

A Pragma – Dialectical Approach to the Study of Arabic Argumentative Discourse

Dr. Shifaa' Al-Hamandi^()*

Abstract

This paper aims at finding out an approach to the study of argumentative Arabic discourse. It is an attempt to answer the questions of cognitive processing of argumentative discourse, its validity, its (un)expressed premises, its schemes and structures, its fallacies as well as the different strategies used. Accordingly, Eemeren and Grootendorst's (1984) theory of argumentation is adopted to be applied and modifications are offered to handle Arabic discourse. A set of rules, stages and schemes are thus defined to propose a notion of rationality being crystallized in the methods language users follow to resolve conflict among themselves.

1. Introduction:

The study of argumentative discourse goes as far as Aristotle and his Topics (see Al-Hamandi 2002). Scholars of rhetoric try to find out an approach to handle the argumentative discourse systematically. Accordingly, different approaches are identified, the

(*) College of Arts / University of Mosul.

pragma-dialectic approach is selected here to choose a specific issue from which. Thus, a set of rules , stages, conditions ...etc. are established to account for such a text depending on the protagonist (the initiator of a stand point), the antagonist (the attacker of this stand point) and the stand point itself. Those participants go through different stages to resolve the difference of opinions that may arise during interaction. If this difference is resolved in accordance with the rules specified (which are culturally, conventionally and discourse-determined), then such a difference of opinions is said to be resolved rationally. Usually each standpoint is related to the premiss by explicit or implicit 'because'. However, this does not suggest in any case that the only relation holds between the standpoint and the premiss is 'causality'(see section 3). Furthermore, the stand point either precedes or follow the premiss.

- (1) (Because the administration of the school has new procedures, the number of the students attending it increases).
- (2) (The number of the students attending the school increases because the administration of the school has new procedures)
In the first sentence, the premiss Because.... procedures) precedes the stand point (The number...increases), and the opposite is true with the second sentence. In an experiment conducted by Eemeren et al. (1994) it appears that hearers prefer the preceding of the stand point before the premiss, a state that

we are in agreement with. The arguer may use different ways to link the stand point to the premiss to make it acceptable to his hearer. These ways of linkage are called argumentation schemes. This paper aims at defining those schemes in Arabic discourse and answers Garssen's third question of exhaustiveness, Are the types of schemes proposed in the pragma-dialectical approach enough to account for Arabic data?

Depending on the semantic point of view that any linguistic item usually activates its contrary in the user's mind, the following perspective is adopted here. We believe that any message is argumentative in one way or another since the speaker/writer hypothesizes a hearer/reader who is either implicit or explicit. The existence of this hearer /reader constraints the speaker/writer to think that this hearer/reader is (not) in agreement with his stand point. Accordingly, a premiss should follow any standpoint proposed. So, when Garssen (1994: 106) gives the following example:

(3) Ian is thrifty, because he is a Scot, he believes that "Ian is thrifty" is the stand point that a hearer may question its validity and ask why. In advance, the speaker gives this needed answer "because he is a Scot". Such a phenomenon may be crystallized by a question proposed by the speaker himself during his speech:

(When living becomes hard, it would have a high value, Why? because easy come easy go and vice versa). The standpoint is defended here by the premiss and this premiss is marked explicitly by the question (Why?).

To study the argumentative discourse, two main approaches can be established, rhetorical approaches and non-rhetorical approaches with each type containing different approaches. Examples of the first are Aristotle's approach, Toulmin's approach 1958, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tytca approach 1969 (for these approaches see Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994b: 55). Within the second approach, two trends can be identified the normative approaches and the descriptive approaches, e.g. Informal Logic (a normative approach): Blair and Johnson 1987 (Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994b : 57), Radical Approach (a descriptive approach): (Ducrot 1980, Ducrot 1983, Anscombe and Ducrot 1983, and Nolke 1992) / (Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994b: 58, Roulet 1996), Problematogy, (Meyer in the 1980s, Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994b:59), Natural Logic (a descriptive approach) (Grize 1982, Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994b:60), Kopperschmidt's Approach (a normative approach) (Willard 1983,1989), The Dialectical Approaches: Two main types can be identified here, formal dialectics and pragma-dialectics. Formal Dialectics, (Barth and Krabble 1982, Lorenzon and Loren/ 1978),

Pragma-Dialectics Approach, this approach is mainly developed by Eemeren and Grootendorst (passim) to account for resolving differences of opinions in argumentative discourse in a rational way. (See Eemeren et al 1992, Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994a and b and Al-Hamandi 2002).

the notion of argumentation schemes can be identified here in this approach, (see Koetsenvuijter 1994 : 173 and Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994b : 106 and cf. Van Dijk's rules 1980).

