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Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse

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assumes that people have a normal communicative capacity and are in a physical situation that allows the transmission of interpretable signals. Nonfulfillment of these conditions, however, would affect communication in general, not just argumentation, and therefore these conditions can be left out here.

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Principles and Procedures for Normative Reconstruction

For many, the raison d'être of argumentation studies is the critical analysis of argumentative discourse—the interpretation and evaluation of actual cases of argumentation in light of normative standards for argumentative conduct. This interest is certainly deeply implicated in the other components of argumentation research; it provides a substantive grounding for philosophical and normative research and gives direction to empirical and practical research.

A central problem for critical analysis is how to represent argumentative discourse in a way that is both relevant to the interests of normative analysis and faithful to the intentions and understandings of the ordinary actors who produce the discourse. Critical analysis of argumentative discourse is always a confrontation between the ideal and the real. Actual practice is evaluated against a normative standard, and the adequacy of the current version of this standard is simultaneously tested for its "problem validity." In this chapter, we provide a framework for conceptualizing the process of representating complex dialogue, and we discuss some methods that may be used to extract standpoints and lines of argument in support of those standpoints.

Normative Reconstruction

We use the term "reconstruction" to refer to a representation of discourse fashioned to fit a specific analytic perspective. Any recon-

struction of argumentative discourse approaches a text in terms of a particular viewpoint and is motivated by a particular interest. Analytic reconstruction always takes place in terms of a theoretical framework that concentrates on certain aspects of the discourse to the exclusion of other aspects. While an analytic reconstruction of argumentation is not really a "coding" of individual utterances, it is similar to coding in that it represents discourse in a way that highlights various features of the discussion process to the exclusion of other features.

The form of reconstruction most suitable for our theoretical purposes is one which orients to disagreement resolution, making more visible those things relevant to the resolution of the disagreement. The ideal model serves as a heuristic tool for a systematic resolution-oriented reconstruction of the various relevant speech acts and stages in an argumentative discourse (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1990), allowing for an abstraction from actual discourse to the "case" offered in support of a standpoint. To reconstruct an argumentative discourse as a critical discussion is to construct a model or representation of that discourse *as if it were* a critical discussion. That is, textual structure, propositional content, pragmatic functions, and so on are all imputed to the discourse with reference to what would be relevant to the resolution of the dispute.

Ordinarily, the primary interests of a normative reconstruction of argumentative discourse are to recover the propositions that make up the substance of the arguments, to determine how the arguments are used to justify or refute the standpoints at issue, and to examine how the performance of speech acts can function at a particular stage of discussion to help resolve a dispute.[1] Normatively reconstructing the discourse enables the analyst to see better how these functions might be performed and to evaluate the discourse against a normative standard.

Interpretive Problems in Reconstruction

When analyzing everyday argumentation, the analyst faces the obvious problem that little in actual everyday discourse directly corresponds to the ideal model of critical discussion. From the point of view of ideal argumentative conduct, much remains unsaid in ordinary discourse. For example, a speaker or writer does not often state explicitly the purpose of his or her contribution, and new stages in the discussion are hardly ever announced explicitly. Likewise, argumentative roles, presumptions, procedures, and similar

matters are usually taken for granted rather than explicitly discussed.

Or again, any variety of utterances and forms of expression may serve as paraphrases for one another, in effect repeating the same point. Argumentation may occur by means of speech acts quite different from those envisioned by the ideal model of critical discussion, as standpoints may be introduced through offers or expressives; arguments may be made by questioning, taunting, or complaining; acceptance may come in the form of a grant or a thank you. And much else goes on besides argumentation. A variety of acts, activities, and aspects of expression may occur throughout an argumentation that are designed to pursue goals, topics, and concerns that are only incidentally related to the purpose of rationally resolving a difference of opinion.

Despite all of this, it may still be intuitively apparent that argumentation is taking place in a way that functions more or less along the lines of critical discussion. We would not want to say that argumentation is not occurring or that it is somehow defective just because what is said and done does not openly, directly, and completely correspond to an ideal model of critical discussion. But then again, neither should the discourse be reconstructed in a way that overinterprets its argumentative potential. Normative reconstruction is not simply a blindly optimistic force-fitting of ideal categories onto actual conduct. After all, much of the point of critical analysis is to evaluate whether or not and to what degree actual argumentative conduct lives up to ideal standards.

Here, then, is the problem for normative reconstruction. The reconstruction should highlight and recover our intuitions about how the discourse can be seen to have an argumentative function, but it should maintain a sensitivity to the way in which any argumentative potential in the discourse is communicated. Reconstruction must identify the components and lay out the structure of the argumentation in a way that makes the discourse susceptible to critical tests for validity and acceptability. At the same time, it should provide a comparative basis for exposing and evaluating defects in the actual conduct of the argumentative discourse as it has occurred.

Empirical Grounding for Reconstruction

How do we justify reconstructing a discourse in a way that more openly and clearly fits the ideal model of argumentation through

critical discussion? Part of the justification for any reconstruction is empirical. That is, the reconstruction imputes structures, functions, and content to the discourse that the participants themselves and natural-language users in general intuitively recognize. In other words, the analyst's representation is meant to call attention to features of the discourse to which natural-language users themselves orient, and which they expect others to recognize. Part of the job of arguing for the acceptability of a reconstruction involves assembling evidence that the reconstruction is "intersubjectively" valid. Consider the exchange in example 3.1 that occurs when two Mormon missionaries (M1 and M2) come to visit at the home of a non-Mormon (L).[2]

There are several empirically grounded claims that can be made about the argumentative structure, function, and content of this exchange, claims that go beyond simply repeating what is openly and directly said. For example, we can see that the content of the claim summarized in 01 (that the Mormon church is different from other churches because Mormons believe everyone must be baptized) is not offered simply as information that is interesting in its own right, but is offered to provide an argument for accepting the higher-order standpoint that Mrs. Lee should convert to the Mormon faith. Likewise, we can see that Mrs. Lee's response in 02 is not an act of affiliation and agreement but is an argument for rejecting M1's higher-order standpoint.

