The Three-dimensional Approach to Argumentation: a New Study Focus

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Abstract

Argumentation is known as a collaborative and mostly dialogical process of considering various perspectives on two contradictory believes on a topic in some reasonable and effective manner for arriving at a judgment. The judgment is meant to resolve the difference in the viewpoints. Linguists tackle his process of discussing, i.e. argumentation, from different angles. Theories on approaching augmentations from logical, rhetorical, dialectical, linguistic, etc. sides are already put forward. All those theories are built on the base of one of two (or both) concepts: (i) argumentation field and/or (ii) argumentation/arguer's goal. However, this paper calls for another way of thought. The paper suggests the followings: (i) argumentations must be theorized on the base of what kind they are, (ii) kinds of argumentations can be classified on the base of the existence or inexistence of an audience (a third party), and (iii) reasonableness and effectiveness should never be studied separately in concern to three-dimensional argumentation studies. Therefore, this paper comes up with a two-dimensional and a three-dimensional approach(TDA), focusing mainly on and developing the latter approach. Further, the approach developed, namely TDA, is meant to be valuable for pragmatic, sociopragmatic and CDA studies of argumentations.

Keywords: Argumentation, argument, three-dimensional, approach, model.

I. INTRODUCTION

Argumentation has become the interest of studies for a long time. Literature shows the way study focuses have been developed starting from tackling logical notions to finally developing a strategic maneuvering theory. This makes the literature of argumentations very rich, yet not fully covered. This paper finds that attention to argumentations that involve the existence of a third party, the audience, is not satisfied. Argumentations need to be distinguished and covered in terms of the involvement of an audience or not. Audience here refers to any third party other than the two opposing parties, whether present at the moment of discussion or absent watching/listening via TV or any other means. The existence of an audience contributes in making a huge change in form, content, structure and goal of argumentations and arguments. Therefore, it is important to tackle argumentations from this angle too.

This paper, for the reasons mentioned above, aims to achieve the following objectives: (i) directing the attentions of scholars to the centrality of audience role, (ii) suggesting a new distinction of argumentation kinds, and (iii) developing a new approach, namely the three-dimensional approach, to argumentation studies- which is planned to be valuable in pragmatic, sociopragmatic and CDA studies of argumentations.

2. Literature Review

Although there is a controversy among scholars about the exact sense that each of the two terms argumentation and argument convey, simple explanation still can be provided. For most of them, argumentation is the process of arguing, i.e. the process of exchanging ideas for the aim of resolving a difference of opinion (Brooks and Warren, 1949:141; Van Eemeren et al, 1996:1; Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004:1, etc.). Argument, on the other hand, is the product of argumentation (Walton ,2006:25; Govier, 2010:1).

Literature sites many approaches and models on the study of argumentation and arguments. They differ in focus and interest. The main approaches, each promoting for several models, are: (i) the logical approach, (ii) the dialectical approach, (ii) the rhetorical approach and (iv) the strategic maneuvering approach.

The logical approach seeks to formalize argumentation, "disagreements, and entailment relations" for drawing certain conclusions. Arieli and Straber (2014:2) clarify that "in logical argumentation arguments are expressed in terms of formal languages and acceptance of arguments is determined by logical entailments". Accordingly, and as stated by Tindale (2004:4-5) , this approach aims at identifying and evaluating argumentations by emphasizing the statements collected in terms of premises and conclusions. A well-known model under this approach is the critical argumentation model proposed by Walton (2016)- see Walton (2016) for details.

The dialectical, or the pragma-dialectic approach to argumentations which was initiated in 1970s by the two pioneers of the field Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendrost, is an approach that combines two perspectives, namely the pragmatic and the dialectic ones, in dealing with argumentative discourses (Van Eemeren and Grootendrost, 2003: 387). It, thus, investigates reasonableness in the argumentative discourses. Argumentation, in this approach, is seen as a verbal activity whereby arguments are exchanged in certain turns for the aim of resolving a difference of opinion on the merits (Van Eemeren and Grootendrost,2004). Well-known models taking this approach as the base are: Van Eemeren and Grootendrost's (1983) model of critical discussion – which is a very

central model in this approach, Toulmin's (2003) model of phases of argumentation, Benoit and Benoit's (2006) model of Strategies of Getting into and out of Argumentations, and others.

The rhetorical approach, as Walton (2004:21) sees it, is the approach investigating the use of propositions for certain goal in arguments. Such a use of language, so, makes the contribution or the argumentative move a very effective (thus persuasive) one. This is specifically achieved by the use of set of figures of speech. In other words, it is the investigation of the perlocutionary acts (in the pragmatic terminology and conception) of verbal and non-verbal moves. A central model to this approach is the three pillars of persuasion (argumentative appeals) of Aristotle's, see Kennedy (1985:24) for details.

The strategic maneuvering approach, finally, is one of the most recent approaches to the study of argumentative discourse. The scope of this approach to argumentation is wider and more comprehensive than the others. It represents an amalgamation of the pragma-dialectic and rhetoric approaches. More precisely, it is an extension to the pragma-dialectical approach with more matured theorizing in which rhetorical aspects are considered too. This approach is initiated by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002). A very central model to this approach is Van Eemeren and Houtlosser's (2002) triangle of the aspects of SM , which presents the three aspects of topic potential, audience demand and presentational devices (see van Eemeren , 2010 for details).

3. Developing a New Approach

Looking back to No.2 above (Literature review), a bird-eyes coverage and a reference to almost all the central approaches and models to argumentation theorizing can be found. Checking them all in their original sources and digging deeper helps recognizing two main common points that they all in a way or another base their theorizing on. The first common point is the focus on the concept of "argument field", as Toulmin (2003: 16) names it. "Argument field" is a concept that refers to the effect of field variation (whether religious, political, legal, medical etc.) on the argumentation held and on

the selection or planning of the model best for its analysis.

A second point that previous approaches focus on in their theorizing is the idea of "arguer's or argument goal", as this paper names it. The concept of "arguer's or argument goal" refers to the angle that the arguer seems to or the analyst wants to focus on in their tackling of argumentation. The angles or the goals can vary from being logical, dialectical, rhetorical, etc. For instance, if the focus is to investigate the dialectical nature of an argumentation, then pragma-dialectical is the target approach, etc. However, the current paper believes that it is no choice to focus on one angle and put aside the other. If to tackle an argumentation comprehensively, then every single consideration needs to be covered, i.e. the dialectical, rhetorical, SM, and other angles are all central in any argumentation, and they can be seen only as a one complementary whole, each having a complementary role in respect to the other. This also indicates that concepts such as reasonableness and effectiveness should never be tackled separately, for the best coverage.

3.1 Kinds of Argumentation

Thinking deeply about the two concepts above (argument field and arguer's or argument goal) and observing some previous studies on argumentation, the current paper takes a different direction in its theorizing of argumentation. The current paper calls for a need to follow a more general thinking about argumentation theorizing. It suggests centering the focus of argumentation theorizing on the questions: what kind of argumentation the analysts are dealing with? It in turn, the paper, suggests to limit the circle of argumentation approaches into two: either a two-dimensional approach (in which the models under the SM approach can fit the purpose well) or a three-dimensional approach (which is the one to be developed for the current study purpose).

Placing the models within the field of argumentation into only two distinct approaches has been based on the suggestion that argumentations (as activities or processes) are of two main kinds. Generally, the current work suggests that argumentations are either two-dimensional or three-dimensional. Two-dimensional argumentation refers to the kind of discussion held between two people or two parties (two sides- dimensions) in some in-group or personal sense. That is to say, the two people or parties strike up a conversation for only and only their own benefits, i.e. to change the mind of one of the directly involved parties for the favor of the other. Their argumentation aims for nothing other than convincing one of the parties or people about certain point at issue. The topic of discussion can be from any field (religious, political, social, medical, etc.). This means that this kind of argumentation is in no-way directed to a third party (an audience). Examples to this kind can be an argumentation between two friends, family members, co-workers, etc. Moreover, this kind of argumentation can take the form of a monologue or a dialogue equally. This is because this paper follows Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004:1) belief that every argumentation involves at least two sides. The other side in a monologue can be an implicit self when the first side is the speaker speaking to himself.

Three-dimensional argumentation, on the other hand, refers to the kind of discussion or debating that involves three parties or sides interested in resolving a difference of opinion on a topic that falls in the whole public sphere's interest. In this kind of argumentation, the first two sides do a kind of discussion or debating on certain non-personal or controversial topic (from whatever field) while a third side (an audience) watches, follows or listens to the argumentation. The role of the two first sides (which are the two arguers) is to do and lead the main argumentation. The third side's role (the audience) can vary from: (i) being only a listener that gets affected (on many levels: ideological, social, etc.) by the result of the discussion, or (ii) being both a listener and a participant in a way or another. To be a participant audience is either to participate in certain voting that affects the whole argumentation or decides its result, or to present an argument - directly or by messaging or calling, etc. Examples on three-dimensional argumentation can be a public debating such as Oxford Union Debate, or an interview on TV, etc.

Moreover, the explanation above leads us to two more points that need to be clarified on the three-dimensional kind of argumentation. Firstly, the third side (which is the audience) can itself be divided into two types, a present audience (P audience) and an absent one (A audience). For

instance, in a TV interview with a certain prominent figure or influencer, there might be the following parties involved: (1) the host, (2) the quest, (3) a present audience- number of people in the studio and (4) an absent audience- those watching from the TV. It is not a big matter whether those two sets of audience participate or not, the most important thing is that they either way get affected by the argumentation and , thus, are considered a central party (side) as well. Secondly, this kind of argumentation can also take both the form of a dialogue and a monologue. An example on a three-dimensional monologue can be a political figure presenting a speech to the public. The sides involved in such a monologue can be defined as (i) an explicit speaker, (ii) an implicit arguer- the one in the speaker's head that stands for the opposing party and (iii) an audience listening.

3.2 The Three-Dimensional Approach to Argumentation

A three-dimensional argumentation, as explained, involves three dimensions or sides in the process of argumentation. Those three dimensions or sides are: the protagonist, the antagonist and an audience. The audience itself here is of two sub-types: a P audience, which is present and contributes in certain voting, and an A audience, which is absent but still watching.

The three-dimensional approach (TDA) to argumentation is characterized as follows:

1.   It is an extension of the SM approach by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002). Many concepts and insights are driven from the SM approach, which is a point to be clarified later in detail.

2.   It takes all the three sides involved or related to the argumentation into a serious consideration. This means that each party (whether the protagonist or the antagonist) is supposed to consider both the opposing parties' and the audience's interest if they aim to play an effective argumentation. This involves a consideration of both sub-types of audience.

3.   It gives no big value to the variation of field or topic of argumentation. It sees that argumentations structure, focus, means and goal can only differ in terms of argumentation kind (a two-dimensional or a three-dimensional).

4.   It promotes for the belief that any change in the pragmatic tools done during an argumentation is tied to the argumentation atmosphere (which is related to argumentation kinds) and not to the field variation (topic variation).

As point one above asserts, TDA is an extension of the pre-existing SM approach. This also indicates that insights from both the dialectical and the rhetorical approaches are maintained too as they both together in certain amalgamation form the SM approach. However, the TDA still presents a complete new direction of study to the field of argumentation.

As being a new direction of study, TDA remodels the following:

First: Stages of Argumentation

For the pervious directions, stages of argumentation are always three or four. For all of them, the main stages are three (opening or confronting- arguing and concluding). This is an undeniable fact. However, it can only be considered so in terms of the two-dimensional kind of argumentation. For the three dimensional argumentations, TDA approach introduces a wider perspective.

In TDA, the three dimensional argumentation involves five stages. Those stages are: pre-argumentation stage, opening stage, argumentation stage, concluding stage, and post-argumentation stage. The result for considering five stages instead of only three is related to the nature of three-dimensional argumentation. What distinguish this kind of argumentation from the two-dimensional are:

(i)   Three-dimensional argumentation involves some kind of well preparation before being actually engaged in an argumentation. This makes a pre-argumentation stage as important as the argumentation stage. This is because, in such planned argumentative events, a good preparation is part of what makes the whole argumentation more effective, persuasive and reasonable.

(ii)   Such a three-dimensional argumentation does not limit its effect within the boundaries of the event held and people participated. Its effect reaches far more than that, (this will be explained below in detail).

To elaborate on the five stages of argumentation, each stage is clarified below and a figure is represented later:

1.   Pre-argumentation stage: this is the first stage of a three-dimensional argumentation. It is when the speakers or the two opposing parties are decided and the event is planned. By this, arguers are already notified about certain discussion viz. they know they are invited. They start preparing themselves and setting well their thoughts. Each party is expected to prepare the strongest arguments and the most effective ones to defend or refute a standpoint at issue. The preparation will involve a consideration of the three main aspects of argumentation- namely topic potential, audience demand and presentational devices. In short (more details on each aspect is provided later), arguers are expected to adjust their arguments in light of (i) some important and most effective knowledge and events of the world such as some historical evidences or justification or some other recent and sensitive information or statistics, etc, (ii) the arguments that they expect to be the most interesting to the public space, and (iii) the best available linguistic structuring for the arguments.

2.   Opening stage: this is the second stage where the argumentation opens. An argumentation opens by announcing the disagreement of the opposing parties on certain standpoint. This is the stage where people (the audience) well recognise the pair of standpoints at issue, one positive and another negative. This can be done explicitly or implicitly. However, the explicit opening is the best always as it presents a clear and undeniable start and commitment.

3.   Argumentation stage: this is the core stage of argumentations. It is the part where parties start presenting their arguments and standing for their side publically. Similar to the pre-argumentation stage, consideration of all the aspects of argumentation is central here. This is because the already prepared arguments might not always be enough to well stand for the position taken by parties. Some arguments are only driven during the argumentation stage. This is mostly a result of the feedbacks received from "audience demand aspect". In this stage, the opposing party's evidences and critics are known and thus some defending or critic moves are triggered and needed. Moreover, arguers,

again on the base of audience demand aspect, may start to read the weak points of the opposing party and refute accordingly. This is one of successful moves of arguing, viz. to define opposing party's hidden arguments. Some other techniques that arguers attend to can be : (i) defining the opposing parties real position by asking them certain questions in light of what they have already represented, (ii) trying to rise skepticism in the opposing parties belief by using the "but" method, and (ii) making the other party feel that their arguments are understood well and this is why exactly they are refuted – this can be achieved by using the repetition technique where arguers repeat the opposing party's idea in different wordings and then refute it.

Moreover, arguers in this stage are supposed to adhere to notions such as politeness principles (specifically the notion of face) and Grice's maxims. Adhering to such notions is an essential part of engaging in a reasonable, effective and persuasive argumentation.

4.   Concluding stage: this is the stage where the end result of the argumentation is announced, either explicitly or implicitly. This stage can either state that (i) argumentation carried – where the positive standpoint wins , (ii) argumentation defeated- where the negative standpoint wins, or (iii) argumentation failed- where a party decides in a way or another to cancel the argumentation

 5.   Post-argumentation stage: this is one additional stage to any three-dimensional argumentation held. It deals with the effects that result from the held event (the argumentation or debating) on the public space, on many levels. The necessity for focusing on such a stage drives from that fact that :

(i)   such argumentative events that concern sensitive issues to people everywhere can reflect on the subsequent/ future argumentations on the same topic. That is, people may use the result of such argumentations as arguments in other argumentations,

(ii)   Such argumentations reflect on the way people think on certain controversial topic and, thus, on how they group together (this point concerns sociopragmatics the most), and

(iii)   the effect extends to make some ideological changes in people's mind.

Considering those post argumentation consequences above by arguers before planning the whole argumentation will result in taking the event more seriously and planning the arguments more effectively. However, for studies that concern only the pragmatic treatment of argumentation, this last stage only constructs a theoretical fact that must be mentioned. On the other hand, studies that extend itself to cover other perspectives - such as sociopragmatic, sociolinguistic or even CDA - must dig deeper this last stage, some only theoretically and others both theoretically and analytically.
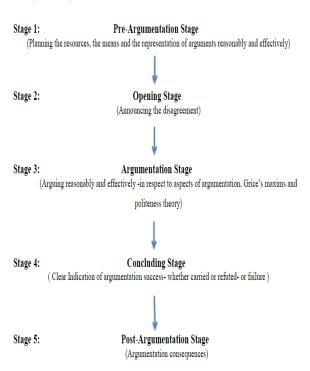
Stage 1:   **Pre-Argumentation Stage**
(Planning the resources, the means and the representation of arguments reasonably and effectively)

Stage 2:   **Opening Stage**
(Announcing the disagreement)

Stage 3:   **Argumentation Stage**
(Arguing reasonably and effectively -in respect to aspects of argumentation, Grice's maxims and politeness theory)

Stage 4:   **Concluding Stage**
(Clear Indication of argumentation success- whether carried or refuted- or failure)

Stage 5:   **Post-Argumentation Stage**
(Argumentation consequences)

Figure (1): *Stages of Three-dimensional Argumentation in TDA*

Second: Aspects of Three-dimensional Argumentation

The main notions of the aspects of argumentation are driven from van Eemeren and Houtlosser's (2002) triangle, which is an essential part of the SM approach. However, TDA goes deeper and re-models this triangle. In TDA, the aspects are as follows:

1. Topic potential: this aspect, as explained before, is the one that concerns the selection of materials that serves arguer's goal the best. TDA extends this aspect to refer to the selection of materials on the base of two main points. The first is arguer's conviction. Arguer's conviction covers the personal beliefs of the arguers on what they see the best for achieving their purpose. This first point mostly covers the choices made in terms of three pillars of persuasion. The arguer may decide on the base of his personal conviction whether to appeal with ethos, pathos or logos. The second point deals with the selection of materials in terms of the general knowledge of the world. This, in turn, covers the selection of materials from those which are recently controversial (up-to-date) and/or those which have always been controversial and interesting (historical). Arguer's can reflect this sub-aspect by the use of "reported speeches", viz. the use of quotes- direct or indirect- that always gets treated as more authentic.

2. Audience demand: This second aspect deals with the selection of materials on the base of what best fits others. "Others" here refers to two groups of people. The first is the opposing party. Each party, as a part of effective argumentation, is expected to define the opposing party's position and weak/strong points during the argumentation to re-plan their arguments for the best move achievement. Arguers can attend to many linguistic means to figure out this sort of audience demand. Some of them are : (i) the use of presuppositions- where arguers trigger important presuppositions in the arguments presented by the opposing party to strength their own moves , (ii) arguers can read implicatures for the same purpose- implicatures show the hidden or the hint arguments of the opposing party which are mostly the weakest ones because strongest arguments are mostly presented directly, and (iii) arguers can raise questions that are so critical.

The second group of people covered under audience demand is the "audience". Audience refers to the third party in an argumentation. It can refer to both (i) those present in the event and participate in some effective or ineffective way (P audience) , yet not central to the actual dialectical activity, and (ii) those who are absent but still get effected by the whole argumentation- people watching the discussion via TV, internet , etc (A audience). Arguers in three-dimensional argumentation are expected to direct their arguments to those two sets of audience just as serious as they do to the

opposing party. They even have to plan their moves in light of the public space's interest.

3. Presentational devices: no modifications have been done in light of this third aspect. It refers to the careful selection of the most effective linguistic means to represent the arguments.

Below is presented a figure to show the details of the aspects of three dimensional argumentation amended by TDA:
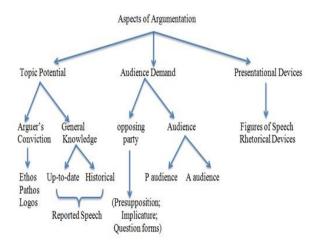

Figure (2): *Aspects of Three-dimensional Argumentation in TDA*

Third: Effectiveness and reasonableness:

Effectiveness and reasonableness are seen as two inseparable notions in TDA. This is because TDA claims that every reasonable argumentation is effective at least in some way, and vice versa. However, the degree of effectiveness and reasonableness might normally differ from an argumentation to another and this difference cannot be exactly measured or justified. This can be because these two notions (effectiveness and reasonableness) are context dependent. Accordingly, argumentations can be classified in terms of these two notions into: a good argumentation (which is effective and reasonable no matter how much) and a bad argumentation (which is not and which ends with a failure in resolving the difference of opinion or a failure in keeping the argumentation hold). Such a perspective of these notions takes us to the fact that they both need to be treated as one complementary whole and analysed inseparably. Therefore, TDA

remodels the notions of effectives and reasonableness in argumentations.

In TDA and following the above simple distinction (good argumentation VS bad argumentation), a good argumentation (an effective and reasonable one) is maintained through the proper adherence to: (i) aspects of three-dimensional argumentation, (ii) principles of politeness, (iii) Cooperative principles-namely Grice's maxims, and (iv) signs of acceptability.

A new term can be noticed above, namely "signs of acceptability". It is an alternative notion for the ten rules of reasonableness – the codes of conduct developed by van Eemeren and Grootendrost (2003). In TDA, "signs of acceptability" refers to the conditions that logically make up a proper argumentation. The more those conditions are respected; the strongest is the signs of acceptability of arguing effectively and reasonably. Those conditions – taken from the ten rules- are: (i) freedom condition (2) starting point condition (3) closure condition and (4) usage condition – to see rules 1, 6, 9,10, check van Eemeren and Grootendrost (2003). The other rules of the ten rules are dropped away because they are seen as only personal moves done by arguers and which themselves contribute in deciding the winning party. So, they are not conditions of judging the overall reasonableness of such activities, they are rather measures for judging the appropriateness of single moves.

