowledge and familiarity with the content. Thus, high-level

argument requires high-level knowledge of the content. According to the authors, students can engage effectively in argumentation only on content and levels of abstraction that are familiar to them. In the same vein, Sadler and Zeidler (2005) investigated the significance of prior knowledge of genetics for the argumentation of 15 undergraduate students on six cloning scenarios. The findings of this study indicated that students with more advanced genetics understanding demonstrated fewer instances of reasoning flaws, such as lack of coherence and contradiction of reasoning within and between scenarios, and were more likely to incorporate content knowledge in their argumentation than students with more a naïve understanding of genetics.

Overall, despite differences in methodology and interpretation, the studies on the argumentative skills of students in the learning contexts of higher education have had the merit to show that students are able to understand and generate an argument, and to construct justifications in defence of an opinion. However, the results of these studies have also indicated that students often do not base their decisions to accept or reject an idea on available evidence and appropriate reasoning. Rather, they tend to use inappropriate reasoning strategies to warrant one particular view over another and distort, trivialize, or ignore evidence in an effort to reaffirm their own ideas.

The present study intends to provide an innovative and relevant contribution to the recent literature on student-generated arguments in the learning contexts of higher education. In the next sections of the paper I will present the research design, as well as the main results of this study.

### *3. Methodology*

#### *3.1. Data Corpus*

The present investigation is based on a corpus of sixteen video-recorded separate lessons of one Bachelor's degree (*sub-corpus 1*) and one Master's degree course (*sub-corpus 2*), constituting about 24 hours of video data. The length of each recording varies from 84 to 98 minutes. The two courses have been selected according to the following criteria:

- i. similar number of students (about 15 students);
- ii. similar disciplinary domain (both courses considered handle themes in the area of developmental psychology);
- iii. both courses are taught by the same teacher in English language.

Sub-corpus 1 consists of 8 video-recorded lessons of the third year elective course “Adolescent Development: Research, Policy, and Practice” of the Bachelor’s degree at the University College of Utrecht (UCU). Sub-corpus 2 consists of 8 video-recorded lessons of the first year elective course “Human development and developmental psychopathology” of the Master’s degree program Development and Socialization in Childhood and Adolescence (DASCA) at the Utrecht University (UU).

### *3.2. Population*

The sub-corpus 1 is constituted by 14 students, 4 boys and 10 girls. All the students at the time of data collection were in their early 20s ( $M = 21.80$ ;  $SD = 1.80$ ). There was no significance difference of age between boys ( $M = 21.89$ ;  $SD = 2.66$ ) and girls ( $M = 21.74$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ). The sub-corpus 2 is constituted by 16 students, who were all girls. Most of the students at the time of data collection were in their early 20s ( $M = 23.00$ ;  $SD = 1.60$ ).

Before starting the last lesson of the course (December 2013), both undergraduate and graduate students were asked (i) to rate in a scale from 1 (none) to 9 (excellent) their own ability to communicate in English language, (ii) if they had already took an academic course in Developmental Psychology, and (iii) to rate in a scale from 1 (none) to 9 (excellent) the level of their previous knowledge in Developmental Psychology, i.e., before taking the course. As for the ability to communicate in English language, in a scale from 1 to 9 the average score of the undergraduate students, according to their own perception, was  $M = 8.28$ , whilst the average score of the graduate students was slightly lower  $M = 7.56$ . The most part of the students did already take an academic course in Developmental Psychology, both undergraduate (Yes  $N = 12$ ; No  $N = 2$ ) and graduate level (Yes  $N = 15$ ; No  $N = 1$ ). In regard to the level of their previous knowledge of the discipline taught in the course, in a scale from 1 to 9 the average score of the undergraduate students, according to their own perception, was slightly lower ( $M = 6.35$ ) than graduate students ( $M = 7.25$ ).

## *4. Analytical approach*

### *4.1. The Ideal Model of a Critical Discussion*

The approach adopted for the analysis is the pragma-dialectical ideal model of a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, 2004) that proposes an ideal definition of argumentation developed according to the standard of reasonableness: an argumentative discussion starts when the speaker advances

his/her standpoint, and the listener casts doubts upon it, or directly attacks the standpoint. Accordingly, confrontation, in which disagreement regarding a certain standpoint is externalized in a discursive exchange or anticipated by the speaker, is a necessary condition for an argumentative discussion to occur.

In the present study, this model is assumed as a grid for the analysis, since it provides the criteria for the selection of the argumentative discussions and for the identification of the arguments put forth by students.

#### *4.2. Criteria used to select argumentative discussions*

The analysis we present in this paper will be limited to and focused on the study of what the pragma-dialectical of critical discussion defines as *analytically relevant argumentative moves*, namely, “those speech acts that (at least potentially) play a role in the process of resolving a difference of opinion” (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 73). If there is not a difference of opinion between two parties, therefore, we cannot talk of an argumentative discussion between them. For the present study, only the discussions that fulfill two of the following three criteria, one between *i.a* and *i.b* and always the *ii.*, were selected for analysis:

*i.a* at least one standpoint concerning an issue related to the discipline taught in the course put forth by one or more students is questioned – either by means of a clear disagreement or by means of a doubt – by the teacher or by (at least) one classmate,

*i.b* at least one standpoint concerning an issue related to the discipline taught in the course put forth by the teacher is questioned – either by means of a clear disagreement or by means of a doubt – by one or more students;

*ii.* at least one student advances at least one argument either in favor of or against the standpoint being questioned.

The argumentation data for each session were obtained by reviewing both the video recording and the corresponding transcript. In a first phase, all the argumentative discussions between students and teacher or among students arisen around an issue related to the discipline taught in the course that occurred in the corpus of sixteen separate lessons were selected (N= 94). Subsequently, for the scope of the present study, I only referred to the argumentative discussions in which at least one student advanced at least one argument either in favor of or against the standpoint being questioned (N= 66).

#### 4.3. *Criteria used to identify and distinguish students' arguments*

In order to identify the arguments put forth by students, the analysis is focused on the third stage of the model of a critical discussion, i.e., the *argumentation stage*. As stated by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, p.138), in this stage the interlocutors exchange arguments and critical reactions to convince the other party to accept or to retract his/her own standpoint: "The dialectical objective of the parties is to test the acceptability of the standpoints that have shaped the difference of opinion". Accordingly, in line with the pragma-dialectical approach, we considered as students' arguments only the argumentative moves by students that aim to support, explain, justify and defend their own position.

Once identified, the arguments put forth by students were distinguished according to the following two criteria:

- the argument refers to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to Developmental Psychology (hereafter, SCIENCE ARG).
- the argument refers to student's personal experience or to any other information that does not refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to Developmental Psychology (hereafter, NO SCIENCE ARG).

An example of SCIENCE ARG is the second part (in *Italic*) of the following discourse by a student: "I think that Piaget's notion that children's development must necessarily precede their learning is wrong, *because according to Vygotsky learning is a social phenomenon and it come before development*". An example of NO SCIENCE ARG is, instead, the first part (in *Italic*) of the following discourse by another student: "*In my school, bullies were above all rich and spoiled guys. I wouldn't say that bullies typically come from poor families*".

#### 5. *Results*

Within the total of N= 66 argumentative discussions analyzed, the graduate students advanced arguments in support of their standpoint more frequently than the undergraduate students. Overall, the undergraduate students advanced at least one argument in N= 23 discussions, for a total number of N= 75 arguments (average number of arguments advanced during an argumentative discussion N= 3.26). These arguments were in most cases advanced during student to student interactions (N= 51; 68%), whilst a fewer number of arguments were observed during student-teacher interactions (N= 24; 32%). The graduate students advanced at least one argument in N= 43 discussions, for a total number of N= 167 arguments (average number of arguments advanced during an argumentative

discussion N= 3.88). Similar to what was observed in regard to undergraduate students, a higher number of arguments were found in student to student interactions (N= 95; 57%) than in student-teacher interactions (N= 72; 43%).

A detailed description of the number of arguments put forth by undergraduate and graduate students is presented below, in Table 1:

	Bachelor	Master	TOTAL
Argumentative discussions in which (at least) one student put forth (at least) one argument	23	43	66
Arguments put forth by students	75	167	242
Average number of arguments advanced during an argumentative discussion	3.26	3.88	3.66

Arguments put forth by students during student to student interactions	51	95	146
Arguments put forth by students during interactions with their teacher	24	72	96

Table 1. Contributions of undergraduate and graduate students in argumentative discussions in the classroom

In order to present the results of this study, a selection of excerpts of talk-in-interaction representative of the results obtained from the larger set of analyses conducted on the whole corpus of students' arguments will be presented.

### 5.1. Undergraduate Students' Arguments

The analysis of the arguments put forth by the 14 undergraduate students involved the N= 23 argumentative discussions arisen around an issue related to the discipline taught in the course in which they put forward at least one argument to support their own standpoint, for a total number of N= 75 arguments. The findings show that in large part the undergraduate students put forth NO SCIENCE ARG (N= 66; 88%), both in interactions with their classmates (N= 50 out of N= 51 total arguments put forth in interactions with their classmates) and with the teacher (N= 16 out of N= 24 total arguments forth in interactions with their teacher).

In the following example we can see how an undergraduate student (STU2F) put forth a NO SCIENCE ARG (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 9: "there is not a mother that would accept to kill her son. it is not culture it is the nature of human beings") to oppose a NO SCIENCE ARG (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 2: "otherwise slavery wouldn't have been permitted. at a certain time at a certain place, it was possible"; and line 4: "at a certain time at a certain place, it was possible") previously advanced by one of her classmate (STU14M) during a discussion favoured by the teacher concerning the cultural approach and its implications (line 1):

#### Excerpt 1

Lesson 3. Min. 38:12. Participants: teacher (TEACH), students (STU2F; STU14M).



1. \*TEACH: according to the cultural approach, all the values, what is right or what is wrong is cultural specific, they depends on culture [...] what do you think about this?
2. - \*STU14M: yes, is right. *otherwise slavery wouldn't have been permitted*
3. - \*TEACH: yes, good point
4. - \*STU14M: *at a certain time at a certain place, it was possible*
5. - \*TEACH: right
6. - %pau: 2.0 sec
7. - \*STU2F: not everything, though
8. - \*TEACH: what?
9. - \*STU2F: not everything is acceptable. *there is not a mother that would accept to kill her son. it is not culture it is the nature of human beings*

[...]

In the corpus, undergraduate students put forth SCIENCE ARG almost exclusively in interactions with their teacher (N= 8 out of N= 9 total SCIENCE ARG put forth in interactions with their teacher). A clear example of the use of this type of argument is the following discussion concerning to moral development in adolescence, where it is possible to observe the following difference of opinion between the teacher and a student (STU6M): according to the student, adolescents' behaviors show to be very often more mature than adults' ones, whilst the teacher clearly disagrees with her student's opinion (line 3: "no::") and puts forth an argument in support of her standpoint (line 5: "adolescence typically have more dangerous behaviors than adults"). In turn, the student advances a SCIENCE ARG (in *Italic* in the excerpt) that refers to the well-known Kohlberg's theory of moral development in order to support his own opinion (line 6: "but Kohlberg said that adolescents can normally respect authority ad rules, and that's pretty good"). This discussion will continue for several minutes, involving other students as well.

#### Excerpt 2

Lesson 4. Min. 59:50. Participants: teacher (TEACH), student (STU6M).

1. - \*STU6M: adolescents' behaviors are very often more mature than adults' ones
2. - %pau: 3.0 sec
3. - \*TEACH: no::
4. - \*STU6M: oh. yes professor ((laughing))
5. - \*TEACH: adolescence typically have more dangerous behaviors than adults

6. - \*STU6M: *but Kohlberg said that adolescents can normally respect authority ad rules, and that's pretty good*
7. - \*TEACH: yes, but

[...]

### 5.2. Graduate Students' Arguments

The analysis of the arguments put forth by the 16 graduate students involved the N= 43 argumentative discussions arisen around an issue related to the discipline taught in the course in which they put forward at least one argument to support their own standpoint, for a total number of N= 167 arguments. Unlike from what was observed for undergraduate students, the findings show that slightly more than half of the all arguments put forth by graduate students were SCIENCE ARG (N= 87; 52%). These arguments were used a little more frequently in student-teacher interactions (N= 46 out of N= 72 total arguments forth in interactions with their teacher) than in student to student interactions (N= 41 out of N= 95 total arguments put forth in interactions with their classmates).

In the following short example we can observe an argumentative discussion having as protagonists the teacher and one student, STU10F, occurred during a lesson centred on the development of identity and personality in adolescence. The teacher explains that adolescents face a phase in which they are committed to choose their values and goals for the future (line 1). The student shows to be in disagreement with the claim made by her teacher, and in turn advances a SCIENCE ARG in support of her opinion (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 2: "some adolescents decide not to choose, according to Marcia it's the identity diffusion, they are not ready to take these decisions"). The discussion continues with the teacher that accepts the argument advanced by her student (line 3: "this is true, some of them don't") and reformulate her previous claim accordingly (line 4).

#### Excerpt 3

Lesson 6. Min. 32:15. Participants: teacher (TEACH), student (STU10F).

1. - \*TEACH: during this phase ((adolescence)) they ((adolescents)) have to decide their goals and values for their future
2. - \*STU10F: some adolescents decide not to choose though, *according to Marcia it's the identity diffusion, they are not ready to take these decisions*
3. - \*TEACH: this is true, some of them don't
4. - \*TEACH: they are supposed to choose their values and goals

[...]

As far as NO SCIENCE ARG are concerned, graduate students used these arguments more frequently during student to student interactions (N= 54 out of N= 95 total arguments put forth in student to student interactions) than during the interactions with their teacher (N= 26 out of N= 72 total arguments forth in student-teacher interactions). A clear example of the use of this type of argument is the following discussion, whose beginning is initially favoured by the teacher, about mental disorders in adolescence and the moment of their actual initiation. Here, it is possible to observe an argumentative discussions initially involving two students: STU15F and STU1F. According to the first student, the actual initiation of a mental disorder is before the manifestation, and she supports her opinion by advancing a NO SCIENCE ARG based on common sense knowledge (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 2: “you need to have a predisposition, because the genes produce a predisposition to have that:: it’s before the manifestation”). On the other hand, the second student claims that having a predisposition is fundamental only for certain mental disorders, not for all of them, since *it can still go in multiple ways*. In particular, she supports this claim by also advancing a NO SCIENCE ARG that is based on her own personal experience (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 3: “*I know people who were depressed and now they are not*”). This discussion will continue for several minutes, involving other students as well as the teacher.

#### Excerpt 4

Lesson 2. Min. 24:30. Participants: teacher (TEACH), students (STU15F; STU1F).

1. - \*TEACH: when is an actual initiation of a ((mental)) disorder? is it when you see some first symptoms or when you see the disorder, when is really labeled as a disorder?
2. - \*STU15F: you need to have a predisposition, *because the genes produce a predisposition to have that:: it’s before the manifestation*
3. - \*STU1F: it’s different for disorders. even if you have a predisposition it can still go in multiple ways. *I know people who were depressed and now they are not*

[...]

The presentation of different excerpts concerning the types of arguments used by the two groups (sub-corpus 1 and sub-corpus 2) of students shows an interesting element that can summarize the argumentative choices (and strategies) used by

them with their classmates and with their teacher. The undergraduate students advance only rarely SCIENCE ARG (N= 9; 12%), and these arguments very used almost exclusively in student-teacher interactions. On the other hand, slightly more than half of the arguments put forth by graduate students were SCIENCE ARG (N= 87; 52%), which were used both in student-teacher interactions (N= 46) and in student-to-student interactions (N= 41). The NO SCIENCE ARG was instead the type of argument advanced in almost all cases by undergraduate students (N= 66; 88%), especially in student to student interactions (N= 50). The Table 2 shows a comparison between the types of arguments advanced by the two groups of students.

<b>Bachelor's Students</b>	<b>SCIENCE ARG</b> No 9; 12%	in Student-to-Student Interaction No 1	in Student-Teacher Interaction No 8	<b>NO SCIENCE ARG</b> No 66; 88%	in Student-to-Student Interaction No 50	in Student-Teacher Interaction No 16
<b>Master's Students</b>	<b>SCIENCE ARG</b> No 87; 52%	in Student-to-Student Interaction No 41	in Student-Teacher Interaction No 46	<b>NO SCIENCE ARG</b> No 80; 48%	in Student-to-Student Interaction No 54	in Student-Teacher Interaction No 26

Table 2. Descriptive frequencies of the types of arguments put forth by the two groups of students

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## 6. Discussion

The findings of this study appear to confirm the two initial hypotheses: 1) “undergraduate students draw their arguments from common sense and personal experience more often than graduate students”; and 2) “graduate students put forth arguments that refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to the discipline taught in the course, i.e., Developmental Psychology, more often than undergraduate students”. How can we explain these results? Among the many reasons than can contribute at different degrees to explain these results, I want to focus on two aspects that I think are the most important.

The first reason is *the actual students' knowledge of the discipline taught in the course*, i.e., Developmental Psychology. Even though the students of both groups - according to their own perception - seems to have a similar knowledge in Developmental Psychology, the observations of the topics treated during the lessons, of the student-teacher and student to student interactions, and the analysis of the arguments advanced by students has led me to realize that the graduate students had an actual knowledge of the discipline much higher than

undergraduate students, even more than what was claimed in the answers to my short questionnaire (graduate students  $M= 7.25$  vs. undergraduate students  $M= 6.35$ ).