A primary grounding for these claims comes from ethnographic evidence. This dialogue occurs in the context of a visit by Mormon missionaries to the home of a non-Mormon. There is an unstated purpose to such visits that permeates the ensuing discussions: proselytization, aiming for conversion to the Mormon faith. Even where that is not the immediate intention of the missionary, most recipients of these visits treat what is said as having some relevance to an underlying standpoint to the effect that the recipient should convert to the Mormon faith. That, presumably, is what hinges on the issue of whether and how the Mormon church differs from other churches. The missionaries need to establish some reason to switch churches, and that reason would most naturally be found in a difference between the churches.

This ethnographic background also allows us to see the questioning in 03, 05, 07, and 09 as an effort to elicit premises that might be used to build arguments to reestablish this higher-order standpoint. That is, we have reason to believe that when M1 asks, "Uh, well what do you believe?" he has not abandoned his initial purpose or standpoint in order to elicit information for some newly emergent purpose—as we might infer if this were simply a casual "get to

Example 3.1

(M1 is responding to Mrs. Lee's question of how the Mormon church differs from other churches. M1 has just finished explaining that "Mormons believe that everyone must be baptized.")

01 M1: Okay? So there's one- one difference. ((Pause)) Okay? We believe every-
[

02 L: My church believes that too.

((Pause))

03 M1: Uh, well what do you believe?

((Pause))

04 L: I don't believe that.

05 M1: You don't believe the Bible?

((Pause))

06 L: No:- not- ((Pause)) Well I don't believe that uh, uh, uh, put into the context of our times that that's true.

07 M2: Wellll, does Jesus Christ change from age to age? Does he change?

((Pause))

08 L: The world has changed.

09 M2: Does Jesus Christ change?

10 L: No, but that doesn't mean that the meaning of his words doesn't.

11 M2: *Oh,* but it does.

12 L: Uh- Heh-heh-heh ((Nervous giggle))

13 M2: Mrs. Lee, I think you need to find out what you believe, first of all. ((Pause)) You've got to find out- reach down inside of yourself and find out what you believe. 'Cause it sounds like you're not even sure of what you believe yourself.

know you" visit in which reciprocal self-disclosure were the expected pattern.[3]

We can also reconstruct from the text certain propositions that are implicated but not expressed. For example, turn 05 ("You don't believe the Bible?") communicates the unexpressed premise that the Bible says that everyone must be baptized and claims in effect that when Mrs. Lee says that she does not believe that everyone must be baptized, she is committing herself to claiming that the Bible says something that is not true. The reconstruction of this unexpressed information illustrates a different source of empirical grounding: knowledge of conventional structures and strategies of discourse. At least part of this inference is warranted by the patterning of cohesive devices in turns 01 through 05 (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Specifically, in 04, Mrs. Lee uses an anaphoric pro-term together with a parallel sentence construction to refer back to M1's cutoff claim in 01: "We believe every[one must be baptized]." In 04 "that" replaces "everyone must be baptized." Then in 05 M1 again uses the cohesive device of parallel construction ("you don't believe" paralleling "I don't believe") to create a frame for highlighting an anaphoric substitution: "the Bible" substitutes for "that" in this slot, which was a substitution for "everyone must be baptized." The cohesive devices, then, signal the following equivalence: to deny "I believe everyone must be baptized" is equivalent to denying "I believe the Bible." Seeing that this equivalence is being signaled leads to the construction of the unexpressed premise, "The Bible says everyone must be baptized."[4]

Or again, presumably any native-language user can intuitively recognize that the questions by the Mormons are more than just a series of distinct and independent information questions. They can be heard as a concerted effort to elicit answers that would make a case for the claim that everyone should be baptized (and therefore that people should convert to the Mormon faith). And while it is not altogether clear what that case amounts to, the questioning seems to anticipate something like the following chain of argument: Since Jesus Christ does not change from age to age, his teachings do not change from age to age and will apply to the context of our times. The Bible reports that Jesus Christ taught that everyone must be baptized. So, if we believe in Jesus Christ's teachings and we believe that the Bible reports his teachings, we must believe that the teaching that everyone must be baptized applies to the context of our times. And that conclusion contradicts the assertions behind Mrs. Lee's avowals in 04 and 06.

This attribution is surely intuitively available to any reader. But it is an intuition that can be empirically grounded by the analyst.

(Indeed, this intuition is available to any reader precisely because it is empirically grounded.) In part this attribution is grounded in cultural knowledge about the Bible and about plausible premises (e.g., that M1 and M2 expect Mrs. Lee to believe in Jesus Christ already, since she has announced that she is already a member of a chuch and has never directly denied the authority of the Bible or of Christ). But this attribution can also be partly backed by pointing to the parallelism between this pattern of questioning and a very general strategic pattern of argumentation called confrontation.[5]

In the standard pattern of confrontation, the confronter—in this case, the "tag team" of M1 and M2 (see Brashers and Meyers 1989)—first isolates and targets an assertion made by the confronted (in this case, Mrs. Lee's claim that not everyone must be baptized). Confronter then questions confronted in a way that elicits premises which can later be seen to contradict the original claim (e.g., what the Bible says is true; Jesus Christ said everyone should be baptized; biblical mandates are timeless and unchanging in application). The confronter then expressly presents the obvious inconsistency in a kind of "punch line" (e.g., in the form of a rhetorical question: "Then how can you say such and such?") that is designed to get the confronted to back down from the original standpoint taken.

