

Conference ARG-AGE 2015

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Argumentation & Language

Linguistic markers, discursive processes, cognitive operations

9-11 September 2015

University of Lausanne

The CoRRéA (Collectif Romand de Recherche sur l'Argumentation) is pleased to issue the first call for participation to the international conference "Argumentation & language", which will be held at the University of Lausanne on 9-11 September 2015.

The conference seeks to attract scholars in language and communication science as well as researchers in cognitive science who are interested in the description of the linguistic dimension of argumentation.

Contributors are expected to submit proposals falling into at least one or two of the three following areas of research: a) linguistic markers; b) discursive processes; c) cognitive operations, which constitute the three conference themes.

a) Linguistic markers

Argument production is constrained by the natural languages in which arguments are uttered; the issue of the linguistic embeddedness of argumentation will accordingly be at the heart of the conference. Over the years, a number of approaches to argumentation have expressed suspicion, if not mistrust, towards natural language: the latter is seen – in the terms of Jacobs and Jackson (1992: 74) – as a "curtain" that needs to be lifted to reveal the underlying reasoning processes. As Marianne Doury summarises it, the first concern of these approaches seems to be "to 'strip' the argumentative text from its linguistic garments, construed as an obstacle to an understanding of its logic or conceptual structure" (2010: 3).

Taking on board the alternative viewpoint, the conference intends to take stock of the various trends in argumentative research which rigorously and systematically study the linguistic markers of argumentation. We are thus looking for research which, regardless of methodological orientation, highlights how the description of linguistic phenomena is essential to our knowledge of argumentation (and vice-versa). Several directions of research may be accordingly envisaged (this list is not exhaustive): the theory of argumentation in language (*argumentation dans la langue*), which has been developed since the 1980s, sees in argumentation an essential component of utterance meaning, if not of lexical meaning: recent developments in the field include Carel's theory of semantic blocks (Carel 2010). The study of *connectives* has unfolded in a rich and long-standing tradition in French circles of language science: we of course encourage submissions of new research on such functional units which are used to express argumentative instructions. We could in this respect also adopt Plantin's viewpoint that the study of connectives needs to be broadened and include other forms, such as ordinary argumentative metalanguage: "The indicator of argumentative function can be indexed on an ordinary term of the argumentative lexicon: (counter)argument, [...] premise, objection, refutation" (2010: 47). The conference thus welcomes research on argumentative indicators (see van Eemeren & Snoeck Henkemans 2007), broadly defined as "words and expressions that are crucial for an adequate reconstruction of argumentative discourse". Finally, work on discourse relations is also welcome, notably research inspired from Rhetorical Structure Theory (Mann & Thompson 1988) which targets the linguistic and discursive dimensions of argumentation.

b) Discursive processes

In the wake of rhetorical approaches to argumentative texts, from Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1958) to the creation of specialized journals in discourse analysis and argumentation (e.g., *Argumentation et Analyse du discours*) and the multiplicity of handbooks and dictionaries that appeared from the 1990s on (Reboul 1996, Molinié 1992, Groarke & Tindale 2004, Walton 2006 among others), rhetorical techniques designed to gain consent have nowadays been rehabilitated. Yet, they remain to be explored in their full linguistic and textual dimension. Argumentative schemes, from Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca's typology to Walton *et al.*'s (2008), are thus modes of reasoning whose linguistic counterparts deserve finer grained analyses. More broadly, the question of argumentative structure (Snoeck Henkemans 1992, Walton 1996, Freeman 2011) could be addressed in relation to the classical rhetoric division of texts or to issues of textual coherence/cohesion.

In the spirit of complementarity, many categories of discourse analysis could be revisited within the persuasive dimension traditionally associated to rhetoric. The following questions could accordingly constitute potential starting points of expected submissions: is the fulfilment of a given discursive genre's expectations conducive to any argumentative effect? Similarly, does the introduction of a narrative or a descriptive sequence in an argumentative text, the resort to intertextuality and to dialogical allusions, or the exploitation of different textual dimensions have significant argumentative implications? In a nutshell, can these discursive phenomena trigger argumentative effects that can be compared to those of argument schemes?

Similarly to numerous works on *ethos* (Maingueneau 1999, Amossy 1999, 2010) or *pathos* (Walton 1992, Plantin *et al.* 2002, Micheli 2010), this conference is also meant to assess the interface between the practice of argumentation, the rhetorical situation (Bitzer 1968) and the analysis of discourse from the perspective of *logos*. As a consequence, the conference programme will privilege contributions focused on (i) accounts of persuasive attempts that borrow their format to discourse genres deemed to be only weakly argumentative, (ii) the rhetorical *dispositio* and its possible textual and argumentative structures, and (iii) argument schemes and ways of identifying them in discourse. This list remains open and contributions related to this general theme which address issues not listed here will also be considered.

c) Cognitive operations

A relatively recent cognitive trend in argumentation studies has emerged from the growing influence of neighbouring disciplines such as the psychology of reasoning (Wason 1960, 1966, Evans & Frankish 2009, Mercier 2011, Mercier & Sperber 2009, 2011) and the study of cognitive heuristics (Tversky & Kahneman 1974, Gigerenzer *et al.* 1999). Our understanding of the cognitive mechanisms solicited to perform reasoning tasks – and inference more generally – is nowadays making great progress by relying on experimental methodologies. The application of these frameworks to the study of argumentation remains nonetheless very often devoted to the study of deductive reasoning. Moreover, the properly linguistic dimension of argumentation is seldom considered in these circles and remains most of the times associated to the field of persuasion research. While the latter allows us to gain insights into the argumentative role of specific linguistic structures, it oftentimes constrains research to the issue of the rhetorical effectiveness of argumentation.