As we have seen in the excerpt 3, the graduate students showed to be able to use as an argument a limited, well-specific aspect of a scientific theory in order to support their own standpoint. Moreover, they were able to engage in critical discussions related to the different theories that treat certain limited aspects of a certain topic discussed during the lessons. On the other hand, the knowledge in Developmental Psychology of the undergraduate students was often limited to a more superficial knowledge of the discipline. In most cases, their SCIENCE ARG ( $N= 9$ ) refer to a well-known theory, however avoiding to mention the correct term of the scientific notion they refer to. For example, in the excerpt 2 we have seen that a student advanced a SCIENCE ARG that refers to a well-known psychological theory, i.e., Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984), claiming that according to this theory adolescents can normally respect authority and rules. Evidently, the student is referring to the "stage four" of Kohlberg's theory of moral development, however without mentioning it correctly.

The second reason is related to the *institutional commitment requested to the students*. From the observations of student-teacher interactions, I noticed that an argumentative effort by students is requested only at the graduate level, not at the undergraduate one. Both at undergraduate and at graduate level, it is the teacher that in most cases favors the beginning of argumentative discussions in the classroom. She does it by asking questions to her students, inviting them to express their opinions, doubts about the theories and notions presented during the lesson. However, looking at the questions used by the teacher to favor the beginning of argumentative discussions, I observed some differences. At the undergraduate level, the teacher asks open questions to her students. These are questions can favor a large discussion with and among students, and they are not focused on limited, specific aspects of a theory, but instead these questions aim to favor a discussion around a more general topic. The focus of the discussion is not the single theory, but the more general topic. The following are good examples of these questions: What are the main reasons leading to episodes of bullying among adolescents? How can the family relationships affect the adolescent development? What are the consequences of adolescent drinking and substance use?

At the graduate level, instead, the teacher asks questions that refer to specific aspects of a certain theory. These questions are often followed by a further Why-

questions asked to the students. Here, the students are expected to provide the reasons at the basis of their own opinions. The following are good examples of these questions: What are the most important processes that according to Steinberg explain the fact that many risk behaviors tend to peak in adolescence? ... Why? Which developmental processes can be studied by each of the seven models described by Graber and Brooks-Gunn and how? ... Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a person-centered approach? ... Why?

Accordingly, it seems that at the undergraduate level students are (only) requested to be interested in and curious of the discipline taught in the course by asking questions. At the graduate level curiosity is not enough. Students are expected to support their standpoints - and even a mere doubt - by advancing arguments that have to refer to scientific theories.

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# **ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Negotiation Versus Deliberation**

*Abstract:* Negotiation and deliberation are two context types widely studied in the argumentation literature. However, one issue that still must be addressed is how to distinguish negotiation and deliberation in practice. In this paper, I seek to develop linguistic criteria to identify instances of these genres in discourse. To this end, I characterise the felicity conditions of the superordinate speech acts



defining and structuring deliberation and negotiation encounters.

*Keywords:* Deliberation, negotiation, offer, proposal, superordinate speech act.

## 1. Introduction

Most contemporary argumentation theorists agree that fallacy judgments are, ultimately, context-dependent. Accordingly, over the last two decades we have witnessed a wave of attempts to characterise different types of contexts and formulate specific reasonableness conditions for the use of argumentation within each of them. Among these attempts, those carried out by Walton and the pragma-dialectical school are probably among the most systematic and advanced.

In Walton's (1998) approach, context types are conceptualised as 'dialogue types': i.e., as exchanges of speech acts between two speech partners governed by a primary goal and a set of rules. Within the pragma-dialectical framework (Van Eemeren, 2010), context types are partly studied through the concept of 'discourse genres', conceived as "socially ratified ways of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity" (Fairclough, 1995, p.14).

'Negotiation' and 'deliberation' are two among a number of other context types that have been studied by these authors. Walton and Krabbe (1995) have proposed a characterisation based, mainly, on their primary goals and rules; pragma-dialecticians have characterised the two contexts in terms of their communicative conventions and the constraining force of those conventions on argumentative discourse. Thanks to these descriptions, it has become possible to carry out context-sensitive and, thereby, more nuanced evaluations of argumentative discussions.

However, one issue that still must be addressed by the aforementioned contextual approaches to argumentation is how to distinguish negotiation and deliberation *in practice*. Since negotiation and deliberation share important features - both are collective decision-making procedures centred on the practical question 'what to do' - they can be easily confused during the process of analysing actual fragments of discourse. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that it has not yet been made clear which of the rules or conventions specified for each genre are - to use a well-known distinction - 'constitutive' and which are only 'regulative' of these practices (Rawls, 1955; Searle, 1969). Constitutive rules or conventions not only regulate, but also define the activity they regulate. Thus, constitutive rules or

conventions are reliable criteria to distinguish one genre from another. Regulative rules or conventions, by contrast, only regulate a pre-existing activity and are, for this reason, unreliable criteria. If, for example, one of the parties violates a regulative convention of the genre of deliberation, it does not necessarily mean that the parties are not deliberating. It may just mean that one party is behaving fallaciously.

With a view to contributing to the study of argumentation in context, this paper seeks to develop criteria that can help the analyst distinguish negotiation and deliberative practices. In this endeavour, I will use pragma-dialectics as my main theoretical starting point.

## *2. Discourse genres and superordinate speech acts*

In line with the rational approach to discourse underlying the pragma-dialectical theory (Eemeren et al., 1993), this essay studies the genres of negotiation and deliberation as rational (i.e. goal-oriented) and socially ratified sequences of speech acts, motivated by the need to repair a specific kind of interactional problem in a given social activity.

To develop criteria for establishing whether or not a particular sequence is an instance of negotiation or deliberation, I shall make use of the concepts of 'superordinate speech act', 'pre-sequence' and 'post-sequence' developed in the field of conversational analysis. A superordinate speech act is a speech act that pragmatically organises a sequence by structuring the interaction and aiding in the interpretation of the speech acts performed before and after the superordinate speech act. Pre-sequences and post-sequences are sequential expansions occurring before and after a superordinate act (Jacobs & Jackson, 1980, 1983).

The hypothesis I wish to explore in this paper is whether there is a specific superordinate speech act within each genre sequence, the performance of which can be seen as a *prima facie indication* that the sequence is a token of one genre rather than the other. Since, according to this hypothesis, the performance of a certain type of speech act defines the genre in which the discourse unfolds, the requirement to perform such speech act can be considered a constitutive convention of the genre if the hypothesis is proved to be correct.

In exploring this hypothesis I will assume that any pre and post-sequences which

are relevant to deciding on the meaning or acceptance of the superordinate speech act - in other words, whose performance is instrumental to determining whether the felicity conditions of the superordinate speech act hold - will fall within the scope of the same instance of negotiation or deliberation.

### 3. *The superordinate speech act of negotiation*

Since the late 1960's, there has been a number of efforts - particularly in the field of business communication and artificial intelligence - to describe negotiations and deliberations from a speech act perspective. Some of these efforts have been directed at identifying the types of speech acts that are vital to the negotiation and deliberation process. In terms of negotiation, scholars generally agree that commissives and, particularly, offers are essential to any negotiation activity (e.g., Tutzauer, 1992, p. 67; Fisher, 1983, p. 159). This suggests that offers are likely to be the superordinate speech act underlying negotiation. **[i]**

An offer counts as an attempt by the speaker to commit himself to perform a future action if this is accepted by the hearer. Offers are similar to promises, but they differ from promises in that the commitment to perform the future course of action is always conditional on the hearer's acceptance. Put differently, while offers become binding only on acceptance, promises become binding as soon as they are performed (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 196). Offers and promises also differ, to some extent, in the psychological state expressed by the speaker concerning the preferences of the audience. When a speaker issues a promise, he can be committed to the view that he believes - rightly or wrongly - that the hearer would like him to perform the action. But when an offer is made, speakers can only be committed to the view that they suppose, conjecture or guess that such is the case. Offers seem to be more tentative than promises.

(1)

Two flatmates have just finished dinner and talk about what they would want for dessert. This is an excerpt of their dialogue:

- 1 A: I quite fancy an orange. How about you?  
2 B: Me too.  
(Party A walks to the kitchen to fetch a pair of oranges but comes back only with one)  
3 A: Sorry, bad news: there is only one left.  
4 B: Too bad. Should we split it in half?  
5 A: Hmm... Are you sure you want an orange?

(2)

Two flatmates talk over dinner about the imminent departure of one of them to another country. The one departing is a little stressed about the trip. His friend notices this. This is an excerpt of their dialogue:

- 1 A: Would you like me to help you with the check in?  
2 B: No, thanks a lot.  
3 A: Ok, can I help you calling the airport transfer?  
4 B: Oh, yeah. I have totally forgotten about that. That would be great!

Not all types of offers, however, seem to be well-suited to performing the role of negotiation's superordinate speech act. To demonstrate this, compare the dialogues in examples 1 and 2:

Are both examples instances of negotiation? The answer appears to be in the

negative. Only Example 1 seems to match our pragmatic intuitions about what a negotiation is. However, in both examples, at least one offer is performed. In Example 1, turn 4, party B offers to split the orange in half; in Example 2, turns 1 and 3, party A offers his help to party B in order to alleviate the stress of his trip.

If in both dialogues an offer is being performed, why, then, is Example 1 perceived as a negotiation encounter, while Example 2 is perceived as a token of something else? The explanation lies, I think, on the *type of offer* performed in each case. In Example 1, the offer is performed in an attempt to reconcile a trivial conflict of interest. Judging by the expressions of disappointment in turns 3 and 4, both parties want the whole orange for themselves, and this creates a tension between them as there is only one orange left. In Example 2, there are no signs of a conflict of interest, at least not on the basis of the information available. On the contrary, their interests appear to be identical, as they both want party B to feel less stressed about the upcoming trip. In order to distinguish the two types of offer, I shall refer to the type of speech act performed in Example 1 as the speech act of 'making an offer' and to the type of speech act performed in Example 2 as a 'generic offer'.

Accordingly, not all types of offers can be analysed as the superordinate speech act of negotiation; only the speech act of making an offer fulfils this role. Like every type of offer, making an offer counts as an attempt by the speaker to commit himself to perform an action, so long as the action is accepted by the hearer. However, unlike generic offers, such a commitment is taken by the speaker with the specific objective of *reconciling a presumed conflict of interest with the listener*. The conflict of interest presumed by the speaker may become clear while the dialogue unfolds – as illustrated in Example 1 – or be presupposed by the context and never verbalised by either party, as often happens in market exchanges.

(3)

A customer enters an antique shop. He browses over the items and begins to pay attention to one particular shelf in a display case. He picks up one of the items and inspects it. The proprietor notices this, approaches the customer, and the following dialogue ensues:

- 1 A: If you buy that item and one of those pots, then you can have the item for £45 and the pot for £30. That's a substantial reduction on their original prices.  
2 B: No, sorry. I don't have that amount of money with me at the moment.  
3 A: Okay, how about £60 for both?  
4 B: Okay, deal."

Speakers can of course make an offer in non-conditional or conditional terms. To make a conditional offer counts as a commitment by the speaker to perform some future action, *on condition that the*

*hearer performs another action in turn* (besides the action of accepting the speaker's offer). Example 3 below contains only conditional offers and is also a clear cut example of a negotiation encounter:

In order to distinguish the three types of offers discussed, I compare them in table 1 in terms of their felicity conditions: **[ii]**

Table 1: Types of offers and felicity conditions

Felicity Conditions	Generic offer	Making an offer	Making a conditional offer <sup>2</sup>
Essential	Counts as an attempt by S to commit himself to do A, on condition that H accepts S's doing A.	Counts as an attempt by S to reconcile some competing interests with H, by committing himself to do A, on condition that H accepts S's doing A.	Counts as an attempt by S to commit himself to do A, on condition that H does A' (besides accepting S's doing A).
Propositional	Some future action A is predicated of S.	Some future action A is predicated of S.	Some future action A is predicated of S and another future action A' is predicated of H.
Preparatory	S is willing to do A.  S is able to do A.  S presumes that H would prefer S's doing A to S's not doing A.	S is willing to do A.  S is able to do A.  S presumes that H would prefer S's doing A to S's not doing A.	S is willing to do A, on condition that H does A'.  S is able to do A.  S believes H is able to do A'.  S presumes that H would prefer S's doing A to S's not doing A.  S presumes that H would prefer doing A' if S does A, than not doing A' and, as a consequence, not having S to do A.

### *An illustration*

Thus far I have argued that making an offer (non-conditional or conditional) is the superordinate speech act of negotiation and that the performance of this speech act can be used as a criterion to determine whether or not a negotiation has taken place. I will now illustrate how the criterion can be applied in practice. The example of negotiation under analysis has been taken from Fisher, Ury and Paton (1991 [1981], p. 23). In contrast to the examples already analysed, Example 4 not only involves a process of 'distributive', but also 'integrative' negotiation.

According to Walton and McKersie (1992), distributive negotiation occurs when the parties assume that what is at stake is the distribution of a fixed pie. In this case, the gains of one party necessarily result in the losses of the other. Distributive negotiations result in zero-sum solutions. Dividing the orange between two parties is a paradigmatic case of distributive bargaining: the more sections of orange one party gets, the less the other. By contrast, integrative negotiations take place when the parties no longer assume that what is at stake is the distribution of a fixed pie, but instead search for a solution where both can

maximize their gains simultaneously. Integrative negotiations aim at a win-win solution.

	S believes that it is not obvious to H that S will do A in the normal course of events.	S believes that it is not obvious to H that S will do A in the normal course of events.	S would rather not do A, unless H does A. S presumes that H would rather not do A, unless S does A. S prefers H doing A' than not doing it. S believes that it is not obvious to H that S will do A in the normal course of events and that H will do A' in the normal course of events.
Sincerity	S intends to do A if H accepts S's doing A.	S intends to do A if H accepts S's doing A.	S intends to do A if H does A.

Since Example 4 involves both types of negotiations, it will also help me demonstrate that the proposed criterion is also useful in identifying integrative negotiations:

Two friends are sitting next to each other in a library. One of them walks towards the window and closes it. The following dialogue ensues:

- 1 A: What are you doing? There is hardly any air in the room.
- 2 B: Fine, I can leave the window open a crack.
- 3 A: No, leave it halfway.
- 4 B: But there's a cold draft coming in. I'm freezing.
- 5 A: Okay, how about opening the window in the next room? Then we will have fresh air without a draft.
- 6 B: Good thinking!

The sequence of speech acts used by the parties in each turn is represented below. The superordinate speech acts underlying the verbal exchange are in italics; implicit and projected speech acts appear between parentheses:

1	A:	(Advances standpoint <sub>1</sub> : B shouldn't have closed the window)	}	Sub-negotiation <sub>1</sub>
	B:	(Doubts acceptability of standpoint <sub>1</sub> )		
	A:	(Maintains standpoint <sub>1</sub> )		
	B:	(Requests argumentation for standpoint <sub>1</sub> )		
2	A:	Advances argumentation for standpoint <sub>1</sub>	}	Sub-negotiation <sub>2</sub>
	B:	(Accepts argumentation for standpoint <sub>1</sub> )		
	A:	Makes offer <sub>1</sub>		
	B:	Rejects offer <sub>1</sub>		
3	A:	Makes offer <sub>2</sub>	}	Sub-negotiation <sub>3</sub>
	B:	Rejects offer <sub>2</sub>		
	A:	(Doubts acceptability of rejecting offer <sub>2</sub> )		
	B:	(Advances standpoint <sub>2</sub> : Rejecting offer <sub>2</sub> is acceptable)		
4	A:	(Requests argumentation for standpoint <sub>2</sub> )	}	Sub-negotiation <sub>4</sub>
	B:	Advances argumentation for standpoint <sub>2</sub>		
	A:	(Accepts argumentation for standpoint <sub>2</sub> )		
	B:	Makes offer <sub>3</sub>		
5	A:	(Doubts acceptability of offer <sub>3</sub> )	}	Sub-negotiation <sub>5</sub>
	B:	(Advances standpoint <sub>3</sub> : Offer <sub>3</sub> is acceptable)		
	A:	(Requests argumentation for standpoint <sub>3</sub> )		
	B:	Advances argumentation for standpoint <sub>3</sub>		
6	A:	(Accepts argumentation for standpoint <sub>3</sub> )		

1 A: (Advances standpoint<sub>1</sub>: B shouldn't have closed the window)  
 B: (Doubts acceptability of standpoint<sub>1</sub>)  
 A: (Maintains standpoint<sub>1</sub>)  
 B: (Requests argumentation for standpoint<sub>1</sub>)  
 A: Advances argumentation for standpoint<sub>1</sub>  
 B: (Accepts argumentation for standpoint<sub>1</sub>)  
 A: Makes offer<sub>1</sub>  
 B: Rejects offer<sub>1</sub>  
 A: (Doubts acceptability of rejecting offer<sub>2</sub>)  
 B: (Advances standpoint<sub>2</sub>: Rejecting offer<sub>2</sub> is acceptable)  
 A: (Requests argumentation for standpoint<sub>2</sub>)  
 B: Advances argumentation for standpoint<sub>2</sub>  
 A: (Accepts argumentation for standpoint<sub>2</sub>)  
 B: Makes offer<sub>3</sub>  
 A: (Doubts acceptability of offer<sub>3</sub>)  
 B: (Advances standpoint<sub>3</sub>: Offer<sub>3</sub> is acceptable)  
 A: (Requests argumentation for standpoint<sub>3</sub>)  
 B: Advances argumentation for standpoint<sub>3</sub>  
 A: (Accepts argumentation for standpoint<sub>3</sub>)  
 B: (Accepts offer<sub>3</sub>)

2 B: (Accepts argumentation for  
standpoint1)  
Accepts standpoint1  
Makes offer1  
3 A: Rejects offer1  
  
Makes offer2  
4 B: Rejects offer2  
A: (Doubts acceptability of rejecting offer2)  
B: (Advances standpoint2: Rejecting offer2 is  
acceptable)  
A: (Requests argumentation for standpoint2)  
B: Advances argumentation for standpoint2  
5 A: (Accepts argumentation for standpoint2)  
Accepts standpoint2  
  
Makes offer3  
B: (Doubts acceptability of offer3)  
A: (Advances standpoint3: Offer3 is acceptable)  
B: (Requests argumentation for standpoint3)  
A: Advances argumentation for standpoint3  
6 B: (Accepts argumentation for standpoint3)  
Accepts standpoint3  
(Accepts offer3)

The analysis proposed shows that the superordinate speech act of making an offer is performed three times in the dialogue: in turns 2, 3 and 5. Thus, according to the identification criterion proposed, there are three negotiation processes in this fragment.