2. *Argumentation Schemes*

Argumentation scheme is a term refers to the relation holds between the stand point and the premiss. Garssen (1994:105) defines argumentation schemes in the following way, "In supporting a stand point by means of argumentation an arguer attempts to transfer the acceptability of the premiss to the stand point. For that purpose, the premiss needs to be linked to the standpoint in a specific way. This way of linking can be characterized as an argumentation scheme". This term has been used first by Windes and Hastings (1969) and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969). In the pragma-dialectic approach, three types of such schemes are established. This suggests that different types of argumentation can be established being related to these types of schemes. And accordingly, "the acceptability of the

premiss is transferred to the standpoint in a different manner” (Garssen 1994 :105). These include:

(1) *Concomitance Scheme:* This scheme which is based on a relation of concomitance holds between the stand point and the premiss. This means that what is stated in the standpoint is a quality of what is in the premiss and/or vice versa. Accordingly, “arguers try to convince their interlocutors by pointing out that something is symptomatic of somethingelse”(Eemeren et al 1994:91).

(4) Ann is an artist, so she is certainly sensitive to such situations.

(2) *Analogy scheme:* this scheme is based on a relation of analogy. This suggests a similarity between what is stated in the stand point and what is stated in the premiss. The argumentation is represented as if there is a relation of resemblance, agreement, license, parallel correspondence between the stand point and the premiss .

(5) I should give Petty a present because last year I had given her sister a present.

(3) *Causality Scheme:* This scheme is based on a relation of causality. What is stated in the premiss is the cause of

what is stated in the standpoint and/or vice versa. The arguer, here, tries to convince his hearer by “pointing out that something is instrumental to somethingelse”. Thus, a relation of ‘a means to ‘, ‘a way of ‘, ‘an instrument for ‘is evolved.

(6) The prices of vegetables have been changed because the weather becomes worse.

(Cf. Eemeren et al. 1994:90-91 and Garssen 1994: 105-106).

Garssen (1994: 106) proposes some criteria to handle the typology of the schemes. The first of these criteria is the acceptability of finding out new types of schemes when necessary. Accordingly, some types of schemes can be added when the text analyzed proposes such a case. In the following such a case is developed since we believe that Arabic language provides its users with rich resources of these ways of linking the premiss to the standpoint.

Due to the different factors interwoven in the typology of schemes, different classification can be established as follows :

(i) (De)-(In)-Duction Classification: Relying on the position of the premiss in the scheme (in relation to the sand point), the scheme is either inductive or deductive (cf Govier 1987, Nolt 1987, Weddle 1987 and Kienpointner

1994). If the stand point precedes the premiss, then the scheme is deductive since the reasoning is arrived at by appealing to a general point (the stand point) and then to a specific case, (the premiss), otherwise it is inductive .

(7) لقد ازدادت أسعار منتوجات الشركة بسبب تغير سياستها مع العمال.

(The prices of the company-products have been increased because of changing its policy with its workers).

(8) بسبب تغيير سياسة الشركة مع العمال ازدادت أسعار منتجاتها.

(Because the company has changed its policy with its workers, the prices of its products have been increased).

(ii) Field - Dependent Schemes: This typology depends on the field that the scheme may be related to. However, such a classification is not logically determined since it is very difficult to encompass all the types of schemes being related to the field of research under investigation.

(iii) Simple-Compound Schemes : When an arguer proposes a standpoint and his hearer rejects it only, then we have a simple scheme. If two stand points (at least) are proposed (because the first has been attacked), then we have a compound scheme (cf. Henkemans 1994:72).

(iv) *Normative-Descriptive Schemes* : If the scheme contains only descriptive propositions in the premiss, it is descriptive, and when contains descriptive and normative propositions in its premiss, it is normative (cf. Kienpointner 1994: 179). When the proposition is either true or false/ probable or improbable then it is descriptive. If it is right or wrong/ acceptable or unacceptable it is normative.

