

Logic and argumentation techniques



Dialogue types, rules

Types of debates

- Argumentation theory is concerned with the standpoints the arguers make and what linguistic devices they employ to defend their standpoint.
- These linguistic devices – to what extent are they useful to reach the goal of a certain discussion/debate?
- It is obvious that we need different devices for reaching different goals.
- What is acceptable in one type of debate can be a mistake in another.

Walton's types of dialogues

TYPE OF DIALOGUE	INITIAL SITUATION	PARTICIPANT'S GOAL	GOAL OF DIALOGUE
<i>Persuasion</i>	Conflict of Opinions	Persuade Other Party	Resolve or Clarify Issue
<i>Inquiry</i>	Need to Have Proof	Find and Verify Evidence	Prove (Disprove) Hypothesis
<i>Discovery</i>	Need to Find an Explanation of Facts	Find and Defend a Suitable Hypothesis	Choose Best Hypothesis for Testing
<i>Negotiation</i>	Conflict of Interests	Get What You Most Want	Reasonable Settlement Both Can Live With
<i>Information-Seeking</i>	Need Information	Acquire or Give Information	Exchange Information
<i>Deliberation</i>	Dilemma or Practical Choice	Co-ordinate Goals and Actions	Decide Best Available Course of Action
<i>Eristic</i>	Personal Conflict	Verbally Hit Out at Opponent	Reveal Deeper Basis of Conflict

These dialogues are technical artifacts called normative models, meaning that they do not necessarily correspond exactly to real instances of persuasion or negotiation, and so forth, that may occur in a real conversational exchange.

Pragma-dialectics

- The pragma-dialectical **aim** of argumentation and argumentative discourse is the **elimination of a difference of opinion**.
- Their ideal model is called **critical discussion**.
- The central task of the theory is to develop **rules for rational discussions** or discourses; and to develop rules that help attain the goal of resolving disputes.
- PD is about analyzing and evaluating argumentation in **actual practice**.

Discussion stages

In this ideal model of a critical discussion, four discussion stages are distinguished that the discussion parties have to go through to resolve their difference of opinion:

- confrontation stage,
- opening stage,
- argumentation stage,
- concluding stage.

Confrontation and opening

- In the **confrontation** stage of a critical discussion, it becomes clear that there is a standpoint that is not accepted because it runs up against doubt or contradiction, thereby establishing a (“non-mixed” or “mixed”) difference of opinion.
- In the **opening** stage, the parties to the difference of opinion try to find out how much relevant common ground they share (as to the discussion format, background knowledge, values, and so on) in order to be able to determine whether their procedural and substantive “zone of agreement” is sufficiently broad to conduct a fruitful discussion.

Argumentation stage

- In the **argumentation** stage, protagonists advance their arguments for their standpoints that are intended to systematically overcome the antagonist's doubts or to refute the critical reactions given by the antagonist.
- The antagonists **investigate** whether they consider the argumentation that is advanced acceptable. If they consider the argumentation, or parts of it, not completely convincing, they provide further reactions, which are followed by further argumentation by the protagonist, and so on.

Concluding stage

- The **concluding** stage of an argumentative exchange corresponds to the stage of a critical discussion in which the parties establish what the result is of an attempt to resolve a difference of opinion. The difference of opinion can only be considered to be resolved if the parties are, concerning each component of the difference of opinion, in agreement that the protagonist's standpoint is acceptable and the antagonist's doubt must be retracted, or that the standpoint of the protagonist must be retracted.

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 1: *Freedom rule*

Parties must not prevent each other from advancing standpoints.

Violation: e.g. ad baculum

- *Concerning Mr X's critique, I don't think I should answer this kind of unintelligible flak. Then again, what do we expect from someone who is dressed so poorly?!*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 2: *Obligation to defend*

A party that advances a standpoint is obliged to defend it.

Violation: e.g. shifting the burden of proof

- *I think John's notes from Argumentation class are useless.*
- *Why do you think that? They are useful to me.*
- *Oh really, and why do you say they are useful?*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 3: *Standpoint*

A party's attack on a standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has indeed been advanced by the other party.

Violation: e.g. straw man fallacy

- *I think tuition fees are bad for equal opportunity.*
- *You want young capable people to do nothing while the public pays for their education and you want them to get unnecessary diplomas instead of working?*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 4: *Relevance*

A party may defend a standpoint only by advancing argumentation relating to that standpoint.

Violation: e.g. ad populum (bandwagon fallacy)

- *Do you need better proof than the fact that people think our product is the best on the market?*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 5: *Unexpressed premise*

A party may not deny premise that they have left implicit or falsely present something as a premise that has been left unexpressed by the other party.

Violation:

- *I strongly disagree with legalizing marijuana because people who are otherwise law-abiding are going to get addicted.*
 - *But may studies show that marijuana is not addictive.*
 - *I'm not saying it is addictive, I'm just saying that people would get addicted which wouldn't be good.*
- (Getting addicted supposes that it is addictive.)

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 6: *Starting point*

A party may not falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point nor deny a premise representing an accepted starting point.

Violation: e.g. loaded question

- *Have you stopped beating your wife?*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 7: *Argument scheme*

A party may not regard a standpoint as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argumentation scheme that is correctly applied.

Violation: e.g. affirming the consequent

- *If there is no gas in the car, then the car won't run.
The car won't run. Therefore there is no gas in the car.*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 8: *Validity*

A party may only use arguments in its argumentation that are logically valid or capable of being made logically valid by making explicit one or more unexpressed premises.

Violation: e.g. hasty generalization

- *I have friends who smoke and they are healthy. Therefore smoking isn't unhealthy.*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 9: *Concluding*

A failed defense of a standpoint must result in the party that put forward the standpoint retracting it and a conclusive defense of the standpoint must result in the other party retracting its doubt about the standpoint.

Violation: e.g. false dilemma

- *You are either with us or against us.*

Rules of critical discussion

Rule 10: *Language usage*

A party must not use formulations that are insufficiently clear or confusingly ambiguous and a party must interpret the other party's formulations as carefully and accurately as possible.

Violation: e.g. equivocation

- *A ham sandwich is better than nothing. Nothing is better than eternal happiness. Therefore a ham sandwich is better than eternal happiness.*

Strategic maneuvering

In every argumentative move that is made in the discourse, the arguers pursue simultaneously the objectives of being **effective** and of maintaining **reasonableness**. In making argumentative moves, arguers are out to achieve the effect of acceptance in the audience they want to reach, but to achieve this effect based on the merits of the moves they make, they need to remain within the boundaries of reasonableness as defined by the rules for critical discussion. Because pursuing at the same time these two objectives inevitably creates a certain tension, the arguers have to keep a delicate balance.

Strategic maneuvering

Strategic maneuvering manifests itself in all argumentative moves in three different aspects:

- the selection from the **topical potential**, i.e., from the set of alternatives available at that point in the discourse;
- the adaptation to **audience demand**, i.e., to the frame of reference of the listeners or readers the speaker or writer intends to reach;
- the exploitation of **presentational devices**, i.e., the stylistic and other means of expression suitable to serve the purpose.

•

Strategic maneuvering

- A dialectical aim has its rhetorical analogue not only at the level of the discussion as a whole and at the level of the various discussion stages but also at the level of the individual argumentative moves that are made.
- In each argumentative move, the dialectical aim that is pursued has a rhetorical parallel.