The sequence of speech acts involved in such processes is indicated in the analysis between braces. We can clearly identify these three negotiation sequences because each of them is relevant in determining the meaning or the acceptability of their respective superordinate speech act. For example, in the first negotiation process, the pre-sequence of speech acts performed (and projected) in turn 1 is relevant to the offer made in turn 2: party A's performance of those speech acts is necessary to establish the existence of a conflict of interest with party B. If such conflict had not been established, then the speech act performed by party B in turn 2 would not be that of making an offer - but only a

generic offer.

Likewise, the post-sequence of argumentatively relevant speech acts performed (and projected) in turn 4 (and partly in 5) is necessary to decide on the acceptability of the offer that was made in turn 3. It is clear however that despite there being three processes of negotiation, all of them can be seen as part of a broader negotiation framework because they are all an attempt at reconciling the same interactional problem: what should the parties do with the window in the library, considering that one prefers it open and the other one would rather have it closed. In this sense, the three processes can be reconstructed as sub-negotiation processes.

On the basis of the analysis presented, we can also show that our criterion applies to both types of negotiations. Sub-negotiations 1 and 2 are clearly distributive negotiations; sub-negotiation 3 is a classic example of integrative negotiation. However, in both cases, there is a conflict of interest between the parties and, in both cases too, the offer performed is a clear attempt at dealing with the conflict. In sub-negotiation 1, the offer made is an attempt at reconciling the fact that party A wants the window open while party B wants it closed; in sub-negotiation 2, the offer is a reaction to the fact that party A doesn't want to leave the window open a crack and party B wants to leave it open a crack; in sub-negotiation 3, the offer is an attempt at reconciling the fact that party A wants the window halfway and party B does not. The difference between the two types of negotiations is not, therefore, that in one case an offer is made while in the other a different type of speech act is performed. In both types of negotiations, the speaker makes an offer. The difference lies in the way in which the speaker attempts to solve the conflict of interest in each case by making an offer. In a distributive negotiation, the offer is made in order to solve a conflict between interests X and Y by trying to reach a compromise somewhere between interests X and Y. In an integrative negotiation, the offer is performed to solve a conflict between interests X and Y by trying to fulfil the parties' convergent interests, which are neither shared nor in conflict, X' and Y' (in this case, party A's interest to have more air in the room and party B's interest in avoiding a draft cold coming in).

#### *4. The superordinate speech act of deliberation*

Several authors have studied the role of proposals within the deliberative genre (e.g., Kauffeld, 1998; Aakhus, 2005; Walton, 2006; Hitchcock et al, 2007). Walton's view on this issue is particularly relevant here. According to Walton



(2006, p. 181), the activities of proposing and deliberating are intrinsically related to one another. This idea is expressed in the way he defines the goal of deliberation, namely, as that of deciding “which is the best available course of action among the set of *proposals* that has been offered” (my italics). By means of this definition, Walton suggests that the very existence of a deliberative encounter is logically dependent on the (explicit or implicit) performance of the speech act of proposing and thereby implies that proposals are deliberation’s superordinate speech act. This is not to say, of course, that the performance of the speech act of proposing is sufficient to establish the deliberative nature of some discursive interaction; the performance of a proposal is only a necessary condition. Deliberation is also defined by the presence of the speech act of argumentation.

If proposals are the superordinate speech act of deliberation, then the distinction between negotiation and deliberation boils down to the distinction between the speech act of making an offer and the speech act of proposing. In order to characterise proposals and distinguish them from offers, it is first necessary to make a distinction between the English illocutionary verb ‘to propose’ and the illocutionary act or speech act of proposing.

The illocutionary verb ‘to propose’ (and the related noun ‘proposal’, referring to the act of proposing) can be used at least in two ways. In one sense, it is used to refer to the speech act of making an offer, as Example 5 illustrates:

- (5)
- A couple talk about their plans for the weekend:
- 1 A: What are your plans for this weekend?
  - 2 B: I want to work on my book.
  - 3 A: Oh, really? I was hoping we could go to the beach; you haven’t had a free weekend for months.
  - 4 B: That’s true. Ok, here about this proposal: we stay at home this weekend, but I promise that we go to the beach next weekend.
  - 5 A: OK, that’s fine with me.

However, the same term can also be used with a different meaning, as shown by Example 6

- (6)
- A couple talk about their plans for the night:
- 1 A: What are your plans for tonight?
  - 2 B: I don’t know yet, but I would like to do something relaxing.
  - 3 A: Hmm, me too. OK, I’ve got a proposal: why don’t we go to the cinema. That’s a relaxing thing to do, isn’t it?
  - 4 B: Yeah, sure. Let’s go.

However, the same term can also be used with a different meaning, as shown by Example 6

Both examples use the term ‘proposal’. However, I would argue that the same term is used to refer to different types of types of speech acts. It is only the second use of the term ‘proposal’ that interests me here and that I wish to capture when I henceforth speak of the speech act of proposing.

Having made the distinction between illocutionary verbs and the speech act of

proposing, we are now in a position to contrast the speech acts of making an offer and that of proposing. The best way to establish their difference is by comparing their felicity conditions. The felicity conditions of proposing set out in table 2 are largely based on Aakhus (2005):**[iii]**

Table 2: Felicity conditions of a proposal

Felicity Conditions	Proposals
Essential	Counts as an attempt by S to get H to consider mutually bringing about A.
Propositional	Collective future action A is predicated of S and H.
Preparatory	S is willing to do A together with H. S is able to contribute together with H to the accomplishment of A. S believes that doing A serves some interest(s) shared by S and H. S believes that it is not obvious to H that either S or H can do A of their own accord in the normal course of events.
Sincerity	S believes A will mutually benefit H and S.

### 5. Differences between making an offer and proposing

An analysis of the felicity conditions of the speech act of proposing, as defined in this article, shows that there are two main differences between a proposal, on the one hand, and making a non-conditional or conditional offer, on the other.

First, when a speaker makes a proposal, the speaker predicates the same collective action of both speaker and hearer.**[iv]** This is specified not only in the propositional content condition of the speech act, but it is also suggested in the essential condition, as the action proposed is an action mutually brought about by speaker and hearer. This is not true when a speaker makes an offer. In order to make a non-conditional offer, it is *sufficient* for the speaker to predicate an action of himself, and in order to make a conditional offer it is sufficient for him to predicate an action of himself and a different action of the hearer. When making an offer, however, speakers may also predicate a collective action for both speakers and hearers.

Consider, for instance, Example 5. Party A is committing himself to two collective actions, both of which involve the hearer: both parties will stay at home this weekend and both parties will go to the beach the next. Thus, if a speaker commits himself to an action that does not involve the hearer, we can be certain that he has not performed a proposal. Yet, if the hearer commits himself to an action that also involves the hearer, it may be a proposal, but it can also be an offer. In short: to propose is *necessarily to predicate a collective action of speaker and hearer*; to make an offer is to predicate an action from the speaker which *may or may not involve mutually bringing it about with the hearer*.

The second difference between making an offer and proposing relates to whose interests are meant to be served by the action(s) that speaker (and hearer) would be carrying out. This difference becomes clear when examining the preparatory conditions of the speech acts. When a speaker makes a proposal, he is committed to the view that the action proposed will further an interest – goal, objective, etc. – that is *shared* by both speaker and hearer. When a speaker makes an offer – non-conditional or conditional – he is committed to the view that his action will further, in varying degrees, interests that are *not shared* by speaker and hearer. In the context of a distributive negotiation, the offer will attempt to partially further the differing interests of the two parties by means of a compromise. In the context of an integrative negotiation, the offer will be directed at fully furthering the parties' convergent interests.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that negotiation and deliberation can be distinguished in practice by examining whether or not the superordinate speech acts underlying each of these genres – making an offer and making a proposal – have been performed. I have also specified the felicity conditions of these speech acts in order to make clear their differences. Moreover, I have emphasised that for a deliberation to take place not only a proposal has to be performed, but also argumentation in favour or against that proposal.

I believe this approach suggests at least two further lines for research. First, I presume that a similar analysis can be carried out with other discourse genres, such as adjudication information-seeking and consultation, in relation the speech acts of accusing informative requests, and advising.

Second, it is possible that the occurrence of deliberation or negotiation (and other genres) depends not only on the performance of the superordinate speech acts that I have identified, but also on the specific demands imposed by the macro-context or communicative activity type in which they occur. Thus, for example, in the context of an antique market, a negotiation may consist solely of an offer and the rejection of that offer. In the context of a collective bargaining process between a trade union and a company, however, the same sequence of speech acts – an offer and a rejection of the offer – is probably an insufficient indication that a negotiation dialogue has taken place. In such a context, if one of the parties systematically rejects the offers made by the other party, and makes no counter-offers in turn, then the party who is making the offers would probably be right in

accusing the other party of not being 'open to negotiation'. Clearly, the criteria I have proposed to determine whether or not a negotiation or deliberation has taken place are minimal and may need to be complemented with the particular requirements of a given social activity.

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### NOTES

**[i]** Various authors (e.g., Sawyer & Guetzkow, 1965; Prakken & Veen, 2006; Amgoud & Vesic, 2012) have pointed out that argumentation not only can play a role, but also that its use is highly recommendable in negotiations. This does not mean, however, that the performance of argumentation is necessary for a negotiation to take place. Paradigmatic cases of distributive bargaining, for example, may not involve argumentation.

**[ii]** The analysis of conditional offers is based on Tiersma (1986), although he presents this set of conditions as the felicity conditions of offers in general, not of conditional offers in particular.

**[iii]** Differences relate to the propositional content and sincerity conditions.

**[iv]** An action can be collective in the sense of shaking hands and getting married - that is, the action cannot take place unless both parties engage in it -, but it can also be collective in the sense of lighting a fire - with one bringing the logs and the other fetching the matches

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# ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Interplay Of Implicitness And Authority: Some Remarks On Roman Rhetorical Ethos

*Abstract:* In the paper we present an analysis of ethos in the early Roman rhetoric. After a brief conceptualization of “Roman” ethos and different social roles of *orator Romanus*, we apply such a view of ethos to the Verschueren’s model of linguistic pragmatics. Focusing on different *types of implicit meaning* we demonstrate how an interaction between the explicit and the implicit reflects a discursive construction of a speaker’s character.

*Keywords:* argumentation, authority, ethos, implicit meaning, linguistic pragmatics, Roman rhetoric.

## 1. Introduction

The research of rhetorical ethos varies from historical and theoretical conceptualizations to practical instances as well as possible approaches for analysis. In this paper we focus on Roman rhetorical ethos and its representations as they can be reconstructed from the texts of early Roman republic. As a general conceptual framework we adopt a more socio-cultural viewpoint on rhetorical ethos and try to apply it to the field of linguistic pragmatics.

Rhetorical ethos reveals at least three characteristics that should be kept in mind when classical texts are considered: a) being a part of oratorical practice, ethos is primarily rooted in a Greco-Roman socio-cultural world (Enos, 1995); b) ethos as a theoretical concept of Greco-Roman rhetorical system significantly extends over Aristotle’s or Isocrates’ conceptualizations as two most frequently studied directions in classical rhetoric (Amossy, 2001; Žmavc, 2012); c) in terms of ancient cultural presuppositions of character as a moral and pragmatic category (May, 1988), ethos as a rhetorical representation of such character manifests

itself through different means, which all gravitate towards the same rhetorical purpose: to secure a speaker's successful persuasion of their audience.

In this case study we are interested in the function, forms and contexts of Roman ethos and its explicit/implicit nature, where speakers, along with what they say explicitly, try to communicate something else in terms of presenting their character. The purpose of our investigation is grounded in the nature of the early Roman rhetoric and the speaker/orator as a focal point of public persuasion. It is a well known fact that in Roman society especially in the 3rd and 2nd century B.C. most of the public performance was limited to the members of governing elite.**[i]** Hence, rhetorical ethos as a persuasion strategy based on a presentation of speaker's character reflected and at the same time helped to secure their dominant social position.

Considering specifics of socio-cultural context of Roman rhetoric, our main objective is to analyse rhetorical ethos as a certain manifestation of language use, which is anchored in the context of early Roman rhetoric as a time and place specific communicative practice. With such perspective we hope to contribute to an understanding of early Roman rhetorical ethos as well as set an example of methodological framework for further comparative and contrastive perspectives in analysis of rhetorical ethos.

A pragmatically oriented approach towards the analysis of rhetorical ethos also opens a perspective for investigation of implicitness as 'ethotic' strategy, especially in terms of representations of speaker's authority. The concept of implicitness has been thoroughly studied within linguistic pragmatics, where it is generally defined as a "range of meanings that go beyond what is 'given' by the language form itself, or what is literally said" (Verschueren, 1999, p. 25). Following Verschueren's conceptualisation three important characteristics of implicit meaning must be taken into account when we approach to language "as a form of action anchored in a real-world context, or what is perceived as such" (ibid.):

- a) due to the impossibility of complete explicitness in language implicit meaning emerges from the *contextually* embedded action character of speech or text;
- b) implicit meaning is not a fixed entity but is shaped and reshaped in the course of linguistic interaction; it is a part of the meaning-generating processes where it *interacts* with explicit meaning;

c) conventional means for conveying implicit (and explicit) meaning are *manipulable* and can be *strategically exploited*.

If we apply these general remarks on implicitness to rhetorical ethos, we can define the implicit nature of construction of speaker's character: considering ancient cultural presuppositions on character and the role of the speaker, a Roman orator (among other things) had to be capable of strategically exploiting "the impossibility of being fully explicit" (Verschueren, 1999, p. 31) in terms to present himself as an authority. Needless to say, implicitness in the context of persuasion is not characteristic only for Roman rhetoric or rhetorical ethos. **[ii]** However, due to the socio-cultural context, Roman ethos can be seen as a rhetorical strategy that includes carriers of implicit meaning with an important persuasive function.

Let us say a few words about the methodology. Our main research questions were: What happens with the construction of speaker's character from the explicit/implicit perspective? Are strategies for implicit meaning generating *somehow characteristic* for construction of Roman rhetorical ethos? In order to try to answer these questions we incorporated theory and methodology of linguistic pragmatics into analysis of rhetorical ethos in texts of early Roman orators.

In the rhetorical framework we adopted Aristotle's concept of rhetorical ethos as part of the three means of persuasion (*ethos-pathos-logos*) and contextualized it with theoretical perspectives of Roman rhetoric as a social practice. The latter are based on studies of Roman rhetoric and oratory by prominent scholars, such as May (1988), Kennedy (1972), Steel (2006) and Enos (1995). We defined ethos as a speaker's favourable character presentation, whose *qualities* and *persuasive function* are contextualized with specific moral and social norms of a given society (in our case early Roman republic) and activated in a language use.

At this point a linguistic pragmatics perspective becomes relevant. As an *interdisciplinary science of language use* with a well-established theoretical and methodological framework it provides useful tools for analysing meaning generating. The study of implicit meaning was especially motivated by Grice's famous *theory of implicature*, which has been extensively treated in different theoretical perspectives by prominent scholars, such as Levinson (2000), Verschueren (1999), Sperber and Wilson (2004) and Carston (2009). Our analysis



is based on Verschueren's theoretical model of linguistic pragmatics, which represents a dynamics of meaning generation in connection to social structures, processes and relations. We believe that such model can represent useful addition to the research of classical rhetorical ethos, because it enables a thorough analysis and adds a broader perspective to the persuasive role of a speaker. A combined approach can be also open new possibilities for comparative and contrastive analysis of other 'ethotical discourses' (e. g. ancient Greek, medieval, nation-based etc.).

Here is a brief summary of the core elements of Verschueren's theory. Using language for Verschueren represents *an activity that generates meaning*. It consists of continuous making of choices, not only on various level of linguistic structure, but also pertaining to communicative strategies and even at the level of context. **[iii]** In his research of implicit meaning Verschueren (1999, pp. 27-36) focuses on investigation of conventionalized carriers of implicit meaning, which link explicit content to relevant aspects of background information and are conceptualized as *types of implicit meaning*.

He distinguishes between the more highly coded

(1) *presupposition* (implicit meaning that must be pre-supposed, understood, taken for granted for an utterance to make sense) and

(2) *implication* (known as logical implication, entailment, or conventional implicature, i.e. implicit meaning that can be logically inferred from a form of expression). The other three types need to be inferred by addressees:

(3) *generalized conversational implicature* (implicit meaning that can be conventionally, or by default, inferred from forms of expression in combination with assumed standard adherence to conversational maxims),

(4) *particularized conversational implicatures* (implicit meaning inferred from the obvious flouting of a conversational maxim in combination with assumed adherence to a principle of conversational cooperation), and

(5) a *residual type of inferences* not directly related to basic maxims or heuristics (e. g. unspoken ways of an utterer's orientation to aspects of meaning and context). The general idea behind this concepts is to investigate how different types of implicit meaning, functioning at different (mostly) structural levels, interact with explicit meaning in the meaning-generating processes in any discourse. **[iv]**

In our analysis we focus on such interaction in relation to the construction of

rhetorical ethos. In order to get meaningful interpretations of strategic interplay between explicit and implicit in the construction of rhetorical ethos, we applied different principles from Verschueren's pragmatic approach. They include investigation of interrelated tasks, such as a) investigation of different aspects of context from the general to the specific levels (i. e. *wider social, political and historical context* of early Roman rhetoric; *immediate context of situation* referring to the of 'actors' involved in the analysed discourse; *linguistic context* - a textual/speech dimension of contextualization) and b) investigation of certain conventions of language use, which are mobilised in the analysed discourse as linguistic choices relevant for construction of ethos (e. g., *language code and style, patterns of word choice, carriers of implicit meaning, activity type*).