(9) يجب أن لا تترك الدواء في متناول أيدي الأطفال فالأطفال لا يعلمون بمضار الدواء.

(You should keep medicine away from children. Children do not know how bad medicine is).

This is a descriptive scheme since the premiss contains a proposition, which is true (as far as the real world is concerned). The following scheme is a normative one since the premiss contains a proposition, which is acceptable/unacceptable.

(10) لا تترك الأطفال خارج الدار لفترة طويلة لأن ذلك يؤدي إلى فسادهم بالتدريج.

(Do not leave the children outside doors for a long time, this may result in getting them spoilt gradually).

The underlined proposition is not true or false but acceptable (for some) or not (for the others) and this what makes the preceding scheme a normative one .

(v) Real-Fictitious Scheme:

Real schemes are related to the real world as far as the proposition is concerned. The proposition is usually formulated in indicative mood. While the fictitious scheme contains propositions related to the fictitious world where the formulation of these propositions is in the subjunctive mood .

(v) ***Pro-Contra-Argumentation Schemes:***

Pro-argumentation schemes contain propositions that support the standpoint. While the contra-argumentation schemes contain propositions in the premisses that refute the stand points. The most common schemes are the pro-argumentation ones since mostly speakers provide premisses to support a standpoint (specifically if it is theirs). An example of the contra-argumentation scheme can be represented in the following:

(11) ان إدارة الشركة يجب أن تتغير بحسب الظروف ولكن الإدارة الحالية قادرة على استيعاب المشاكل المتوالدة بكفاءة عالية.

(The administration of the company should be changed according to the circumstances, but the current administration is able to comprehend the generated problems so perfectly).

Depending on the dialectic transformation rules (see Al-Hamandi 2002), this scheme can be represented as follows:

- (1) X should be changed because Y (Stand Point)
- (2) X is able to manage Y (Premiss)
- (3) So X should not be changed (Conclusion)

Here, the premiss does not support the standpoint but refutes it and thus the conclusion is the contrary of the standpoint. Now, consider the following example:

(12) أن إدارة الشركة يجب أن تتغير لعدم قدرتها على استيعاب المشاكل الحالية.

(The administration of the company should be changed because it is unable to comprehend the current problems).

Following the transformation rules, the preceding scheme can be represented as:

- (1) X should be changed (Stand Point)
- (2) X is unable to manage Y (Premiss)
- (3) So X should be changed (Conclusion)

So, whenever the conclusion is in agreement with the standpoint, then the scheme is pro-argumentation otherwise it is contra-argumentation.

(vii) Semantic Schemes: The last type of classification here is the type of schemes which depends on the semantic relations that may hold between a stand point and a premiss. Different categories can be established here, some of which are represented as follows. The three main schemes represented as the pragma-dialectic

schemes are included here. In addition to these types, the followings can be identified:

(1) Under the concomitance schemes, four different types of schemes can be established:

(i) Definition: This scheme refers to the use of the definition to make the stand point clear to the hearer to understand (see Viskil 1994).

(13) يجب أن يكون تحليلك موضوعياً أي يعتمد على المنطق.

(Your analysis should be objective, i.e. it depends on logic).

It seems that only the context which determines whether (أي يعتمد على المنطق) is adequate premiss or not since defining 'objectivity' in sense of being logical or not only is questionable.

(ii) Whole-Part: A part can be used as a premiss to justify the whole:

(14) يجب أن تتغير الإدارة في شركتكم فقد سمعت أن أحد الإداريين متورط في مشاكل قضائية.

(The whole staff of the company-administration should be changed because (only) one of them seems to be involved in judicial troubles).

(iii) Inherent Quality :

(15) حاول أن تحافظ على هذه الأنواع من الأسماك فألوانه رائعة جداً.

(Try to keep these types of fish, they have so beautiful colors).

(iv) Genus-Species:

(16) ان تربية الحيوانات ممتع جدا فأني أفضي وقتا لطيفا مع قطتي الصغيرة.

(Breeding animals is interesting, I have some beautiful time with my little cat).