4. Pragmatic, sociopragmatic and CDA perspectives

Tackling the three-dimensional argumentations from a merely pragmatic perspective makes the post-argumentation stage, the fifth one, useless analytically. So, the active parts of the stages to be analysed are the four initial stages in the pragmatic studies. However, argumentations urgently need to be studied from some other perspectives too, such as sociopragmatic or CDA ones. Argumentations and debates have become activities of interest and importance to societies, specifically with the growing pace of change. They have gained specific national and international value as they contribute in increasingly complex way in defining the political, social, religious, educational and all

the contexts of life. Specifically with the development of online and social media resources, argumentations and debates turn to be the main source of clarifying and introducing perspectives and ideologies to the world. This fact itself can prove that argumentations/debates affect societies in the following ways:

1.   In terms of speech communities: speech community refers to any "social group of any size who reside in a specific locality, share government, and/or have a common cultural and historical heritage" (Hanachore,2012:59). Thus, a group of people who stand for certain standpoint rather than the other is considered one speech community. Sharing the same belief on certain issue is one of the criteria to define the concept of speech community, as Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015:63-6) confirm. Therefore, such argumentative events and debates naturally contribute in re-shaping the speech communities within societies. An arguing party that succeeds in changing the mind of the opposing party and set of other people's mind is already doing some significant changes in societies and in the way people interact with one another.

2.   In terms of ideological commitments: ideology refers to the system of ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values (Van Dijk, 1998:1). Argumentations/debates are the processes of exchanging ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values for the purpose of refuting one in the favor of another. This itself can make argumentations/debates as activities where the war of ideologies is performed in less or more civil way. The party that wins the dispute gets more chances to wider the circle of their ally and followers, thus achieves more hegemony. Yet, this point is subject to three variables: (i) how controversial and sensitive is the topic, (ii) how committed is the listener (some people are ideologically moderate, others prejudiced and some others careless), and (iii) how valuable is the event (some events are more famous and valuable from the others which is what makes them more authentic to public sphere).

3.   In terms of future argumentations: this is about the use of recorded argumentation contents in future argumentations. Arguers can depend the results of pervious argumentations or quote single series of arguments as evidences in their current debates. For instance, voting statistics of Oxford Union debates can be used

as an inductively valid generalized argument, which is a highly used kind of arguments.

Although the above three points show how argumentations affect societies (the post-argumentation effects), society effects argumentations equally. Therefore, the below figure can be drawn to show the effect-relationship between argumentation and society:
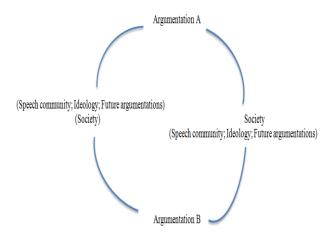

Figure (3): *The Effect-Relationship between Argumentation and Society*

The three points mentioned above give a hint to the way the post-argumentation stage is applied in the sociopragmatic and CDA studies. For the former, the sociopragmatic one, the stage can only referred to and elaborated in theoretical terms, discussing the parts of society that might get affected by the event or process. The latter, on the other hand, can be more fruitful analytically. CDA studies can benefit from the post argumentation-stage to highlight the ideological effects of such processes and activities. Models such as those of Fairclough, Van Dijk, etc. can fit the last stage to come up with ideological analysis.

5. Conclusions

This paper has concluded the followings:

1.   The field of argumentation theorizing lacks focusing on the role of the wider audience, the third party.

2.   Audience is a very important notion in the field of argumentation studies and it can be of two sub-types : the present audience and the absent one

3. Argumentations are set into two kinds in terms of audience existence: namely the two-dimensional argumentation and the three-dimensional argumentation.

4. The two-dimensional argumentation involves only the two opposing parties while the three-dimensional one involves three sides: the two opposing parties and an audience.

5. Three-dimensional argumentations consist of five stages.

6. Reasonableness and effectiveness are two inseparable notions and they are achieved by the adherence to: (i) aspects of argumentation, (ii) politeness principles, (ii) cooperative principles, and (iv) signs of acceptability.

7. Reasonable and effective argumentations can be called or described as "good argumentations" and they end either by argumentation is being carried or defeated. "Bad argumentation", on the other hand, is the one that ends with failure and, thus, neither reasonable nor effective.

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