THE DIALOGUE FRAME OF COMMUNICATION IN THE LIGHT OF PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL AND RHETORICAL ARGUMENTATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DEBATE

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Abstract: The present article examines the argumentation employed in dialogic interaction and attempts to verify the way in which the pragma-dialectical theory applies to debate argumentation in general and to reasonable resolution making, in particular. After a brief analysis of the term 'pragma-dialectic,' some historical references are made in order to reveal the auspicious conditions that enabled the emergence of this theory. The dialogue format that involves two participants or two parties has long been considered to be good ground for the study of the argumentative phenomenon due to its simple set up, its easy-to-follow proceedings, and the richness of resources encouraging wide-ranging analyses. All these reasons have determined the prolificacy of studies and the sophistication of the research in this domain. The contribution of audience as support factor for the argumentative type of discourse specific to debate is also worth noting here especially because it represents a defining element that separates logic from argumentation.

Keywords: pragma-dialectical, reasonableness, dialogue, multilogue, strategic manoeuvring.

Introduction

This article proposes an investigation of theoretical methodology applied to argumentation, following primarily the pragma-dialectical directive lines, regarding the dialogic type of communication with reference to organised public events, more specifically to debates.

In order to clarify various aspects of communication that could be assessed by means of such normative instruments, a few general considerations should be made with respect to the critical and persuasive types of discussions.

By submitting a thesis to discussion, a dialogue context is created where the participants in it are stimulated to interact actively and, ideally, reasonably.

The most reasonable way to take into account a proposed thesis is by approaching it in a *critical* way. If the critical approach follows the constructive, positive line of argumentation, the result will turn out as stimulating for everyone engaging in a dialogue that is counted upon as productive. Otherwise, the dialogue fails to accomplish its ethical communicative goal, and ends in discord, or, worse, in communication void.

Speakers can engage in a confrontation of ideas and eventually create a context fueled by agonistic rapports. This happens in debate, which is the argumentative environment of an agonistic type where two parties confront each other in a dialogue of opposing principles. In debates the *persuasive* type of dialogue could be regarded as the pivotal structure of the entire edifice without however omitting to give the critical component due consideration. In such

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contests, persuasion is, as a rule, formal. Formal persuasion, of lofty rhetorical nature, is characteristic of political, legal, or theological debate settings. Persuasion is predominantly informal in everyday communication, in conversations based on natural (i.e. 'unpretentious') opinion exchange.

The structure of a debate (Glazer & Rubinstein 2006) has been so devised as to accommodate speech interactions that follow strict rhetorical-argumentative rules. These are, usually, formal conditions to be applied to communication. The debaters adopt antagonistic, contradictory positions pertaining to the decisions to be made. Furthermore, in order to reach an *apposite* conclusion, certain conditions of reasonability must be fulfilled.

In informal discussions, or conversations, the communicative flow moves freely, often in a disorganised manner, and is usually unsystematic. In such situations, the conversants are not expected to obey any rigours of formality, censure, and control, that is, they are not expected to employ precisely verified information of academic, or specialised nature.

Unlike the informal conversations, which happen in casual contexts and which are by and large lax and unconventional or rule-free, in debate there is a certain control, a rigour in the unfolding of the communicative exchange. In this way a context is created where specialised information is subject to discussion, and therefore the participants must be thoroughly prepared from both an informational and a strategic (rule-complying behaviour) point of view. The argumentation dialogue should take place in such a way as to inform an uninformed party, in this case, the audience.

The article examines the argumentation employed in such a type of dialogic interaction and attempts to verify the way in which the pragma-dialectical theory applies to debate argumentation, in general, and to resolution making, in particular. After a brief analysis of the term 'pragma-dialectic,' some historical references are made in order to reveal the auspicious conditions that enabled the emergence of this theory.

The pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation appeared in the early nineteen eighties at the initiative of Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst. Their work was primarily inspired by the Aristotelian dialectics and rhetoric, which they elaborated and developed according to the models offered by the dialectical theory of critical rationalists. Their second notable source of inspiration was the Searlean theory regarding the direct and indirect speech acts.

In terms of the dialogic communication in natural languages, the pragma-dialectic approach proposes a support framework for rational dialogue development, which has been devised as a system of four principles. These are *dialectification*, *functionalisation*, *socialisation* and *externalisation.*

Chaïm Perelman ushered in a new concept in theory, namely that of *reasonableness*, which he distinguished from a related concept, *rationality*. The concept of reasonableness was later taken over by the pragma-dialectic theoreticians, who gave it an original configuration in the studies they made on the ways in which differences of opinions are resolved.