## 2. Roman rhetorical ethos, authority and implicitness - A linguistic pragmatic analysis of the defence of scipio africanus

In the second part of our paper we present a case study of the role of implicitness in construction of rhetorical ethos in early Roman rhetoric. As an example we used a fragment of the defence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (235-183 BC), a famous Roman politician and a military general from the period of early Roman republic, who was also known for his oratorical skill and public performance. The fragment is preserved in Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*, and refers to historical events around the year of 184 BC when tribune M. Naevius charged Africanus of accepting money from King Antiochus of Asia.

The purpose of analysis of Scipio's words is to identify main elements of construction of his ethos and to determine its function in the context of his defence. **[v]** A special attention is paid to the strategies where interplay between explicit and implicit meaning generation is relevant for representation of his authority. We also investigated, which character features of Scipio's ethos are presented through presuppositions, implications and implicatures and how is a set of *propositions* of "who and what he is" related to the issue that he is presenting. Contextualized with general features of early Roman rhetoric and society we conceptualise Roman rhetorical ethos as a means of persuasion that is specific in its structure, dynamics and function. Let us now see what Scipio said in his defence according to Gellius:

(1) *Cum M. Naevius tribunus plebis accusaret eum ad populum diceretque accepisse a rege Antiocho pecuniam, ut condicionibus gratiosis et mollibus pax cum eo populi Romani nomine fieret, et quaedam item alia crimini daret indigna*

*tali viro, tum Scipio pauca praefatus quae dignitas vitae suae atque gloria postulabat, 'Memoria,' inquit, 'Quirites, repeto, diem esse hodiernum quo Hannibalem Poenum imperio vestro inimicissimum magno proelio vici in terra Africa pacemque et victoriam vobis peperit spectabilem. Non igitur simus adversum deos ingrati et, censeo, relinquamus nebulonem hunc, eamus hinc protinus Iovi optimo maximo gratulatum.'* *Id cum dixisset, avertit et ire ad Capitolium coepit. Tum contio universa, quae ad sententiam de Scipione ferendam convenerat, relicto tribuno, Scipionem in Capitolium comitata atque inde ad aedes eius cum laetitia et gratulatione sollemni prosecuta est.* (Aul. Gell. NA 4.18.3-5)

(When Marcus Naevius, tribune of the commons, accused him before the people and declared that he had received money from king Antiochus to make peace with him in the name of the Roman people on favourable and easy terms, and when the tribune added sundry other charges which were unworthy of so great a man, then Scipio, after a few preliminary remarks such as were called for by the dignity and renown of his life, said: *'I recall, fellow citizens, that this is the day on which in Africa in a mighty battle I conquered Hannibal the Carthaginian, the most bitter enemy of your power, and won for you a splendid peace and a glorious victory. Let us then not be ungrateful to the gods, but, I suggest, let us leave this worthless fellow, and go at once to render thanks to Jupiter, greatest and best of gods.'* So saying, he turned away and set out for the Capitol. Thereupon the whole assembly, which had gathered to pass judgment on Scipio, left the tribune, accompanied Scipio to the Capitol, and then escorted him to his home with the joy and expressions of gratitude suited to a festal occasion. (transl. by J. C. Rolfe; italics are ours)

Since implicit meaning is highly context dependent, the first step is to set the referential framework that constitutes the cultural, social and linguistic context, in which Scipio's defence is anchored. **[vi]** Besides mutual knowledge of Scipio (utterer), Roman people and M. Naevius (interpreters, first as direct addressees, the second as side participant in the event), which consists of the world of unexpressed but assumed to be shared information (e. g. recursive and mutual embeddings: *I know that you know that I know* etc.), we also need to consider social and cultural aspects of rhetoric in the period of early Roman republic that motivate and/or are affected by the linguistic choices in Scipio's speech.

Here is a short outline of the relevant wider context. Before it came into close

contact with a conceptualized Greek *rhetorike tekhnē*, early Roman rhetoric (3/2nd century B.C.) as an oratorical practice reflects of Rome's social and political situation. Public oratory played an important part in society; however, a group of Roman aristocratic families who directed economic and political growth of *res publica* influenced all socio-cultural activities, public speaking as well. Such native rhetoric would in some part present a tool of political power, but at the same time it was tools for sustaining and transmitting traditional political, social and cultural values of the dominant social group (Kennedy, 1972; May, 1988). Social and political structures, such as courts (with *patronus-clientis* system), political offices (*contio* and *senatus* - each with special audiences and procedures for speakers) as well as funerals (a well known 'place' for emotional character presentation and establishing connections between individual's traits and cultural patterns), offered main opportunities for orators as well as determined their key persuasive strategies (Steel, 2006). Regardless of the rhetorical situation, in Rome persuasion was always subordinated to the strategy of speaker's character presentation. Roman orator, based on his social and political ranking, represented a widely recognised authority and was a focal point of traditional (native) forms of public speaking. Consequently, rhetorical ethos of that time reveals some of the characteristics that are connected with the strategic exploitation of the explicit and the implicit. This circumstance influenced further development of Roman rhetoric, which is particularly evident in Cicero's speeches and theoretical discussions on rhetoric (May, 1988, pp. 5-6).

For a clearer picture let us point out some of the most typical characteristics of rhetorical ethos as a strategy of persuasion that can be identified in the early and late republican Roman oratory. **[vii]** The concept of Roman rhetorical ethos is based on Roman conceptions of a person's 'character', which was believed to be inherited from family ancestors and remained constant from birth. Consequently, a character would also determine person's actions. As a strategy of persuasion it represented a broad concept on the quantitative and qualitative level, which significantly differed from Greek conceptions of rhetorical ethos. **[viii]** Roman ethos was a combination of *collective* and *individual ethos*. The first one consisted of political and military accomplishments of a *speaker's family members* (i. e. collective ethos of the gens), the second one was a result of *speaker's own authority*, which arose from actions of the speaker himself and proved his 'ethotic' value.

Individual ethos consisted of set of virtues, recognised in Roman society as praiseworthy and vital for person's public activity. These virtues were:

- 1) *gratia*: influence and popularity based on the number of services owed to the speaker,
- 2) *gloria*: glory as a consequence of speaker's past actions (i. e. *res gestae*),
- 3) *existimatio*: reputation based on his oratorical and political skills,
- 4) *dignitas*: dignity as a result of speaker's social status and moral conduct,
- 5) *auctoritas*: authority as a consequence of exhibition of wisdom gained through practical experience, expert knowledge and a sense of responsibility in public and private life. **[ix]**

Another characteristic of Roman ethos as strategy of persuasion refers to the ways of its realisation in the discourse. Since it reflected socio-political circumstances and cultural assumptions about human nature and character, Roman rhetorical ethos conveys an entirely pre-existing nature (i. e. it is not *constructed* in the discourse but *reflected* by the discourse) as well as it contains emotional connotations (i. e. a conflation with pathos). As a final remark we should add that Roman rhetorical ethos also carries an argumentative function. Arguments based on speaker's character represented a legitimate source of proof and were discursively realised either in the form of 'ethical narrative' (i. e. facts that were represented as reflections of speaker's character) or as a part of argument from authority (i. e. arguments based on explicit or implicit premise 'because I say so'). **[x]**

We are now returning to our example of Scipio's defence, where ethos reveals a similar position. Before we present characteristics of his persuasion strategy let us briefly sketch relevant elements of the immediate/situational and linguistic context as they can be identified on the discursive (i. e. textual/speech) level and are relevant for implicit meaning generation in Scipio's ethos construction **[xi]**:

\* *Utterers and interpreters*:

- utterer: Scipio presents himself as a well known to audience and uses his own voice (1st person) when referring to his role in the past historical event and the importance of his actions for Romans (*memoria repeto*/"I recall"; *vici*/"I conquered"; *victoriam peperit*/"I won"). He switches to the use of 1st person plural when he positions himself as a part of the collective (i. e. Romans) and present actions, which should to be taken in order to prevent anger of the gods (*non*

*simus ingrati*/"let us not be ungrateful"; *relinquams*/"let us leave"; *eamus*/"let us go");

- interpreters: a) people of Rome - primary audience, directly addressed by Scipio to secure their attention and influence their decision; b) M. Naevius tribune of the commons - a prosecutor, presented as a side participant and indirectly addressed by the use of pejorative description (*hic nebulo*/"this worthless fellow").

\* Mental states: The use of the 1st person plural and a hortatory subjunctive mood in the second part reveals utterer's personal and emotional involvement into actions he is proposing.

\* Aspects of social/institutional settings: Within a 'defence speech' preformed in the context of judicial event (*contio ... ad sententiam ... ferendam convenerat*/"assembly ... gathered to pass judgement") religious practices (*adversum deos ingrati*/"not be ungrateful to the gods"; *gratulatum*/"render thanks") and 'institutions' (*Iovi Optimo Maximo*/"Juppiter greatest and best of gods"; *in Capitolinum*/"for the Capitol") are invoked as a reminder of the role of religion in Roman social structures (e. g. Juppiter as a bestower of military victory).

\* Temporal and spatial anchor of the discourse: As a response to the accusations, relevance of past events for a present state of affairs is emphasised and a new spatial point of reference is presented. The present spatial point is 'judicial' and bares a negative connotation as a representation of an unnecessary and improper trial. It is marked by linguistic choices of a description of the accuser, who should remain at the present place (*relinquamus nebulonem hunc*/"let us leave this worthless fellow"), and of the swiftness of leaving the present location by the utterer and the rest of the audience (*eamus hinc protinus*/"let us go at once"). The new spatial point, which is suggested by utterer, is 'religious' and bares a positive connotation as a place where a sacred duty that needs to be performed.

\* Markers of co(n)textual cohesion: anaphora (*vestro - vobis*), self-reference (*repeto - vici - peperit - censeo*), contrasting (*ingrati - gratulatum; nebulo - Iuppiter*).

With all these correlates in mind we now proceed to the final part of our analysis, where the strategy of construction of Scipio's ethos is analysed through the interplay between explicit and implicit information and interpreted as a vital

communicative element in the process of his successful persuasion of the audience.

Table 1: A schematic presentation of explicit and implicit information in Scipio's defence, which are relevant to the construction of his rhetorical ethos.

EXPLICIT	IMPLICIT
(2) ...sic!...I conquered	- The use of a 1st person presupposes a commonly known fact that he was a commander of a Roman army (not a warrior in an individual combat or a common soldier) and that he (not someone else) defeated Hannibal. - ETHOS: The fact that he was a commander implies the importance of his social status.
(3) Hannibalem Punicum imperio vincto I conquered Hannibal the Carthaginian the most bitter enemy of your power	- 'Hannibalem Punicum vincto'/'I conquered Hannibal the Carthaginian' use of <i>para pro nota</i> (analogy with the use of 1st person – a commander instead of an army) implies two great military deeds juxtaposed. ETHOS: Description of the event implies the highest possible military achievement and thus establishes undoubted glory and auctoritas within Scipio's ethos.
(4) propterea et victoriam vobis peperit I won for you a splendid peace and a glorious victory	- 'Pax', 'victoria inspectabilis'/'splendid peace and a glorious victory' presuppose previously/already finished actions of the great danger. - ETHOS: Both actions ( <i>pro gratiae</i> ) serve as implicit proofs of Scipio's <i>gloria</i> and <i>auctoritas</i> .
(5) Memoria, Quirites, repeto, dico ante I recall, fellow citizens, that this is the day, on which	- 'Memoria repeto' presupposes Scipio's ability to remember nationally important anniversary (' <i>diem bodianum, quo...</i> '/'I recall... that this is the day, on which') and implies
	a contrast with his prosecutor, who clearly ignores that fact. - ETHOS: implies his responsibility in public life (part of <i>auctoritas</i> ).
(6) ...religiosam relictam domum let us leave this worthless fellow, and go at once to render thanks to Jupiter, greatest and best of gods	- The portrayal of his prosecutor as 'schelus'/'a worthless fellow, who should be left behind (' <i>religiosam</i> ') 'let us leave' implies insignificance (compared to 'Jupiter optimus maximus'/'Jupiter, greatest and best of gods') and willingness to join the solemn ceremony (repeated 1st person pl. ' <i>religiosam... curam gestulemus</i> ') 'let us leave... go... to render thanks' ETHOS: 'schelus' implies a contrast with Scipio's character, who is a leader of the ceremony (1st person pl. ' <i>veniam</i> ') and emphasises his moral qualities ( <i>religiosus</i> ).
(7) Non igitur animi adhaerens dico ingrati ...let us then not be ungrateful to the gods.	- The use of political <i>noti</i> : 'non animi ingrati'/'let us... not be' implies a proposition. To prosecute Scipio on such day might seem an act of ingratitude and impiety toward gods who granted Scipio and Rome a military success. - The use of 'igitur'/'then' presents a proposition, with which it occurs as logical and sufficient conclusion from preceding proposition (i. e. victory over Hannibal and peace).
(8) ...Hannibalem Punicum imperio vincto I conquered Hannibal the Carthaginian, the most bitter enemy of your power, and won for you a splendid peace and a glorious victory	With a detailed description of what he did, Scipio might state Cicero's maxim of quantity, since more information than needed is given about the occasion. Roman audience was undoubtedly well aware of the anniversary and the military accomplishments of Scipio – the description might carry implication of importance of Scipio ( <i>auctoritas</i> ), as well as evoke the danger and fear of the Roman people (emotional effect: <i>I am a very important person for Rome; remember the terror and fear you felt</i> )

(9) the whole utterance	<i>at that time</i> . The whole utterance might flout Cicero's maxim of relevance, since Scipio's battle with Hannibal in Africa is not relevant to the case about accepting Antiochus' bribery in Asia. The statement might carry implicature: The fact that I, Scipio, have won such a historic battle in Africa is enough to drop the charges related to the events in Asia.
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Table 1: A schematic presentation of explicit and implicit information in Scipio's defence, which are relevant to the construction of his rhetorical ethos

From the linguistic choices in the fragment we can see that the construction of Scipio's authority, as a basis for the standpoint that charges against him must be dropped, is entirely based on his individual ethos. The authority that comes from his character is justified by Scipio's specifications of

a) his past actions,

b) his social status and moral conduct, as well as

c) his *auctoritas*. [x] As means for such presentation we can identify the following examples of the strategic interplay between explicit and implicit information (see table 1).

Reading Scipio's defence in the broader frame, that is, as a specific language activity type (i. e. judicial oratory) with its typical structure, language, code and style, we can interpret the fragment from A. Gellius as a part of refutation. The general argumentative pattern consists of the main argument from authority about Scipio's merits and moral conduct (i. e. his ethos), followed by a conversed argument from authority (i. e. *ad hominem*) about Scipio's opponent. Both arguments support the conclusion about dropping charges against Scipio. We can reconstruct this in the following scheme:

(10)

Premise 1: *I am 'such and such' authority, and I believe that charges must be dropped.*

Premise 2: *My accuser is not an authority (he is a 'nebulo').* - *ad hominem.*

Conclusion: *Charges must be dropped.*

In the fragment both premises remain implicit and so does the conclusion. But Gellius' description of the situation (i. e. the cotext of the quotation) and the above-indicated pragmatic aspects of the 'speech' itself provide us with enough information for such a general meaning construct. The question is: Why would Scipio Africanus, one of the most respected Romans use implicit argument from authority in order to succeed in a trial against him? A coherent answer unfortunately cannot be provided on the basis of (linguistic pragmatic) analysis of A. Gellius' fragment. However, we can rephrase our question and include results of our background analysis into a tentative answer that would in some part explain his linguistic choices in terms of construction of his ethos, which were identified in the schematic presentation above. Namely, we can ask ourselves, what types of implicit meaning do premises and conclusion belong to and why? Taking into account our investigation of referential framework and strategies of language use, it is evident that Scipio's implicit argument from authority (i. e. his ethos) could be seen more as presupposition and not as implication or implicature. The elements of Scipio's authority (i. e. his merits, social status etc.), due to the Roman cultural presuppositions, represented a shared to be assumed background knowledge and not something to be logically inferred from a form of expression or conventionally (much less) conversationally inferred by his addressees. His ethos as a persuasive/argumentative strategy is the effect of the use of implicitly communicated content, which had a pre-discursive nature and preceded him as an utterer/orator. In other words, he was able to use his ethos as



a main argument regardless of its relevance to the conclusion/charges because of the Roman socio-cultural context, which legitimated such use. As for other two elements in the argument scheme, we can interpret a) the conclusion as implication, based on the sufficient grounds that Scipio is offering in the context of his self-characterisation, and b) a second premise as implicature. The *ad hominem* contains a characterisation of Scipio's accuser/opponent (i. e. 'nebulo'). What 'nebulo' stands for and why he cannot be seen as a proper authority in the trial, which is taking place on the anniversary of Scipio's defeat of Hannibal, is something that audience must infer from Scipio's description of his past actions, social status and moral conduct. And this might be another reason why he takes the effort of enumerating his ethotical qualities otherwise known to the audience: to imply that his opponent is something completely opposite, which would make his ethos inconsistent with the accusations he has set forth against Scipio.

### *3. Conclusion*

From the analysis of Scipio's strategic use of explicit and implicit meaning generation in construction of ethos we could see that his argumentation entirely relied on the impact of his self-characterisation made upon cultural presuppositions of that time. Such strategies were common and are evident in many other fragments of Roman orators. Again, it is the importance of person's character in Roman society that made these strategies a focal point of persuasion and a formal means of proof. This is a unique Roman perspective on ethos that despite of adoption of Greek rhetorical system fundamentally influenced further development of Roman rhetorical practice and theory.