While this pattern does not "come off" completely in the case above, it bears a striking resemblance to other cases documented in the literature. And this comparison allows us to attribute to M2's comments in turn 13 an argument that might not otherwise be apparent. What M2 is in effect asserting is that Mrs. Lee's answers are inconsistent with her denial that everyone should be baptized—which is the standard type of claim made in this slot of a confrontation sequence. We can also notice that this assertion is based on a kind of evidence that parallels what is ordinarily the case for confrontation sequences. Ordinarily, the self-contradiction consists of showing that the targeted assertion is contradicted by assertions that the confronted has either agreed with or supplied through the answers to the questioning. Here, however, the self-contradiction is attributed to the pragmatics of Mrs. Lee's answers: Mrs. Lee is obviously uncertain about her answers. She is answering as she does, not because she has thought her position through and is answering what she believes to be true, but because she does not really have a position and is simply anticipating what answer is needed to avoid contradicting her original claim. She therefore has not reasonably defended the claim she put forward in 04.[6]

Especially in cases of dialogue, another source of empirical grounding may come from various cues that indicate how the participants themselves understand the argumentative force of the dis-

course. For example, there is good reason to believe that the participants themselves understand the argumentative trap that this pattern of questioning leads to. The pauses, fillers ("uh" or "well"), cut-offs, and restarts are all characteristic vocal features of an orientation toward dispreferred turns in conversation (Heritage 1984b, 265–80; Levinson 1983, 332–36). Notice also the way in which Mrs. Lee's answers in 06, 08, and 10 fail to provide a direct and straightforward answer to the Mormons' questions. In 08 and 10 Mrs. Lee seems to deny an anticipated implication of accepting the proposition in question. Or notice how in 09 M2 simply repeats his question from 07 when Mrs. Lee fails to give a direct answer in 08.[7] All such clues suggest that the missionaries are trying to maneuver Mrs. Lee into giving answers that will contradict her prior standpoint and that Mrs. Lee sees this strategy and is trying to avoid giving those answers.

Several sources of empirical evidence thus can come into play: ethnographic evidence, comparative information about discourse in general, and reflexively organized cues to how the participants themselves understand what is going on. This evidence can be assembled both to justify the analyst's intuitions empirically about what is being argued and to augment those intuitions so as to go beyond a naive reading of the discourse. These various sources of information are interdependent in subtle and complex ways. None of these sources works alone, and all work against the background of the analyst's and reader's own cultural knowledge and intuitive competence as a native speaker. Ultimately, the acceptability of any particular reconstruction of a discourse will depend on its overall coherence, its accountability to the details of the text, and its consistency with other information about how this case works in particular, how related cases of this type work in general, and how discourse in general is known to work. (For more extended discussion of empirical methodology in discourse analysis, see Jackson 1986; Jacobs 1986, 1988, 1990.)

Normative Warrants for Reconstruction

Empirical grounds, taken by themselves, are not sufficient to provide a complete and unequivocal reconstruction of argumentation in terms of the ideal model. Even in the most clear-cut cases of filling in missing premises, we must *assume* that the speaker is being cooperative—that is, that the speaker is orienting to contributions of interlocutors, is taking up the evident purposes of the exchange, and is making a contribution that fits with those purposes. This is more than just an empirical attribution. It is a normative presumption in the sense that we expect of interlocutors that they will act in reasonable, cooperative ways, and we hold them accountable for meeting such expectations.[8]

In accordance with their own specialized interests, argumentation analysts hold participants to a refined version of this normative presumption of cooperative communication. In this respect, the ideal model for critical discussion serves as a heuristic tool in the analysis, which can be seen in two ways. First, the empirical qualities of any discourse suggest multiple meanings and are compatible with multiple forms of representation, not all of which are equally relevant to a critical analysis. Those aspects of the discourse relevant to a reconstruction are determined, in part, by the critical rationalist perspective of the ideal model. The philosophical background of the model dictates an interest in those aspects of discourse that are relevant to a resolution-oriented analysis.

Empirical considerations suggest meanings and functions other than the argumentative functions and structures that are of interest to a critical reconstruction. In the example above there are social and relational meanings that could also be selected out for reconstruction and analysis. For instance, Mrs. Lee's utterance in 02 does not merely argue against the missionaries' standpoint, it also disaffiliates with them socially. She casts her church as an alternative to the Mormon church, and she places herself in an antagonistic relationship with its representatives. Or again, M1's question in 05 is phrased in a way that is laden with implications for Mrs. Lee's moral identity (and not just with argumentative implications for what will and will not be taken as an acceptable assertion). At least as far as the Mormon missionaries are concerned, to admit openly to not believing the Bible is to place oneself into a category of moral alien that is quite different from being a non-Mormon who still confesses faith in the Bible. Likewise, M2's comments in 13 indicate a social categorization of Mrs. Lee as a lost and confused soul. Those comments claim for M2 a role in which he has the authority to impute personal beliefs to Mrs. Lee, to counsel her, and to pass judgment on her.

Pointing to the social functions of these turns does not deny their argumentative functions and implications. But the point to see is that a dialectical reconstruction selects those qualities of the discourse that isolate the argumentative structures, functions, and content of the discourse and ignores other aspects that do not clearly bear on those considerations.[9] The warrant for this selectivity is a normative one based on the interests of the analyst.