The new pragma-dialectical theory, therefore, "systematically combines normative insights from philosophical dialectics and dialogue logic with pragmatic insights from the Gricean speech act theory, and discourse analysis and is applied in the analysis, evaluation and production of oral and written argumentative discourse. The theory incorporates the notion of an ideal model for critical discussion, with 10 procedural rules governing the process of resolving a

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difference of opinion on the merits. Each violation on of a discussion rule means that a fallacy has been committed which hinders the possibility of the difference of opinion being resolved in a reasonable manner."[1] This combined orientation that refers to formal, but mostly to informal contexts of communication casts new and more elucidating light on the initial understanding of the concept of argumentation as disciplinary field. This is so because it takes communication exactly for what it is, namely an interaction among participants in the context of a discourse that can influence this interaction in a negative or positive way depending on the factors that are at work in the moment when the interaction takes place, factors of multifarious nature: linguistic, non-linguistic (body-language), paralinguistic (loudness, rate, pitch, pitch contour), and extra-linguistic (physical aspect, setting).

Argumentation also takes account of the Popperian perspective, an approach which rests on objective, normative, and contrastive evaluation procedures made in the critical rationalist spirit. To this perspective, the pragma-dialectical trend attaches the pragmatic dimension with special emphasis on Grice's language philosophy and discourse analysis and, last but not least, the inclusion of the theory of speech acts for the practical application of the theoretical-ideal model of the communicative activity.

The new trend in argumentation envisioned by van Eemeren and Grootendorst had an integrative configuration in the sense that it advocates a systematic engagement of the pragmatic and the dialectic coordinates as base for all research in the domain of argumentation. Thus, one of the first perspective-changing proposals made by pragma-dialectics is a theory that relies on the application of four principles necessary for investigation procedures. All the four principles focus on the speech act, as core element of the communicative intercourse.

By the application of the first principle, *functionalisation*, discourse should be treated as a purposive act. The second principle, *socialisation*, highlights the interactive role of the speech act, the principle of *externalisation*, the third pragma-dialectical principle, is involved with relation between the speech act and the outcome of its application in the communicative act, namely the resulting propositional and interactional commitments. With the fourth and last principle, *dialectification*, the speech acts are seen dynamically, in their active exchange between participants, a perspective on which the entire edifice of critical discussion rests, and which is actually considered the ideal model for it. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 52-53).

The speaker-listener tandem

Conversations normally involve two or more partners, who are, alternately, speakers as and listeners. In monologues, the speaker and the listener overlap their roles and functions as the discourse is produced by and for (it is both produced and addressed to) the same person, who can thus be said to be engaged in a self-reflexive act. In the case of lectures or presentations the discourse addresses a group, or an *audience*, and it is not meant for immediate interaction. The interaction happens, according to the case, in the subsequent stages, when questions posed by the audience are answered by the speaker.

When the organised, dialogic interactions employ persuasion, a predominant feature of debate, negotiation, critical discussion, etc., the audience plays a major part. The role of the audience in this kind of contexts is also worth noting here especially because it represents a

[1] University of Amsterdam personal page, Frans van Eemeren, http://home.medewerker.uva.nl/f.h.vaneemeren.

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defining element that separates logic from argumentation, an issue on which the Perelman – Olbrecht-Tyteca theory and that of pragma-dialectics are in agreement.

The semantic-historical duality of the *pragma-dialectic* term

William James referred to 'pragma' as being the root of the word 'pragmatism', which, in turn, refers to the truth of a concept or opinion whose validity needs to be proved.

By the close of the nineteenth century, Charles Sanders Pierce, defined pragmatism as being a normative-regulative principle with applicability in the field of logic, where, for optimal achievement, all operations must be made with utmost accuracy and precision.

For F.C.S. Schiller, an ardent sustainer of James' theories, pragmatism has rather a *de facto* applicability. He strongly believed in the intrinsic power of words to communicate ideas in a simple and thus perfectly accessible way with no need of formalism, which is seen as a prerogative of high philosophy. Words, with their double function as containers and vehicles of semantic charge, attain the intended expression only in context. This outlook brought him very close to contextualism, a trend that advocates the crucial role played by context in word usage for communicative purposes.