### NOTES

**i.** Cf. Kennedy (1972), Enos (1995), Steel (2006).

**ii.** Let us point out just two examples: a) one of the corner stone elements in rhetorical argumentation, Aristotle's enthymeme, is fundamentally grounded on the implicit element (i. e. major premise); b) there are conventional linguistic strategies within the classical concept of *ornatus* (e. g. wide range of tropes and figures of speech) that are based on deliberate avoiding of explicitness and are used to communicate implicature-type added meaning (cf. Verschueren, 2012, p. 171).

**iii.** The concept of linguistic choices and notions of variability, negotiability, adaptability that make sense of process/activity of choice-making, as well as contextual correlates of adaptability that motivate and/or are affected by the

choices are outlined in Verschueren (1999).

**iv.** Cf. Verschueren (2012, p. 159).

**v.** For a discussion on problems of authenticity of Scipio's words see Kennedy (1972, p. 6.). In analysis of implicitness we used only words that Gellius literary ascribes to Scipio, while Gellius' description circumstances is partly included among elements of immediate context.

**vi.** Theory of contextual correlates is outlined in Verschueren (1999).

**vii.** For extensive discussion cf. May (1988, pp. 5-12).

**viii.** For discussion cf. Žmavc (2012, pp. 181-189).

**ix.** Cf. Balsdon (1960) and May (1988) for ancient sources on the use of specific notions.

**x.** For ancient testimonies about Roman conceptions of character and its rhetorical/persuasive function see Cic., *De sen.* 61.7.10, *Brut.* 111.4-112.1, *De or.* 2.182; Quint. *Inst.* 5.12.10.1-4.

**xi.** A short historical background of the event: After Antiochus had advanced into Greece, Scipio's brother Lucius was given the command, Publius serving as his legate; they defeated Antiochus at Magnesia. In 187 BC Lucius was accused for refusing to account for 500 talents received from Antiochus; Publius may have been accused but not condemned in 184 BC.

**xii.** Engl. word 'authority' is not a sufficient translation of Latin *auctoritas*.

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# **ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Argumentation In Lincoln's Gettysburg Address**

*Abstract:* Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address normally is understood as epideictic, intended only to dedicate a national cemetery. In fact, however, an important argument is subtly and implicitly developed in this brief text: that nationalism is necessary for democracy to flourish. This argument will be identified and its layout described. Moreover, Lincoln employs all three dimensions of strategic maneuvering (topical potential, audience demand, and presentational choices) to enhance this argument. Its placement within an epideictic address is strategically useful and illustrates the ways in which epideictic can have argument content.

*Keywords:* argument structure, burden of proof, coordinative argument, deliberative, epideictic, eulogy, Gettysburg, Lincoln, strategic maneuvering.

## 1. *Introduction*

Probably no figure in United States history is better known worldwide than Abraham Lincoln, who is taken as representative of the upward mobility Americans value and of the ideals the nation espouses. No speech delivered by Lincoln is better known around the world than the Gettysburg Address. Seemingly a model of simplicity, the Address actually is quite complex/ Seemingly a purely ceremonial address, it actually also presents and develops an argument whose contents are mostly implicit. Seemingly a recitation of communal values, it actually upholds values that are highly controversial. And seemingly transparent in its message, it actually relies on silence, ambiguity, and assertion as means of strategic maneuvering.

This essay is written in honor of the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address in 2013. In what follows, a brief sketch of the context will be followed by an analysis that seeks to unpack the paradoxes noted above.

## 2. *The battle and the speech*

The battle of Gettysburg, a small town in southeastern Pennsylvania, was fought on 1-3 July 1863. Although not fully evident at the time, it was a turning point of the war. It stopped the bold attempt by Robert E. Lee's Confederate army to invade the North through Maryland and to threaten the capital, Washington. It thereby meant that the South could not win the war through invasion (although a later attempt at a raid was made) but would need to rely on attrition and war-weariness on the part of the North. But the Northern failure to capture Lee's army after the battle, allowing it instead to escape to Virginia, meant that the war would not end decisively, certainly not soon.

For the most part, the thousands who died in battle were left where they fell on the ground. Hoping to give the Union soldiers a dignified burial and also to control the stench and disease caused by rotting corpses, a group of private citizens undertook to establish a military cemetery on part of the battlefield. Their efforts, though not complete, progressed far enough for the cemetery to be dedicated on November 19, about five months after the battle.

The principal speaker for the occasion was Edward Everett, former governor, representative, and senator from Massachusetts, former president of Harvard University, former secretary of state, and 1860 vice-presidential candidate of the Constitutional Union Party, one of the four major parties that year. Everett spoke

for over two hours and, although he has been ridiculed for its length, his speech was an excellent example of its kind. (The text is readily available as an appendix in Wills 1992.) He verbally recreated the battle from start to finish and celebrated the Union victory. His detailed rhetorical depiction enabled audience members to feel as though they were present for all three days of the historic battle. Everett's speech was followed by a musical interlude and then Lincoln rose for brief remarks formally dedicating the cemetery - the role he was invited to play. Popular myth has it that Lincoln wrote the speech on the back of an envelope while riding on the train to Gettysburg. This myth was created during the 1880s and has no basis in fact (Johnson 2013). In fact he wrote a draft before leaving Washington and then did final editing in Gettysburg the night before delivering the speech (Boritt 2006).

At only 272 words, the text (Basler 1953, 7:23) is easily accessible; a copy is included in the Appendix. Briefly, Lincoln positions the present moment as part of a war testing the commitment of the American founders to nationalism premised on liberty and equality. It is appropriate, he says, for us to hallow the ground on which the soldiers defending this commitment fell, but in a larger sense we cannot, since the battlefield already has been dedicated through their bravery and sacrifice. What we should do, therefore, is to rededicate ourselves to their ideals and to finish the work on their project.

### *3. The argumentative character of the speech*

The speech can be characterized as a eulogy, a genre of epideictic discourse whose functions are to offer praise for the dead and advice for the living. While fulfilling these functions, however, it also implicitly contains a significant argument about what the audience should do. The major standpoint (1) is the claim, "We should strengthen our commitment to the nation and its founding principles." This claim is derived from Lincoln's statement that "it is for us the living . . . to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced," and the earlier statement that the Civil War is testing whether any nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality can endure.

Supporting this standpoint is a three-point coordinative argument structure, featuring the claims that (1.1a) the founders created the nation in liberty and committed it to equality, (1.1b) war tests the endurance of the national commitments, and (1.1c) our role is to rededicate ourselves to the task. The parts

of this argument together support the major standpoint and prevent its being circular. The claim about the founders stands on its own, seemingly unchallenged. The claim that the war is a test brings with it the subsidiary claim that Gettysburg is “a great battle field of that war.” *A fortiori*, if the larger war is a kind of test, then its specific instantiation at Gettysburg is part of that test.

The claim that our role is to rededicate ourselves to the founding principles is supported by a more elaborate subsidiary structure of multiple coordinative arguments. First is the pair (1.1c.1a) “we are here to dedicate a cemetery,” and (1.1c.1b) that, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate a cemetery. The combination of these two statements creates a paradox that is resolved through the claim in (1.1c) that we have a less obvious purpose, namely to rededicate ourselves to the commitment of the founders. The second pair of subsidiary statements is also a coordinative argument, though independent of the first: (1.1c.2a) what we say here will not be long remembered, and (1.1c.2b) we must assure that the dead did not die in vain. If our statements at the cemetery will not by themselves be enough to assure that the deaths were not in vain, then we must do something else to assure that result: we must rededicate ourselves to the task to which they presumably were committed.

Laying out the argument in this fashion helps to make clear what Lincoln accomplishes in this speech. First, he not only consoles the living but directs them in a particular way: toward reaffirming what he claims are the nation’s founding ideals. Second, he portrays this action as a duty by showing that it is the natural progression in a sequence that begins with “our fathers” who proclaimed these ideals and the “great civil war” which is testing them. Third, the steps in this progression are asserted briefly rather than developed in any depth. This may be appropriate in a eulogy, where one does not expect the structural presentation of claims and reasons, but it has the effect of making contestable claims appear as if they are self-evident. Lincoln is taking advantage of the generic expectations of a eulogy in order to reduce his burden in advancing a deliberative claim about what we should do. Fourth, Lincoln adds force to the claim that “it is for us the living, rather, to rededicate ourselves” to the founding ideals by implying that doing so resolves the paradoxes. It is a way out of the predicament that it is appropriate for us to dedicate the ground and yet “in a larger sense” we cannot do so, by offering something we can do that will be at least as good as dedicating the ground. And it offers a way out of the tension between wishing to assure that the

dead not die in vain and yet believing that “what we say here” will be “little note[d] nor long remember[ed]”; that is, that our words will not rescue the dead from oblivion. The act of rededicating ourselves to the founding national ideals is thus doubly attractive.

#### 4. *Strategic maneuvering*

Not only does the Gettysburg Address contain the implicit structure of an argument, but it also clearly reflects strategic maneuvering to present Lincoln’s position in the most favorable light. The speech reflects all three of the categories of strategic maneuvering discussed by van Eemeren (2010).

##### 4.1 *Topical potential*

Lincoln’s choices regarding topical potential can be made clear by observing what he elects not to discuss. First, unlike Everett, he makes no mention of the battle of Gettysburg itself - *not* its progression, not even its outcome. Second, there is no discussion of slavery - unless that is how one chooses to read “all men are created equal,” which probably was not the intended context - and none of emancipation, even though the proclamation had been issued on 1 January and emancipation was recognized as an aim of the war. Third, there is no self-reference to Lincoln himself or to his office.

What all of these silences enabled Lincoln to do was to focus his remarks less on the past than on the future, less on the dead than on the living. Everett’s focus was on the events of 1-3 July; Lincoln’s was on how those attending the dedication could give those events a larger and more transcendent meaning. For Everett, listeners could use the battle by vicariously participating in it and basking in the glory of a Union victory. These were purely consummatory ends. For Lincoln, however, they could use the battle as a stimulus to their own acts of rededication.

The absence of references to slavery and emancipation may be harder to explain, because they are what we perceive the war ultimately to have been about. But Lincoln saw it somewhat differently. Despite his own strong antislavery beliefs, freeing the slaves was not his cardinal purpose in prosecuting the war. That was a means - granted, a necessary means, as he came to see - toward the goal of preserving democratic self-government and majority rule, which had been undermined by the act of Southern secession, especially when that act had no basis other than that slavery’s advocates had lost a lawful and fairly conducted popular election. Lincoln had said in his First Inaugural Address (Basler 1953,

4:262-271) that the essence of secession was anarchy. That was the end to be prevented by victory in the “great civil war,” toward which both emancipation of slaves and the victory at Gettysburg were essential means.

#### *4.2 Audience demand*

Lincoln also adapted his presentation to audience demand, as is evident in his use of strategic ambiguity. Terms and phrases are used that admit of multiple readings, with quite different implications. For instance, just who are “these honored dead”? Gettysburg was a Union cemetery; no Confederate dead were buried there. Lincoln says as much when he refers to “those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.” But in the next paragraph he refers to “the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here” and “they who fought here.” These phrases are broader in scope and could be taken to refer to both Union and Confederate soldiers. Contemporary audiences often read the speech this way, as a universal tribute to all the fallen, although that reading is not completely faithful to text or context. This ambiguity allows Lincoln to speak to multiple audiences across time. Audiences in 1863 might have been more likely to celebrate the fallen Northerners, whereas after the wounds of war have healed, the speech can be understood by later audiences – say, those of 2013 – as national consecration in memory of all the Gettysburg dead. Since it is constrained within the moment of the battle, Everett’s speech cannot achieve such transcendence.

A similar ambiguity is found in the pronoun “we.” It may refer to all people, both North and South: “we are engaged in a great civil war.” Or it may refer to his immediate audience: “we are met on a great battlefield of that war.” Universal and particular views of “we” interweave throughout the speech. In such a gifted writer as Lincoln, such shifts probably are not accidental. It seems more likely that Lincoln responds to audience demand by regarding his immediate audience both in its own right and as a synecdoche for the entire nation, North and South (those who are only metaphorically “here” at Gettysburg) and also for those not yet even born, who will be “here” when they are in the act of reading or memorizing the speech. In this way, Lincoln raises the audience onto a different and more abstract plane, on which partisan or sectional conflict is out of place and national reaffirmation is appropriate. The fact that he moves back and forth between the particular and the general suggests that the speech should be intended as simultaneously embracing both.

The most obvious example of an ambiguous term is “dedicate.” It is used in the



phrase “dedicated to the proposition,” meaning “committed” or “pledged.” But when the president says, “we have come to dedicate a portion of that field,” it means “to designate” or “to set aside.” In the next paragraph he means something different still, as he signals by his comment that he is referring to “a larger sense.” Here he supplies his own synonyms, “consecrate” and “hallow.,” suggesting a meaning such as “to distinguish sacred from profane.” The final uses, referring to “us the living,” return to the original sense of “dedicate” as “to pledge or commit.” What is more, Lincoln’s use of the word “rather” contrasts this sense of “dedicate” with “to set aside” or “to hallow,” which he used earlier.

These shifts in the term’s meaning satisfy audience demand by providing a constructive outlet for audience energy despite the fact that listeners cannot rise to the act of consecration because the soldiers already have done that. If the audience cannot do what they came to do, Lincoln does not send them away with nothing. What they can do, and should do, is to commit themselves to give the nation “a new birth of freedom,” so that it once again is committed to the proposition that all are created equal. By using the same term, “dedicate,” Lincoln implies that his audience’s action is equivalent, at least in value, to what the soldiers did who consecrated the Gettysburg battlefield with their lives.

The last example of strategic ambiguity to adapt to audience demand is the phrase, “the great task remaining before us.” Lincoln does not say exactly what the task is. To be sure, he offers clues in the final phrases of the speech. But is each synonymous with “the great task remaining before us” or is each an element of that task? And how might each of these phrases translate into practical action? To take just one example, it is reasonable to assume that to “take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion” means that the Union must fight on until it wins the war. But to make that meaning explicit would be to stipulate that the war must be ended by military victory, and Lincoln probably would not want to exclude the possibility that the South might simply tire of the struggle. Nor did he want to confirm the perception that he was stubborn and inflexible. This view was held by Northern critics who were themselves tired of the war and were calling for reconciliation with the South without the abolition of slavery. Besides, to call explicitly for Northern victory, even if that is what Lincoln really meant, would make it impossible for the speech to be read then or later as a conciliatory message addressed to North and South alike. The same could be said about what one would do to “highly resolve

that these dead shall not have died in vain,” depending on whether “these dead” refers to the Union soldiers who were buried at Gettysburg or to all who died on either side of the battle. By leaving the matter ambiguous, Lincoln is able to enlarge and unify his audience, thereby fulfilling the epideictic function of the speech.

#### 4.3 *Presentational choices*

The final category of strategic maneuvering is presentational choice - decisions about arrangement and language that advance the purpose of the speech. Several examples can be cited from the Gettysburg Address. To begin with, Lincoln chooses to present some of his key claims as assertions, claims put forward as if they are self-evident rather than standpoints to be justified by argument. A nominally epideictic address such as a dedication speech may be the perfect vehicle for doing so, since a structure of claims and proofs is not normally expected. Instead the speaker typically states and celebrates shared knowledge. Lincoln follows this pattern except that his values and knowledge claims, though stated as if unquestioned, in fact were highly controversial.

For example, Lincoln says that the country was “brought forth” by “our fathers” in the year 1776, “four score and seven years ago.” That was, of course, the year of the American Declaration of Independence, when “our fathers” declared their commitment that all men are created equal. That is one of several possible dates that might have been selected for the national origin, but it was not the only one available to Lincoln. Others included 1765, when the Stamp Act Congress (the first intercolonial body) met; 1775, when the military rebellion began; 1778, when aid from France made the revolution viable; 1781, when the Articles of Confederation were ratified; 1787, when the Constitution was drafted; 1788, when the ninth state ratified it; or 1790, when Rhode Island made it unanimous. To have selected any of those dates would have implied a very different origin story. By selecting 1776 and presenting it as if there were no question, Lincoln locates the country’s beginning in the expression of ideals - and not just any ideals, but those of liberty and equality, the very values to which Lincoln would have his audience reaffirm their commitment.

Furthermore, Lincoln characterizes the ideal of equality as a proposition. In context, a proposition was a hypothesis that would be tested and proved through the life of the country. It was like a geometric asymptote, something that would be continually approached even though never actually reached. It would serve as

a goal toward which the nation always would strive. This was the same view of equality that Lincoln had expressed during his pre-presidential years, when he had attributed it to the founders and used it to resolve the paradox of how slavery could have been condemned by those who themselves owned slaves. The other obvious way out of that paradox was to say that the founders did not regard blacks as men within the scope of the Declaration. This was the view taken, for example, by Lincoln's perennial political opponent, Stephen A. Douglas. How to choose between these interpretations? Fortunately, one doesn't have to. By making the presentational choice to state as fact what is a highly contestable assertion, Lincoln is able to define away the controversy and leave listeners with the simple "truth" of what "our fathers" had in mind.

Moreover, what was it to which "our fathers" gave birth in 1776? Lincoln states as fact that they "brought forth, on this continent, a new nation." But it is questionable whether they did any such thing. The Declaration says that the former colonies "are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states." The emphasis is on states, plural, and there is no reference to a single nation. Eleven years later, the Preamble to the Constitution announces its aim to "form a more perfect union," not a more perfect nation. By 1863, it was clear that movement was in the direction of nationalism, of seeing "the people" as a single entity and the nation as its embodiment. But rather than acknowledge that this is a new development or a gradual evolution, Lincoln read backwards and claimed it to be the view of the founders themselves. It was the view of some founders, but Lincoln swept away the whole historical controversy. What the country needed to be in 1863, he said it actually had been all along. This is what Robert L. Scott (1973) called "the conservative voice in radical rhetoric." It enabled Lincoln to claim that the very same nation had survived for 87 years and was now being tested. To succeed at that test not only would meet the needs of the moment but also would vindicate the vision of the founders. This simple statement that the founders created "a new nation" enacts a theory of history and politics. Stated as a bold assertion, the claim no longer requires any argument.