An ideal normative model also serves as warrant for reconstruc-

tion in a second way. While empirical features of the text suggest multiple meanings and multiple forms of representation, empirical features do not always provide an analyst with decisive clues to any particular meaning, or they underdetermine the most appropriate form of representation.

Sometimes the problem of underdetermination can be sidestepped, resolution of the issue not being crucial to the analyst's purposes in conducting a given analysis. For example, many spoken and written texts do not straightforwardly produce arguments but instead frame the argumentation in an act of reporting (cf. Goffman 1974). In such a case, the person reporting is not openly intent upon resolving a dispute by convincing someone else. Most newspaper items containing speeches and elements of discussions are officially intended to be taken by the reader simply as information about what someone else argued. But that does not mean that the materials cannot be usefully construed as argumentation. Example 3.2 is fairly typical of a newspaper report in which a dispute is fought out among opponents who are not clearly identified.

It is not quite clear who is the antagonist here, though the potential for an antagonist is clearly projected in the opening reference to a possible debate. Nor is it absolutely clear what the main standpoints are on the question of "who is actually receiving a so-called 'genuine minimum' income."

And it is unclear whether or not the article itself should be analyzed as argumentation or only as a report of a (potential?) argument. In the former case, the roles of protagonist and antagonist would have to be imputed to the author and the reader respectively. But that imputation is conditional on a decision to treat the article itself as argumentation, a decision which is not strongly grounded in any empirical evidence one way or the other.

Part of the ambiguity arises from the use of the phrases here italicized: "the Local Authorities' Association *has demonstrated that, at any rate,* they include many elderly people." On the one hand, this statement could be intended simply as a report of the status of one line of argument made by the association in support of some higher-order standpoint on the question of "who is actually receiving a so-called 'genuine minimum' income." The qualifier "at any rate" suggests that there is more to the debate than this claim alone. On the other hand, this phrasing could be intended as an argument from authority on behalf of the claim that many elderly people receive a genuine minimum income. The conclusionary judgment implied by the verb "to demonstrate" suggests this latter interpretation. A similar ambiguity occurs later in the text in which a reported claim is qualified as "the Association believes"—where

Example 3.2

Real low incomes for elderly

Should a new debate brew up in the coming weeks about who is actually receiving a so-called "genuine minimum" income, the Local Authorities' Association has demonstrated that, at any rate, they include many elderly people. The Association has carried out a survey of those applying for the Christmas bonus. The survey covered 114 districts and found 506,000 people applying for the bonus. Most of them were either elderly or members of ethnic minorities. The Association believes that with more preparation (with information aimed more carefully at particular sections of the community) more of the elderly and more foreigners would have applied, since the survey also showed that it is precisely these groups who have most difficulty finding out about and applying for the bonus.

"believes" contrasts with the later phrase "the survey also showed that," which refers to the basis for the association's belief.

In spite of these complications, however, we can still recognize a train of argument that is part of a critical discussion. It is fairly easy to identify the dialectical stages that have to be passed through in the resolution of the dispute. The first sentence signals the confrontation stage as it introduces the dispute (or potential dispute). As quite commonly happens, the opening stage is less clear-cut, but in the first sentence we are told that the Local Authorities' Association will act as protagonist with respect to the proposition that the elderly are among those receiving a "genuine minimum" income. The argumentation stage contains the results of the association's survey and is located further in the future ("Should a new debate brew up in the coming weeks . . ."). The concluding stage is left unilaterally to the association ("has demonstrated"). Moreover, the categories of protagonist and antagonist are clearly projected by the discourse, even if it is not altogether clear exactly who has taken on these roles. The normative commitments associated with those roles can be applied conditionally to anyone who was to occupy those roles. It should be clear that, for the purposes of analyzing these aspects of argumentative structure and function, an identification of who is actually filling the roles of protagonist and antagonist and a decision on whether or not the writer in fact intends to be

arguing as well as reporting are incidental issues that need not be resolved in order to carry out the analysis.[10]

There are, however, a variety of cases in which empirical ambiguity and vagueness in meaning can pose an obstacle to analysis. In such problematic cases, a critical reconstruction should tend toward the strongest possible reading, providing the best fit with the normative model. Since the point of a normative analysis is to find out how conflicts can be resolved in a reasonable way, the reconstruction should represent the discourse in maximally reasonable terms.

From a critical rationalist perspective, acting reasonably to manage disagreement implies taking part in a critical discussion. This means that the analyst will try to reconstruct the problematic parts of the discourse as part of a critical discussion, presuming that, in the absence of decisive clues to the contrary, the discourse is designed to resolve a difference of opinion in a reasonable way. The speaker or writer is then given the benefit of the doubt, and the analysis is favored which is most beneficial to the resolution of a dispute. The analyst opts for assigning to a questionable utterance the communicative force which is the most congruent with the distribution of speech acts in the ideal model of a critical discussion, and where the content of the discourse is incomplete or otherwise equivocal in meaning, the analyst makes sense of the discourse by filling in propositional content as would be most reasonable in making an argument.

For an analysis of speech acts belonging to the argumentation stage, this means that if the communicative force is not completely clear, an argumentative interpretation should be tried reconstructing those parts of the discourse that serve as argumentation. (See van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992a, 49, for this strategy of *maximally argumentative interpretation.*) In such an analysis it is of special importance that argumentation be clearly and justly distinguished, not only from communicative acts like advancing a standpoint and accepting or rejecting it, but also from act complexes which may just as well be performed in that stage of a critical discussion but which aim at different interactional effects and create different kinds of commitments, such as those usage declaratives of definition, precization, amplification, explication, and explicitization.