During the period between the 1930s and the 1970s an important trend of thought emerged in the British philosophy which became known as The Ordinary Language Philosophy, the adepts of which were, among others, Austin, Strawson, Ryle, Witgenstein, or Searle. These philosophers and linguists paid careful attention to the way language is used in ordinary contexts being less concerned with philosophical theories about words and their functional value. In this sense, this school follows the line Schiller himself followed when he challenged formal logic, when he paid tribute to context as the only framework where words reveal their true meaning. Like in the case of the absence of the appropriate context, in decontextualisation the words' meaning is seriously affected, its functions are harmed often irreversibly, a situation that ultimately leads to the disintegration of communication. Consequently, context-reliance is a condition that must be carefully considered when analysing the way in which words fulfil their communicative function.

By and large, for these researchers of language the words used in commonplace situations are the true containers and conveyers of genuine meaning.

The term *dialectic*, or *dialectics*, points to a method of argument whose origins can be traced back to Ancient Greece. For Plato, who made it popular, it was a form of *interactive dialogic communication with persuasive purposes*.

Socrates was the advocate of a democratic form of communication where the spirit of dialectics prevailed. For him, dialectics meant a civil successive exchange of opinions where every speaker enjoyed equal right to express her point of view. In contrast, the Sophist scholars preferred *rhetoric*, in which they excelled. This was a non-dialogic form of addressing by definition as rhetoric is a relatively long oration performed or delivered by a single person.

History shows us that the logical pattern that supports dialectics, namely *dialectical reasoning*, is found in various philosophical approaches such as those underlying the arithmetic of the Socratic theories, of the Hindu, the Buddhist, or the Talmudic axioms, or the fundamental principles of the Medieval philosophy, those of Hegel's, or of the Marxist doctrine.

Also, *dialectic* is connected with the attempts made by the theorists of the trend to open up a new perspective on argumentation which is now seen as a "complex speech act, with the usual four types of felicity conditions" (Searle 1969). These are the propositional content and the

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essential conditions (together called *identity conditions*), and the preparatory and the sincerity conditions (together called *correctness conditions*). Since the speech act theory belongs to pragmatics (the study of the uses of language in everyday contexts), the construal of argumentation as a speech act includes *pragma* in the *pragma-dialectics* label.

Further on, the term *dialectic* covers two meanings that are important in the field of argumentation, namely *contradiction* and the Artistotelian *art of argument*.

At its root rests the word *diad* meaning *two* and *lectic*, meaning *word(s)*, but the connotation that stands closer to the purpose of this study is the original Greek word 'dialekticos', which means 'conversation or dialogue' or, more precisely, 'two parties that employ words in order to engage in communicative interaction.'

Later, under the influence of Hegel's philosophical outlook, the dual notion came to indicate a process that facilitates the access to truth. This process implies first the stating of a thesis, then the developing a contradictory antithesis, and finally their combination into a coherent synthesis. In this way, *dialectic* becomes a means of establishing the truth-value of ideas in the process of argumentation through the use of two contrasting sides: one in favour of evidence, supporting it (pro), and the other opposing evidence, rebutting it (con).

Dialectics, the essence of the Socratic democratic spirit, reflects the natural succession of interactions where the activity of speaking prompts the activity of listening and the other way round, the fulfilment of the act listening stimulates the activity of speaking.

The result of the sequencing of the three terms of the argumentative activity, thesis, antithesis and synthesis, is called communication. The ultimate objective is the reaching of a reasonable consensus at the final stage, synthesis. This is the point when communication attains the high standard of ethicism in that the parties come to a productive agreement. In pragma-dialectics, the reaching of the consensus represents the indispensable condition for the successful accomplishment of the communicative act. In this way, truth is acknowledged by both parties alike. The effective speaker-listener cooperation rests on these coordinates, dialogue, as a form of communication, being especially stimulating for the occurrence of a free cooperation between them. Any distortion in the logical succession of thesis, antithesis and synthesis leads to confusion in communication. Today, with all the efforts made by the ethicalist groups, communication crosses a serious crisis in the sense that the desire for a consensual dialogue seems to be sporadic. Abstract dialectics reflects exactly these disfunctions that corrupt the reasonable communicative activity and turn it into unreasonable, irrational communication.[2]

The Argumentation school from Amsterdam proposes an innovative perspective on argumentation with efficient applicability to actual practice. Unlike the strictly logical approaches (which focus on the study of argument as product), or the purely communicational ones (which emphasise argument as a process), pragma-dialectics aims at the study of an argumentation as a discursive activity from the joint perspective of these two implications. Thus, the pragma-dialectical theory views argumentation as a complex *speech act* that occurs as part of natural language activities and has specific communicative goals.