A final example of assertion as a presentational choice was the statement that the function of the Civil War was "testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." That is, the war will determine whether democratic self-government, in the United States or anywhere else, is sustainable beyond the 87 years it already has survived. To abandon the war

would be to forfeit the test, permitting those who had lost a fair election to overturn the results by military action until they got their way. Doing that would negate the legitimacy of popular elections, and without them there would be no democratic self-rule. If such a thing could happen in the United States, with its tradition and over 80 years of experience, then it could happen anywhere; so if democracy fails here, it fails everywhere. Lincoln puts forward this theory as fact, not needing to argue for it. In the process he obscures other possible accounts for the war, such as the view of many Southerners that military action *now* was necessary to interrupt the arc of history which, since Lincoln's election, was tending toward slavery's demise. Lincoln's strategic maneuver redirects attention from slavery to the even higher principle of democracy and self-rule, which he pronounces to be the ultimate object of the struggle.

The speech reveals several other presentational choices. The opening line, "Four score and seven years ago," evokes the Biblical claim, in Proverbs, that "the days of a man's life are threescore years and ten, or if by reason of strength, fourscore years." The Union already has exceeded that boundary, so it is on course to "long endure," provided that there is no successful revolt by dissatisfied Southerners. The persuasiveness of Lincoln's argumentative claim for a commitment to nationalism is enhanced by its Biblical resonance.

Another presentational choice is the use of negation as an indirect means of providing support. After saying that his audience was present to dedicate a cemetery, Lincoln states that they cannot do so because it already has been done by "the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here." We therefore must do something else, and Lincoln presents what is a far greater and more important task than setting aside a piece of ground. But rather than saying directly that our task is more significant than theirs, he seems to do the opposite, maintaining that "the world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." The first clause in the sentence was clearly false, but the second clause is true in the sense that *doing* trumps *saying*. Since our talk is less significant than their action, we ought to do something else in order to even the exchange and assure that the dead will not have died in vain. Talk plus personal dedication is at least equal to action. But had Lincoln said this explicitly, he would be rightfully accused of hubris. So he made his point by using the presentational choice of negation.

A final example of strategic maneuvering through presentational choice involves

the closing prepositions “of,” “by,” and “for,” each of which relates to the noun, “the people.” The point of this closing statement is not the differentiation of the prepositions but the repetition of the noun. “The people” by 1863 was a term of nearly universal veneration, especially when it stood in opposition to terms such as “special interests.” “The people” could be dominated by elites just as they could be ruled by monarchs. The genius of the United States, and its uniqueness in the world, was that the people ruled. Government acted upon them, but also was created and composed by them, and it operated for their benefit. “The great task remaining before us” was to assure the survival of this form of government. That was what was at stake in the war, and that what was what required a new commitment to American nationhood, keeping the people free from the elites that Lincoln thought had hijacked the Southern state governments and led them into the abyss of secession. The case of the United States would prove the viability of popular rule.

## 5. *Conclusion*

Within the pragma-dialectical framework (van Eemeren 2010), strategic maneuvering offers advocates the chance to increase their rhetorical effectiveness while also meeting their dialectical obligations. On first glance, it may seem that the Gettysburg Address does the opposite: maximizing rhetorical success while evading one’s dialectical obligations. After all, Lincoln never substantiates that the United States is one nation, or that it was founded in 1776, or that its goal is the achievement of equality under popular rule. Even less does he answer objections that could be set out against any of these standpoints. What gives them force is that they are embedded within an epideictic framework that celebrates the dead while urging the living to dedicate themselves to a larger task. It is perhaps in this sense that Wills (1992) wrote that listeners to the speech “had their intellectual pocket picked,” leaving the battlefield on 19 November with a different sense of the United States from what they had when they arrived. It has become commonplace to observe that the Gettysburg Address epitomizes the war-induced shift from regarding the United States as a plural noun (“The United States are. . .”) to a singular noun (“The United States is . . .”).

But this may be taking too limited a view of the matter. The defense of American nationalism did not issue forth from Lincoln at Gettysburg for the first time. He had been striking these themes for some years, at least since the “Peoria speech” of 1854 (Basler 1953). Often he had fully-developed arguments that anticipated or

replied to critics, even if he did not reprise them at Gettysburg. In the Lincoln-Douglas debates he argued why the Union was older than the Constitution and perhaps older than the states (Zarefsky 1990). In the First Inaugural Address he had developed the case against secession and explained why the essence of the Civil War was a struggle for popular rule (Zarefsky 2012).

What an epideictic address might do is to evoke the more fully developed argument through allusion to it and restatement of its conclusion. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958/1969) are right in observing that epideictic has an argumentative character, but it typically achieves that result by indirection rather than explicitly. Analysis of a masterpiece such as the Gettysburg Address helps us to see how. If argumentative structure and rhetorical functions are discernible in such an iconic text as this, then *a fortiori* they should be even easier to discern implicitly in more quotidian examples of epideictic discourse.

## APPENDIX

Lincoln's Gettysburg address, 19 November 1863

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate - we can not consecrate - we can not hallow - this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from

the earth.

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# **ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Arguing With Oneself In Writing For The News**

*Abstract:* This paper addresses intrapersonal argumentation in the soliloquy occurring within oneself while making decisions. It focuses on the analysis of an example of soliloquy by a journalist arguing about his choices in newswriting, made observable by means of a cue-based Retrospective Verbal Protocol from Progression Analysis. After having reconstructed the argumentation structure of

the soliloquy in pragma-dialectical terms, the Argumentum Model of Topics is applied to explain the inferential relation between standpoints and arguments.

*Keywords:* argumentative soliloquy, Argumentum Model of Topics, intrapersonal argumentation, newsmaking, progression analysis.

## 1. Introduction

*If inner dialogue is not a form of argumentation, what is it then? Should we think of two completely idiosyncratic phenomena, we would paradoxically maintain that, in a public argumentative discussion, standpoints are defended reasonably; yet that they originate uncritically in the black box of the arguers' minds. So one would be bound to publicly defend in a reasonable fashion what he has unreasonably decided in his silent thoughts.*

(Greco Morasso 2013, p. 60)

From this provocative quote from Greco Morasso's (2013) account of argumentative inner dialogue in migrant mothers, **[i]** I shall start my reflection upon the much-debated issue of arguing with oneself. Although this topic has received a lot of attention from psychology and sociology (e.g. Billig, 1996 [1987]), as well as from philosophy (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 2010 [1958] mention Isocrates, Pascal, Schopenhauer and Mill, but Plato dealt with it too), argumentation theory devoted only marginal interest to it. In fact, the main focus of the latter has always been dialogue. Nevertheless, some scholars (amongst others Dascal, 2005; Greco Morasso, 2013; Perrin & Zampa, under review; Rigotti, 2005; Rocci, 2005) turned to intrapersonal argumentation. Therefore I set the present contribution in a still less explored branch of argumentation studies. More precisely, I consider "self-directed argumentation" (Rigotti, 2005, p. 94) enacted within oneself while making decisions in what I call the *argumentative soliloquy*. I assume the soliloquy to be comparable to a critical discussion, whose protagonist and antagonist are one and the same person.

But how can such a claim be proven? How can a soliloquy be captured? A precise, flawless recording of inner speech is still not feasible today, as it would require installing some science-fiction device in the thinker's brain. Anyway, data that get close to it are at disposal: cue-based Retrospective Verbal Protocols (from now on, RVP) from Progression Analysis (Perrin, 2003, 2013). RVPs are verbalizations of decision-making during writing, made by the author while watching video



recordings of the writing process he just completed. I here take as an example an RVP produced in a television newsroom, i.e., a journalist's reflections about the coming into being of the textual part of a television news item. The data analysis (Section 4) is conducted on two levels: first I reconstruct the argumentation structure of the soliloquy following Pragma-Dialectics (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004), then the inferential relation between selected standpoints and arguments by means of the Argumentum Model of Topics (Rigotti 2006; Rigotti & Greco Morasso, 2009, 2010, in preparation - from now on, AMT). Before moving to the analysis, I provide a brief account of the state of the art of the studies on argumentation in inner speech I base my analysis upon (Section 2) and introduce the corpus and research method I work with (Section 3).

## 2. *On intrapersonal argumentation* [ii]

The data I analyze in this paper (see Section 3) comes as close as possible to reproducing a soliloquy in the sense of the process of "speaking to oneself" (Rigotti, 2005, p. 94). The soliloquy is all the more relevant to argumentative analysis because "[it] appears as the human activity in which - so to speak - one works for persuading oneself" (2005, p. 114). In other words, in a soliloquy the same person plays the role of protagonist and antagonist in turn, and the result is rational persuasion.

The similarities between intra- and intersubjective argumentation are particularly relevant to the present analysis, as they make it possible to analyze soliloquies with the same tools used for dialogues. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (2010 [1958]) address such similarity by describing argumentation with oneself as "self-deliberation":

*when a person is thinking, his mind would [...] strive to assemble all arguments that seem to it to have some value, without suppressing any, and then, after weighing the pros and cons, would decide on what, to the best of its knowledge and belief, appears to be the most satisfactory solution.*

(Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 40)

In self-deliberation one does not follow any shortcut, but argues for and against standpoints exactly as he would do in deliberating with other people. Dascal (2005) focuses on this link too. He assumes that between external debates and mental activities there are metonymic relations: they both belong to "the social activity 'debate'" and the "mental moves that take place *in foro interno* [...] are

entirely subservient to what is currently going on *in foro externo*.” (ibid., p. 44). At the same time, they are in a metaphorical relation, for some features of the source domain “external debate” are projected onto the target domain “internal debate”. Both are a form of deliberation in the Aristotelian sense of “the mental process through which an individual establishes his preferences and decides how to act”, aiming at leading “to rational persuasion in favour of one of the options” (ibid., p. 52). Finally, Greco Morasso (2013) signals the presence of interlocutors in the arguer’s mind as a proof of the connection between external and inner debate. This claim is supported by developmental psychology (Vygotsky, 1962 [1934]) and literary criticism, especially by Bakhtin’s (2006 [1935]) concept of *dialogism* inherent to all kinds of discourse, which means that “every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (ibid., p. 280).

### 3. Methodology and corpus presentation

In this section I first describe the corpus I work on and its collection method (3.1), then the tools used for argumentative analysis (3.2).

#### 3.1 The corpus

The example I consider here (see Section 4) is taken from a television news corpus constructed by applying Progression Analysis at the Swiss public broadcasting service (SRG SSR) during the Swiss National Science Foundation project “*Idée Suisse: Language policy, norms, and practice as exemplified by Swiss Radio and Television*” (2005-2008), included in the National Research Program 56, “Language Diversity and Linguistic Competence in Switzerland”.

Progression Analysis is a computerized multimethod approach that “combines ethnographic observation, interviews, computer logging, and cue-based retrospective verbalizations to gather linguistic and contextual data” (Perrin & Zampa, under review) on three levels: the situation in which writing is produced (macro level); the material activity of writing (meso level); the reflection on the writing process (micro level). In the newsmaking context, the macro level is defined thanks to interviews with journalists and editors and field observation, with a focus on interpersonal, professional, institutional and technological conditions and constraints in the newsroom. Particularly relevant components at this level are editorial conferences, the actual setting of decision-making about what journalists will write about. The meso level, on the other hand, is concerned with the writing activity. Each keystroke and writing movement is recorded by

means of key logging and screenshot recording programs (Perrin, 2013, p. 256). The recording does not influence the writers' performance, since it operates automatically in the background, without changing the user interfaces of the writing or editing software used. Finally, the micro level consists in the RVP, in which the journalist watches on the screen how his text came into being and comments on each writing step, explaining what happened and at the same time giving reasons for it. It aims at opening "a window onto the mind of the writer" that reveals "the decisions that an author could have made in principle" (Perrin, 2013, pp. 63-64), i.e. the writing strategies and practices he is aware of.

An important remark shall be made with respects to this data type I am about to analyse. The RVP is produced together with a researcher, whose role is to make sure that the journalist keeps on commenting by posing standard questions. The researcher is not engaging in a discussion with the journalist nor expressing opinions, she "only triggers the writer's account of his own thoughts, strategies and decisions" (Perrin & Zampa, under review). Despite these precautions, it cannot be avoided that the journalist (who, by the way, is not aware of the research goals) views the researcher as a real interlocutor. This can of course influence the way past actions and decisions are accounted for, and eventually lead to rendering them differently from how they were made inside his mind. Therefore the soliloquy is an approximate reconstruction a posteriori - but still, probably the best we can achieve with today's means.

The chosen RVP has been recorded at *Tagesschau*, the German-language news bulletin of SRF1 (*Schweizer Fernseher*). *Tagesschau* aims at reporting information that is considered important for the audience in a clear and neutral way (Gnach, 2013, pp. 103-104). As stated on the official website: (<http://www.srf.ch/sendungen/tagesschau/sendungsportraet>). The program pictures itself as committed to the news values (see 3.2 for a definition) of *relevance*, *recency*, *interest for the audience* (related to the news content) as well as *credibility*, *adherence to facts* and *understandability* (related to the reporting style). Journalists are expected to apply these criteria when producing news items.

### 3.2 Tools for argumentative analysis

The present analysis is embedded in the above mentioned (Section 1) frameworks of Pragma-Dialectics (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004) and of the AMT (Rigotti 2006; Rigotti & Greco Morasso, 2009, 2010, in preparation).

Pragma-Dialectics considers argumentation the process of defending or refuting a standpoint by putting forward arguments for or against it, with the aim of resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. This process is staged in a critical discussion that has a protagonist, who puts forward a standpoint and defends it, and an antagonist, who casts doubt on it or argues against it. A model of an ideal critical discussion (i.e. of how an argumentative discussion would ideally develop if all standards of reasonableness were met) is proposed as a normative and descriptive tool (cf. van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004 for an exhaustive account of the model and of the theory).

The AMT allows moving from the pragma-dialectical overview of how argumentation is articulated to its deep inferential structure. According to it, in order to understand why a given argument supports a standpoint it is not enough to rely on its logical soundness. A connection to the actual context of the discussion must be established for argumentation to be effective. This aim can be achieved by reconstructing the endoxical[**iii**] premises that root reasoning in the common ground of the participants to a discussion. In the newsmaking context I am considering, such endoxical premises are often *news values*, i.e. criteria for news selection that are shared in a community of newsmakers and among its audience, and guide the choice of events as potential news items.[**iv**] Being part of the community's common ground, these criteria usually remain implicit, and are verbalized only when disagreement occurs. An example of news values playing the role of *endoxa* is displayed in Section 4.

#### 4. *Data analysis: argumentation in the reconstructed soliloquy*

The RVP I here analyze has been recorded on November 08, 2006 at *Tagesschau* (sf\_ts\_061108\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc). Some contextual information are taken from other interviews[**v**] with the journalist (sf\_ts\_061106\_1315\_HS\_frame\_1.doc and sf\_ts\_061108\_2400\_HS\_rumsfeld\_review) and from the item itself (sf\_ts\_061108\_2400\_HS\_rumsfeld\_item.doc).

The journalist under investigation, HS, started working in the field in the '70 and has long been based in Latin America, where he was also involved with local political movements. He is thus an experienced newswriter, especially on political issues.

The item whose production he comments on regards the resignation from duty by Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. secretary of defense under George W. Bush. He resigned

quite unexpectedly, right after the Republicans lost the mid-term elections and only few days after Bush declared his intention to have him at his side during the whole mandate. It is an historical moment, because actually it is Bush who fires Rumsfeld and, by doing so, he implicitly communicates that he is aware that they made mistakes in the Iraq war.**[vi]** The item features part of Rumsfeld's resignation speech and of Bush's comments on it. Both politicians seem pretty emotional about the event. Nevertheless, as HS repeatedly notices, the whole situation is odd: Rumsfeld is pushed to resign because of the negative effects of the disastrous Iraq war (in particular because of the inhuman interrogation techniques he allowed) on the Republican administration, but nothing about this real reason is said on this occasion. On the contrary, Bush underlines his general's achievements,**[vii]** whereas Rumsfeld depicts himself as a humble servant and admirer of the army.**[viii]** The journalist wants to make this incongruity evident to the audience, to make it clear that it is all part of a show business strategy to protect the image of Bush's war policy**[ix]** because he feels it is his duty to tell the truth.**[x]** At the same time he cannot say it overtly,**[xi]** because there is no statement by Bush or Rumsfeld on the topic.**[xii]**

This brings up a key issue in newsmaking: the requirement to report neutrally what happened, without adding any interpretation. Such characteristic of journalistic discourse has been named "reporter voice" by Appraisal Theory**[xiii]** (Martin & White, 2005), meaning "a regime of strategic impersonalisation by which the author's subjective role is backgrounded", that allows expressing "esteeming meanings" (ibid., p. 183) indirectly and "warrant[ing] the widespread impression that news reporting is objective" (Pounds, 2010, p. 109). Such strategic impersonalisation serves as a measure to protect news organizations "from the accusation of gross partiality" (ibid.). As noticed in Section 3, *Tagesschau's* mandate clearly encourages this attitude. HS is very aware of this, as he himself explains during the frame interview.**[xiv]** Furthermore, when he was allocated the task of preparing this item, he was told not to provide any background information, but to focus only on the press conference.**[xv]**

Taken all this into consideration and having pondered on various options,**[xvi]** HS decides to end the item with a slightly ironical description of what happens in the video,**[xvii]** so that an acute spectator can understand what is really going on behind the curtains.**[xviii]** He is aware that, by doing so, he might cross the line of what is allowed to a reporter, and considers the issue worth discussing for

journalism in general. **[xix]** Nonetheless, from the RVP it can be understood that HS values telling the truth more than complying to mandate indications like neutrality and facticity. I shall get back to this issue later in the analysis.