In the case of precization, for instance, one should not ask if it is an adequate defense of a standpoint but if it indeed restricts the possible interpretations of what is precised. If, however, a speech act is not considered as an argumentation but mistaken for some sort of usage declarative, it will fail to be judged properly and adequately as

a contribution made by the speaker or writer in resolving the dispute at issue. This strategy of maximally argumentative interpretation applies not ony to speech acts belonging to the category of assertives but also to implicit speech acts which at first sight appear to be commissives, directives, expressives, or declaratives but which fulfill a constructive part in the critical discussion only if reconstructed as argumentation.

Speaking more generally by way of a legal metaphor, it might be said that in analyzing a discourse satisfactorily, judgment must be made and pronounced by a rational judge who assumes that disputants are themselves reasonable in a dialectical sense. This judgment may in fact have to be made in the absence of indisputable facts and in spite of a lack of proof, starting from circumstantial evidence. It must take into account all extenuating or aggravating circumstances. In interpreting the communicative force of speech acts, this rational judge is required to apply the strategy of *maximally dialectical analysis* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992a, 105). Discussants are given the benefit of the doubt and are presumed to be acting reasonably insofar as this judgment is consistent with the available evidence.

In other words, the analyst applies an interpretive strategy that can be seen as a normatively specialized version of applying the Gricean presumption of cooperativity in generating implicatures. This strategy implies that a discourse which may or may not be conceived of as a critical discussion is conceived of as such. In applying the strategy of maximally dialectical analysis, the point of departure is the presumption that the discourse is meant to resolve a dispute. On such a presumption all speech acts performed are, in the absence of contrary indications, interpreted as a potential contribution to this goal. In this way, the language users are given maximal credit where credit is due.

A maximally dialectical analysis of this sort is chosen only where such an analysis is not ruled out by empirical considerations and where the dialectical force ascribed to an utterance remains compatible with other obvious functions of the utterance. An aside that is clearly simply an aside remains an aside. And the relevance of a question that is clearly a question naturally remains a question, regardless of whether or not it could also be construed as being an argument. The strategy of maximally dialectical analysis just prevents speech acts which play a potentially crucial part in resolving a dispute from not receiving acknowledgment. This is why in a dialectical analysis certain speech acts are, for example, substituted by the assertive standard form of a standpoint or an argument for that

standpoint.[11] Applying the strategy of maximally dialectical analysis, a normative reconstruction of the discourse can be achieved which may be properly described as a dialectification.

Approaches to Analysis and Reconstruction

So far, the framework for the analysis of argumentative discourse used by the analyst and the framework for the interpretation of argumentative discourse used by an ordinary-language user do not seem to be much different. In chapter 5 we will give more detailed attention to what we will term "naive reconstruction," meaning interpretive procedures used by ordinary-language users to accomplish an ongoing "reading" of the situation. Although we will argue that elements reconstructed analytically must be accessible *in principle* to naive reconstruction, this does not mean that naive reconstruction is in fact identical to analytic reconstruction, even under ideal conditions of cooperation and reasonableness. To reconstruct what a certain conversational move contributes to a case in support of a standpoint addresses a technical problem that is different from the problem of explaining, say, the overall functional organization of that move in the conversation, its communicative design, or its structural positioning with respect to other moves. The perspective of analysis and the perspective of interpretation should be clearly distinguished.

In this section, we attempt to position our own perspective with respect to other typical approaches to the analysis of discourse. We draw several distinctions among discourse analytic approaches, none intended to be more than a way of relating our approach to other approaches. The first distinction is between what we term "analytic" and "interpretive" approaches. The second distinction is between a priori and a posteriori approaches. The third distinction is among contrasting concepts of organization, which we term sequential, conventional, and rational.

Analytic vs. Interpretive Approaches

Pike's (1967) distinction between an "etic" and an "emic" perspective on language use captures much of what we mean when we speak of a distinction between analytic reconstruction and naive reconstruction (see also Taylor and Cameron 1987 and Wootton 1976). According to Pike (1967), an emic approach attempts to describe the particular interpretation procedures that the language users themselves in fact apply: their labeling and classification of discourse units, implicit recognition rules, and so on. In an etic approach, the discourse is methodically analyzed from an external perspective. Starting from objective verbal and nonverbal cues, the analyst aims at identifying what is going on in the discourse by applying an explicit decision procedure. In an etic approach, analytic decisions are made from within a scheme that is both systematically articulated and comprehensively applicable. That is, an etic scheme of reference is designed to reflect a theoretically principled order of classification and to be capable of subsuming the emic system of any particular speech community. In principle, the critical analyst adopts an etic approach to argumentative discourse because of the purpose-overlay implied in the critical discussion model. At the same time, concepts fundamental to the model (such as standpoint) draw attention to arguers' own perspectives.

All approaches to discourse in which a purely emic perspective is chosen we shall call interpretive, and all approaches in which a purely etic perspective is chosen, analytic. Both perspectives find adherents among discourse analysts.