Two scholars, Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, expressed certain reserve with regard to the term *dialectic*, and this determined a reformation of the concept of *the new dialectic* in favour of *the new rhetoric*. Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca's joint efforts have

[2] Source:http://longsworde.wordpress.com/Communication, anonymous author.

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revolutionised the field of rhetoric by throwing new light on its traditional approach. Their innovation comes to shift interest from style towards reason and reasonableness. Later research has embraced with enthusiasm this orientation that rests on the ancient view of rhetoric and which Perelman and Tyteca regarded as being a "study of a technique for use by the common man impatient to arrive rapidly at conclusions, or to form an opinion, without first of all taking the trouble of a preliminary serious investigation," (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1991: 7). The new research combines it with principles of dialectic, an approach that merges critical debate and rhetoric into a more comprehensive theory of persuasive argumentation. Its principles are applied in the analysis and evaluation of real-life argumentative discourse.

Today, many note the manifestation of a phenomenon of de-dialectisation, a process that may be the herald of the dissolution of the initial, ideal concept of dialecticism in communication. As David Bohm (2011) notes, through abstractisation dialectical reason has become increasingly rational whereas it affective component is wearing away more and more. The very poles of communication, the speaker and the hearer, are now to be perceived in abstract terms, as thesis and antithesis. The representation that is thus conferred to them sets them clearly in a new communicative configuration where "the former role of the speaker and listener are now [replaced] by the abstracted principles of "thesis" and "anti-thesis", now at war."[3] The reaching of an ethical consensus marked by the mutual discovery of the truth is rendered through "synthesis", an ideal in communication that is fervently advocated by pragma-dialectics. In this way, integrity governs the making of arguments and the dialogue is constructive.

Stephen Toulmin has proposed an argumentation scheme that consists of several components. This scheme applies perfectly to the debate format due to the specific of the components that make up its configuration. The components of this diagram are the claims, the grounds, the qualifiers, the warrants, and the backing. All these elements are arranged in a tree configuration: the claim is a belief supported by information that forms the basis of argument. The grounds are the vertical elements of argument configuration in that they contain the supporting information. The strength of an argument is ensured by rules and principles, conveyed by argument's connecting elements, which are the warrants. In order to indicate the degree of probability of the claims, the grounds, and the warrants a qualifier is needed.

When resolving a difference of opinion in a dispute, the arguers (agonists) are expected to convince their opponent using *logical* structures. On the one hand, they must demonstrate that their own claim is 'well-grounded,' and on the other, that the opponent's grounds and/or warrants on which their claim is built are false. In the absence of grounds or warrants to support a claim there is no argument but merely a belief or a claim that can sometimes be inaccurate.

The link between the claim, grounds and other data is made by the warrants. They legitimise the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant, so they indicate what makes a claim true. Basically, there are explicit warrants or implicit (non-verbalised) warrants.

The backing (support) sustains the warrant by contributing with supplementary relevant information.

[3] D. Bohm, "The Crisis of Consciousness: The End of the Civilisation of the Dialogue?", http://longsworde.wordpress.com/2011/08/01/the-crisis-of-consciousness-the-end-of-the-civilisation-of-the-dialogue/

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The modal degree qualifiers shows how strongly connected the ground is to the warrants. Words like *least, most, sometimes, usually, always, never*, etc. are modal degree qualifiers. Arguments may thus range from strong assertions to weak or uncertain statement.

Another element that can be present in this kind of context is *reservation*. When reservation is declared, the accuracy of the claim is questioned. For example, in the God controversy, so long as there is no argument to *prove* that God *does not exist according to the precepts of rational understanding*, the proponent will argue *for* God's existence, case in which the claim *against* God's existence is questionable. And the other way round, until one proves that God *exists* according to the precepts of rational understanding, the claim that God exists in questionable. Qualifiers and reservations are means to prevent lying in argumentative dialogues.

Any argument, even the strongest ones, can be rebutted. Rebutting is the form of argument attack, or counterattack. A rebuttal is an argument in itself having on its side the entire arsenal of a normal argument (claim, warrant, backing, etc). Since rebuttals have their own rebuttals, the arguer will have to be equally able to predict and understand both the rebuttals and the rebuttals of the rebuttals.