Let's now reformulate HS's reasoning in argumentative terms. He ponders on three alternatives in reporting the Rumsfeld story: making the audience understand something which is not explicit and for which he has no evidence, but that he considers worth communicating (alternative A); *not* making the audience understand something which is not explicit and for which he has no evidence (alternative B) and making the audience understand that something important, but not explicit and for which he has no evidence, is going on by means of irony (alternative C).

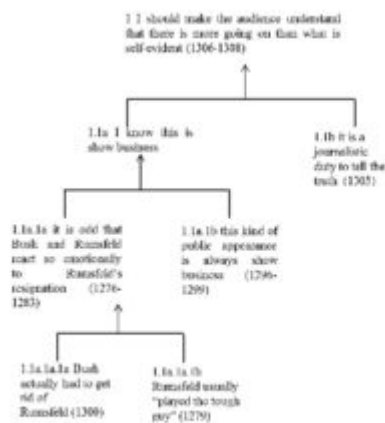
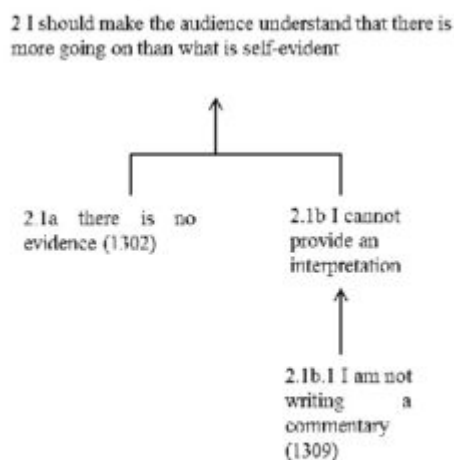


Figure 1

Alternative A can be formulated as the standpoint “I should make the audience understand that there is more going on than what is self-evident” (1), supported by coordinative argumentation (Figure 1). HS has to do so because it is his professional duty to tell the truth (1.1b) and because he knows that there is show business going on in Bush and Rumsfeld’s speech (1.1a), given his knowledge of how public appearances of this kind usually function (1.1a.1b) and of the excessively emotional reaction of the politicians to the public announcement (1.1a.1a). Such a reaction is excessive because on the one hand it was Bush who decided to fire Rumsfeld (1.1a.1a.1a), on the other hand because it contrasts with Rumsfeld usual “tough guy” attitude (1.1a.1a.1b).

The opposite standpoint “I should *not* make the audience understand that there is more going on than what is self-evident” (2), corresponding to alternative B, is supported by coordinative argumentation too (Figure 2). HS should not do so

because there is no evidence about the real reasons why Rumsfeld is leaving (2.1a) and he is not entitled to provide an interpretation of the event (2.1b) because he is writing a report, not a commentary (2.1b.1).



**Figure 2**

Eventually the journalist chooses alternative C. Again, the standpoint is supported by coordinative argumentation: “the best way to make the audience understand that there is more going on than what is self-evident is by means of irony” (3) because irony warns the spectator not to take everything that is said literally (3.1a), and HS cannot explicitly say “show business is going on here” (3.1b), because he lacks evidence, as mentioned in support of standpoint 2 (Figure 3).

But how does HS come to the decision that one alternative shall prevail upon the other? And how is this decision connected to the choice of irony as a good means to convey the message? This connection can be made clear by applying the AMT. Let’s proceed step by step. First of all I consider the reasoning behind the standpoints that “fail” (1 and 2, in Figures 4 and 5).

If it is a journalistic duty to make the audience understand what is going on, even if one does not have evidence (i.e. pictures or documents) for it (*endoxon*) and HS knows that show business is going on in Rumsfeld’s resignation, even if he does not have any evidence (*datum*), then making the audience understand that show business is going on in Rumsfeld’s resignation means fulfilling a journalistic duty

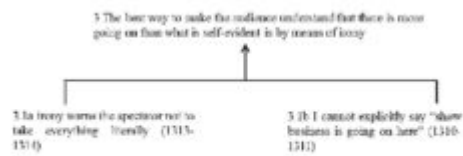


Figure 3

going on (final conclusion). Again the locus from the final cause secures the logical validity of the reasoning behind the opposite standpoint (2) (Figure 5).

If the aim of *Tagesschau*, as foreseen by its mandate, is to report events in a neutral way, on the basis of evidence and without analyzing them, and making the audience understand something without providing evidence means analyzing events (*endoxa*), and if HS has no evidence that show business is going on (datum), then making the audience understand that show business is going on means analyzing the event and going against the mandate (first conclusion). The latter becomes the minor premise of a topical syllogism whose major premise is the maxim “if the action X goes against the mandate of an institution Y, X should not be undertaken”. The final conclusion thus is that HS should not make the audience understand that show business is going on.

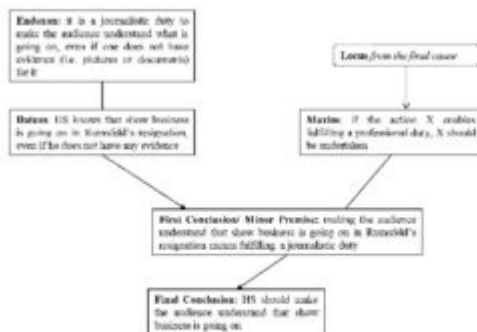


Figure 4

The endoxon at the roots of this reasoning is based on two news values that HS wants to fulfil, and that are valid throughout the journalistic community in Western countries: *truthfulness* (report what actually happened) and *neutrality* (do not take stance on events you report about). Furthermore it entails the fact that the three possibilities considered by HS (A, B, C) are alternative. These alternatives involve fulfilling the news values in a different way (datum): saying that show business is going on means being truthful but not neutral (A); not saying that show business is going on means being neutral but not truthful (B); making understand that show business is going on by means of irony allows being

(first conclusion). Thus if this is the case and if a reaction that enables fulfilling a professional duty should be undertaken (maxim from the locus from the final cause), then HS should make the audience understand that show business is

Until now though it has only become clear why standpoints 1 and 2 were eligible for consideration, and they both seem very reasonable. Why the third alternative is selected can be explained by the following reconstruction (Figure 6).



truthful and neutral at the same time (C). Therefore only alternative C allows HS to fulfil both news values (first conclusion). Onto this first conclusion the maxim is applied “if an agent wants to fulfil multiple values, and among the alternatives at disposal only X enables him to achieve them all at the same time, X has to be chosen”, derived from the combined loci from alternatives and from end to means. It follows that alternative C should be chosen (final conclusion).

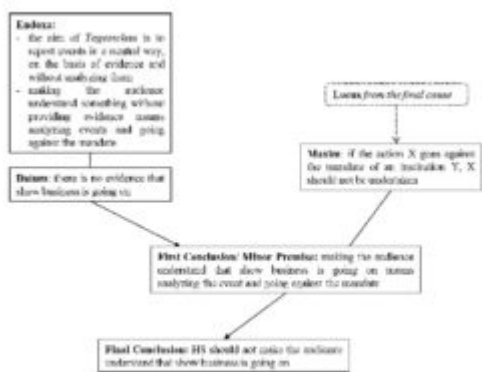


Figure 5

Anyway, it strikes the attentive observer that using irony to convey a message does not really mean embracing neutrality. Instead, it means shifting the responsibility of catching the meaning implied in the ironical expression to the audience, without a clear stance taking on the journalist’s side. Thus HS avoids the risk of being accused of adopting a

position towards an event while reporting it – an action that would go against *Tagesschau’s* mandate – but still can attempt to convey a message he cares for. It remains unclear whether the audience will understand his intention or not. [xx]

## 5. Conclusion

The claim of this contribution was to show that arguing with oneself when making a decision in newswriting is comparable to dialogic argumentation, and that RVPs are data that allow demonstrating it. Proof has been given by analyzing a journalist’s reflections on his writing activity, which includes decisions on how to frame and formulate a news item. In the RVP, HS accounts for his reasoning process for and against each alternative considered. As the reconstruction has



Figure 6

shown, while writing he has (or at least believes he has) argued for each possibility within himself, as he would have done with an external interlocutor. His decisions are backed by *endoxa* and news values, constrained by contextual limitations, professional duties and requirements and regulated by inferential rules in all comparable to those active in an interpersonal critical discussion. In particular, in the present example it

became evident how journalists struggle between contrasting forces and need to find concrete solutions to problems that emerge in everyday work, e.g. between the urge to inform the audience about a relevant issue and the neutrality requirement. In HS' case, irony is the tool adopted to reach a balance between contrasting aspects of the mandate, or at least to convey a message without overtly violating an institutional norm. Argumentative reasoning thus helps the journalist to get through the maze of possible options and find an emergent solution for a given instance of newsmaking.

### *Acknowledgements*

The author sincerely thanks Rudi Palmieri for his precious advice in the analysis of the RUMS case.

### NOTES

- i.** See also Greco Morasso's contribution to the present volume. Apart from the investigation of journalistic inner argumentation conducted in the present paper and in Perrin and Zampa (under review), Greco Morasso is - to my knowledge - the only scholar doing corpus-based research on this issue.
- ii.** This literature review on arguing with oneself is proposed also in Perrin and Zampa (under review).
- iii.** With Aristotle (Topics I, 100b) I understand endoxa as "[those opinions] which commend themselves to all, or to the majority, or to the wise - that is or to all of the wise or to the majority or to the most famous and distinguished of them".
- iv.** The notion of news values is a much-debated one in journalism studies, nevertheless due to space limitations I here only present the definition I adopt.
- v.** The frame interview is conducted by the researcher at the very beginning of the collaboration with a journalist in order to reconstruct his background and understanding of his role as a newsmaker. The review interview is conducted right after the RVP. In this occasion, the journalist is requested to sum up "what he had to do, wanted to do and actually did when writing the item" (Perrin & Zampa, under review).
- vi.** sf\_ts\_061108\_2400\_HS\_rumsfeld\_review.doc: 0110-0117 and I wanted that the spectator gets something-/ catches something of the- of the historical moment/ that's an historical moment now yes/ ehm three four five six it was more than three years of war in iraq/ and ehm now all of a sudden one realizes ehm-/ it is for the first time overtly admitted/ we have made a mistake there/ the man has to go.
- vii.** sf\_ts\_061108\_2400\_HS\_rumsfeld\_item.doc: 0026-0033 he disempowered

saddam hussein/ and helped the iraqi people/ establish a constitutional democracy/ it will go down in history/ that under donald rumsfeld's leadership/ our troops/ overthrew two terrorist regimes/ and freed about 50 million people.

**viii.** sf\_ts\_061108\_2400\_HS\_rumsfeld\_item.doc: 0037-0041 I must say/ that it was the highest honor/ that I have experienced in my life/ to have been able to serve with the amazing young men and women/ in uniform.

**ix.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1296-1299 as a journalist now it is something very important for me/ one must always keep at the back of one's mind in this kind of public appearance/ this now was again pure show business/ a public relations exercise.

**x.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1305-1308 nonetheless as a journalist I have the duty/ to make the spectator somehow perceive/ that I know it that they are doing show business there.

**xi.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1310-1311 of course as a journalist I can't say/ this was the show business for today.

**xii.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1300-1302 because as a matter of fact he had to throw out rumsfeld/ because he was not supportable anymore/ of course he doesn't say that.

**xiii.** A theory based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985) that investigates the interpersonal dimension of language use, and devotes considerable attention to journalistic discourse.

**xiv.** sf\_ts\_061106\_1315\_HS\_frame\_1.doc: 0676-0686 the aim of tagesschau is to show pictures of events/ that have happened/ [...]/ the aim cannot be that of analyzing/ the tagesschau doesn't have the task to analyze/ [...]/ the task of analyzing/ and conveying the background/ and to exhaustively represent the connections/ that is the newspapers' task.

**xv.** sf\_ts\_061108\_2400\_HS\_rumsfeld\_review\_1.doc: 0135-0143 I was requested/ not to make it longer than one minute twenty/ and not to make any background material on rumsfeld/ thus no life of rumsfeld/ quick retrospection that was it then/ the so-called background/ but that I should only show the press conference/ it went like this/ and they said this.

**xvi.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1285-1291 now the question was/ how do I comment on this/ do I simply leave it very dry/ do I say just something/ or do I go into it/ and comment it just as it is/ or do I comment it slightly ironically.

**xvii.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1327-1329 "rumsfeld was visibly moved/ and also president bush somewhat touched/ patted on his

commander's back".

**xviii.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1312-1314 thus I try to include a bit of irony in it/ that signals the spectator/ well that should not be taken one to one.

**xix.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1335-1342 it would be interesting/ to discuss again about this concluding sentence from a journalistic viewpoint/ to say is it allowed/ is it not allowed/ is it even necessary/ that the journalist shows the spectator/ whoops I know more/ than I can say now.

**xx.** sf\_ts\_061108\_0000\_HS\_rumsfeld\_verbal\_1.doc: 1322-1325 and therefore I try/ to bring in a slightly ironical note in the end/ whether it succeeded/ it is always very difficult to succeed with irony in television.

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# **ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Recognising Argumentation In**

# Dialogical Context

*Abstract:* The aim of the paper is to present an analytical method for the dialogical argument structure analysis. The method is used for the extension of the existing models of the recognition of argumentation which typically focus on inference indicators as cues for argument detection. In the proposed approach the aim is to identify argument structures via dialogue protocols. In the dialogue “Bob: We should increase funding for science; Alice: Why?; Bob: Science is necessary for successful industry” the standard method is not sufficient to recognise the argument. The solution is to use the Inference Anchoring Theory which allows us to understand how it is that when e.g. A asks why it is that  $p$ ; and then B say  $q$ , we recognise an inference from  $p$  to  $q$ . In the paper sample analysis of the natural dialogues is presented using the transcripts of the BBC Radio4 program *Moral Maze*. Basing on those examples the method for recognition of argument pro- and con- in debate is presented.

*Keywords:* Argument mining, argument structure, corpus studies, dialogue protocols, inference anchoring theory, protocol for debate

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to introduce a procedure for the description of arguments performed in dialogues. Analysis of argument structure in this approach will be used as an ‘ore’ for the argument mining techniques, consisting of methods for automated and semi-automated argument extraction from texts in natural language. The proposed method is an extension of existing methods which typically focus on inference indicators such as “because”, “since”, “therefore” as cues for argument recognition (see e.g. van Eemeren et al. 2007). Let’s consider the following example:

### Example 1

Bob: *We should increase funding for science because science is necessary for successful industry.*

In Bob’s utterance from example 1, argument structure can be easily recognised by means of the inference indicator “because” which allows recognition of the part “*We should increase funding for science*” as a premise, and “*science is necessary for successful industry*” as a conclusion of the argument. This method

is usually used for the argument mining techniques (see Budzynska & Reed, 2011). Yet, it is not always sufficient for argument detection for all communicative situations, e.g. argumentation performed in the dialogue where there is no indicators. To illustrate such a situation, let's consider Bob's utterance from example 1 as it was performed during Bob's conversation with Alice:

Example 2

Bob: *We should increase funding for science*

Alice: *Why?*

Bob: *Science is necessary for successful industry*

Here Bob's argument cannot be recognised by means of procedure based of inference indicators description since this fragment does not contain any inferential components. The conclusion of the argument was performed by Bob in the first locution in example 2, and its premise was performed in the third locution. Moreover, between the premise and the conclusion performed by Bob, Alice executed one more locution which does not belong to the structure of the argument. Such a case becomes problematic when it comes to the description of automated method for dialogical argument recognition.

The motivation of this research is to explore the possibility of building an analytical method which will reliably work in situations like example 2, and be used for the techniques of automated and semi-automated argument extraction. Proposed method aims to identify argument structures not only via inferential components, but also via dialogue protocols, e.g. certain sequences of utterances in a dialogue (Budzynska et al. 2014). This procedure allows us to understand, e.g. how is that when one participant performs challenging move in a dialogue after which another participant via performing an assertive move performs also argumentation.

Proposed approach to argument structure recognition aims to deal with the resources in natural language, such as transcripts of conversations. In the current paper the analyses of structure of the argument is presented for the discourse of debate.

The paper consists of three parts. In section 2 the methodology for the analysis is described. In sections 3 and 4 the analyses of examples from corpus studies, in which structure for argumentation pro- and con- in debate is illustrated, will be

presented.

## 2. Methodology

In this section the state of the art representing the background of the research is described. Firstly, theoretical framework introducing main assumptions and terms in the proposed model for argument identification is introduced (see: 2.1). Secondly, general description of the corpus studies during the analyses of debate is reported (see: 2.2).

### 2.1 Theoretical framework

The proposed method for the argument structure analysis is based on two theoretical models describing dialogue and argument structures. Firstly, during the dialogue structure analysis assumptions from formal dialogue systems (Hamblin, 1970) were taken. Then, during the dialogical argument structure description, inference anchoring theory (IAT) is used as a core framework for the analysis (Budzynska & Reed, 2011).

The concept of a dialectical system was introduced by Hamblin (1970), as a rule-governed structure of organised conversation. The main goal of such systems was to “model contexts for everyday conversation” which will allow us to analyse argumentation performed in natural communication (Walton & Krabbe, 1995). Formal dialogue systems aim to determine rules governing the course of a dialogue. Currently a lot of systems are built depending on the type of conversation those systems aim to model, e.g. system DC by Mackenzie (1979), system CB by Woods and Walton (1978), system PPD and RPD by Walton and Krabbe (1995), system TDG by Bench-Capon (1998) and system ASD by Reed and Walton (1995).