One of the goals of this conference is accordingly to provide an exchange platform for research at the cognition/argumentation interface which highlights the linguistic and discursive dimension of argumentation by exploring the following questions (which are, again, indicative and non-exhaustive): what are the cognitive counterparts of argument production and reception? What cognitive constraints affect the rhetorical (in)effectiveness of argumentative utterances? Can the fallacious nature of certain arguments and arguments schemes be accounted for by examining the nature of their cognitive processing? What are the different cognitive functions solicited in argument processing, from the point of view both of production and reception?

Given the above rationale, the organising committee

- encourages submissions dealing with the interrelations between language (its units, its levels, its functions and modes of processing) and the way argumentation functions.
- will give priority to proposals which make their methods and analytical categories explicit and which privilege the description of empirical data collected in corpora or empirically.
- will select received submissions on the basis of anonymised abstracts.

Invited speakers

Ruth Amossy (University of Tel Aviv)

Marianne Doury (CNRS)

Hugo Mercier (University of Neuchâtel)

Francisca Snoeck Henkemans (University of Amsterdam)

Douglas Walton (University of Windsor)

Types of contributions

Individual presentation

Individual presentations will last 25 minutes, followed by a 5 minute question session. Contributors will need to tie their presentation with one or two of the conference themes, as described above. The deadline for submission is **January 15, 2015**.

Abstracts should not be more than 400 words; they must (i) clearly state the research question, (ii) include a brief description of the theoretical framework and of the methodology adopted by the author and (iii) highlight the originality of the proposal.

Panel

Panels are 2 hour long thematic sessions. They are divided in three 20 minute presentations and are followed by a 30 minute discussion time (to take place at the end of the panel or in its course). The panel convenors are responsible for the organisation of both the thematic coherence and the logistic articulation of the panel in order to ensure that it fits the general orientation of the conference.

Panel proposals will contain a general description and the abstracts of the three papers to be presented. Panel proposals can be submitted until **December 1, 2014**.

The general description of the panel and the abstracts should not exceed the 400 word limit each. As for individual presentations, these must (i) clearly state the research question, (ii) include a brief description of the theoretical framework and of the methodology adopted by the author and (iii) highlight the originality of the proposal.

Calendar

1 December 2014	PANEL submission deadline
15 January 2015	INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION deadline
31 March 2015	Notification of acceptance/rejection
31 May 2015	Early bird registration deadline
30 June 2015	Registration deadline
9-11 September 2015	Conference

Conference fees

Category	Fee	Observations
Participant: Early bird	CHF 150	Registration possible until 31 May 2015
Participant: Standard	CHF 200	From 31 May to 30 June 2015
Participant: Student	CHF 100	Proof of PhD student status will be required.
Attendance	CHF 80	Conferences are free of charge. Registration as attendant covers meals and coffee breaks.

A conference dinner will take place on the evening of 10 September 2015. Conference participants will need to register and pay an additional fee to participate.

Organising committee

CoRReA (Collectif Romand de Recherches sur l'Argumentation¹) :
Thierry Herman, Jérôme Jacquin, Raphaël Micheli, Steve Oswald.

Scientific committee

Jean-Michel Adam, Ruth Amossy, Corina Andone, Marc Bonhomme, Marion Carel, Vasco Correia, Emmanuelle Danblon, Louis de Saussure, Marianne Doury, James B. Freeman, Bart Garssen, Sara Greco Morasso, Jean Goodwin, Chris Hart, Thierry Herman, Jos Hornikx, Jérôme Jacquin, Alfredo Lescano, Marcin Lewinski, Fabrizio Macagno, Didier Maillat, Hugo Mercier, Raphaël Micheli, Jacques Moeschler, Dima Mohammed, Steve Oswald, Manuel Padilla-Cruz, Fabio Paglieri, Rudi Palmieri, Christian Plantin, François Provenzano, Pierre-Yves Raccah, Anne Reboul, Eddo Rigotti, Andrea Rocci, Corine Rossari, Francisca Snoeck Henkemans, Christopher Tindale, Assimakis Tseronis, Frans van Eemeren, Jan Albert van Laar, Jean Wagemans, Douglas Walton, Galia Yanoshevsky, David Zarefsky.

Sponsors

University of Lausanne / Faculty of Arts (French and Language & Information Sciences) and
École de Français Langue Étrangère (EFLE).

Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF)

¹ <http://collectifcorrea.wordpress.com>