(2) Under the analogy schemes the followings can be identified:

(i) Identity /Similarity :

(17) يجب أن تهدي لأحمد هدية قيمة لأنك أهديت أخيه هدية قيمة العام الماضي.

(You have to give Ahmad a valuable present because you offered his brother such a present last year).

(ii) Difference :

(18) كان يجب أن تقبل اقتراحه هذا لأن أبيه رفضه.

(You should have accepted his suggestion because his father has already rejected it).

(iii) Comparison:

(19) اذا كان ابنك غير قادر على فعل ذلك فهو امر طبيعي لانني انا نفسي غير قادر على فعله.

(If your son is unable to do that, it is a natural thing since I myself is unable to do it). (see Figure 2)

(iv) Giving an Example :

(20) لقد ارتفعت الأسعار بشكل ملحوظ فقد وصل سعر الخضراوات إلى أعلى قيمة له منذ عام 1999.

(Prices have been increasing so remarkably, the price of the vegetables is at maximum since 1999).

(v) Referring to a Model :

(21) يستطيع الشعراء أن يصعدوا بك إلى السماء فأحمد شوقي قادر حتى على أن يرفعك إلى الجنة ويعيدك أرضاً.

(Poets can bring you up to the sky, Ahmad Shawqi can bring you up to the Heaven and bring you back on the Earth).

(3) Under causality schemes the followings can be identified :

(i) Cause -Effect:

(22) يجب أن تحل هذه المشكلة لأنها أصبحت تؤثر على الكل.

(This problem has to be solved because it affects the all).

(ii) Action-Result:

(23) لقد قام بعمل جيد فترى الان البناء قارب على الانتهاء.

(He has done a good job , you can see now the building is almost finished).

(iii) End-Means:

(24) ان الطريق الوحيد لبلوغ هدفك هو العمل المجد.

(The only way to approach your goal is by hard working).

(iv) Emphasizing the nobility of a goal in order to justify the means. This scheme is somehow related to the previous one.

(25) ما دامت نيتك حسنة فستجد الكثير ممن سيوافقك على أتباع هذا الطريق.

(Since your intention is good , you will find many people who will agree with you to take that way).

(4) Opposition Schemes : This type of scheme presupposes a proposition with opposite meaning in the premiss . Included here are :

(i) Contradiction :

(26) انه يحب الحيوانات و(لكنه) يرتدي معاطف الفرو.

(He likes animals (but)(and) wear furs).

(ii) Contrary :

(27) سأتي هذا المساء ما لم تكتب لي تخبرني بعدم المجيء.

(1 will come this evening unless you write me not to come).

(iii) Incompatibility:

(28) انه ليس سعيدا لأنه غني.

(He is not happy because he is rich).

Figure one represents the classification of these types of schemes (cf. here Kienpointner 1992:182, Eemeren et al 1994:91, Garssen 1994 :106-107 inter alia).

(3) Indicators of Argumentation Schemes

Every premiss is indicated by a specific marker which is consciously determined and thus can be called a meta-pragmatic awareness indicator (for the last term, see Al-Hamandi 2002, Verschueren 1997. This marker is either explicitly or implicitly indicated. When it is implicit, the language user also understands it. However, being explicit may facilitate the process of argumentation to a large extent (cf. Garssen 1994: 110). Included here are some items like:

ولهذا / لأن / بسبب / ف / و عليه / ولكن / أي / ما لم / حتى.....

Some of these indicators are related to specific types of schemes, e.g. (بسبب) is related to the causality scheme (though it is related in a sense to all the other types of schemes being the indicator of the premiss element in the argument). (أي) is related to the definition scheme and (لأن) (ف) (بسبب) are related to more than one type of schemes as the examples show (cf. here Kienpointner 1992: 185, and Garssen 1994: 109).

(4) Conclusions

It appears that pragma-dialectical approach to the study of argumentation provides insufficient classification of the argumentation schemes, a main issue in the approach referred to

above. Different classification can be proposed. However, the Arabic data shows that the semantic classification is the most comprehensive when related to the other types of classifications as show below. In other words, the other typologies can be given as a specific type of criteria creating thus a kind of interwoven network, e.g. a causality scheme is either deductive or inductive, normative or descriptive, pro-or contra-argumentation real or fictitious and simple or compound. Accordingly infinite number of schemes can be established if we connect the sub-type of schemes in the semantic schemes to all the other types of classification as show in the figure below (See Figure 2).

The same is true with the other sub-types of the semantic schemes. Then, it appears that the idea of argumentation schemes is culture-specific since it is language, which determines the availability of such schemes. Indications of schemes, further, can be found explicitly or implicitly. When they are implicit they can be understood so easily by the language user but still they have effective role in second language learning since the conceptualization of such schemes is straightforward in the first language but it is not in the second language. A recommended study here is an empirical study, which may help to gain results as far as these observations are concerned.

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A Typology of Schemes

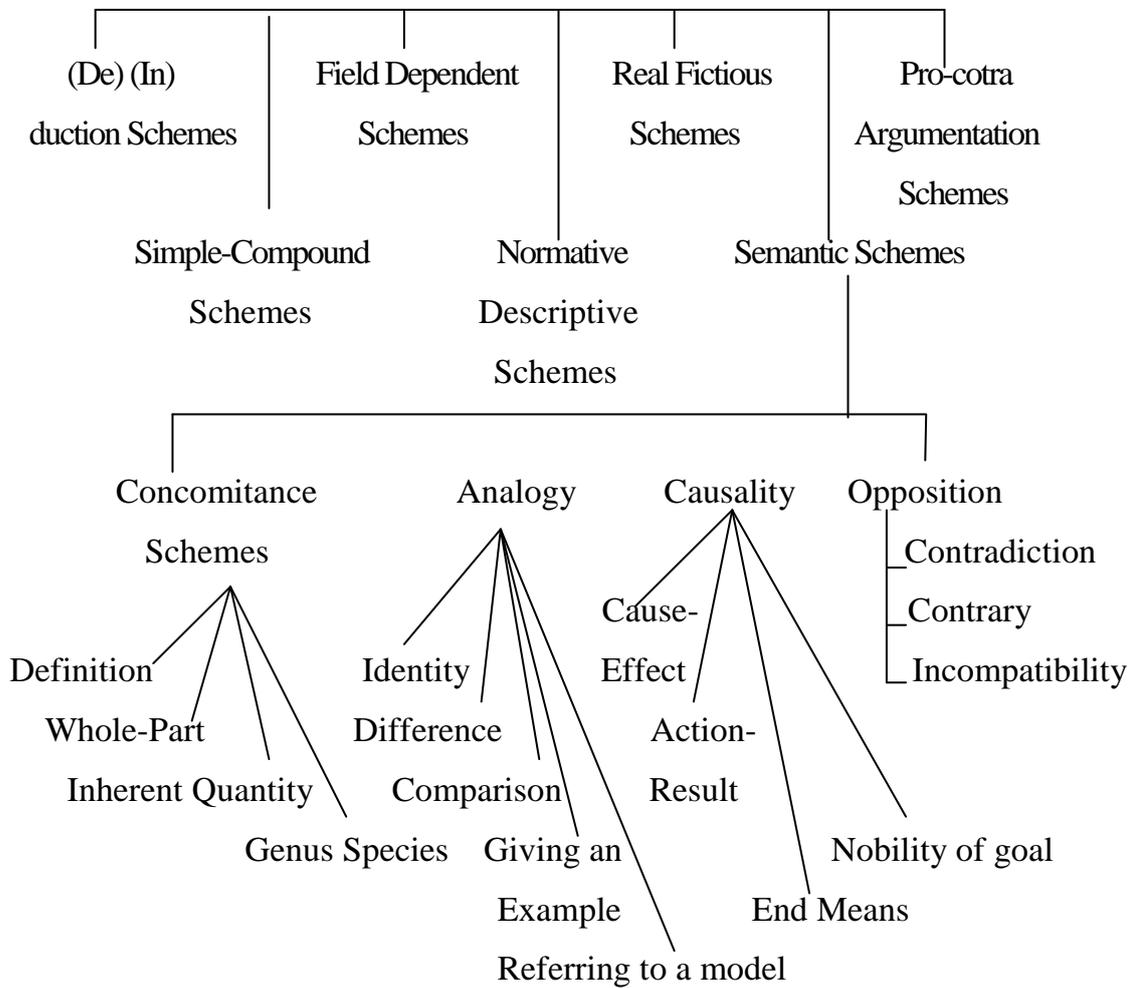


Figure (1): A Typology of Schemes

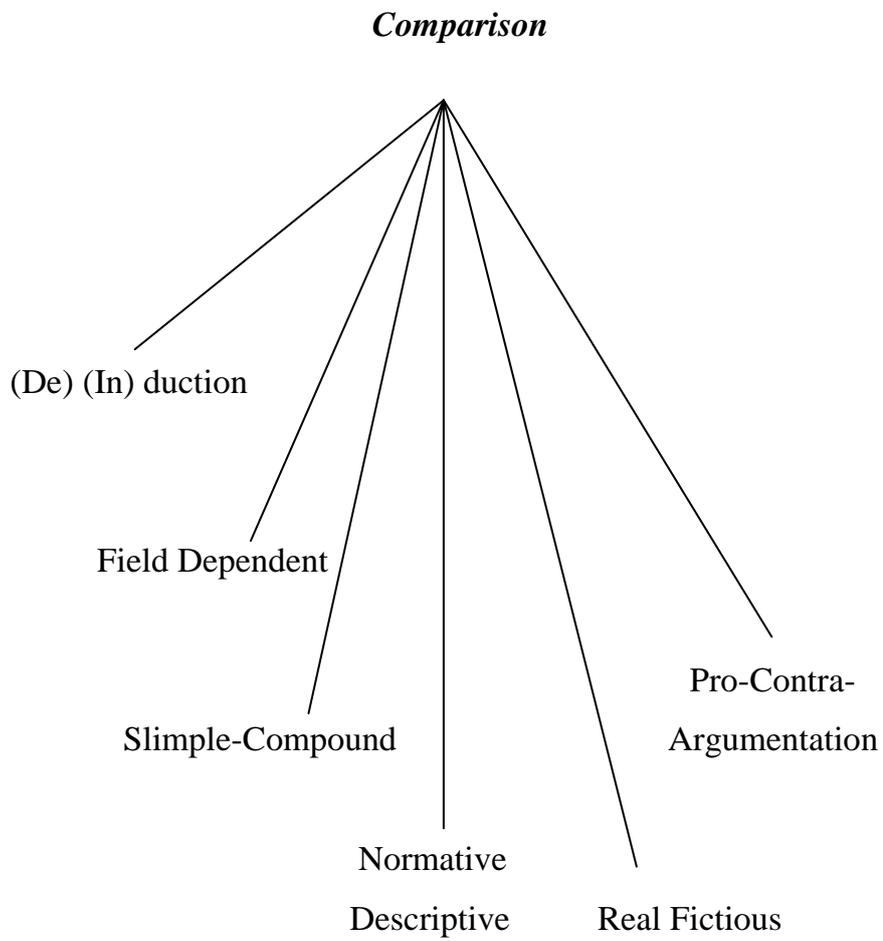


Figure (2): The Scheme of Comparison

ملخص

نحو نموذج براغمي تطبيقي - دايالكتيكي لدراسة النص الجدلي

العربي: دراسة لأنواع الجدل

د. شفاء هادي الحمدي (*)

يهدف هذا البحث إلى إيجاد نموذج لدراسة النص الجدلي العربي وبالأخص دراسة أنواعه. ويعتبر هذا البحث محاولة لمعالجة النقاط الرئيسية الآتية: المعالجة الإدراكية للنص الجدلي وقيمه ونقاط الارتكاز الواضحة والتضمينية وبنيته وأنواعه والاستراتيجيات المتبعة. وعليه فقد تبيننا نظرية ايمن وكرونندورست الخاصة بالنص الجدلي لتطبيقها على نماذج النصوص العربية مع إضافة بعض التحويلات لمعالجة النص العربي. ويعرض النموذج الحالي مجموعة من القوانين والمراحل والبنى والأنواع للمساعدة في تقديم تعريف لمصطلح العقلانية والذي يمكن أن ينعكس في الطرق التي يستخدمها متحدثوا اللغة لإيجاد حلولاً لصراعاتهم بين بعضهم البعض.

(*) كلية الآداب / جامعة الموصل.