Exemplifying interpretive approaches are forms of analysis that describe or explain participant perspectives on interaction. Symbolic interactionist approaches generally and most theories of strategic message production and message design can be classified as interpretive (see Blumer 1969; Burleson 1989; Delia, O'Keefe, and O'Keefe 1982; Maines 1981; O'Keefe 1988; Sanders 1987). Efforts to construct participant-oriented typologies of illocutionary acts also qualify as interpretive (Clarke 1983; Kreckel 1981; Rosaldo 1982).[12]

The most clear-cut examples of analytic approaches are those that focus entirely on analyst-defined features of discourse. Interaction analysts such as Duncan and Fiske (1977) and Cappella (1979, 1980) concentrate on objective physical features of the discourse, describing patterning and organization in terms of features which may or may not have any clear relevance to participant perceptions of the organization of discourse.[13] More relevant to our current purposes are analytic approaches involving functional features of discourse, for example, approaches based on theoretical systems of speech acts (Edmondson 1981; Searle 1975, 1976; Searle and Vanderveken 1985; Vanderveken 1985, 1990). We group Searle and Vanderveken's speech act theory with analytic approaches, not only because the categories for their taxonomy of speech acts are self-consciously derived from a set of theoretically based ordering principles, but also because they openly deny that the procedure for deriving indirect speech acts may be considered to be a description of the actual interpretive procedures of language users. Likewise, we group Edmondson with

analytic approaches because in his system, the language user's own perceptions are discounted, and even the use of the ordinary illocutionary verbs as names for the various types of speech act is rejected. But it is perhaps clear that the grounding of such analyses in ordinary-language intuitions about speech act types introduces interpretive elements.

In establishing a procedure for identifying what is relevant to the resolution of a dispute, we opt for such an analytic approach which includes interpretive insights. Such an analytic approach is captured by Schutz's (1973, 6) notion of "constructs of the second degree." By this phrase, Schutz means that the objects of human studies have intrinsic meaning apart from the interests and relevancies of the analyst.[14] The constructs of the human studies refer to and are founded upon the commonsense constructs of everyday actors. Rather than being first-order constructs, the constructs of the analyst are constructs about constructs—and part of the task of any analytic model is to select and codify that preexisting system of relevancies. At the same time, however, Schutz insists that the constructs of the human studies must necessarily reflect the specialized analytic problems of the social scientist and be developed in accordance with the technical ordering principles and the requirements of systematization of the discipline. The categories and principles of an analytic model cannot, and should not try to, correspond to the commonsense constructs of everyday actors. For this reason, while an analytic model is accountable to the structure of everyday discourse, it is never simply a reproduction of the perspective of an ordinary-language user; nor is it governed by the interests and categories of an ordinary-languge user.

A Priori vs. A Posteriori Approaches

Cutting across the distinction between interpretive and analytic approaches is a distinction between a priori and a posteriori approaches. An a posteriori approach to discourse is inductive: the theoretical insights are gained by way of empirical observation. An a priori approach starts from certain theoretical premises concerning the way discourse is conducted.

A posteriori approaches may be interpretive or analytic. A posteriori interpretive positions include most ethnographers of speaking and many conversation analysts. Ethnography of speaking aims for description of the participant-defined features of the diverse speech events they encounter in the communities they study and the social conventions that govern them. A common theme in writing about

ethnography is that the analyst must be prepared to see the speech event as organized in terms of the constructs of the participants.[15] Conversation analysts following the ethnomethodological tradition of Garfinkel (1967) adopt an initially atheoretical, inductive approach in an effort to establish empirically the methods by which orderliness is created in ordinary discourse—in other words, the methods used by the conversationalists themselves in order to reach a shared interpretation (cf. Heritage 1984b; Schegloff 1988; and Zimmerman 1988).[16]

A posteriori analytic approaches are also inductive, but they do not focus on discovery of the meanings participants bring to situations. A good example is interaction analysis, which generally applies analyst categories to the description of interaction but aims for inductive model-building based on regularities in the association of one act type and another (Bakeman and Gottman 1987; Cappella 1979, 1980; Duncan and Fiske 1977). Interaction analysts frequently describe their approach as starting without theoretical preconceptions and searching for a "grammar" of conversation by noting regularities in the sequencing of act types within interaction (Jose 1988; Stech 1975).

A priori approaches differ from a posteriori approaches in that they start from a theoretical stance taken toward the phenomena, such as a theoretically generated classification of illocutionary acts. Leading examples are members of the Birmingham school (Coulthard 1977; Stubbs 1981, 1983), who study the structure of verbal exchanges; speech act analysts, who try to describe the deep structure of speech acts (Ferrara 1980; Gibbs and Delaney 1987; Hancher 1979; Searle 1969; Vanderveken 1990); and the Griceans, who formulate conversational principles (Brown and Levinson 1987; Horn 1984; Leech 1983; Sperber and Wilson 1986).[17] Although these approaches are more analytic than interpretive, it is also possible to take an interpretive a priori position (e.g., Clarke 1983).

No position is purely a posteriori, for at a minimum the observer begins with constructs embedded in ordinary communicative competence. Likewise, no position is purely a priori, for theoretical concepts must come from experience with the phenomena unless they are entirely devoid of content. The distinction is not meant to be more than a contrast in emphasis and research direction, a rough distinction between theory as a summary of observation and theory as a structuring of observation.

Our position is a priori in the sense that it begins with a model of critical discussion, worked out abstractly as a description of what discourse would look like if ideally tailored to the task of disagreement-resolution. But the model obviously depends upon

some understandings of the structuring of discourse that are experientially and observationally based.