Rational people often engage in disagreement, an activity which represents both a motivation and a challenge to their reasonableness. As a rule, the parties that engage in one form of disagreement or another make plausible "cases" by grounding and qualifying their claims, therefore an analysis of the structure of the dialogue must pay attention to the specific nature of the dialogue in question. When a solid argument is made, the role of the values, beliefs, and opinions must be carefully taken into consideration in that these aspects ground the argument in a specific context.

Warrants contain values and beliefs that are unanimously accepted. They may have global significance, in the sense that they are accepted by all the members of a social group, or they can have universal significance, which makes them accepted by an entire humanity. An argument builds on values and beliefs. Value orientation serves as warrant for claims; when the warrant is a belief, it is backed by values. In argumentation, values support beliefs that warrant arguments and underlie choices that have to be made about argumentation decisions such as evidence, style, reason and presumption.

The evidence/grounds come in support of the argument's thesis/position and the warrant connects the evidence to the standpoint advanced by the argument.

The standards of argumentative and persuasive dialogues

When the validity of their assertions that are based on personal experience is 'attacked' or challenged, or when the values they hold 'sacred' are subject to contestation, people usually react by trying to defend their position, their claims, or their hard-wired convictions. When their views are questioned or/and rebutted, disputers instinctively resort to lengthy verbal repartees that often slide into heated disputation. The truth is that we are all supremely rational thinkers and brilliant rhetoricians when it comes to our own interests. It is essential however to think of the problem we are supposed to defend (events that do not concern us *directly*) as if it *is* our own affair and therefore make it *become* our keen matter of concern. By bringing ourselves to believe that a thesis that we are expected to defend is our own point of interest, we internalise that thesis. We find solutions for a functional conduct in such situations in two basic types of dialogue, the

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reasoned dialogue, proposed by pragmatic theories, and the *argumentative* dialogue[4] which is a component of the theory of argumentation.

The pragmatic dialogue is not a persuasive tool but rather an informative instrument in the sense that it supports inquiry and reflective thinking. Its contribution goes beyond the territory of the dialogue proper in that it guides the participants in the dialogue in such a way that they succeed in maintaining the informational flux, and, in this way, it facilitates a cooperative interaction between them.

When the conflict becomes too sharp, the disputants capitulate and the dialogic connection breaks. In some cases the proceedings of the dialogue are arrested or else the dialogue dies out altogether and the conflict does not yield the desired resolution. Yet, in order for the dialogue to fulfil the condition of cooperativeness, the participants should be guided so as to be able to go beyond commitment to an idea or assumption and examine their long-held beliefs. This is an act of self-analysis, or an introspection that is conditioned by internal and external support and by absence of constrains. The persons in question will rather be aided to move on from the defensive phase, sometimes unawares, into the inquiry phase.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst have determined a number of stages of the argumentative dialogue, which represent indispensable conditions to comply with in argument making and analysis: confrontation, opening, argumentation and conclusion-resolution.[5]

The chief concern of this examination is with the way in which the theory of pragma-dialectics applies to sectors of linguistics that focus on how language works in 'live' communication, aspects which are treated extensively by pragmatics and discourse analysis. While the object of research in discourse analysis is primarily the structure of texts and the mechanisms of conversation, pragmatics studies meaning transmission in an all-inclusive context that contains not only to information strictly related linguistic competence proper – where the speech act reference framework is essential – but also information that brings into discussion non-linguistic aspects of communication. All these aspects are rendered in a rigorous way by debate, a communicational environment that concentrates all these rules and principles and assembles them following the lines and obeying the tenets of a systematic, disciplined and productive methodology.

Even though argumentation has made the object of intense investigation of various domains of human verbal communication, its pioneering contributions place in leading positions philosophy and rhetoric, which subsequently branched out into other fields that are in direct dependence with it such as psychology, pragma-linguistics, sociology, or political sciences.

The ability to use language effectively is a sine qua non condition for all these areas of human communication. Live verbal communication is fuelled by oratory, the art of making persuasive speeches, actually the very essence of rhetoric, but it also draws on logic and on the philosophical and pragmatic aspects of argumentation. As for the domain of philosophy, specialised investigation goes even deeper and forays levels which require analyses that target relations between other areas of human thought and culture and rhetoric, and this is where

[4] "Argumentative Dialogue"; "Persuasive Dialogue", https://academictech.doit.wisc.edu/ideas/otr /communication/forms-of-dialogue/argumentative.
[5] Argumentation Theory – how people argue, http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Levels of theories/micro/Argumentation Theory.doc.

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psychology and sociology step in, with their focus on such aspects of rhetoric that bear strong philosophical emphasis.

With reference to the relationship between argumentation and dramatism James F. Klumpp contends that "argumentation study has been reinvigorated in this century with new frameworks from informal logicians, students of naturally occurring argument, narrative argument, and followers of Chaïm Perelman, Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, Toulmin and Habermas."[6]

In his review on *Advances on Pragma-Dialectics*, David Hitchcock (2002) indicates that the substance of the dialectical structure of pragma-dialectics has been enhanced by van Eemeren & Houtlosser (1999, 2001) due to the rhetorical element brought in by them, an initiative that has contributed with a more relaxed approach to argumentative discussion. This permissiveness enables arguers to employ rhetorical procedures more confidently and more easily. One such rhetorical device is "strategic maneuvering", which consists of an array of various devices that grants the arguers victory in the discussion with their opponents while obeying at the same time the rules of critical discussion. Strategic maenuvering permits the discussants to shift the burden of proof in each stage of the discussion (opening, or argumentation) in order to defend their own interest. In this way, by pointing to (and, automatically, pointing *at*) the opponent's *concessions*, an arguer can use them as a means of supporting his or her own *position*.

The victory-oriented rhetorical maneuvers can elicit reactions from "theorists of argumentation who construe argumentation as fundamentally a persuasive activity, to be judged by its effectiveness. For those who construe argumentation as fundamentally a matter of justification or proof, on the other hand, the addition of the concept of strategic maneuvering makes pragma-dialectics empirically more realistic and more helpful, both analytically and practically. It provides scope for further analytical, empirical and practically oriented research"[7].

The contribution made by the pragma-dialectical approach to the field of argumentation offers the solution of the marriage between the dialectic and the rhetorical perspective over the communicative act within the common ground of reasonable conflict resolution. In this way, rhetoric is seen as an integral part of the argumentative discourse. Van Eemeren's *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse*[8] pleads in favour of a contextualisation of the theory of argumentation and suggests a joint approach of argumentative dialecticism and rhetoricism in which strategic maneuvering plays key note. Krabbe (1982, 1985, 1986, 1992, 1995a) and Walton (1995a), explain that strategic maneuvering is a strategy employed by the speaker in order to bring about reconciliation in dialogue on basis of reasonableness. This procedure also raises awareness on audience, an element of twofold significance: *evaluative* of an argumentative context and *directive* of the argumentative line. Thus, when specific presentational strategies are proposed, the expectations of the audience regarding the dialogue they witness are taken into careful consideration. Without a doubt, the context that exemplifies the harmonious blending of al these perspectives, strategies, and organizational courses of action, ones that make highly efficient models to be followed in all attempts to achieve really lucrative communicational skills, is debate.

[6] James F. Klumpp, "A rapprochement between dramatism and argumentation," 1993: 148.
[7] David Hitchcock: Review of *Advances in Pragma-Dialectics*, http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~hitchckd/advances.htm.
[8] Frans H. van Eemeren, *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse – Extending the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010.

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The shortcomings that may occur while maneuvering the discussion strategically – the fallacious passes – are the result of the violation of some rule or rules for critical discussion. Strategic maneuvering offers a better account of the argumentative discourse as it takes place in reality, focusing on the arguers' persuasiveness and its effect on their interlocutors, in the sense of their belief modification, by accomplishing the proposed objective of reasonable conflict resolution.

Van Eemeren and his fellow theoreticians consider that reasonableness is not a sine qua non condition in rendering a communicative sequence persuasive due to the simple fact that an argument may be (or sound), *reasonable* but not always *persuasive*. Persuasiveness is a complex psycho-semantic attribute very much influenced by extra linguistic aspects as well – some of which being perhaps better explained by means of cognitive semantics and psychology. One can be very charismatic when making her exposition and therefore highly persuasive even in the absence of a sufficiently sound argumentative support for the claims being made, or may address a poorly informed or even uninitiated audience, who readily accept, if nicely presented, whatever they are told. These aspects are part of the strategy of manipulation and are regarded as psychological tactics by which influence is exerted.

Van Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels (2009) also reconsider the acception of the concept of fallacy so that it is no longer to be regarded as a logical error but as a form of hindrance of the fulfilment of productive communication, the outcome of which is the reasonable (ethical) resolution of opinion conflicts. Thus, the soundness or acceptability of argumentative moves are rather left in the background, the highlight being now on the contribution of the argumentation exchange that takes place in a critical discussion to resolution achievement. They are no longer to be regarded *invalid reasoning* from a formal perspective but "*moves* in a discussion that are unreasonable from a dialectical perspective because they hinder, frustrate or even block the resolution of a difference of opinion. Fallacies are then violation of (freedom) rules for critical discussion." This new perspective on fallacy treatment brings in new 'fallacious' contexts, such as "considering a standpoint taboo, sacrosanct, evading the burden of proof by personally vouching for the correctness of a standpoint, or evading the burden of proof by immunising a standpoint against criticism by using hermeneutical-essentialistic phrases for that purpose." (van Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels 2009: 203). Furthermore, the fallacies that in the traditional logical approach are ranked within the same category are treated distinctively in the pragma-dialectic research analysis. In sum, the great family of fallacies is *dialectified*. Factors such as argument structure (multiple or simple, subordinative or coordinative), standpoint type (descriptive, evaluating or inciting), the *stage of discussion* (whether it is confrontation, opening, argumentation or concluding) all are taken into serious consideration when an argument is suspected of being fallacious.

The role of the respondent is now respected probably more carefully than ever, in that from the point of view of the reasonableness of the discussion every respondent reacts in a specific way to an argumentative proposal. If the arguers, or the participants in the communicative (or dialogic) activity, do not respect the requirements of reasonableness, persuasion alone is of no help in attaining the desideratum for effective communication. A fair/acceptable/honest communicative act is one that avoids inadequacies and ill-maneuvering. These are usually the fallacious moves that break the partnership codes and rules and they are real obstacles to proper communication. In anomalous dialectical-rhetorical relations, that is, as

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Tindale notes "when the correct relationship between the dialectical and the rhetorical is inverted" (Tindale 2006: 18), the arguer's intention to persuade abandons the rigours of reasonableness. The very trespassing of the law of reasonableness is regarded fallacious according to the pragma-dialectical approach of cooperative communication. "All derailments of strategic maneuvering are fallacious and all fallacies can be regarded as derailments of strategic maneuvering" from a critical perspective. (van Eemeren 2001: 23) Also, strategic maneuvering, on the one hand is instrumental in clarifying the relationship between fallacious and nonfallacious argumentative structures, and on the other, it explains the reason for which fallacies can be so persuasive. (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2003: 3; Tindale 2009: 7)

Audience – the third personal factor in confrontational argumentation

Another very important aspect is the role of the audience in *argument circulation* – 'circulation' meaning the *formulation* and the *exchange of arguments* within the communicative process. In the dialectics of the argumentation process, the audience fulfils a determining role in the sense that it receives the argumentative segments expressed by the speaker and reconfigures them according to its own normative standard. Once the audience has evaluated the received segments and has come to a conclusion, it builds up its own argumentative segments that will serve as a confirmation (acceptance) or invalidation (rejection) of certain aspects of the disputants' argumentation. This argumentation in particular contributes to a considerable extent to the tipping of the balance in favour of one argument or another.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's research has generated a theory of rhetorical argumentation/ argumentative rhetoric, which dissociates argumentation from demonstration. Demonstration uses operational methods based on calculation according to rules accepted by formal, deductive logic, whereas argumentation gets its substance from the field of discourse and employs discursive techniques as analytical tools.

Demonstration aims at reaching a conclusion by reasoning from premises through mathematical formulas. Demonstration, or formal logic, is a highly impersonal procedure based on the abstract rationality of mathematical language. It starts from an axiom that is assumed to be true and only true irrespective of an audience's agreement.

Argumentation, unlike demonstration, is personal, which makes it dependent on an audience, its aim being to get the audience to accept or adhere to a claim or to a set of initial premises. Its operational tool is, in this case, the naturally ambiguous human language. Perelman's conclusion is that human language is grounded on 'the reasonable' while the language of logic is born from 'the rational' and characterises mathematical reason. Thus, 'the reasonable' relates to the commonsensical, which is part of the argumentation domain, rather than to the abstract, self-evident and immutable truths with which the language of formal logic operates and which are part of 'the rational'[9].

The audience represents the element of distinction between formal logic and argumentation. Argumentation cannot exist in the absence of an audience, its opinion being the line around which the reasoning process of argumentation progresses.

By and large, argumentation is a confrontation between two reasonings: the proponent's reasoning (the protagonist) and that of the recipient (the antagonist). However, for the confrontation to take place, it must comply with the convention of 'reasonable acceptance'. This

[9] C. Perelman & L.Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 1969: 4.

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means that a successful exchange of opinions can only be accomplished when the parties engaged in it have managed to find a 'common language' to use in their communicative exchange. Outside or in the absence of this 'common language' there exists no communication that is governed by the dictates of *logical comprehensibility*.

Two or more reasoning parties interact according to a linguistic consensus, which presupposes the existence a set of prior cognitive information which they will eventually put to use in the communicative process. Such prior cognitive information is, for example, the information conveyed by the rules of conversation. The rules of conversation are part of the conversational convention. To attain success in communication, the parties engaged in the communicative activity must be perfectly compatible from a communicative point of view. For this, the speaker will have to convey a message that can be easily identified and whose semantic meaning can be decoded by the interlocutor (audience) and, very importantly, a message that will be found by that interlocutor worth responding. This chain of interdependencies means communicative compatibility. This will make communication both effective and efficient. Any speaker is defined in terms of her audience (her referential element). Her wish is to influence her audience whatever way that may be and for this end the speaker will resort to the entire argumentative arsenal she can employ. The audience is influenced mentally and emotionally and a response is expected in turn. Finally, in order for the audience to respond to the speaker's challenge, it must follow the premise-conclusion convention. In this way, the argumentative persuasion turns out to be successful.

Perelman deems that "the aim of argumentation is not, as in the case of demonstration, to prove the truth of the conclusion from premises, but to transfer to the conclusion the *adherence* accorded to the premises." (Perelman 1982: 21) It is essential that the audience be brought to agree (adhere) to the intentional content included by the speaker-arguer in the premises. The rejection by the audience's of the premise of an argument has the same effect as the refusal to let the argument begin. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 65-66)

Once the audience accepts the premises, the next step is to convince its members to adhere to the conclusion in the same way as they have been convinced to agree with the premises. This means that "a bond" is created "between the premises and the theses whose acceptance the speaker wants to achieve." (idem Perelman 1982) With the fulfillment of this 'mission,' the speaker could be said to have won an important battle in view of her eventually coming to win the war.

Conclusion

The points this study has tried to make are that the pragma-dialectical approach to argument use provides a solid theoretical foundation for the analysis of argumentative dialogic structures such as the critical discussions for public debates or other confrontations of similar nature and configuration.

Another issue that was highlighted was that the pragma-dialectical model of critical discussion is a comprehensive practical tool for the reconstruction of argumentation due to its flexible applicability to various problematic issues regarding dialogic communication. Its extensiveness and high versatility make this domain of investigation to be a fertile ground of investigation for practically anyone interested in communication, whether it is pragma-dialectics, argumentative discourse, or textual approach. This is so because argumentation in general and pragma-dialectics in particular open endless perspectives for anyone who is honestly involved in

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a quest that is both academically-contained and truth-oriented. Ideally speaking, the mission of this school of thought, pragma-dialectics, is impartial and objective its clearly stated objective being the accomplishment of an amiable and at the same time productive type of dialogue.

Secondly, argument is a useful tool for standpoint defence, and in this case the mechanism of argumentation can equip arguers with the proper instruments that can help them gain indisputable success. In fact, these are circumstances in which things at odds with each other: decisions based on beliefs, values or opinion, eristic encounters, or interest-based negotiations. For all these, argumentation tries to come up with the right solutions, ones that can get arguers out of unproductive differences of opinion and offer them practical resolutions.

The dialectical dimension is inspired by normative insights from critical rationalism and formal dialectics, the pragmatic dimension by descriptive insights from speech acts theory, Gricean language philosophy and discourse analysis.

To allow for the systematic integration of the pragmatic and dialectical dimensions in the study of argumentation, the pragma-dialectical theory starts from four meta-theoretical principles: functionalization, socialization, externalization and dialectification.

The meta-theoretical principles described above were developed only to a certain extent here, the article including a few hints at the critical type of discussion, which, according to the pragma-dialectical theory, constitutes the best environment for the application of argumentation.

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