



# The Making of Argumentation Theory: A Pragma-dialectical View

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## Abstract

In ‘The making of argumentation theory’ van Eemeren and van Haaften describe the contributions made to the five components of a full-fledged research program of argumentation theory by four prominent approaches to the discipline: formal dialectics, rhetoric/pragmalinguistics, informal logic, and pragma-dialectics. Most of these approaches do not contribute to all components, but to some in particular. Starting from the pragma-dialectical view of the relationship between dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness – the crucial issue in argumentation theory – van Eemeren and van Haaften explain the positions taken by representatives from the approaches discussed and indicate where they differ from the pragma-dialectical approach. It transpires that approaches focusing on dialectical reasonableness are, next to pragma-dialectics, formal dialectics and informal logic; approaches focusing on rhetorical effectiveness are, next to pragma-dialectics, rhetoric and pragmalinguistics, and the informal logician Tindale. When it comes to the relationship between dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness, some interest in it is shown in rhetoric and pragmalinguistics, but only in pragma-dialectics and in Tindale’s work is it a real focus. The main difference between Tindale’s view and the pragma-dialectical view is that in pragma-dialectics the decisive role in deciding about reasonableness is assigned to a code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse and in Tindale’s approach this role is assigned to Tindale’s interpretation of the Perelmanian universal audience.

**Keywords** Argumentation theory · Dialectical reasonableness · Formal dialectics · Informal logic · Pragma-dialectics · Research program · Rhetorical effectiveness · Rhetoric and pragmalinguistics

## 1 Argumentation Theory as a Discipline

Argumentation is of vital importance to all kinds of human practices.<sup>1</sup> In society at large as well as in people's private and professional lives there is not only a constant flux of opinions, but also a strong demand to resolve (often non-explicit) differences about them. Whether an evaluative, a prescriptive (inciting) or a descriptive standpoint is involved,<sup>2</sup> in order to resolve the difference in a reasonable and effective way, argumentative discourse is generally used.<sup>3</sup> Because the argumentative process can be rather complicated and the argumentative products resulting from it may be lacking in quality, an academic discipline is needed in which the production, analysis and evaluation of argumentation is systematically examined. This discipline, called *argumentation theory*, serves intellectual as well as practical purposes: next to providing knowledge and insight regarding the process and products of argumentation, it creates a basis for improving argumentative practices.<sup>4</sup>

As a discipline relating to an empirical phenomenon, argumentation theory should inform us about how things *are* in argumentative discourse – both in general and in specific argumentative practices. This means that argumentation theory must in any case have a *descriptive* dimension. As a discipline concerned with the quality of argumentation, argumentation theory should also point out how argumentative discourse *should be* conducted in order to be fully up to standard. To serve its purposes, argumentation theory must therefore also have a *normative* dimension.<sup>5</sup> In addition, as a discipline aimed at enabling constructive interventions based on the results of descriptive and normative examinations, argumentation theory needs to develop tools for improving the ways in which in different kinds of argumentative practices argumentation is produced, analysed and evaluated. This means that argumentation theory must also have a *practical* dimension.

Argumentation theory is the study of the use of arguments (i.e. reasons) to convince others by means of a reasonable discussion of the acceptability of the (evalu-

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<sup>1</sup> We thank the two anonymous reviewers of the journal *Argumentation* for their useful comments.

<sup>2</sup> These different types of standpoints have in common that – unlike, for instance, the explanandum in an explanation – they are supposed to meet with doubt or rejection – otherwise there is no difference of opinion.

<sup>3</sup> The general goal of argumentation is in our view to resolve, i.e. decide, a difference of opinion in a reasonable way. Argumentation theorists who think that argumentation serves also other goals should check whether pursuing these goals is inherent in argumentation. Otherwise, studying their pursuit is not necessarily the task of argumentation theorists. When differences are resolved by other means than argumentation (e.g. by exerting emotional pressure), examining how that happens is not a primary task of argumentation theorists either.

<sup>4</sup> The scope of argumentation theory, i.e. what is included in the discipline, depends on how the notion of argumentation is perceived and consequently defined. See van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe et al. (2014: 1–7).

<sup>5</sup> Even when argumentation theory is seen as a purely descriptive discipline, there will be a descriptive interest in the norms that are applied in practice in deciding whether a standpoint is adequately defended.

ative, prescriptive or descriptive) standpoint<sup>6</sup> at issue in a difference.<sup>7</sup> The crucial problem in the study of argumentation therefore is how maintaining reasonableness in argumentative discourse can lead to effective convincingness. If argumentation theory is to be a discipline incorporating the descriptive, normative and practical dimensions just mentioned, various kinds of research must be undertaken to give substance to this unique combination. In our view, a fully-fledged research program for the examination of argumentation needs to include the following five components (van Eemeren 1987/2015).

- (1) In argumentation theory, in order to respond adequately to the problems of argumentative quality giving rise to the theorizing, *philosophical reflection* is required upon the normative point of departure of the discipline. This may, for instance, result in the philosophical motivation of the use of an ‘anthropological’, a ‘geometrical’ or a ‘critical’ *conception of reasonableness* in dealing with argumentation (Toulmin 1976). The philosophical reflection should also include careful consideration of the meta-theoretical principles underlying the theorizing.
- (2) Systematic consideration of the meaning of the normative ideal for a constructive approach to argumentative reality is to be followed by the articulation of a *theoretical model of argumentative discourse*. This model must contain the various kinds of argumentative moves that are relevant to resolving a difference of opinion in a reasonable way and indicate what their *functional role* is in the resolution process.
- (3) *Empirical research* has to make clear *which kinds of communicative* (‘illocutionary’) and *interactional* (‘perlocutionary’) acts are in actual argumentative discourse instrumental in making argumentative moves that are relevant to resolving a difference of opinion<sup>8</sup> and *which kinds of factors* play a part in determining the outcome. This research can be qualitative or quantitative. The one type of empirical research (as a rule the qualitative one) may precede the other.
- (4) *Analytical research* is required to make a *methodical reconstruction* of argumentative discourses from real life in terms of the theoretical model taken as the guiding principle. This reconstruction takes account of all institutional and other contextual exigencies that influence the conduct of the argumentative process in the communicative practice concerned.
- (5) Based on the results of the philosophical, theoretical, empirical and analytical research, the development is to be started of *practical formats and methods* for adequately *producing, analysing and evaluating* oral and written argumentative discourse. These formats and methods need to be specified in accordance with the demands of the various argumentative practices.

<sup>6</sup> When a descriptive standpoint is at issue, acceptability may boil down to a requirement of truth in order to avoid relativism.

<sup>7</sup> Going by this generally accepted concept of argumentation, argumentation theory is neither a general theory of reasoning nor a theory of proof.

<sup>8</sup> Communicative and interactional acts are speech acts simultaneously performed in oral or written speech events. They are aimed at bringing about the communicative effect of understanding and the interactional effect of acceptance.

In a full discipline of argumentation theory a research program containing each of these five components is in our view indispensable for acquiring the descriptive, normative and practical understanding necessary for tackling the intricate problem of maintaining reasonableness while aiming for effective convincingness. In dealing with the combination of reasonableness and effectiveness in argumentative discourse, insight into the ideal and insight into the real should meet – and that can only happen on the basis of a well-considered union of, on the one hand, philosophical and theoretical research concerning the ideal and, on the other hand, empirical and practical research concerning the real – by means of reconstructive analytical research that systematically links them to each other. In practice, individual researchers may well concentrate on just one or two components of the research program, but they always need to keep in mind how these components relate to the other components. Guarding this complete overview of the whole and its constituent parts is in our opinion a prerequisite for a proper development of argumentation theory as a discipline.

In statements about the objectives and research plans of argumentation theory that are made in the field, such an overview is as a rule lacking, just as there is generally no articulated view pronounced concerning the connection between maintaining reasonableness and aiming for effectiveness – which is in our opinion a precondition for a proper development of the discipline. These two observations, which we will show to be interrelated, motivated us to write this article. In Section 2, we shall first indicate which contributions to the various components of the research program have been made in prominent (clusters of) approaches to argumentation theory. In Section 3, we explain our pragma-dialectical view on the relationship between maintaining reasonableness and aiming for effectiveness in argumentative discourse. In Section 4, we discuss the positions on this crucial issue taken in other approaches and compare them with the pragma-dialectical view. This allows us to draw in Section 5 some general conclusions about the current state of the art in building argumentation theory as a discipline.

## 2 Current Approaches to Argumentation Research<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1 The Progenitors of Modern Argumentation Theory

The realization of the complex of ambitions regarding the study of argumentation described in the previous section has taken shape in several clusters of approaches (van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe et al. 2014). Progenitors of modern argumentation theory are Toulmin (1958/2003) and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958/1969), whose “neo-classical” contributions started modern argumentation theory. In our view, the philosophers Crawshaw-Williams (1957) and Næss (1966) deserve to be added to this short list.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> for an Elaboration of our Succinct Description, see van Eemeren (2018: 169–192). See for more Information van Eemeren et al. (2014)

<sup>10</sup> Other influential authors are mentioned in the next sections.

Toulmin's 'field-independent' model of the procedural form of argumentation, which resembles the classical *epicheirema*, provides a systematic overview of the various elements that are functional in the argumentative defence of a standpoint. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's 'new rhetoric' introduces the point of departure, associative argument schemes and dissociation techniques that make argumentation sound,<sup>11</sup> if they are chosen in such a way that they adduce or reinforce the audience's assent to the standpoint at issue.<sup>12</sup>

The dominant theoretical perspectives these days adopted in argumentation theory continue to be the dialectical view and the rhetorical view<sup>13</sup> developed in the classical tradition (van Eemeren 2018: 169–184).<sup>14</sup> Modern dialectical approaches are in particular indebted to Crawshay-Williams and Næss. Crawshay-Williams (1957) introduced the two-part requirement of 'problem-solving' validity and 'intersubjective'/'conventional' validity that needs to be fulfilled in resolving a difference of opinion reasonably by means of argumentation ("on the merits").<sup>15</sup> Næss (1966) treated argumentative discourse as verbal communication that is to be conducted in accordance with certain procedural and material discussion rules. Modern rhetorical approaches remain first of all strongly influenced by the classical rhetorical tradition that started in Antiquity (van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe et al. 2014: Ch. 2).

## 2.2 Formal Dialectical Approaches

Starting from a formal logical approach to reasoning,<sup>16</sup> and in certain cases influenced by dialectical insights of Crawshay-Williams and Næss, several formal dialectical approaches have developed.<sup>17</sup> They vary from Hamblin's (1970) formal

<sup>11</sup> In argumentation theory the term *sound* is not limited to its meaning in formal logic of a formally valid argument with true premises.

<sup>12</sup> Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 19) emphasize that audiences are always a more or less "systematized construction" consisting of "the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation". Next to 'particular' audiences, they distinguish a 'universal' audience. Gross and Dearn (2003) consider the construction of a universal audience as an operation of the imagination. Tindale (2004: 148) agrees, but adds emphatically that it is an operation "on a real audience that exists".

<sup>13</sup> We do not consider the argumentative discourse itself *dialectical* or *rhetorical*, but the theoretical perspective from which the discourse is observed and characterized (cf. Blair & Johnson 1987: 41; Krabbe 2002: 29). It causes conceptual confusion when these terms are used interchangeably at the subject-matter level as well as the meta-level.

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle already distinguished these two perspectives next to the logical perspective.

<sup>15</sup> Crawshay-Williams inspired recognition of this two-part validity criterion, in which *problem(solving)-validity* refers to solving the theoretical problem of distinguishing between "reliable" and "unreliable" arguments and *intersubjective validity* to making clear when such a validity standard can be decisive in actual practice. The notion of problem-validity connects with the traditional notion of validity. In our terminology, the notion of intersubjective validity is associated with intersubjective acceptability of the validity standard and the notion of conventional validity with its actual acceptance in a certain company of people.

<sup>16</sup> Formal deductive logic deals with formal implications or inferences, not with argumentation. Lorenzen and Lorenz (1978) have given formal logic a dialogical shape in which it deals with solving a difference of opinion.

<sup>17</sup> Recently the close historic connection between dialectic and logic (Krabbe 2006: 186–190) has been further documented by Dutilh Novaes and Duncombe (2016).

dialectical approach to argumentation and treatment of the fallacies to Barth and Krabbe's (1982) formal discussion procedures for resolving differences of opinion by checking whether the conclusion contained in the standpoint *follows* indeed from the premises contained in the argumentation.<sup>18</sup> In formal dialectics, a conclusion follows from certain premises, "if and only if the defender of the conclusion [...] will, as soon as his adversary [...] admits these premises, be able in principle to win any discussion about that conclusion" (Krabbe 2006: 190). The formal procedures involved make use of the dialectical systems proposed by the Erlangen School (Lorenzen & Lorenz 1978). From a more recent date is Walton and Krabbe's (1995) attempt to integrate the Hamblin-type and the Lorenzen-type formal dialectical systems in rules for dealing with argumentative commitments in contextualised dialogues.<sup>19</sup>

The formal dialecticians' contribution to the study of argumentation pertains for the most part to the theoretical component of the research program that we outlined, but there is also a (less pronounced) link with the philosophical component (Barth & Krabbe 1982: 3–36) and through applications to computer-mediated interventions in artificial intelligence (Hage 2000) with the practical component. Due to the formal character of these dialectical approaches, an established connection with research of real-life communicative and interactive practices is lacking. As a consequence, they make no immediate contribution to the empirical component of argumentation theory and the analytical component is only sparsely represented.

### 2.3 Rhetorical and Pragmalinguistic Approaches

The rhetorical and pragmalinguistic approaches to argumentation are for the most part descriptive rather than normative.<sup>20</sup> Additionally they have in common that their research concentrates primarily on presentational qualities of specific pieces of argumentative discourse carried out in particular historical or institutional contexts. The rhetorical approaches tend to be case-oriented and refer frequently to the classical rhetorical tradition while the pragmalinguistic approaches tend to focus on textual properties and refer frequently to insights from discourse and conversation analysis.<sup>21</sup> The most striking modern specimens of a rhetorical approach are the – predominantly American – studies giving descriptions of the utilization of means of persuasion in political and some other domains of discourse (e.g. Zarefsky 1995, 2014, 2021). As for the theoretical background of these analyses of discourses aimed at persuasion:<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The Bayesian approach to argumentation, which differs from the dialectical approaches, is also purely formal, but instead of being deductive, it is probabilistic in nature. See, e.g., Hahn and Oaksford (2007).

<sup>19</sup> The goal of this modeling is normative: dialectical systems are to help analysts to "justify critical judgments that an argument in a real case is fallacious or nonfallacious" (Walton & Krabbe 1995: 5). See also Walton (1999).

<sup>20</sup> Even rhetoric-minded Tindale (2004: 151) acknowledges that to the assessment of arguments "rhetorical considerations seem rarely pertinent".

<sup>21</sup> In dealing with argumentative texts in 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA), both rhetorical and pragmalinguistic insights are used, but then from a normative ethical perspective – and sometimes combined with insights from pragma-dialectics or other argumentation theories. See, e.g., Reisigl and Wodak (2001).

<sup>22</sup> According to Burke (1950/1969), a progenitor of modern rhetoric, "Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric".

they have mainly classical roots. The (related) communicative studies of argumentative discourse in natural settings, such as those of informal argumentative exchanges by Jacobs and Jackson (1982; 1989), are primarily pragmatologically-oriented. Currently Jacobs and other linguistic pragmatists focus on studying the ‘design’ of argumentation (Jacobs 2000).

The francophone linguistic approach called *Radical Argumentativism* (Anscombe & Ducrot 1983) developed its own theoretical point of departure but also connects with classical rhetoric. Other (pragma)linguistic approaches from France (such as Plantin 1996 and Doury 2006) borrow from various linguistic pragmatic theories, discourse and conversation analysis and make use of rhetorical insight that fits in with their ‘emic’ perspective.<sup>23</sup> A more recent European approach that includes, next to linguistic insight, also insight from rhetoric and from approaches such as pragma-dialectics, is the topics-based approach to argument schemes of Rigotti and Greco (2019).

Characteristically, the empirical component of the rhetorical and pragmatological approaches is virtually always qualitative and seldom quantitative;<sup>24</sup> rhetorical research consists to a large extent of analytic case studies (Leff 2003; Zarefsky 2021). Although in American communication studies the ‘fields’ or ‘spheres’ of discourse are prominently mentioned as the macro-context in which the argumentative discourse takes place (Goodnight 1982: 16; 2012), until recently not a great deal of “field-dependent” empirical research of actual argumentative discourse in specific domains or communicative activity types has been carried out.<sup>25</sup>

Generally, the rhetorical and pragmatological approaches focus on the theoretical and the empirical components of the examination of argumentation, not so much on the philosophical or the practical components. More than the pragmatological approaches, the rhetorical approaches contribute by means of case studies also to the analytical component of the research program for argumentation theory, albeit that this contribution is often limited to applications of the familiar rhetorical tools. Rhetorical research is in fact dominated by such case studies.

## 2.4 Informal Logic’s Conglomerate of Approaches

The term *informal logic* denominates a conglomerate of different approaches to the study of reasoning in ordinary language started in the late 1970s by philosophers from North America that were inspired by the practical problems they experienced in teaching modern logic to their students.<sup>26</sup> These approaches tend to concentrate on premise-conclusion relations in “natural arguments” and most of them are normative and logic-oriented. A substantial contribution to the theorizing about argu-

<sup>23</sup> For the distinction between ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ perspectives, see Pike (1967). Doury (2006: 37) expresses an emic interest in exploring “the way arguers justify or reject a specific argument scheme”.

<sup>24</sup> Next to the self-contained psychological ‘persuasion effect research’ (see O’Keefe 2002), Hample’s empirical research is a notable exception (e.g. Hample & Dallinger 1987).

<sup>25</sup> In the last decade, the journal *Argumentation and Advocacy* and the *Journal of Argumentation in Context* have shown a real change for the better.

<sup>26</sup> Since informal reasoning includes more than just argumentation, *informal logic* is a discipline that is in principle broader than *argumentation theory*.

mentation are Johnson and Blair's (2006) criteria of 'acceptability', 'relevance' and 'sufficiency' for a "logically good" argument.<sup>27</sup> Under slightly different names, these criteria are also discussed by Govier (1987).<sup>28</sup>

Johnson (2000: 165–167) suggests in *Manifest Rationality* that argument can be thought of as having two tiers: the 'illative core', which concerns the support that the premises offer for the conclusion, and the 'dialectical tier', which relates to dealing with alternate positions and objections. Other remarkable theoretical contributions to informal logic are Freeman's studies of premise acceptability (2005) and macrostructures of argumentation (2011), Pinto's (2006) and Hitchcock's (2006) views of inferences, and the overview of argument schemes of Walton, Reed and Macagno (2008).

Walton, a very productive scholar, made a substantial contribution to argumentation research, primarily to the theoretical component of the research program – and later, via AI, to the practical component. His contribution covers a great number of topics, next to argument schemes also including dialogue theory and the fallacies (e.g. Walton 1998, 1999, 2007). However, apart from the fact that Walton favours a (formal) dialectical approach and is pragmatic in a very general sense, his theoretical position is not so easy to characterize. This is mainly because in his research he takes a variety of directions and is not afraid of ad hoc solutions. His dialectical approach is not always consistently maintained either, but his basic view seems to be that in principle each of the various 'dialogue types' he distinguishes has its own reasonableness standards and when arguers rely on standards from other types of dialogue than the one they are engaged in, a fallacy is committed.

Hansen and Pinto (1995) focused on reporting about the historical and conceptual study of the fallacies. In response to Hamblin's (1970) call, a great number of the fallacies are analysed by Woods and Walton (1989) – and by Walton individually in later publications (e.g. Walton 1998). Tindale has opened a completely new theoretical angle of approach in informal logic by proposing a rhetorically-grounded synthesis of the logical, the dialectical and the rhetorical perspectives on argumentative discourse (1999: 207; 2004: 7).<sup>29</sup> According to Tindale (2004: xii), "it is through its rhetorical features that argumentation as a communicative practice can best be understood".<sup>30</sup>

Next to Govier (1987), Hansen (2011) has made a contribution to the philosophical component of informal logic by reflecting on the methodological and meta-theoretical starting points of the theorizing. In the philosophical component, Biro and Siegel (1995, 2006a, 2006b, 2011) and Lumer (2005) are among those who take an episte-

<sup>27</sup> Blair and Johnson (1987) consider acceptability, relevance and sufficiency as dialectical requirements of argumentation in a theory of criticism. Sufficiency then concerns the fulfilment of the arguer's dialectical obligations.

<sup>28</sup> Govier, who sees informal logic as concentrating on argument evaluation, proposes a pluralistic theory of argument, which Johnson (2000: 84) calls *conductivism*.

<sup>29</sup> In Tindale's (2004: 7) view, the rhetorical "will influence how we understand and deal with the logical and the dialectical in any particular case". He also insists that "rhetorical argumentation" cannot ignore the "dialectical dimension" of reasonableness (p. 13).

<sup>30</sup> The model of argumentation that Tindale (2004: 116) advances is "one that meets the requirements of cooperation [by an audience of 'co-arguers'] and Bakhtinian co-construction".



mological approach: they emphasize that the standards for evaluating argumentation are epistemological and promote the idea that argumentative exchanges are to lead to an improvement in the epistemic state of the people involved. This view is adopted by protagonists of ‘critical thinking’ who define that field as applied epistemology.

An exceptional contributor to the analytical component in informal logic is Finocchiaro (2005), who favours an empirical dialectical approach. He developed a method for analysing from a logical, and more in particular dialectical, perspective real cases of natural argument from the history of science in their historical context.

Although there are also contributions made to the philosophical and the analytical components, most prominent in informal logic are contributions to the theoretical component and (by means of textbooks) to the practical component. No distinctive contribution is made to the empirical component.

## 2.5 Pragma-dialectics

Pragma-dialectics combines taking a dialectical perspective with a pragmatic approach and contributes to all five components of the discipline. Its development started in the 1970s with a ‘conceptualization’ phase in which its philosophical and theoretical foundations were established (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984).<sup>31</sup> Four meta-theoretical principles were regarded necessary for developing an adequate argumentation theory: ‘functionalization’, ‘socialization’, ‘externalization’ and ‘dialectification’ (van Eemeren 2018: 19–32).<sup>32</sup> Shaping the research in accordance with these principles resulted in examining argumentative discourse from the theoretical perspective of a ‘critical discussion’ consisting of a systematic exchange of communicative and interactional acts<sup>33</sup> that are instrumental in resolving a difference of opinion on the merits (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004).

In the ‘validation’ phase the problem-solving validity of the model of a critical discussion as a normative standard for judging argumentative discourse was tested by checking systematically whether the fallacies that are traditionally distinguished no longer occur if the rules for critical discussion are followed that constitute together the proposed ‘code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse’ (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992). By indeed excluding commitments of the traditional fallacies, these rules prove their problem-validity as a critical testing procedure.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> According to the critical rationalist philosophy, the reasonableness of argumentative discourse depends on its compliance with an appropriate critical testing procedure. For this reason, in pragma-dialectics a concerted effort has been made to develop such a procedure.

<sup>32</sup> These principles involve concentrating on (a) the argumentative functions of communicative moves, (b) the coordinated dialogical efforts of the participants, (c) the identifiable commitments undertaken by the participants and (d) the critical standards to be observed in maintaining reasonableness.

<sup>33</sup> For the speech act perspective in pragma-dialectics, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1991, 1992) and van Eemeren (2015: 275–318). Govier (1996: xii) mistakenly thinks that van Eemeren and Grootendorst adopt an “oral paradigm”, but verbal acts are also performed in writing.

<sup>34</sup> Next to their problem-validity as a testing procedure, the pragma-dialectical rules could also be given a different justification, i.e. an ethical justification with the help of ‘virtue argumentation theory’ (Gascón 2017: 722).

The ‘empiricalization’ phase started with qualitative studies of the manifestations of the pragma-dialectical theoretical constructs for dealing with argumentative discourse in argumentative reality. Initially, this qualitative research of the empirical basis of the theory focused on the role of textual and contextual indicators in the identification of argumentative moves (van Eemeren, Houtlosser & Snoeck Henkemans 2007). Later it was complemented by quantitative experimental research of the identification of argumentative moves by ordinary arguers and of the intersubjective validity of the pragma-dialectical standards of reasonableness for ordinary arguers (van Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels 2009).

In the ‘instrumentalization’ phase the analytical instruments were designed for reconstructing argumentative discourse as it (often partly implicitly) occurs in argumentative reality in terms of a critical discussion.<sup>35</sup> These analytical instruments include typologies of standpoints<sup>36</sup>, differences of opinion, argumentation structures and argument schemes, and an explicitization procedure for unexpressed premises. In reconstructing actual argumentative discourses all of them are put to good use (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson et al. 1993) and by enabling their practical application also in providing education in various argumentative practices (van Eemeren & Snoeck Henkemans 2016; van Eemeren, Garssen & Labrie 2021).

The phase of ‘theoretical expansion’ consisted in functionally integrating a rhetorical perspective on the effectiveness of argumentative discourse in the pragma-dialectical perspective on the maintenance of reasonableness.<sup>37</sup> This integration, realized by introducing the notion of ‘strategic manoeuvring’, resulted in the ‘extended pragma-dialectical theory’ (van Eemeren 2010).<sup>38</sup> Research connected with this extension involves methodical applications of the theory to the identification of the intertwining of ‘topical selection’, ‘adaptation to audience demand’, and ‘exploitation of presentational devices’ in the various modes of strategic manoeuvring that are utilized in argumentative reality to keep the balance between aiming for effectiveness and maintaining reasonableness.

In the most recent phase of ‘contextualization’, strategic manoeuvring in ‘communicative activity types’ from the various domains of argumentative reality is exam-

<sup>35</sup> The reconstruction should lead to an optimally informative overview of the argumentative process. In cases of doubt between possible analyses, in the last resort refuge is taken in “maximal strategies” leading to the most constructive reconstruction (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992: 49, 81, 105).

<sup>36</sup> Unlike Kock (2007: 240) asserts, next to descriptive standpoints, in pragma-dialectics evaluative and prescriptive (inciting) standpoints (or propositions) are distinguished (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992: 157; van Eemeren 2018: 4).

<sup>37</sup> Because argumentation is, due to the ‘argumentative predicament’, always characterized by the joint pursuit of reasonableness and effectiveness, this integration is of vital importance. In the pragma-dialectical view, the strategic ways in which the two dimensions are combined are therefore central to argumentation theory.

<sup>38</sup> This integration contradicts Frank’s assertion that pragma-dialectics is “hostile to the rhetorical tradition” (2004: 278). At the same time – because effectiveness is to be achieved *through reasonableness* – it also contradicts Siegel’s (2006b) assertion that in pragma-dialectics the kind of critical standards required in epistemology are not maintained. According to Botting (2010: 415), the pragma-dialectical perspective on reasonableness models from an epistemic perspective “the critical rationalist procedure of conjecture and refutation”.

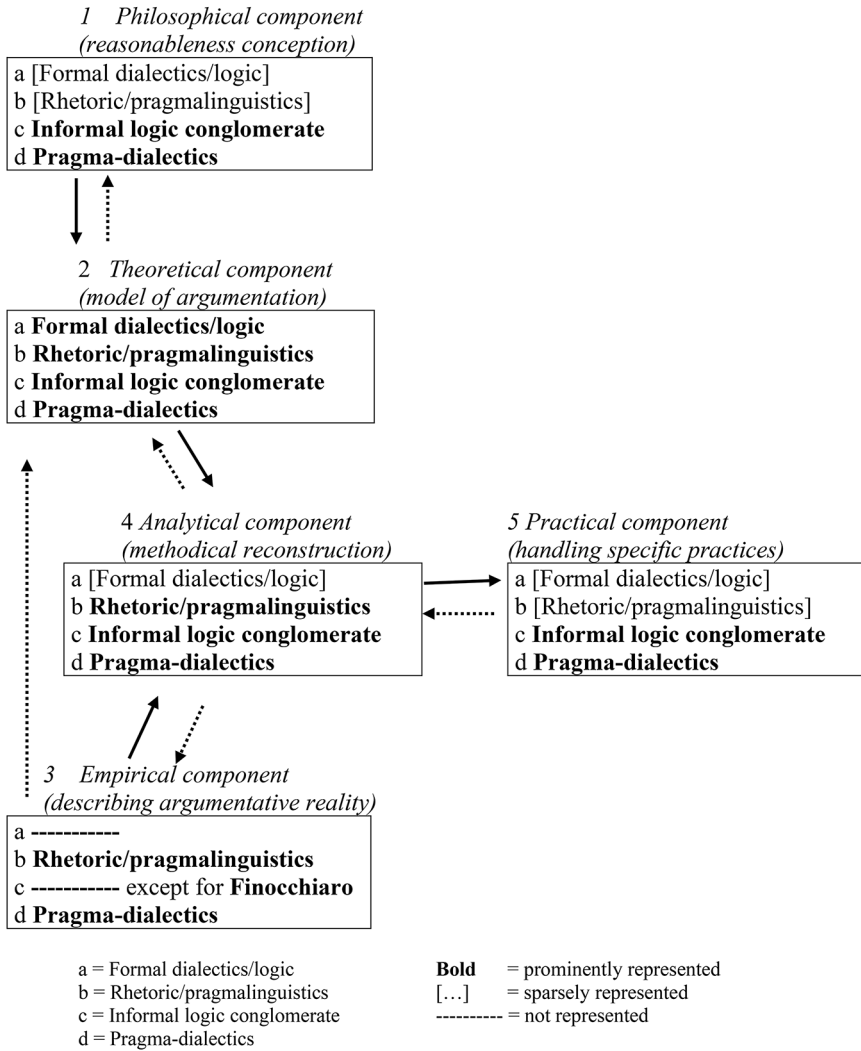


Fig. 1 Overview of contributions to the five components of the discipline

ined by taking systematically the different institutional requirements into account.<sup>39</sup> This research focuses primarily on the political, the legal, the medical, and the academic domain. Since 2019 it is also examined which ‘argumentative styles’ are utilized in these domains (van Eemeren, Garssen, Greco et al. 2022).

<sup>39</sup> The communicative activity types are the institutional macro-contexts constituting the cultural, social and cognitive environment in which the argumentation takes place.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the contributions made by the approaches to the various components of the research program of argumentation theory that we discussed.<sup>40</sup>

### 3 Effectiveness and Reasonableness in Argumentative Discourse

#### 3.1 The Crucial Issue in Argumentation Theory

Even though in argumentative practice they do not always live up to this presumption, in examining argumentation it is assumed that people who advance argumentation are out to defend their standpoint by relying on the Principle of Reasonableness.<sup>41</sup> Their reliance on the Principle of Reasonableness means that they want to resolve the difference at issue on the basis of the merits of their argumentation. What it means to resolve a difference with an audience supposed to be in doubt or disagreement with the standpoint at issue on the merits, depends on what conception of reasonableness is used in giving substance to the Principle of Reasonableness.<sup>42</sup>

Depending on their conception of reasonableness, argumentation theorists have different views of what is required to resolve a difference of opinion on the merits. When they have an *anthropological* conception, being reasonable means complying with standards of reasonableness that are considered problem-valid because they belong to the standards accepted as reasonable in the community in which the argumentative discourse takes place. In the case of a *geometrical* conception, being reasonable means observing standards of reasonableness that are problem-valid because they are in agreement with certain logical and epistemological starting points. In the case of a *critical* conception, as favoured in pragma-dialectics, being reasonable means observing certain standards for the tenability of a standpoint against systematic criticism.

Whatever conception of reasonableness is adopted, in real-life situations a difference can only be resolved on the basis of argumentation if the argumentation advanced is in agreement with problem-valid standards of reasonableness that are also acceptable to the audience.<sup>43</sup> This means that the argumentation not only needs to be reasonable according to the prevailing standards of reasonableness, but also acceptable

<sup>40</sup> Figure 1 is based on Fig. 10.1 in van Eemeren (2018: 185).

<sup>41</sup> The very fact that they provide reasons for accepting the standpoint, is considered to indicate that they intend to respect the Principle of Reasonableness.

<sup>42</sup> A difference of opinion is resolved by the protagonist's argumentation if the audience to be convinced no longer maintains its doubts or position of disagreement regarding the standpoint at issue.

<sup>43</sup> Problem-valid (or other) standards of reasonableness must be acceptable to potential discussants and subsequently accepted for utilizing them in resolving a difference of opinion to those involved in the difference. In an anthropological conception of reasonableness, the reasonableness conception and acceptance of this conception will in principle coincide because what is reasonable is then determined by what the members of a community consider acceptable. In other cases, (problem-valid) standards of reasonableness may need to be made acceptable by creating an understanding of their problem-solving capacity.

to (and accepted by) the intended audience – and therefore potentially effective.<sup>44</sup> To put it more strongly, in order to fulfill its purpose adequately the argumentation has to be effective on the basis of its reasonableness. Although both reasonableness and effectiveness are of vital importance in their own right, and therefore also need to be examined separately in the way that is most appropriate, their combination is decisive for the quality of argumentation.<sup>45</sup>

The crucial issue in examining argumentation is how effectiveness is achieved through reasonableness or can be achieved while maintaining reasonableness. In responding to the need for problem-validity, we shall in this section first discuss how reasonableness is in pragma-dialectics treated as the first requirement of argumentative discourse. In responding to the need for intersubjective validity, i.e. acceptability,<sup>46</sup> we shall discuss effectiveness as the complementary requirement.<sup>47</sup> This section will thus provide an overview of the pragma-dialectical stance. In Section 4 we shall indicate how other approaches deal with reasonableness and effectiveness and how their way of dealing with the connection between the two relates with the pragma-dialectical approach.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2 The Pragma-dialectical View: Reasonableness as the Primary Requirement

In pragma-dialectics a critical philosophy of reasonableness is given shape in the theoretical component of the research program by developing an ideal model of a regimented argumentative exchange between two parties involved in a difference of opinion exclusively directed at resolving the difference based on the merits of the argumentative moves that are made.<sup>49</sup> In line with our critical rationalist conception of reasonableness, we call this ideal model of an argumentative discourse in which the Principle of Reasonableness<sup>50</sup> is optimally observed a *critical discussion* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004).<sup>51</sup> A critical

<sup>44</sup> When the common starting points necessary for achieving effectiveness through reasonableness are lacking, this may result in ‘deep disagreement’, which cannot be resolved through argumentative discourse when the ‘higher order’ conditions for a critical discussion have not been fulfilled (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 189–190). See Gascón (2017) for a possible connection between pragma-dialectics and virtue argumentation theory relevant to dealing with deep disagreement via the higher order conditions.

<sup>45</sup> In the pragma-dialectical view, this calls for a functional integration of the dialectical and the rhetorical perspectives on argumentation.

<sup>46</sup> In actual argumentative practices intersubjective validity may gradually lead to conventional validity.

<sup>47</sup> Treating effectiveness as complementary to reasonableness not only goes against the (superficial) view that the two are incompatible, but also emphasizes that reasonableness is not complementary to effectiveness.

<sup>48</sup> For other points of (dis)agreement between pragma-dialectics and other approaches about how the study of argumentation is to be conducted, see van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe et al. (2014: 586–600).

<sup>49</sup> Johnson (2000: 310) correctly observes that, although the model does not say “that actual discussions will take place in quite this way”, this ideal model “is not a naïve one and it is capable of being empirically validated”.

<sup>50</sup> The Principle of Reasonableness serves as a presumption in the projected critical discussion; it is an implicit starting point of the argumentative process.

<sup>51</sup> The theoretical construct of a critical discussion is an ideal model but Walton (2007) treats it wrongly as one of the many communicative activity types (‘dialogue types’) that can be empirically distinguished

discussion is a template of the resolution process specifying the dialectical procedure<sup>52</sup> for making out whether the standpoint at issue in a difference is tenable against methodical criticism by the performance of certain communicative and interactional acts in which specific argumentative moves are made (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004).

The pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion presents in this way the general procedure that is in argumentative discourse to be followed to resolve a difference of opinion in a reasonable way.<sup>53</sup> The problem-solving validity of this dialectical procedure for resolving differences of opinion on the merits is determined by its constructive power in making out whether the standpoints at issue and the argumentative moves made in defending them are tenable against relevant criticism.<sup>54</sup> In the pragma-dialectical view, a standpoint may be considered tenable if its defence answers the critical questions associated with the rules for critical discussion included in the pragma-dialectical code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse and its defence therefore agrees with this code.<sup>55</sup>

The rules of the code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse represent a variety of functional standards that need to be observed in the various stages that are to be distinguished in resolving a difference of opinion on the merits (confrontation stage, opening stage, argumentation stage, and concluding stage).<sup>56</sup> They pertain to features of the resolution process manifesting themselves in the argumentative moves that are made. Compliance with the rules is tested dialectically by means of critical questions. The names of the rules indicate their focus in maintaining the quality of argumentative discourse: (1) the Freedom Rule, (2) the Obligation to Defend Rule, (3) the Standpoint Rule, (4) the Relevance Rule, (5) the Unexpressed Premise Rule, (6) the Starting Point Rule, (7) the Validity Rule, (8) the Argument Scheme Rule, (9) the Concluding Rule, and (10) the Language Use Rule (van Eemeren 2018: 66–67).<sup>57</sup>

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in argumentative reality.

<sup>52</sup> According to Zarefsky (2006), “validity as procedure” (p. 322) is in pragma-dialectics the informal “analogue to [logical] form” (p. 318).

<sup>53</sup> That every argumentative discourse naturally aims at resolving a difference, could be the cause of the mistaken belief that pragma-dialectics is a ‘consensualist’ theory (Kock 2007: 239; Zenker 2007: 1588; Lumer 2010: 67). Subjecting a standpoint to a critical discussion is not aimed at achieving consensus, but at deciding in a reasonable way about its acceptability – and resolving the difference in that sense. To critical rationalists such as the pragma-dialecticians, intellectual and cultural progress depends on a continuing flux of opinions and argumentative discussions about them.

<sup>54</sup> Freeman (2006) explains that Siegel and Biro (1997) – who have a wrong perception of the problem-solving validity and preconditional status of the pragma-dialectical rules for critical discussion – misunderstand the pragma-dialectical account of rationality [reasonableness, in fact], which “encompasses rather than conflicts with an epistemic conception of rationality” (p. 70).

<sup>55</sup> The rules for critical discussion are in pragma-dialectics incorporated in a practical code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse to make them suitable for application to (an analytical reconstruction of) real-life argumentative discourse.

<sup>56</sup> These standards of reasonableness concentrate fully on the argumentative quality (‘soundness’) of the defence of a standpoint in resolving a difference on the merits, not on other qualities.

<sup>57</sup> Zarefsky (2006: 317) finds it “interesting” that the justification of these rules is “purely internal”: no “overt appeal to external values such as fairness, equity, and fair play” is made. This does not mean, of course, that such an external justification could not be given.

Every violation of any of the ten rules – whatever party commits it in whatever stage – is an infringement of the code of conduct that involves a fallacy because it is a hindrance, or even an obstruction, to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 208–217). The fact that the rules of the code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse exclude the commitment of the fallacies described in the literature (van Eemeren et al. 2009), is a practical test of their problem-solving validity – it could be called the *litmus test*.<sup>58</sup> Because in different communicative domains different institutional macro-contexts impose other requirements upon the argumentative discourses, the implementation of the general standards of reasonableness incorporated in the rules of the code of conduct needs to be differentiated contextually in the political, the legal, the academic domain, etc. This means that, next to general standards of reasonableness that are context-independent, in the pragma-dialectical view there can also be more specific soundness conditions for reasonable argumentative conduct ensuing from context-dependent requirements that need to be taken into account in dealing with pertinent critical questions (van Eemeren 2018: 140–147).

### 3.3 The Pragma-dialectical View: Effectiveness as the Intended Complement of Reasonableness

To achieve the goal of resolving a difference of opinion on the merits, argumentative discourse needs to comply with soundness standards that are not only problem-valid but also intersubjectively valid for those involved in the difference or otherwise concerned with the resolution process. If this additional requirement has not been fulfilled, no resolution can come into being.<sup>59</sup> A difference can only be resolved by means of argumentative discourse if the parties involved agree about the standards of reasonableness that need to be applied in the evaluation process. For pragma-dialectics this means that if the standards of reasonableness incorporated in their code of conduct are to be instrumental in resolving a difference of opinion,<sup>60</sup> they must also be acceptable to the disputants – or potential disputants.<sup>61</sup>

Viewed from the perspective of a projected critical discussion, the standards of reasonableness that are applied in evaluating argumentative discourse need to be agreed upon in the opening stage. In that case it is fully clear to all concerned which standards are mutually acceptable. In real-life communicative practices, the standards for reasonable argumentative discourse may be agreed upon at the start of the

<sup>58</sup> The logical validity requirement of the “standard treatment” of the fallacies is thus replaced by a variety of standards.

<sup>59</sup> Siegel (2006b) misses the point by not seeing that intersubjective validity is a requirement *additional* to problem-solving validity that is necessary for effectively resolving a difference on the merits. Problem-validity always comes prior to intersubjective validity.

<sup>60</sup> Unlike the problem-validity of argumentative moves in resolving a difference of opinion in the sense of being in agreement with problem-valid standards of reasonableness, intersubjective validity in the sense of their ensuing acceptability for those concerned is in principle relative to people, place, and time.

<sup>61</sup> As Tindale (1999: 61–62) recognizes, in pragma-dialectics there is a hierarchical relationship between problem-solving validity and intersubjective validity. It is pointless to check the intersubjective acceptability of standards of reasonableness before their problem-solving validity has been established.

discourse, but more often than not they have for a great deal been established (explicitly or implicitly) before the argumentative discourse begins – and are then simply imposed on the participants. In whatever way they have become established, in real-life argumentative practices standards of reasonableness will generally be activated only if they are acceptable to those engaged in the evaluation process. Therefore argumentation theorists must find out to what extent the standards of reasonableness they intend to apply are acceptable to (potential) disputants. If they are not acceptable, it needs to be investigated why not, and how this can be remedied by a further explanation of the standards.<sup>62</sup> This is a prerequisite for developing suitable methods for teaching people how to produce, analyse and evaluate argumentative discourse in the practical component of the research program on the basis of these standards.

To gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of argumentative discourse, empirical research of an experimental nature has been carried out systematically (and will continue to be carried out) in the Conceptions of Reasonableness project to determine to what extent the standards of reasonableness incorporated in the rules of the code of conduct are acceptable to arguers. In this way, it is tried to make out whether the problem-valid rules of the code of conduct are also intersubjectively valid in the argumentative reality that is examined. If they are indeed intersubjectively valid,<sup>63</sup> the standards concerned are likely candidates for acquiring conventional validity,<sup>64</sup> so that they can be used in practice as standards for resolving differences of opinion on the merits. For the rules for critical discussion we investigated empirically, this proves to be the case (van Eemeren et al. 2009). They can therefore more easily be brought to bear in teaching people how to deal with argumentative discourse.<sup>65</sup>

An understanding of the potential effectiveness of argumentation is necessary to be able to deal adequately with the reasonableness-effectiveness relationship.<sup>66</sup> Insight in this relationship is vital to come to grips with the effectiveness through reasonableness aimed for in argumentative discourse. ‘Strategic manoeuvring’, the notion introduced in extended pragma-dialectics to examine the accomplishment of effectiveness through reasonableness, involves reconciling effectiveness with reasonableness by selection from the available topical potential, adaptation to audience demand, and exploitation of presentational devices (van Eemeren 2010: 93–127). Since the study of argumentation is put right in the middle of argumentative practice

<sup>62</sup> This explanation involves making clear why the standard that is not yet accepted is in fact problem-valid. In exceptional cases this may be an occasion for renewed reflection upon the reasonableness standard concerned.

<sup>63</sup> The intersubjective acceptability of standards of reasonableness can in some cases be community-dependent or depend on people’s cultural background or level of education.

<sup>64</sup> This means conventional validity among ordinary arguers, not in a community of model interlocutors of high competence such as Blair and Johnson’s (1987).

<sup>65</sup> This is because the results of the empirical research make clear that the standards for reasonableness incorporated in the rules do not seem “unnatural” or too complicated to ordinary arguers.

<sup>66</sup> Because reasonable (i.e. non-fallacious) argumentation need not necessarily be effective in convincing the intended audience, effectiveness means here in fact *potential* effectiveness. Unlike in rhetoric, in pragma-dialectics ascribing potential effectiveness to argumentation is based on empirical evidence concerning the audience’s standards for judging argumentative discourse. The role of strategic considerations in furthering rhetorical effectiveness is in pragma-dialectics investigated in ongoing experimental research (e.g. van Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels’s contributions in van Eemeren 2015: 771–824).



by including strategic manoeuvring, it is necessary to take account of the varying demands of the institutional macro-contexts that have been conventionalized in the various communicative activity types of argumentative reality. This conventionalization has come into being in response to specific institutional exigencies. This means that the balancing of reasonableness and effectiveness in strategic manoeuvring calls in some cases for specific implementations of the general standards of the code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse.<sup>67</sup>

## 4 Positions on Reasonableness and Effectiveness in Other Approaches

### 4.1 Choices for Dialectical and Rhetorical Perspectives by the Progenitors

The theoretical perspectives dominant in modern argumentation theory, the dialectical and the rhetorical view, are in the extended pragma-dialectical theory systematically combined. In the other approaches described in Sect. 2 generally one of the two is favoured. The focus is then as a rule either on reasonableness or on effectiveness. Which approaches concentrate on reasonableness and which approaches on effectiveness? How about the interplay between maintaining reasonableness and aiming for effectiveness in these approaches? And how do these views compare with the pragma-dialectical view?

Toulmin (2001), a progenitor of modern argumentation theory, focuses on maintaining reasonableness – claiming to link ‘logic’ with ‘rhetoric’ by treating reasonableness as ‘field-dependent’.<sup>68</sup> Toulmin’s model of argumentation is basically descriptive,<sup>69</sup> while the pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion is normative. Another important difference is that Toulmin does not take the strategic manoeuvring between aiming for effectiveness and maintaining reasonableness into account, as the pragma-dialecticians do, when he connects the reasonableness of argumentation with the macro-context in which the argumentation takes place.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s (1958/1969) new rhetoric is in principle effectiveness-oriented. However, if the ‘universal audience’ is to be convinced,<sup>70</sup> the argumentation is supposed to address a (real or imagined) company of people that

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<sup>67</sup> To avoid fallaciousness, in an academic paper, for instance, an appeal to authority needs to agree with stricter and more precise specifications of the general reasonableness conditions for this mode of strategic manoeuvring than in a political debate.

<sup>68</sup> Toulmin (1958/1973) establishes this link in the context of a certain field through empirical and historical criteria for judging the “validity” of the connection between ‘data’ and ‘claim’ made via the ‘warrant’ and the ‘backing’.

<sup>69</sup> An adequate treatment of the fallacies, for instance, is not to be found in Toulmin’s approach.

<sup>70</sup> The universal audience is a notoriously unclear concept that is hard to apply and to evaluate. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s (1969: 491) describe it as “a concrete audience that changes with time, along with the speaker’s conception of it”. According to Tindale (2004: 129), this does not mean that each arguer decides in some arbitrary way what it involves: “it is the argumentative context dictating [...] how the universal audience can be conceived”, and in this decision the particular audience involved has “a co-authoring role”. In Tindale’s view, the universal audience is therefore “more than just a projection of the arguer” (p. 130).

embodies ‘reasonableness’ for the arguer.<sup>71</sup> Instead of being an independent guardian of reasonableness, this universal audience remains a projection of the arguer. This means that in the new rhetoric the Principle of Reasonableness is ultimately substantiated as effectiveness.<sup>72</sup> The relationship between reasonableness and effectiveness is in the new rhetoric therefore perceived in a fundamentally different way than in pragma-dialectics.<sup>73</sup> In pragma-dialectics legitimate effectiveness depends on (independently determined) reasonableness, instead of reasonableness on (presumed) effectiveness.

Like Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca had an impact on modern rhetorical approaches focusing on aiming for effectiveness, Crawshay-Williams and Næss influenced modern dialectical approaches concentrating on maintaining reasonableness. By explaining that a *problem-valid* method for resolving differences of opinion can only be effective in real-life situations if this method is also acceptable (i.e. *intersubjectively valid*) to the people involved in the difference – and indeed accepted (i.e. as *conventionally valid*) by these people – Crawshay-Williams (1957) prepared the way for combining an interest in maintaining reasonableness with an interest in aiming for effectiveness. In this perspective the problem-validity of standards of reasonableness such as those incorporated in the rules of the pragma-dialectical code of conduct is a precondition for resolving a difference on the merits and the potential effectiveness of these rules in actually resolving a difference depends on their intersubjective/conventional validity: their acceptability to the people involved in the argumentative process and these people’s actual acceptance of these standards as decisive.<sup>74</sup>

One of the analytic tools proposed by Næss (1966) for determining the state of affairs in a specific argumentative discourse is a ‘*pro et contra* survey’ of the arguments for and against the standpoint at issue put forward by each of the parties in the difference.<sup>75</sup> Portraying the argumentative exchange between the parties as a “tug of war”, allows the analyst to depict the intricate ways in which the contrary forces exercised by the parties by their arguments influence together the result of the dialectical exchange. One could say that dialectically-minded argumentation theorists have made it their business to develop in their research analytical tools for providing viable translations of this metaphor.

## 4.2 Approaches Focusing on Dialectical Reasonableness

Characteristically, dialectical approaches to argumentation concentrate on maintaining reasonableness in argumentative exchanges and other discourses that can be

<sup>71</sup> This conception of reasonableness hinges on presumptions thought to be considered as reasonable starting points in a certain community.

<sup>72</sup> Because of this effectiveness-dependent view of reasonableness, it is understandable that in the new rhetoric fallacies do not have a real role to play.

<sup>73</sup> This different view is also observed by Tindale (2004: 15).

<sup>74</sup> Only then the rules of the code of conduct may be considered to belong to the procedural starting points agreed upon in the opening stage of the projected critical discussion.

<sup>75</sup> A *pro et contra* survey enables the analyst to trace the various forces at work and to weigh their relative strengths.

reconstructed as such exchanges. Leff (2006: 200) summarizes their theoretical mission as “dialectic generates norms for reasonable argument”. Instead of speaking of “reasonableness”, though, the protagonists of dialectical approaches tend to speak of “rationality”,<sup>76</sup> without making a clear distinction between the two terms.<sup>77</sup> Like in ordinary language, in *our* terminology *rationality* refers to using one’s faculty of reason and *reasonableness* to doing so appropriately,<sup>78</sup> i.e. in a way that is suitable for dealing with the problem at issue.<sup>79</sup> “Acting reasonably” therefore has a more specific meaning in pragma-dialectical parlance than “acting rationally”: it means acting rationally in a way suitable for resolving a difference of opinion.<sup>80</sup>

The traditional reasonableness criteria of ‘validity’ and ‘soundness’ familiar from formal deductive logic are in formal dialectical approaches to argumentation given a dialectical interpretation. These approaches concentrate on formal procedures for resolving differences by rational dialogical exchanges. In this endeavour no account is taken of the potential effectiveness of the argumentative moves that are made in real-life argumentative discourse. In Barth and Krabbe (1982), for instance, rationality is put at the centre of the theorizing (pp. 71, 75, 257) without any mentioning of effectiveness. And in Walton and Krabbe (1995) *dialectic* is a prominent term (pp. 5–6, 67), but *rhetoric* is not – fully in agreement with Krabbe’s (2002: 39) description of this approach as “a [...] theory of dialectic”. Walton and Krabbe discuss, for instance, “whether an argument ad hominem is reasonable or fallacious” (p. 111), but not whether it is effective in convincing an audience.

According to Krabbe (2006: 185), the formal dialectical theory is “a technical [...] formal [...] elaboration of Wittgenstein’s ‘language games’”, with classical roots, further developed by Lorenzen and Lorenz (1978).<sup>81</sup> A formal dialectical system is a system of discussion rules – or a *logical dialogue game*.<sup>82</sup> One of the objectives of designing such dialectical systems is to provide models for argumentation theory (p. 196). The starting point for arguments dealt with in these systems is “found in differences of opinion” and the goal of the argumentative process is “to resolve a difference of opinion as to reach a solid and well-founded agreement” (p. 196). The “ideal format of this process is to be given by a model of discussion”, which is what the theorist needs “to analyze and evaluate what actually goes on” (p. 196).

<sup>76</sup> To formal logicians *rational* seems indeed the favourite term, but we do not agree with Perelman (1979: 117) that rational “corresponds to mathematical reason”.

<sup>77</sup> Usually, they seem to use these terms interchangeably, which can easily lead to conceptual confusion.

<sup>78</sup> Toulmin (2001: 24) also distinguishes between ‘rational’ and ‘reasonable’, but he uses the two terms differently.

<sup>79</sup> In a similar vein as “appropriate to the occasion”, Jacobs (2002: 124–125) states: “Reasonable argumentation is argumentation that makes the best of the situation”.

<sup>80</sup> Although it might be a rational move, committing a fallacy is in our parlance not a reasonable move.

<sup>81</sup> According to Krabbe (2006: 197), the Lorenzen-type model and Hamblin’s (1970) systems of formal dialectic represent different types of formal dialectical models, which are in Walton and Krabbe (1995) “combined in one complex type”; in pragma-dialectics “rather more informal models, based on speech act theory” are used, but “these approaches supplement one another”.

<sup>82</sup> The dialogical orientation has become a third orientation in formal logic, next to the derivational and the semantic orientation (Krabbe 2006: 189).

Krabbe (2002) emphasizes the mutual closeness of dialectic and rhetoric in their history.<sup>83</sup> As he observes, “the embedding of speeches in conversations and of conversations in speeches, as it is displayed in rhetorical and dialectical practice, calls for an integration of their [rhetorical and dialectical] theories” (p. 39). In his view, this integration has been partly achieved in pragma-dialectics where speeches “are analyzed in terms of the dialogues implicit in them” (p. 39). According to Krabbe (2002: 39), in extended pragma-dialectics it is shown how “discussants may achieve rhetorical aims without (necessarily) abandoning dialectic norms” and how fallacies “can then be analyzed as derailments of strategic maneuvering”. He adds that Walton and Krabbe (1995) “have moved towards a more encompassing theory of dialectic, bringing in various types of dialogue besides the persuasion dialogue” (2002: 39).<sup>84</sup>

Due to their abstract character, formal dialectical approaches to argumentation, like other formal approaches, do not so easily lend themselves to being tested empirically. This explains why, in spite of the ambition to develop normative models relevant to real-life argumentative practices, in the research programs the empirical component is missing. The analytical component, too, is only sparsely represented. Instead of offering clarifying reconstructions of real-life argumentative discourses, the illustrations are for the most part formal translations of (sometimes artificially constructed) text fragments. Only more recently analyses are provided of short fragments of real-life argumentative exchanges that concentrate on properties of the discourses that lend themselves to a formal treatment.

According to Johnson (1996: 103–104), he adopted in informal logic – “following the lead” of some pragma-dialecticians and logicians – a pragmatic perspective on argumentation that “emphasizes the *centrality of rationality*”. In a culture in which rationality “has achieved a modest presence”, rationality “must be understood and valued” (Johnson 2000: 15). The informal standards of reasonableness used in informal logic in dealing with what is considered “rational persuasion” are as a rule dialectical.<sup>85</sup> In ‘Argumentation as dialectical’ Blair and Johnson (1987) imagine arguers to appeal for reasonableness judgments about their argumentation to “the community of interlocutors who hold well-informed beliefs about the subject under discussion” (p. 50). Those engaged in argumentation “must take themselves to be addressing not merely the individual ‘other’ in the opposite role”, but “a larger community of others”. These people “conceive themselves as trying to satisfy the demands of a com-

<sup>83</sup> Aristotle developed in the *Topics* a dialectical model of regulated dialogues for refuting a claim, starting from concessions of the other party (*endoxa*). The aim of dialectic in the Aristotelian sense is “to attain at a truth”. Rhetoric is concerned with persuasion, with *logos* as “the core-business” (Krabbe 2002: 33). At the theoretical level dialectic and rhetoric are “intertwined” (p. 39). Krabbe acknowledges that the actual practice of classical dialectic has also more to do with persuasion (or convincing) than Aristotle suggested.

<sup>84</sup> It is important to note that Walton and Krabbe equate the ‘persuasion dialogue’ with the critical discussion described in pragma-dialectics but a critical discussion is a general ideal model of the argumentative process, not a specific communicative activity type (or ‘dialogue type’) from argumentative reality. See also note 51.

<sup>85</sup> Finocchiaro (2005: 232) notes that “some exponents of the dialectical approach”, i.e. Blair and Johnson, “also advocate an informal-logic approach” and “some advocates of the dialectical approach”, i.e. van Eemeren and Grootendorst, “have a clear empirical orientation”. He wonders whether there is “a natural affinity” between the two orientations. Van Rees (2001), however, comparing Johnson’s view with the pragma-dialectical view, considers the former insufficiently dialectical.

munity of interlocutors characterized by features which establish certain standards of objectivity as a goal in the argumentative interchange” (p. 50). This “community of model interlocutors collectively will exhibit certain traits of reasonableness which might be thought of as necessary conditions of making a reliable objective judgement” (p. 50). As such traits they mention being “knowledgeable”, “reflective”, “open”, and “dialectically astute” in the sense of being alert to possible problems of relevance, the need to provide enough evidence of the right kinds, and the possibilities of counter-arguments and conflicting evidence (p. 51).

“As contrasted with some sort of unattainable ideal”, Blair and Johnson (1987) state, the community of model interlocutors uses the standards “of the best available minds” (pp. 52–53). They imagine the relevant communities to be “flesh and blood people”. Though they are “outstanding exemplars”, Blair and Johnson add, “they are nonetheless only ‘role models’” (p. 52).<sup>86</sup> Leaving other differences aside, the relationship between the standards of reasonableness and the people who “legitimize” their use in a particular argumentative context as rational judges that judge reasonably is here the opposite of that in pragma-dialectics: in Blair and Johnson’s approach, there is a community associated with a particular argumentative context and this community provides the standards of reasonableness that are to be applied in this context; in pragma-dialectics, by contrast, there are the standards of reasonableness laid down in problem-valid rules of a code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse and there is (or might be) a company of people that accepts these standards as intersubjectively valid, thus providing them with the conventional validity necessary for evaluating argumentative discourse by applying these standards.

### 4.3 Approaches Focusing on Rhetorical Effectiveness

Aiming for effectiveness is investigated in rhetorical and pragmalinguistic approaches to argumentation. It is important to realize that in this research the focus is on *aiming for* effectiveness, not on *empirically observed* effectiveness. If the latter had been the case, the research would have concentrated on the actual realization of the interactional effect of acceptance of argumentative moves (standpoints, starting points, arguments, etc.). At issue in rhetorical approaches is what can be called “deserved” effectiveness, i.e. effectiveness arguers are as it were entitled to based on the rhetorical quality of their argumentative moves. Rhetoric is concerned with how in real-life argumentative discourses the available means of persuasion are used in aiming for

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<sup>86</sup> According to Blair and Johnson (1987: 51), for each assertion or proposition used in an argument “there will be a particular group of model interlocutors – those who know something about it and who have an interest in it”. In their view, “the membership of the community of model interlocutors will vary from proposition to proposition”. For some propositions it will consist of model experts, for many other sorts of “ordinary people” (pp. 51–52).

effectiveness.<sup>87</sup> Actually achieved effectiveness is a topic of investigation only in empirical *persuasion effect research* in social psychology.<sup>88</sup>

The expression “persuading someone” is in rhetorical and pragmalinguistic approaches generally used in the broad sense of making people change their mind, irrespective of whether this change is achieved in a reasonable way or not. To emphasize the difference between the two, in pragma-dialectics being effective through reasonableness is not called *persuading someone* but *convincing someone* – a special case of persuading someone.<sup>89</sup> In rhetorical and pragmalinguistic approaches no such systematic distinction between persuasiveness and convincingness is made.<sup>90</sup> If a certain reasonableness conception is underlying these approaches, as seems usually the case,<sup>91</sup> it is generally an anthropological conception that equates reasonableness with what is considered reasonable by the people involved in the discourse. This goes for rhetorical studies of argumentation as well as qualitative empirical pragmalinguistic studies, such as Doury’s (2004, 2006), in which ‘emic’ descriptions are given of the use of discursive interactional devices such as argument schemes.

In spite of the fact that the rhetoricians themselves associate rhetoric generally with aiming for persuasive effectiveness, the tendency to do so is criticized by Kock (2007).<sup>92</sup> According to Kock, rhetoric concentrates in political discourse on arguers speaking for opposite choices and they are not “obliged” to resolve their difference. In our view, political argumentation, too, is ultimately aimed at resolving differences of opinion, even if in some cases it is not the official discussion partner – the co-debater(s) – that is the audience intended to be convinced, but the electorate – the politician’s potential voters. Choosing from different standpoints, too, involves in the end always determining a preference for a certain standpoint. Political argumentation is therefore in all cases aimed at convincing others of a particular opinion and resolving in that sense a difference of opinion with these people. Also when pursuing another goal is instrumental in aiming for effectiveness or when aiming for effective-

<sup>87</sup> According to Simons (1990: 5), “most neutrally [...] rhetoric is the study and practice of persuasion”. Various classical and modern authors emphasize however that in rhetoric more is aimed for than just effective persuasion.

<sup>88</sup> Persuasion effect research aims “to understand how and why persuasive messages have the effects they do” (O’Keefe 2006: 235). O’Keefe shows by means of meta-analytic reviews of empirical studies that there is a clear relationship between normatively sound argumentative practice and persuasive success (pp. 236–240).

<sup>89</sup> Our distinction connects with ordinary language, where “persuading someone” can only be properly used when a prescriptive (inciting) standpoint is defended, whereas it is very well possible to speak of “convincing someone” of the acceptability of a descriptive or an evaluative standpoint. Pragma-dialecticians are primarily interested in reasonableness-oriented rhetorical studies which centre around “persuasion” by *logos* (i.e. argumentation).

<sup>90</sup> A notable exception is Tindale (2004: 149): “If I wish to aim at conviction rather than mere persuasion, I need to consider my audience as reasonable people”.

<sup>91</sup> When in these approaches fallacies are signaled, as sometimes happens, there must be a certain standard of reasonableness. It is nevertheless remarkable that, as Jacobs (2002: 123) observes, in spite of a strong interest in rhetoric in “such decidedly dialectical concerns as the quality of deliberation in the public sphere or the nature of controversy”, the study of the fallacies is in rhetoric “largely ignored”.

<sup>92</sup> Braet (2007: 11–13) reminds us that classical rhetoric focused already on effective persuasion, but that most scholars respected in their treatises silently normative requirements for reasonable argumentation relating to the institutional context.

ness is embedded in the pursuit of another goal (e.g. establishing one's identity), the rhetorical means that are used are primarily designed for aiming at effectiveness.

When it comes to argumentation, the rhetoricians' central interest is effective persuasion. Leff (2002: 54–55), like many other rhetorical scholars, defines rhetoric in the familiar Aristotelian fashion as the faculty of “observing in any given case the available means of persuasion”. A decisive characteristic of the rhetorical perspective is in his view its focus on aiming for effectiveness in context<sup>93</sup> – be it the relatively stable institutional macro-context (‘genre of oratory’), the situation in which the argumentative discourse takes place or the changeable context of the argumentative exchange itself. According to Leff (2002: 62), “attention to these situational features of argumentation characterizes a rhetorical perspective”. This view is, among many others, shared by Kauffeld (2002).

It is clear that there is a great deal of agreement between various representatives of a rhetorical approach and the pragma-dialecticians with regard to the pragmatic dimension of the study of argumentation,<sup>94</sup> which plays a vital role in explaining how in argumentative discourse effective persuasion comes about. When Kauffeld (2002: 103–106), for instance, turns in searching for intrinsically rhetorical standards for effective persuasion to the Gricean maxims (Grice 1975) and the felicity conditions for the performance of speech acts, he is exploring the same grounds as the pragma-dialecticians explored in their standard theory in developing a pragmatic basis for a methodical reconstruction of argumentative discourse (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; van Eemeren et al. 1993). Kauffeld (2002) refers to this analytical reconstruction when establishing a connection between the arguers' obligation to address the issues critical to a disagreement and “the duties speakers typically incur in the course of seriously saying and meaning something” (p. 103).

Like rhetoricians, pragmatologists – often, just as Kauffeld, combining a linguistic interest with a rhetorical interest – emphasize standardly the need for a contextual embedding of deliberative and other argumentative procedures for producing persuasive effects in real-life argumentative situations. According to Jacobs (2002: 123), a prominent linguistic pragmatist, “a refocus on the notion of argumentative *effectiveness*” is required “to get beyond a categorical analysis of fallacies” [as proposed in standard pragma-dialectics].<sup>95</sup> In line with other argumentation theorists, Jacobs is out to “improve the quality of argumentative discourse” in the “messy, imperfect world of real life” (p. 129). To his mind, the way of achieving this is not a rule-governed pragma-dialectical one but a case-oriented rhetorically-minded one, based on a pragmatological understanding of the micro-contexts of communication in argumentative discourse.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Next to effectiveness, Leff (2002) mentions appropriateness as a norm of rhetoric.

<sup>94</sup> The term *pragmatic*, in its Gricean meaning connected with purposeful action, is in both cases related to the level of semiotics where languages and other sign systems are studied in their actual use in real-life contexts.

<sup>95</sup> The view of effectiveness he is calling for “relies on the insights of both the dialectical and the rhetorical traditions of argumentation theory” and is in that respect related with the approach developed in extended pragma-dialectics.

<sup>96</sup> In addition to “argumentative effectiveness with individual strategic purpose as the persuasive effect on an audience”, Jacobs (2002: 123–124) recommends considering “how arguments might fulfill public



#### 4.4 Approaches Focusing on the Reasonableness-effectiveness Connection

The crucial issue in developing argumentation theory as a discipline is the connection between aiming for effectiveness and maintaining reasonableness. Defining this connection boils in fact down to determining the desired relationship between the rhetorical and the dialectical perspective on argumentation. Since aiming for effectiveness and maintaining reasonableness are in argumentation inherently connected,<sup>97</sup> it will not do to simply regard the rhetorical and the dialectical perspective as mutually independent views which lead to alternative ways of theorizing that have nothing to do with each other – and may only coincidentally supplement each other. Instead, the two perspectives are to be seen as dependent on each other – the one view influencing the implementation of the other. If this means that one perspective prevails, the superimposed view determines the implementation of the other view. The implementation of the rhetorical perspective then depends on what underscores the reasonableness of the argumentation or the implementation of the dialectical perspective on what increases its effectiveness. As we saw when strategic manoeuvring in pragma-dialectics was discussed in Sect. 2.5 and 3.3, it can also mean that the two views are functionally integrated, so that the dialectical and the rhetorical perspective are implemented together, in mutual dependency.

In considering their take on the discipline, various prominent rhetorical scholars disapprove of associating rhetoric with achieving effective persuasion without making any further demands on how this persuasion is achieved. Leff (2002), for one, believes that there are normative dialectical standards that rhetoric has to meet and assigns a corrective function to dialectic. Referring to Aristotle's view of rhetoric as "antistrophos" of dialectic,<sup>98</sup> Leff explains that once rhetoric "sets the wheels of reason into motion", its efforts to achieve effective persuasion "must be disciplined by dialectical rationality" (pp. 61–62).<sup>99</sup> While in Leff's (2002) view dialectic deals more with field-independent argumentative procedures, in rhetoric the application of normative standards is field-dependent because rhetoric is characterized by situational embedding:<sup>100</sup> dialectical procedures "work autonomously within the practice of the art", rhetoric "tends to adjust argumentation to public situations" (p. 57).

In responding to the Aristotelian *antistrophos* that "in the analysis and design of good arguments" dialectical soundness and rhetorical acceptability need to be linked

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interests" at the institutional level for "the achievement of reasonable decision-making".

<sup>97</sup> Argumentation is by definition aimed at reaching the interactional effect of having a standpoint accepted by a rational judge who judges reasonably (van Eemeren 2018: 3).

<sup>98</sup> For the relationship between Aristotle's *antistrophos* and modern argumentation theory see also van Eemeren (2015: 31–53).

<sup>99</sup> According to Leff (2002), dialectic also needs rhetoric: "to close and define the situations in which it can operate" (p. 61). Rhetoric comes into play because somewhere there must be a stopping point, "a concession that emerges from agreements not secured through the inferential sequence" (p. 60).

<sup>100</sup> In our interpretation: the rhetorical standards for effective argumentative discourse depend according to Leff on the specific requirements of the communicative situation in which the argumentation takes place. The dialectical standards for reasonable argumentative discourse in pragma-dialectics are general but when they are applied in a particular communicative activity type they need to be specified in accordance with the requirements of the institutional macro-context.



on the practical level, Hohmann (2002: 50) assumes a similar position. Starting from Aristotle's view of the interdependency of dialectic and rhetoric, he favours "treating dialectical and rhetorical aspects of argumentation analysis as complementary, rather than asserting primacy of one over the other" (pp. 49–50).<sup>101</sup> Although Leff and Hohmann are rhetorical scholars who see the need to link dialectic and rhetoric,<sup>102</sup> they refrain from making clear how, in their opinion, insights from the two perspective should be integrated.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, their views do not add substantially to the views in which the two are seen as alternative perspectives.

Kauffeld (2002: 97–98), who views argumentation theory in a similar fashion as the pragma-dialecticians as a discipline engaged in pragmatics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992), looks for the norms for "argumentative adequacy" in the "rubric of *stasis*": the "critical issues upon which persuasion turns".<sup>104</sup> In his approach the connection between aiming for effectiveness and maintaining reasonableness is not explicitly discussed. Zarefsky (2006) goes a big step further in his normative desiderata by suggesting that the lacking conception of "validity" – in his view a "perplexing problem in rhetorical studies" – can be solved by making use of pragma-dialectical insight (p. 313). In the absence of such a conception, the question is "what besides persuasive success can certify that an argument is not only effective but also sound". When in rhetoric "the quality of an argument is related to its fit with the beliefs and values of the audience", Zarefsky observes, this comes "dangerously close to equating sound argumentation with successful persuasion" (p. 314). Scholars wishing to preserve the normative dimension therefore need a concept that does the work of "validity": providing "a content-neutral criterion for the evaluation of argument". In Zarefsky's view, the criteria mentioned so far by rhetoricians are not satisfactory.<sup>105</sup> This also applies to the universal audience criterion, because "Perelman is silent on the question of what characteristics an argument should have in order to merit the assent of the universal audience,<sup>106</sup> and also on the question of how anyone [...] can know and interpret the disposition of the universal audience" (p. 315).

<sup>101</sup> Hohmann (2002: 41) voices the (political) fear that by combining rhetoric with dialectic as the pragma-dialecticians do, rhetoric may become a "handmaiden of dialectic". This fear is also expressed by Tindale (2004: 15). To avoid a "vertical, hierarchal placement" of rhetoric and dialectic, Leff (2006), too, prefers to situate the two in a "parallel, horizontal configuration" (p. 200).

<sup>102</sup> Leff (2002: 9) envisages a situation in which dialectic and rhetoric correct each other's "vices". According to Green (1990: 9), another rhetorician, they "always imply one another, and can be transformed into one another, without actually being one another".

<sup>103</sup> Kock (2007: 243) goes a step further by specifying from a rhetorical perspective some dialectical obligations that, on behalf of reasonableness, should be maintained in a political debate. Like Jacobs (2002: 124), he is primarily interested in helping to achieve an institutional goal central to realizing the institutional point of the communicative activity type.

<sup>104</sup> These issues are usually called *stock issues*. Kauffeld (2002: 103) refers in this connection to "the duties speakers typically incur in the course of seriously saying and meaning something". According to Goodwin (2002: 89), by trying to find a normative basis for *stasis*, Kauffeld helps solving the problem that the *stasis* system misses "an account of why going through this process leads to just the effects it has".

<sup>105</sup> McKerrow (1977), for instance, states that these criteria are relative to situations. Zarefsky (2006: 315) comments that this is "true but not very helpful".

<sup>106</sup> According to Zarefsky (2006: 315), the pragma-dialectical perspective "offers the possibility of resolving this problem and articulating when an argument will count as [non-formally] valid".

Considering the relationship between dialectic and rhetoric more closely, Leff (2006: 200) speaks of a “rhetorical dialectic” when rhetorical elements are subsumed within a dialectical perspective; in what he calls a “dialectical rhetoric” the alignment is reversed.<sup>107</sup> In his view, the pragma-dialecticians represent the one side of the coin and Tindale the other side. According to Leff (2006), adaptation to the audience is to Tindale, who focuses on this adaptation,<sup>108</sup> not just one of the constitutive aspects of argumentative conduct, as it is in extended pragma-dialectics, but – in line with Perelman – “its core requirement” (p. 201).<sup>109</sup> Thereby, Tindale “opens himself to the charge of encouraging a vicious relativism that destabilizes the standards needed for reasonable deliberation and offers no protection against manipulation, deception, and pandering” (p. 201). “Anticipating this objection”, Tindale invokes, according to Leff, “Perelman’s conception of the universal audience”, a construct embodying general norms for reasonable argument, as the touchstone for evaluating arguments. Leff concludes that in Tindale’s approach the universal audience “supercedes the systematic abstract rules used for that purpose in the pragma-dialectical system” (p. 201).

Instead of being “introduced into the argumentative situation from the outside”, the universal audience is, according to Tindale (1999), “developed *out of* the particular audience” and therefore “essentially connected to it” (p. 117): it shares common ground with the particular audience (1974: 128).<sup>110</sup> In line with Crosswhite (1989, 1996),<sup>111</sup> Tindale imagines a – rather complicated – process of moving from an understanding of the particular audience to the universal audience.<sup>112</sup> As he explains, in constructing a universal audience relevant to the case, the arguer or critic can distill features of the concrete audience. Starting from certain characteristics of a particular audience, the universal ideal is then projected in the audience.<sup>113</sup> Tindale (1999: 117–118) optimistically expects that the members of the audience will not let their perspectives and prejudices rule “what they realize is reasonable”: when scrutiny discovers manipulation, for instance, “the perspective of the universal audience rejects it, and the arguer who thinks in these terms will not use it”. In this way, Tindale states,

<sup>107</sup> We think that subsuming rhetorical elements in a dialectical perspective not necessarily makes the dialectic “rhetorical”, nor does the inclusion of dialectical standards necessarily make the rhetoric “dialectical”.

<sup>108</sup> Tindale emphasizes that argumentation is always rooted in a context that includes an arguer, an audience, a subject, and a time and place.

<sup>109</sup> Tindale (1999: 215) acknowledges that even when it is unclear who are the audience, as is often the case, it is necessary “to recover as much as possible of the intended audience from the context that is known”.

<sup>110</sup> Tindale (1999: 120) considers “the reasonable in each case, in each argumentation” because he does not want to “impose a conception of the reasonable onto the argumentation, but rather [...] look for it there”.

<sup>111</sup> Crosswhite (1989) provides a list of “techniques” for constructing a model universal audience from particular audiences in various contexts, which involve excluding members of a particular audience as well as merging particular audiences. We think it worth noticing that using these techniques already implies that certain standards of reasonableness are applied.

<sup>112</sup> To clarify what is involved in getting from the particular to the universal audience, Tindale (1999: 119) says that “it is arrived at from beneath, as it were, drawn from the varied views of the immediate audience and concretized in the move of reasonableness that the universal audience represents”.

<sup>113</sup> The distinctive feature of the universal audience is to Tindale the interaction between the actual and the ideal.

“we do not transport in a notion of reasonableness”, because “we describe it,<sup>114</sup> we do not prescribe it” (p. 120).<sup>115</sup>

Tindale’s (1999) anthropological conception of reasonableness is fully in line with the general position he takes in a more explicit way in *The Anthropology of Argument* (Tindale 2021). The universal audience is in his interpretation a construction embodying reasonableness in a universal sense that refers to “real people able to distance themselves and to see beyond their perspective” (p. 118). In discussing the construction of the universal audience for an argument, Tindale states that a universal audience “cannot value effectiveness over reasonableness” (2004: 147), but “we do not give up effectiveness” (1999: 117).<sup>116</sup> Unless he smuggles in other standards of reasonableness in the process of “universalizing” the particular audience (projecting them into the audience), this means that Tindale’s conception of reasonableness runs a serious – and avoidable – risk of relativism. Without providing a clear rationale for adopting this “external” precondition of reasonableness, Tindale declares that in proceeding from the particular audience to the universal audience it is necessary to reject fallacies as contradictions to be excluded (p. 118).<sup>117</sup>

The standard of avoiding fallacious contradictions that Tindale explicitly acknowledges could very well lead to results that are materially equivalent with the results of applying the standards for avoiding fallacies of the pragma-dialectical code of conduct for reasonable argumentative discourse. If that is indeed the case, it is no longer clear what is in respect of maintaining reasonableness the fundamental difference between Tindale’s approach and approaches such as the pragma-dialectical one. Unlike Tindale’s ideal of reasonableness, however, the pragma-dialectical ideal is not a projection of an arguer’s or outside evaluator’s reasonableness conception in a particular audience but a code of conduct that is established, independently of its acceptability to an audience, on analytical grounds. Unlike in Tindale’s approach, the standards of reasonableness are in pragma-dialectics all tested for their problem-validity. This qualitative testing happened before it was checked empirically to what extent these standards are also acceptable to ordinary arguers – which is useful to know, because these problem-valid standards can only acquire conventional validity if they are intersubjectively acceptable to the company of people that is supposed to use them.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>114</sup> This clearly indicates that Tindale has an anthropological conception of reasonableness.

<sup>115</sup> Tindale (1974: 116–117) refers to Bakhtin’s *superaddressee*, who “bridges the internal dialogism of a situation and what lies outside of it”. The superaddressee has an “absolutely just responsive understanding” (p. 125) and is “not another voice” (p. 127), but a projection that is “presupposed” and “controlled” by the arguer.

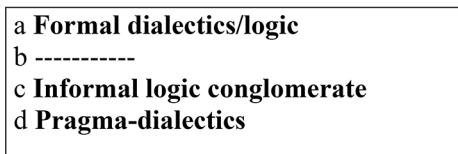
<sup>116</sup> According to Tindale (2004: 147), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do not “sacrifice reasonableness to effectiveness” either.

<sup>117</sup> In reaction to an example of the passions of a racist as another contradictory element that should be excluded, Tindale (1999: 118) observes that “the racist himself, as well as most of his audience, may not recognize this [contradiction], but the evaluator will, and now has a clear *reason* for why such statements should be rejected”.

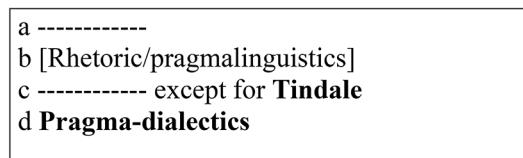
<sup>118</sup> Experimental research (van Eemeren et al. 2009) has shown that ordinary arguers agree with the standards of the code of conduct tested so far. It is to be noted that these are judgments given in a laboratory situation, where disturbing influences, such as prejudices due to strong emotional involvement, are excluded. Reactions in a laboratory may not always accurately represent people’s genuine reasonableness standards.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the main foci of the various approaches of argumentation theory in their research regarding the reasonableness and the effectiveness of argumentation. It shows clearly that there is a yawning gap between the dialectical and the rhetorical approaches to the discipline and that only in some approaches a serious effort is made to bridge that gap.

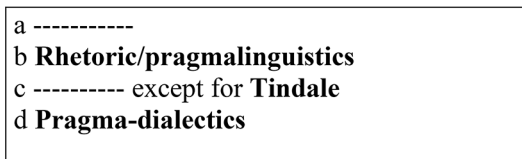
1 Reasonableness



3 Reasonableness with effectiveness



2 Effectiveness



a = Formal dialectics/logic  
 b = Rhetoric/pragmalinguistics  
 c = Informal logic conglomerate  
 d = Pragma-dialectics

**Bold** = prominently represented  
 [...] = sparsely represented  
 ----- = not represented

Fig. 2 Contributions to examining the reasonableness and effectiveness of argumentation

## 5 Conclusion

Concentrating for the most part either on dialectical reasonableness ('rationality') or on rhetorical effectiveness ('persuasiveness'), all approaches we discussed have made their own contribution to the development of argumentation theory as a discipline. Some approaches opt for a purely descriptive approach and provide useful insight in how actual argumentative discourse argumentation is produced, interpreted and assessed. Other approaches are normative and concentrate on providing insight that is necessary for understanding how argumentation is to be produced, analysed and evaluated in order to be dealt with properly. Most approaches do not contribute to all components of the research program but only to some. As long as a clear connection with the other components is ensured, this is not an impediment to the development of the discipline – a focused specialized approach may even lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomena examined.

The formal-dialectical approaches contribute in the theoretical component of the research program to our understanding of the reasonableness of argumentation and less prominently in the philosophical, analytical and practical component – the empirical component is virtually absent. In rhetorical and pragmalinguistic approaches the effectiveness of argumentation is examined in the theoretical and analytical component and more sparsely in the philosophical, empirical and practical component. Studies from the informal logic conglomerate are generally devoted to the reasonableness of argumentation and contribute to the philosophical, theoretical, analytical and practical component of the research program while neglecting the empirical component. Tindale's contribution to the informal logic approach is exceptional: it is in the philosophical, theoretical, analytical and practical component primarily devoted to rhetorical effectiveness; the empirical component is not really represented. In pragma-dialectical research, the reasonableness and the effectiveness of argumentation are examined in all components of the research program.

In only a few approaches explicit attention is paid to the crucial issue of achieving effectiveness while maintaining reasonableness – which is central to the discipline. In informal logic Tindale does so by complementing his rhetorical approach with dialectical insight concerning reasonableness. In pragma-dialectics the combination of reasonableness aspirations and effectiveness aspirations characteristic of argumentation is tackled by means of an integrated dialectical-rhetorical approach.

According to its definition in the *Handbook of Argumentation Theory* (van Eemeren et al. 2014), argumentation is in principle aimed at making a standpoint acceptable to "a rational judge who judges reasonably" (p. 7).<sup>119</sup> In the various approaches to argumentation the rational judge that judges reasonably has taken on a variety of "mugs".<sup>120</sup> The differences between the approaches manifest themselves also in the connection that is (or is not) made between reasonableness and effectiveness. Of the argumentation scholars who explicitly relate the dialectical and the rhetorical perspective with each other, the pragma-dialecticians integrate the two perspectives in

<sup>119</sup> As Blair and Johnson (1987: 51) correctly observe, such a notion is in argumentation theory, i.e. informal logic, "tacitly assumed in the paradigm of argumentation".

<sup>120</sup> Varying from a Habermasian ideal audience to a procedural code of conduct.

an impersonal way under the auspices of a procedural code of conduct; the informal logician Tindale regards in a rhetorical fashion a Perelmanian universal audience as the final judge.

According to Tindale (1999), the rhetorical perspective has as its significant advantage that it pertains to the most concrete and complete argumentative situation – the dialectical perspective emerges from, and responds to, that situation. In our view however, this description of the two perspectives and their genesis is not fully accurate.<sup>121</sup> Nor do we think that starting from the most concrete and complete situation is really the best point of departure for theorizing which requires focus and abstraction.<sup>122</sup> And the claim that a rhetorical approach offers “the most [...] satisfying account of what argumentation is” (p. 7) could equally well be made for other approaches. For the pragma-dialectical approach, for instance, because it is supposed to present the rules that need to be observed in properly “playing the game” of having an argumentative discourse, i.e. playing it in a reasonable way. In addition to that, this approach provides the theoretical framework for dealing with the strategic manoeuvring aimed at keeping a balance between aiming for effectiveness and maintaining reasonableness – the continual predicament of argumentative discourse.

Leaving the differences just mentioned aside, Tindale’s rhetorical approach and the pragma-dialectical approach have a good deal in common that is vital to a further development of argumentation theory. First of all, in both approaches “effectiveness through reasonableness” or – put more modestly – “effectiveness without violating reasonableness” is viewed as central to argumentation, and therefore to argumentation theory as a discipline. Pragma-dialecticians think that dealing with effectiveness through reasonableness can best be ensured by relying on a code of conduct based on a dialectical procedure for argumentative discourse that describes the “rules of the game”.<sup>123</sup> In Tindale’s approach, the place of this code of conduct is taken by the universal audience, but in actual practice this guardian of reasonableness could very well commit arguers to observing the same or similar standards of reasonableness as laid down in the pragma-dialectical code of conduct. If Tindale’s method of getting from a particular audience to the universal audience will indeed result in the avoidance of fallacies, as he envisages, his approach could even prove to be materially equivalent with the pragma-dialectical approach by a code of conduct.<sup>124</sup>

Whether the decision about the reasonableness of argumentative moves depends on their agreement with the reasonableness standards of a problem-valid code of conduct or is left to the people supposed to constitute the projected universal audience, in neither of the two approaches the decision about the acceptability of argumenta-

<sup>121</sup> This criticism applies, for instance, to Tindale’s (2004: 181) statement that dialectical principles “are derived, tested, and modified from specific cases”.

<sup>122</sup> Braet (2007: 11), for one, observes that rhetoric has as its subject matter ordinary argumentation in socially meaningful situations, but the price it pays for not abstracting from various factors is lack of depth.

<sup>123</sup> Because it is instrumental in describing the rules of the game, the dialectical perspective is in our view methodologically (not hierarchially) prior to the rhetorical perspective, but it depends on one’s philosophical starting points which perspective is to be taken as point of departure.

<sup>124</sup> This conclusion would agree with the plausible assumption that Tindale’s (and like-minded scholars’) standards for determining whether argumentation is acceptable to the universal audience will not be fundamentally different from the pragma-dialectical standards for reasonableness.

tion is a purely “technical” one that is the prerogative of a group of highly competent experts functioning as a reasonably judging rational judge. In addition, the extended pragma-dialectical theory and Tindale’s approach have been brought closer together by the rhetorically-inspired attention to contextualization that went together with the introduction of strategic manoeuvring.<sup>125</sup> In view of the danger of relativism, it should be noted however that a considerable difference remains: in Tindale’s approach each context may in principle for its own sake enforce certain standards of reasonableness upon the evaluation of the argumentation but in pragma-dialectics these standards are always contextual specifications of the general standards of reasonableness that are immediately related with the institutional requirements of the macro-context in which the argumentation takes place.

More constructive than debating a hierarchical relationship between the dialectical and the rhetorical perspective is in our view continuing to develop the theorizing about argumentative discourse from an integrated dialectical-rhetorical perspective that does justice to the systematic interplay of maintaining reasonableness and aiming for effectiveness. In light of the fact that the rationale for advancing argumentation is to resolve a difference of opinion, most important to argumentation theorists is always to investigate to what extent in the argumentative discourses they examine effectiveness is indeed pursued by maintaining reasonableness.<sup>126</sup> However desirable they may be from a social, political or other perspective, realizing other possible objectives highlighted by some scholars<sup>127</sup> is in our opinion not to be considered as a general objective of argumentation theory as a discipline. This even goes for the suggestion – in line with the traditional rhetorical interest in *vir bonus* and “civil society” – to connect argumentation with “moral action” (Frank 2004: 267). Argumentation theorists are, of course, free to judge the quality of argumentative discourse from any ideological or practical angle they wish, but their central concern should always be the reasonableness and effectiveness of argumentation in defending a standpoint.

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<sup>125</sup> See van Eemeren (2015: 55–77) for the need to empiricalize, contextualize and where possible formalize the treatment of argumentation to a still further degree.

<sup>126</sup> Even from a rhetorical perspective concerned with achieving effectiveness, Tindale (1999: 119) states also that the goal of his enterprise is “reasonable argumentation”.

<sup>127</sup> Gerber (2011: 22), for instance, recommends to correct “ethical deficiencies” in “rationalist” approaches to argumentation such as pragma-dialectics, which “run the risks of amorality”.



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