Concepts of Organization: Sequential, Conventional, and Rational

Among the a priori, analytic approaches (the approaches most similar to our own), there are still important differences. An important difference between the members of the Birmingham school, on the one hand, and the Searleans and Griceans, on the other, is that the former concentrate on the surface level of discourse, whereas the latter try to grasp its "deep structure." Stubbs (1981, 1983), Coulthard (1977), and other members of the Birmingham school analyze the structures of verbal exchange by describing the acts which constitute the discourse by their interactional function. They try to distinguish between structurally well-formed and ill-formed sequences. Essentially, their approach amounts to a form of distributionalism. The function of an utterance is determined by its regular sequential positions within a system of co-occurrences and alternatives. Like certain a posteriori analytic approaches (such as Duncan and Fiske 1977), their analysis is driven by a "sequencing rules" approach.[18]

Unlike for the Birmingham school, for the Searleans function is determined by conventional devices such as "felicity" conditions and by the intentions of the speaker. Verbal utterances are goal-directed speech acts that further the interests of actors in a certain speech event. Verbal utterances can serve this function because they are recognizable realizations of certain speech acts. Their recognizability is due to the common knowledge among language users of the conventions that govern the performance of speech acts. The conventional felicity conditions determine when an utterance may be taken as a certain speech act. By virtue of the conventionality of the felicity conditions, it is possible to identify which intention may be ascribed to the speaker.

Labov and Fanshel (1977, esp. chap. 3) extend speech act theory by formulating rules of discourse that specify how analysts can identify speech acts at a deep level. These rules have the following form: "If S produces an utterance and the conditions $C_1, C_2, \ldots, C_n$ apply, analyze this utterance as a speech act belonging to category X." In their view, the sequencing of speech acts is governed by quasi-grammatical rules. The speech acts that play a part at the deep level may, at the surface level, be realized by various kinds of other speech

acts. A sequence of speech acts that is orderly at the deep level may seem incoherent at the surface level.

The organization of verbal interaction can be regarded as a product of sequencing or as a product of conventional structures, but it can also be regarded as a product of deeper rational principles. A sequential view of organization assumes that order in discourse is to be found at the level of behavioral regularities that may or may not be recognized by the language users themselves. On this view, the meaning of acts is constituted by their probability of occurrence in a particular interactional context.

According to conventionalists, order in discourse is to be found at the level of more or less arbitrary agreements that serve as the basis for shared normative expectations. On this view, the meaning of acts is constituted by rules that serve as stipulative definitions for any given act type.

According to rationalists, order in discourse is to be found at the level of principles for practical action that serve as guides for the calculation of strategic action and as interpretive presumptions for the construction of inferences. On this view, the meaning of acts is constituted by communicator intentions and a process of inference to the best explanation.[19] Searleans tend to emphasize the conventionality of language use; Griceans favor a rationalistic view.[20] For Grice (1975, 1989), the Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims are not merely rules that conversationalists do in fact follow but principles that are reasonable for them to follow.

We have argued elsewhere that a rational model can subsume and explain much of what is wanted from a conventional or sequential approach (Jacobs 1985; Jacobs and Jackson 1983, 1989). We see these three approaches to organization as representing successively deeper levels of structure.

As far as the empirical justification of a normative reconstruction of argumentative discourse is concerned, in our view, an integration of Searlean insights into the communicative aspect of discourse and Gricean insights into the interactional aspect provides the most adequate approach. In ordinary discourse, the communicative and the interactional aspects are closely interwoven. In principle, the communicative effect of understanding is aimed for only in view of achieving the interactional effect of accepting, and these two effects are simultaneously pursued by the same speech act.

The integration of Searlean and Gricean insights, because of its combination of conventional and rationalist views, brings together in a harmonious way the rules and regularities of actual discourse and the normative principles of goal-directed discourse. Hence, we

would characterize the approach developed in this book as more analytic than interpretive, as more a priori than a posteriori, and as built on a rational model of discourse structure.

Notes

1. The critical analysis of argumentative dialogue may be concerned with aspects of argumentation other than the structure and substance of a completed "case" made for or against some standpoint. One could, for instance, be interested in how a case emerges through dialogic interaction, in the properties of argumentative gambits that rely on timing and order of presentation, or in the communicative structure of strategies for alluding to arguments or hinting at cases. See the analyses in chapters 5 and 6 for some of these concerns.

2. From Jacobs 1986. All examples use an adaptation of Gail Jefferson's transcription notation (see Atkinson and Heritage 1984): Single parentheses ( ) indicate material that was not clearly audible to the transcriber or not audible at all. Brackets [ ] indicate beginning and endpoints of interruption and overlap. Equal signs = mark a continuous stream of talk between two speakers or by the same speaker. Double parentheses (( )) contain editorial descriptions. Italics indicate special stress. Words spelled in all capital letters indicate increased loudness. Colons and repeated letters indicate stretched sounds. Dashes at the end of partial or completed words indicate cutoff sounds. Punctuation marks usually indicate vocal intonation rather than grammatical form.

3. The use of "well" by M1 in 03 and by M2 in 07 is also a conventional means of marking the relevance of an utterance in a context where expectations of upcoming coherence have been upset (Schiffrin 1987). That is, the questions in 03 and 07 are not *just* questions but questions addressing something problematic in the continuation of the discourse.

4. There is more to the construction of this missing premise than a simple follow-through on the cohesive cues in the text. See van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1982, 1983.

5. See Bleiberg and Churchill 1975; Jacobs 1986; also discussion of turns 037–46 and 095–99 in example 6.4. An example of the standard pattern is the following case, from an initial psychotherapy session between a young female patient and a middle-aged male therapist (from Bleiberg and Churchill).

01 Pt: I don't want them ((parents)) to have anything to do with my life, except ((Pause)) security(?)
[
02 Dr: You live at home?
03 Pt: Yes.
04 Dr: They pay your bills?
05 Pt: Yeah.
06 Dr: How could they not have anything to do with your life?

6. Perhaps more precisely, Mrs. Lee has called into question her commitment to part of Grice's (1975) Quality Maxim: Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. For a more elaborated discussion of this example as an instance of "confrontation," see Jacobs 1986.