Most of such dialogue systems can be described as in general specification for dialogue systems described in Prakken (Prakken, 2006). According to this framework dialogical systems contain three main types of moves. The first type, called locution rules, determines what type of illocutionary forces a player can execute during the conversation, e.g. participant may be allowed to use: *claim p*, for asserting a proposition *p*; *why p?*, for challenging a *standpoint p*, and *retract p*, for *withdrawing p*. The second type of moves, called commitment rules, describes how a particular utterance affects the commitment base of the player, e.g. the performance of *claim p* by the agent results in adding the proposition *p* into his commitments. The key element of a dialogue system is its protocol



describing what kind of utterance a player can execute in the particular stage of the dialogue, e.g. after *why p?* the participant can utter: *argue(p,q)*; or *retract p*.

In the proposed method for argument recognition the normative approach for dialogue structure description will be applied. Though, the protocol will be described for the real-live dialogues performed during the radio debate *Moral Maze* basing on the analysis of its transcripts (for detailed description of corpus studies see sec. 2.2). Basing on the protocol description the argument structure recognition will be fulfilled using the core element for the proposed method for argument analysis which is Inference Anchoring Theory (Budzynska & Reed, 2011) showing deeper interrelation between communicative process and argument structure explored in this process.

The inference anchoring theory is built in order to explore the interrelation between argumentation and dialogical processes. The main goal of the theory is to show “how the complex language structures (particularly inference) are linked to communicative structures (such as e.g. speech acts of arguing or disagreeing)” (Budzynska et al. 2013). IAT framework bases on the assumption, that argumentation structures are anchored into the communicative process via illocutionary connectives related to the illocutionary force (Austin 1962, Searle 1969). Dialogue fragments in IAT are represented as graphs particular elements of which are described in language of Argument Interchange Format (AIF+) (Reed et al. 2010).

Using the IAT framework the dialogue between Bob and Alice from example 2 can be represented as in figure 1:



Figure 1: IAT representation of example 2

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On the right side of the IAT diagram (see: figure 1), called in AIF+ L-nodes (locutions) particular utterances of the dialogue between Bob and Alice are represented. They are connected via TA1- and TA2-nodes (transitions), representing specific dialogue rules according to which conversation is governed, like e.g. a participant can perform an assertion after a challenging move. In the left side of the diagram, argument introduced by Bob is represented as I-nodes holding the propositional content of players utterances and RA1 node representing relation of inference between them. In the case when participant performs an argumentation against particular statement (argumentation con-) the relation between premise and conclusion of his argument is represented as CA-node representing a conflict between them. Argument structure and dialogue process are linked via illocutionary forces represented via YA-nodes. Illocutionary forces represented in YA1, YA2 and YA4 are called unitary illocutionary forces, since they were used in the dialogue in relation to the units of propositional content. Illocutionary forces represented in YA3, though, is a relational illocutionary force since it was used in the dialogue for the introduction of the relation of support between premise and conclusion of the argument introduced during the dialogue.

Using this framework we can analyse argument performed by Bob in dialogue from example 2, which we can reconstruct in a following way.

- (1) Bob: asserting (*We should increase funding for science*)
- (2) Alice: challenging (*We should increase funding for science*)
- (3) Bob: asserting (*Science is necessary for successful industry*)

In the move (1), represented by the node L1 (see: figure 1), Bob performs an assertion, represented by the YA1 node, of the proposition content "*We should increase funding for science*" represented by I1 node. In the move represented in L2 Alice challenges statement made by Bob in move (1), therefore Alice's move (2) has the same propositional content as Bob's move (1), but different illocutionary force - challenging, represented by YA2. In the move (3) Bob performs another assertion of the propositional content "*Science is necessary for successful industry*" represented via I2 node. There is a relation of inference RA1 between contents of I-nodes, where I2 supports I1. Both those contents are introduced by Bob what indicates that he performs an argumentation in the dialogue. The illocutionary force of *Arguing* according to the inference anchoring theory is anchored in the transition between Alice's challenge L2 and Bob's

second assertion L3 and points into the relation between the premise and the conclusion of the argument performed by Bob represented as RA-node (for more details see Reed & Budzynska, 2011). This approach defers from, e.g. pragma-dialectical description of argumentation (Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004), where this illocutionary force, in the current example, would refer to the illocutionary force in Bob's second assertion (L3) and would be represented as YA4-node.

Proposed model for the argument recognition in the dialogical context is based on the formal dialogue structure description and representation of interrelation between the dialogue process and structure of the argument performed in this process. This allows to use particular sequences of moves in the conversation described by its protocol in order to detect argumentation performed in this conversation, e.g. in example 2 in the *Assertion - Challenge - Assertion* between challenge and second assertion argumentation is anchored. Propositional content of the first assertion can be indicated as a conclusion of the argument and propositional content of second assertion - as a premise supporting it.

## 2.2 Corpus studies

The model for dialogical argument recognition was applied to the studies on debate basing on the analyses of real-live dialogues. Corpus consists of the collection of a data base which is a set of transcripts from BBC radio4 program *Moral Maze*. This program typically involves a moderator, a panel of four persons and several witnesses who discuss on the moral aspects of the controversial issues in Great Britain. The corpus contains a large diversity of argumentative situations which make it relevant for the research on the model for argument structure detection from the dialogical context.

The MM2012 corpus containing three transcripts (15 200 words) is available at AIFdb Corpora: <http://arg.dundee.ac.uk/corpora>. The analysis was made in OVA+ tool (Online Visualisation of Argument, see: Janier et al. 2014): <http://arg.tech.org/ova>. OVA+ is an online based graphical interface for IAT structure representation for the text analysis.

Current stage of the corpus studies includes two parts. Firstly, locutions made by participants during the discussion had to be described with the relevant and applicable illocutionary forces. In such a way, set of illocutionary forces characteristic for this type of dialogue was identified. As a result a taxonomy for illocutionary forces in *Moral Maze* dialogue is specified (for detailed description

see: Budzynska et al. 2013 and Budzynska et al. 2014a). For the sake of analysis, which will be shown in the following parts of paper, main categories are mentioned. There are three main types of unitary illocutionary forces in the MM-type of dialogue: *Asserting*, *Questioning* and *Challenging*, and two main types of relational illocutionary forces: *Agreeing* for the introduction of the relation of support and *Disagreeing* for the introduction of relation of conflict. Types of unitary illocutionary forces consist also of subcategories, depending on the dialogical intention of participant. For example, *Questioning* and *Challenging* can be regarded as a *Pure Questioning* and *Pure Challenging*, in the case where speaker wants to get only hearer's opinion; *Assertive Questioning* and *Assertive Challenging* in the case where speaker not only asks about an opinion but also conveys his own beliefs on the topic; and *Rhetorical Questioning* and *Rhetorical Challenging* in the case where speaker performs locution which is shaped like a question but aims only to introduce his beliefs, not to hear someone's response (see Budzynska et al. 2013).

Second part of the corpus studies is to reconstruct argument structures from the MM dialogues. Having two types of relational illocutionary forces linked to the relation of support and relation of conflict, the argument structures pro- and con- are investigated, what will be illustrated in the following parts of the paper.

### 3. *Argumentation pro-in debate*

In this section the procedure for the identification of the structure of argumentation pro- is described. On the base of the example from the corpus MM2012 (see: sec 2.2) the analysis for cases in which participant of a debate provides means in order to support his standpoint is introduced.

The dialogue interaction shown in example 3 is a fragment of the transcript of Moral Maze program titled Welfare State. During this audition participants discuss about moral premises and virtue goals of the "welfare state" concept as also as its influence on the contemporary society. James Bartholomew introduces his understanding of the possible uses of the concept:

#### Example 3

James Bartholomew: *The real question, as opposed to going out to theoretical 'nowhereville', is to ask "What is the best welfare state we can make, in the real world?"*. [...]

Kenan Malik: *Go on, explain.*

James Bartholomew: *Well, I believe there are lots of ways in which we can change our welfare state to make it better.* (AIFdb corpora: Argument Map 1484)

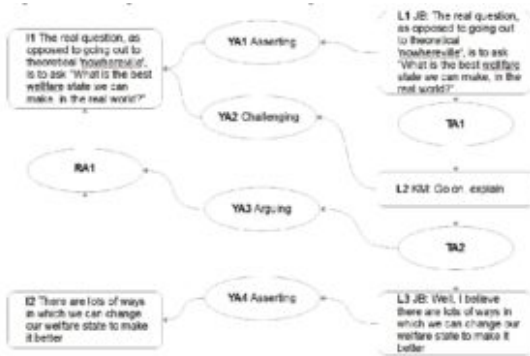


Figure 2: IAT representation of example 3

Figure 2: IAT representation of example 3

The graphical representation of the IAT structure of this fragment using the language of Argument Interchange format is shown below in figure 2.

In this dialogue fragment James Bartholomew (JB) introduces his standpoint about the way we can define and use the concept of welfare state in the current point of history. This move is represented in locution L1 (see: figure 2). He uses an illocutionary force of assertion represented in YA1-node for providing propositional content represented in I1-node. In the second move Kenan Malik (KM) says “*Go on, explain*”, which is analysed as a challenging move related to the propositional content in I1-node. In order to support his standpoint James Bartholomew (JB) provides another propositional content (I2-node) which supports his main opinion (RA1-node). Analogically to the analysis of example 2, here argumentation is performed by JB, and *Arguing* relational illocutionary force links the TA2-node and relation of support (RA1) between propositional contents represented in I1 and I2.

JB’s performance in example 3 is analysed as argumentation but not as explanation despite that KM challenges JB’s standpoint via saying “*Go on, explain*”. This analysis is made due to the nature of propositional contents introduced by JB which are opinions, but not facts. Also, KM, being an opponent to KM’s standpoint, does not have certainty about the conclusion in JB’s argument and asks for some premises to it. To analyse this case the description of argumentation and explanation in the dialogue introduced in (Bex et al. 2012,

Walton, 2011). Here the explanation in the dialogue is defined as a situation where opponent has no doubts about the conclusion of the argument but asks proponent to explicate why the main standpoint to be the case. Yet, argumentation is described as a situation where proponent has not only provide reasons why his standpoint is a case but also remove opponent's doubts about his standpoint. Referring to this definitions string "Go on, explain" was analysed as a rhetorical tool for the invitation for justification of JB's standpoint. KM seems to not be convinced about the merit of JB's utterance in L1 and asks for providing some reasons why the question "What is the best welfare state we can make, in the real world?" should be asked.

In the dialogue interaction shown in example 3 players perform sequence of moves *Assertion - Challenge - Assertion*. Also, the relational illocutionary force of *Arguing* is anchored in its second and third locutions of the interaction *Challenge-Assertion*. In the existing corpus of dialogues for the debate there is a significant number of transitions *Challenge - Assertion* and all of them anchoring an *Arguing* illocutionary force. According to this data, mentioned sequence can be used for the argument structure recognition and be implemented to the model for argument mining. Knowing the illocutionary forces of participants moves a system can guess that there is also an illocutionary force of *Arguing*.

#### 4. *Argumentation con-indebate*

In this section the analysis of the argumentation con- in debate is described. Examples from the MM2012 corpus (see: sec 2.2) in which participants provide means against particular standpoint are presented.

According to the IAT framework arguing against particular standpoint is related to the relational illocutionary force of *Disagreeing*. Via this communicative intention participants introduce propositional contents being in the relation of conflict to the standpoint with which they do not agree. This relation is represented as CA-node in the language of Argument Interchange Format. Disagreement in the discourse of debate can be expressed in several ways. Two examples of argumentation con- and its IAT representation are introduced bellow.

Example 4 present a fragment of the debate conducted in the audition *Morality of Money*, during which participants discussed moral aspects of getting into depth and causes and effects of crisis in Eurozone. The interaction represents a standpoint delivered by Michael Buerk (MB), in which he on behalf of John

Lamiday's (JL) critics provides a fault-finding in concept of giving credits:

#### Example 4

Michael Buerk: *Mr. Lamiday, I suppose your critics would say that you are actually financing consumer spending, as opposed to investment. You're actually financing lifestyles that people can't actually afford.*

John Lamiday: *No. What we're financing is the ability of people to smooth out the peaks and troughs of their income and expenditure.* (AIFdb corpora: Argument Map 1590)

The example introduces two turns in the dialogue, yet, the analysis of the disagreement performed in a debate requires only two locutions in exchange between MB and J: "MB: *You're actually financing lifestyles that people can't actually afford.*; JL: *No.*" The graphical representation of the IAT structure of this fragment using the language of Argument Interchange format is shown below in figure 3.

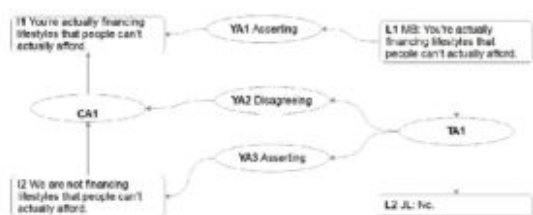


Figure 3: IAT representation of example 4

#### Figure 3: IAT representation of example 4

In figure 3 the first locution performed by MB is represented in L1-node where MB introduces a propositional content represented in I1-node via illocutionary force of assertion (YA1-node).

In the second locution JL responds to this assertion saying "No" (L2-node). Utterance "No" does not have propositional content since this is regarded as a reaction to the previous move and its propositional content. In formal protocol for debate this dialogical move can be defined only as a response, not as independent move and, consequently, has to be preceded via dialogue rule application, i.e. transition (TA1-node). Transition between assertion of propositional content I1 and locution "No" anchors an assertion (YA3-node) of propositional content I2,

which is contradictory to the I1. Contradiction between I1 and I2 is applied via relation of conflict (CA1-node).

Such representation indicates JL's standpoint (or commitment, referring to the dialogue structure specification described in sec 2.1) which he does not introduce explicitly so it is not shown as a propositional content of locution L2 but still can be recognised in a dialogical context so it is also represented as an *Assertion* anchored into the transition (TA1). Besides an *Assertion* the transition TA1 also anchors JL's communicative intention of *disagreement* with previous speaker (YA2-node). Disagreeing illocutionary force indicates the conflict CA1 representing contradiction between MB's and JL's commitments.

The sequence "*Assertion-“No”*", where *Assertion* indicates an illocutionary force with which a player introduces a propositional content and "*No*" indicates a string being the response to the previous move can be used in method for automated argument recognition as an anchor for the *Disagreeing* illocutionary force. This anchor will indicate argumentation against particular standpoint. In example 4 JL in fact introduces a counterargument in his next locution "*What we're financing is the ability of people to smooth out the peaks and troughs of their income and expenditure*", which can be analysed as argument supporting JL's standpoint reconstructed from the dialogue structure in I2-node.

In the discourse of debate, participants argue con- not always via introducing commitments contradictory to the opinion they disagreeing with. Very frequently they just provide premises conflicting with standpoints represented by their opponent which can be regarded as counterarguments to particular standpoint. Such a case is illustrated in example 5, which is a fragment of the audition of *Moral Maze* program titled *British Empire*. During this audition participant tried to give a moral evaluation to the behaviour of British army in the colonial territories in the Twentieth century. Discussion also concerned the contemporary issue of retribution for moral and material damage to the victims by the present government of UK. In this context participants discussed also an issue of the racism within black people who are subjects of United Kingdom:

#### Example 5

Lee Jasper: *I don't agree black people can be racist in the United Kingdom context. They can be racially offensive*

Melanie Phillips: *They can't be prejudiced against white people?* (AIFdb corpora:



## Argument Map 1520)



Figure 4: IAT representation of example 5

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The graphical representation of the IAT structure of this fragment using the language of Argument Interchange format is shown in figure 4.

In the example 5 Lee Jasper (LJ) introduces his standpoint about an issue of racism within black people. His utterance is represented via locution L1-node, which starts with an expression “*I don’t agree*”. This fragment allows us to analyse LJ’s move as an assertion (YA1-node) of the propositional content as “*Black people cannot be racist...*” (I1-node) being an opposite sentence to the one which LJ explicitly introduce. In the next move represented in L2-node Melanie Phillips (MP) asks a question. Yet, via posing this question MP not only wants to hear LJ’s response but also conveys her own opinion. According to the IAT framework such communicative intention is analysed as *Assertive Questioning* (for more details see: sec 2). Using this illocutionary force participant also introduces a propositional content which in this case is a sentence represented in I2-node.

The propositional content “*They can be prejudiced against white people*” introduced by MP is clearly in the relation of conflict with propositional content “*Black people can be racist in the United Kingdom context*” introduced by LJ. This allows us to verify MP’s disagreement (YA1-node) with her opponent which she delivers via introducing the opinion being an counterargument to LJ’s standpoint by means of questioning so that LJ also provide his commitments on the topic. *Disagreeing* illocutionary force aims to the conflict (CA1-node) between opinions introduces by LJ and MP.

Sequence of moves “*Assertion - Assertive Questioning*” can be used for the

detection of argumentation con- in debate. In this case propositional content of the first move will be regarded as a standpoint; and the propositional content of second move will be indicated as a counterargument to it.

## 5. *Conclusions*

In the paper a methodology for argument structure recognition in the real live dialogues was introduced. Examples from the corpus studies (corpus MM2012) on the discourse of debate were illustrated in which participants performed argumentation pro- and con- particular statement. The corpus of analysed argumentation in debate is used for the description of the method for automated and semi-automated ways of argument extraction from the resources in natural text (see Budzynska et al. 2014a and Budzynska et al. 2014b).

Presented approach, however, should not be regarded only as a tool for the automated argument structure recognition. Proposed corpus studies disclosed also a structure of a dialogue performed in natural context. This allows as to capture the rhetorical means by which people perform their argumentation in the context of debate during the radio audition. The IAT structure of particular fragments illustrate deep interrelation between the process of communication within participants and the argument structure they perform. For example, providing an argumentation using question is a characteristic feature of this type of dialogue since *Assertive Questioning* is a second frequent illocutionary force after *Asserting* (for more detail see Budzynska et al. 2014a). Such evidences from corpus studies will be used also for the dialogue game description in the context of debate in which means for argumentation in the context of debate will be normatively described.

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