7. Nofsinger (1975) discusses the occurrence of repeated turns as evidence for failure of responsiveness on the part of the recipient of the initial turn.

8. Normative and empirical aspects of interpretation are inextricably bound together. Just as normative presumptions such as Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle are empirically grounded in the sense that ordinary-language users orient to such a principle, so also any empirical grounding for interpretation will be normatively warranted by the assumption that the actor is reasonable, cooperative, knows "what anyone should know," and so on. No normative principle for reconstruction would thus be acceptable to the analyst if it could not be shown to be intersubjectively valid (i.e., empirically grounded). And no empirical cue or background information is interpretable or relevant outside a framework of normative standards and presumptions.

9. A very difficult issue is what is and is not relevant to the conduct of the argumentation. At present there are no principled answers to that question. For example, some of the so-called fallacies of argument may not involve arguments at all (e.g., argument *ad baculum* [i.e., appeal to force] or certain emotional appeals). Or what is objectionable are the argumentatively irrelevant qualities (e.g., some cases of argument ad hominem or cases of loaded language). But those aspects of the discourse should still be retained in a reconstruction. Nevertheless, we should not confuse this issue with the related issue of what kinds of information should be taken into account when deciding on the most appropriate argumentative reconstruction. The information that is represented in the reconstructed argument is not the same as the information that needs to be taken into account in deciding just how the argument should be represented in a reconstruction. More on this topic in chapter 5.

10. These issues might prove important for other considerations. For example, the fact that a writer can use the reporting frame to evade argumentative responsibilities while putting forward an argument is a danger that a critic might wish to point out. Clearly, however, when claiming that the writer was in fact doing so and should be held accountable for it, one should bear in mind that the absence of strong empirical grounding cannot be compensated for by emphasizing the analyst's strong normative interest in critical discussion. The problem here is that empirically there is a normative expectation that news reporters will not engage in advocacy (for a similar situation, see norms for mediators in chapter 6). About all that could be said is that *if* the writer was making an argument, certain argumentative responsibilities *would* follow from that, and that *if* the writer had the intention of forwarding an argument without owning up to it, that

intention *could* be satisfied through the textual presentation in question. But neither "if" leads to a bona fide critical evaluation or judgment, since here the benefit of the doubt calls for a nonargumentative reading.

11. A specific problem of analysis arises when it is unclear whether an argumentation is multiple or is coordinatively compound. Then it is possible that the speaker or writer sees the single arguments individually as conclusive of his or her standpoint, but it is equally possible that the speaker or writer takes them to be a conclusive defense only when seen in concert. In dialectical analysis multiple interpretation of the argumentation structure is a strategy to start with. That way, at least there are guarantees that each single argumentation will be examined as to its justifying or refuting capacity in relation to the proposition to which the standpoint being defended refers. Since in this way we attribute a maximum of argumentative force to each individual, single argumentation, this recommendation leads to the strategy of *maximal argumentative analysis* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992a, 81).

12. We see Clark 1983 as exemplifying an interpretive approach by virtue of assuming performative verbs to be indicative of the language users' categorization of discourse.

13. Duncan and Fiske (1977, 10) mention as a defining strength of their approach the use of data generated "through observations demanding a minimum of inference by the rater (in part by avoiding the ascription of 'meaning' to actions)." Cappella (1979, 1980) takes this strategy to its logical extreme, concentrating on the analysis of patterns of the purely physical features of talk and silence.

14. We use the term "human studies," even though Schutz referred only to the social sciences and had specifically in mind the discipline of economics. His point, however, is not restricted to these disciplines.

15. E.g, Saville-Troike (1982, 4) describes ethnography as follows: " 'Doing ethnography' in another culture involves first and foremost field work, including observing, asking questions, participating in group activities, and testing the validity of one's perceptions against the intuitions of natives. Research design must allow an openness to categories and modes of thought and behavior which may not have been anticipated by the investigator."

16. In the conversation analytic approach, agreement on the rules of discourse is regarded as something for the conversationalists themselves to work out. The methods they use in negotiating this agreement are based on the principles of accountability and intersubjective understanding. Conversation analysts thus do not assume a universal and preprogrammed communicative competence; instead, they start from the methods displayed by ordinary-language users in their conversational negotiations. The conversation analytic approach aims to provide insights into the interpretive categorization of events and sequences of utterances by the conversationalists. Notions such as "preference system," "adjacency pair," "preferred pair part," "dispreferred pair part," and "markedness of dispreference" (pausing, token agreement, etc.) play a crucial role in their description. However, for a view contrary to the a posteriori analysis of such constructs see Coulter 1983.

17. Edmondson (1981) goes one step further in following an analytic and a priori line of approach. He also considers the exchange of speech acts as the fundamental discourse unit, but he does not want to rely on a taxonomy of speech acts which is in any way derived from ordinary-language use and instead proposes his own taxonomy based on theoretical considerations. In his taxonomy, each utterance has, by definition, only one force. Unfortunately, it is not quite clear why he chooses the specific acts that are included in his taxonomy.

18. See also interaction analysts following in the tradition of Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson 1967.

19. Various aspects of these contracts are discussed in greater detail in the chautauqua debate between Cappella (1990) and Jacobs (1990) as well as in Akmajian, Demers, Farmer, and Harnish 1990, chap. 9, and Kauffeld 1987.

20. Among positions built on a concept of organization as "rational," the best known are Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, Clark and Haviland's (1977) Given-New Contract, Leech's (1983) Tact Maxim and Principles of Interpersonal Rhetoric, and Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory.