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SPEECH ACT THEORY AND THE STUDY OF ARGUMENTATION

Abstract. In this paper, the influence of speech act theory and Grice's theory of conversational implicature on the study of argumentation is discussed. First, the role that pragmatic insights play in van Eemeren and Grootendorst's pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation and Jackson and Jacobs' conversational approach to argumentation is described. Next, a number of examples of recent work by argumentation scholars is presented in which insights from speech act theory play a prominent role.

Keywords: adjacency pair, conversational argument, conversational implicature, felicity condition, pragma-dialectical, maxim, Principle of Communication, speech act, strategic manoeuvre

1. Introduction

Insights from speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1965, 1969, 1975, 1979) and Grice's theory of conversational implicature (1975) play a crucial role in two prominent approaches to the study of argumentation. First, speech act theory is a theoretical starting point in the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation developed by Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst (1984, 1992, 2004)¹. Second, it is used as an analytical tool in the conversational approach to argumentation advocated by Scott Jacobs and Sally Jackson (1981, 1982, 1989). In 1993, these four authors together published the monograph *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse*, in which insights from both their approaches are combined. With the works of these four authors as a starting-point, other researchers have been inspired to make use of speech act theoretical insights in their analyses of crucial concepts of argumentation theory and in their reconstructions of argumentative discourse.²

In this paper, I shall first discuss the role speech act theory plays in van Eemeren and Grootendorst's pragma-dialectical approach and in Jackson

and Jacobs' conversational approach to argumentation. Next, I shall give some examples of recent publications by other argumentation scholars in which insights from speech act theory are put to good use.

2. The role of speech act theory in the pragma-dialectical approach

In the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, argumentation is viewed as a means of resolving a difference of opinion on the merits by means of a critical exchange of argumentative moves between two parties. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 2004) have developed a theoretical model of a critical discussion in which it is specified which moves by which party in different stages of the discussion can contribute to resolving the dispute. Two perspectives on argumentation are combined in developing this model of a critical discussion: a dialectical perspective inspired by the critical-rationalist ideal of reasonableness, and a communicative perspective based on speech act theory and discourse analysis. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst explain the two-fold character of their model of a critical discussion as follows:

The theoretical model of a critical discussion is dialectical because it is premised on two parties who try to resolve a difference of opinion by means of a methodical exchange of discussion moves. The model is pragmatic because these discussion moves are described as speech acts that are performed in a specific situation and context. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 22)

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, p. 3) chose to make use of speech act theory for their theoretical and practical analysis of the language used in argumentative discussions because they regarded speech act theory as the best analytical instrument available in descriptive pragmatics. Nonetheless, applying speech act theory to the analysis of argumentative discussions, required in their view a number of amendments of the Searlean standard speech act theory.

A first problem encountered by van Eemeren and Grootendorst in their attempt to give a description of argumentation as a specific type of language use was that it is not exactly clear what type of speech act *argumentation* should be considered to be, and what conditions can be taken to be fulfilled when this speech act is performed. According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1982, pp. 4–7; 1991, p. 154) argumentation is a complex type of

speech act that differs in the following three important respects from Searle's characterization of prototypical speech acts:

1. Unlike speech acts such as asserting and requesting which can consist of one sentence, argumentation always consists of at least two sentences, neither of which can stand as a complete argumentation on its own (although one of them may have been left implicit). An example would be the following argumentation for the standpoint: "She'd better not take driving lessons": "She panics easily, and panicky people shouldn't get a driver's licence". Even though the second part of the argumentation will often be left unexpressed, it still forms part of the complete argumentation.
2. Unlike Searle's prototypes, argumentative utterances always have a dual illocutionary force: taken individually they are assertives, but together they form an argumentation.
3. Unlike most of Searle's examples of speech acts, the speech act argumentation cannot stand by itself but can only be regarded as argumentation if it is linked to another speech act which expresses a standpoint. The utterances constituting the argumentation can only function as such if they serve as a defence of a particular standpoint.

As a solution to these problems, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, pp. 34–35) propose to make a distinction between illocutionary forces at the sentence level and illocutionary forces at a (higher) textual level. At the sentence level argumentation can then be seen as composed of elementary speech acts belonging to the category of assertives. At the textual level, the complete constellation of elementary speech acts constitutes the complex speech act of argumentation. It is at this higher textual level that the speech act complex of argumentation is – through a relation of justification or refutation – connected to the speech act of putting forward a standpoint.

After having made it possible to analyse argumentation as a speech act by characterizing it as an illocutionary act complex composed of elementary illocutions, van Eemeren and Grootendorst complete their analysis of the speech act argumentation by specifying the felicity conditions for this speech act (1984, pp. 43–45; 1992, pp. 31–33). As a starting point, they take the situation in which a speaker has also performed another speech act in which a standpoint is advanced with respect to a proposition *p*. The speaker is then addressing the listener with utterances 1, 2, ..., *n*. These utterances can only be considered a performance of the complex speech act of argumentation, if the following two conditions, which van Eemeren and Grootendorst call 'identity conditions' have been met (1992, p. 33):³

IDENTITY CONDITIONS

1. *Propositional content condition:*

Utterances 1, 2,..., n constitute the elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n, in which a commitment is undertaken to the propositions expressed.

2. *Essential condition:*

The performance of the constellation of speech acts that consists of the elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n counts as an attempt by the speaker to justify *p*; that is, to convince the listener of the acceptability of his standpoint with respect to *p*.⁴

Apart from the identity conditions, there are also a number of conditions that a speaker needs to fulfil in order for the performance of the illocutionary act of argumentation to be correct:

CORRECTNESS CONDITIONS

3. *Preparatory conditions:*

- a. The speaker believes that the listener does not accept (or at least not automatically or wholly accept) his standpoint with respect to *p*.
- b. The speaker believes that the listener is prepared to accept the propositions expressed in the elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n.
- c. The speaker believes that the listener is prepared to accept the constellation of elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n as an acceptable justification of *p*.

4. *Responsibility conditions:*⁵

- a. The speaker believes that his standpoint with respect to *p* is acceptable.
- b. The speaker believes that the propositions expressed in the elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n are acceptable.
- c. The speaker believes that the constellation of elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n is an acceptable justification of *p*.

In the essential condition of the speech act *argumentation*, the illocutionary point of the speech act is formulated: argumentation is analysed as an attempt to convince the listener of the acceptability of a standpoint. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst thus link the illocutionary act complex *argumentation* with the perlocutionary act of *convincing* (1984, p. 48). They define *convinced* as “being prepared to accept the standpoint supported by the argumentation” (1991, p. 155). In this way they avoid giving a definition of the perlocutionary effect of ‘being convinced’ in which this effect is perceived as an internal mental state: “Acceptance can be part of controllable

and rule-governed behaviour, which is not the case with being convinced in the internal sense” (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1989, p. 369). Van Eemeren and Grootendorst regard acceptance of the argumentation as the perlocutionary effect that is by convention associated with argumentation. According to them, this effect is intended by the speaker, requires an understanding of the speech act of argumentation, and depends on rational considerations of the listener (1991, p. 155).⁶

Another modification of the standard theory of speech acts is made by van Eemeren and Grootendorst to make it possible to explain that in practice arguing is not the same as convincing (1982, p. 12). Even though the verbal means used in arguing and convincing are the same, the happiness conditions of these acts are different. To account for this difference, van Eemeren and Grootendorst differentiate between the correctness of a speech act from the *speaker's* point of view and from the *listener's* point of view. They explain this distinction by using the speech act of making a proposal as an example:

Seen from the first perspective, for example, it is sufficient that the speaker who makes a proposal believes that his proposition is in the interest of the listener, but seen from the second perspective, for a ‘happy’ proposal, it is also required that the listener thinks likewise. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1989, p. 369)

A further adaptation of standard speech act theory is that van Eemeren and Grootendorst have integrated the Searlean conditions for the performance of speech acts with general conversational rules such as Grice’s maxims (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1989, pp. 159–160, 1992, pp. 49–52). To this end, they replace the Gricean *Co-operative Principle* by a general *Principle of Communication*. This principle requires language users to be clear, honest, efficient, and to the point. Next, the Gricean maxims are formulated as rules for the performance of speech acts in such a way that each maxim corresponds with one or more of the identity or correctness conditions (1989, p. 159):

1. Perform no incomprehensible speech acts (corresponds to Searle’s propositional content and essential condition).
2. Perform no insincere speech acts (corresponds to Searle’s sincerity condition)
3. Perform no unnecessary speech acts (corresponds to one of Searle’s preparatory conditions).
4. Perform no pointless speech acts (corresponds to one of Searle’s preparatory conditions).

5. Perform no new speech acts that are not an appropriate sequel or reaction to preceding speech acts (has no counterpart in the Searlean conditions since it refers to connections *between* speech acts).

By integrating Gricean maxims with Searlean conditions, it becomes possible to specify what it means for a particular speech act to be in accordance with the maxims: it should be recognizably and correctly performed. The speech act conditions can thus be seen as specifications of more general communication rules (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1989, p. 159). Another advantage of this integration is that the rules, unlike the Gricean maxims, do not just apply to assertives, but to all kinds of speech acts.

On a theoretical level, opting for a speech act perspective has made it possible to develop a model for critical discussion in which not just the move of putting forward argumentation, but all moves that contribute to the resolution of a dispute are described as speech acts (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984). The model for critical discussion consists of a specification of the speech acts in the four stages (i.e., confrontation stage, opening stage, argumentation stage and concluding stage) that the resolution of a dispute should pass through:

The rules of the model indicate what sorts of speech acts in the four stages of a critical discussion can serve the purpose of resolving a dispute. They prescribe when the discussants are entitled, or indeed obliged, to perform a particular speech act. The ideal model is elaborated in rules for critical discussion that specify who may perform what type of speech act with what intention at what stage of the discussion. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1991, p. 157)⁷

By formulating the rules for critical discussion as rules for the performance of speech acts, it becomes possible to establish a connection between the normative dialectical rules and argumentative practice:

The main point is that by formulating the rules like this, the normative rules for carrying out speech acts in a critical discussion are linked in a natural way to the descriptive conditions of performing elementary and complex speech acts. In turn, these are closely connected with all kinds of more general descriptive rules for conducting everyday discourse and conversation [...]. To put it more bluntly, our normative discussion rules can partly be seen as dialectical regulations of the rules that already apply in ordinary conversations. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1991, p. 158)

Making use of a pragmatic perspective on argumentation has also proved to be fruitful for dealing with problems concerning the reconstruction of implicit and indirect elements in argumentative discourse. When

analysing unexpressed premises, for instance, van Eemeren and Grootendorst propose to carry out an analysis both at a pragmatic and at a logical level:

At the pragmatic level, the analysis is directed toward reconstructing the complex speech act performed in advancing the argumentation, while at the logical level, the reasoning underlying the argumentation is reconstructed. In practice the logical analysis is instrumental for the pragmatic analysis. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, p. 60)

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst see unexpressed premises as a special sort of indirect speech acts. Taken literally, an argument in which a premise has been left unexpressed is invalid. This would mean that a rule of communication has been violated, because the speaker would have put forward a speech act for which the third responsibility condition and the third preparatory condition are not fulfilled:

Because of the responsibility condition the speaker may be assumed to believe that the argument underlying his argumentation is valid, and because of the preparatory condition he may be assumed to believe that the listener will believe this too. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, p. 62)

The pragma-dialectical procedure for reconstructing unexpressed premises is as follows:

The first step [...] is to determine what the “logical minimum” is that makes the reasoning in the argumentation logically valid. Taking “If premise, then conclusion” as the starting point the next step is to determine the “pragmatic optimum” that may be regarded as the unexpressed premise. The pragmatic optimum is determined by finding out if and how, given the context, specific and general background knowledge, and common sense, the “if-then” statement can be made more informative and appropriate in the case at hand. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, pp. 117–118)

The following example may be used to illustrate how this procedure would work (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, pp. 63–67):

- (1) Bart must be at home, because his landline is busy.

The logical minimum would be:

- (2a) If Bart’s landline is busy, then Bart must be at home.

This addition renders the reasoning valid, but pragmatically speaking this is not enough. The logical minimum contributes nothing new, but only

states explicitly that it is permitted to infer the conclusion of example (1) from the premise. Since this was already clear from the fact that the speaker assumes that the conclusion follows from the premise that has been provided, adding (2a) would be superfluous. If this logical minimum were seen as the unexpressed premise, a violation of the efficiency rule of communication would be ascribed to the speaker. In order to prevent such a violation, and in view of our general background knowledge about phones (in particular that if people are using their landline, they must be at home to be using it), it seems justified to reconstruct a more generalized version of the logical minimum as underlying the argument. Hence, adding (2b) as the pragmatic optimum seems to be justified:

(2b) People whose landline is busy are at home.⁸

The pragmatic optimum is thus the premise that makes the argument valid and also prevents a violation of a rule of communication. Reconstructing the pragmatic optimum amounts, according to van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, p. 64) to the following:

Predominantly, this is a matter of generalizing the logical minimum, making it as informative as possible without ascribing unwarranted commitments to the speaker and formulating it in a colloquial way that fits in with the rest of the argumentative discourse.

An advantage of using a speech act perspective in the reconstruction of unexpressed premises is that the phenomenon of unexpressed premises is not treated in an ad hoc way, but is placed within the general framework for the analysis of indirect language use that a speech act perspective (in combination with Gricean insights) offers.⁹ Analysing unexpressed premises (and unexpressed standpoints) as conversational implicatures, not only makes it possible to provide an explanation for the fact that ordinary language users are generally prepared and able to fill in the unexpressed elements, but also provides the analyst with (pragmatic) criteria for the selection of a particular unexpressed premise (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984, p. 135).

3. Jackson and Jacobs' pragmatic analysis of conversational argument

Closely related to the pragma-dialectical functional and procedural view of argumentation is Jackson and Jacobs' pragmatic and discourse analytic

approach to argumentation. In this approach, argument is not seen as a process whereby a single individual arrives at a conclusion, but as “a procedure whereby two or more individuals publicly arrive at agreement” (Jacobs & Jackson, 1982, p. 215). Arguments are treated as “interactionally emergent structures organized around the function of managing disagreement” (Jacobs & Jackson, 1992, p. 161). Jacobs and Jackson (1982) give the following description of argument as a disagreement managing device in conversations:

Argument regulates in important ways the shape and occurrence of other conversational events. It can be used to obtain and avoid agreement, acceptance, or affiliation for a wide range of conversational acts. (p. 206)

An example presented by Jacobs and Jackson of such a conversational argument is (3):

- (3) (01) S: Hey, you wanna go to La Baguette for breakfast and have some Danish?
(02) C: Don't we have to leave for the airport by 9:30?
(03) S: Yeah, but there's plenty of time before we have to go.
(04) C: Yeah, well, it's okay with me if it's okay with my parents. We'll have to see what they wanna do. (1989, p. 157)

In this example, S's proposal made in turn (01) meets with an objection by C in turn (02): they may not have time to go for breakfast at La Baguette since they have to be at the airport by 9.30. In turn (03), S defends the proposal by countering this objection, and in turn (04) the disagreement is resolved, since C accepts the proposal on the condition that it is acceptable to his parents as well.

Jackson and Jacobs distinguish three different levels of discourse organization that are relevant to the analysis of conversational argument. The first level is that of the *structural* organization of conversation. For the description of this level, they make use of the sequencing rules model developed by conversation analysts (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1974).¹⁰ In this model the concept of adjacency pair (two turns by different speakers that together form a pair, consisting of a first and a second pair part, such as “question-answer”, or “request-grant/refusal”) plays an important role. Argumentation in conversation takes the form of expansions of adjacency pairs, in such a way that different patterns are produced:

adjacency pairs can be *sequentially expanded* in three ways: through pre-expansion, which involves prepositioning a subordinate adjacency pair to “lead

up” to the main pair (A: “*Do you believe that women have the same rights as men?*” B: “*Sure.*” A: “*Then why don’t you do half of the housework and child-rearing?*”); through embedded expansion, which involves inserting a subordinate pair between the first-pair part and the second-pair part of the main pair (A: “*Would you come here and clean up this milk I spilled?*” B: “*Can’t you get it?*” A: “*I’ve gotta peel these carrots.*” B: “*Okay.*”) and through post-expansions, which involve following up the main pair with a subordinate pair (A: “*I think you should do grocery shopping and laundry once in a while.*” B: “*That is women’s work.*” A: “*That is a wholly unacceptable response.*” B: “*Okay, okay, I was just joking. Boy!*”). (Jacobs & Jackson, 1982, p. 222)

An important characteristic of adjacency pair organization is that it exhibits a structural preference for agreement (Pomerantz, 1978). First-pair parts like requests, for instance, can be followed up by two different second-pair parts, a grant or a refusal. The first of these second-pair parts is the preferred pair part, since it amounts to an acceptance of the perlocutionary effect associated with the speech act that functions as the first-pair part. A respondent reacting with a dispreferred pair part, such as a refusal, is required to provide a reason or excuse. It is thus in consequence of the preference for agreement that conversational argument “takes the form of disagreement relevant expansion” (Jacobs & Jackson, 1982, p. 224). The structure of conversational argument is analysed by Jackson and Jacobs as resulting from the occurrence of disagreement in a rule system built to prefer agreement (1992, p. 681). Arguments are seen as “subordinate speech acts issued in support or in objection to some main, superordinate act” (Jacobs, 1989, p. 348).

A second level of discourse organization is *functional* in nature, because it concerns the connections between speech acts that are established via the felicity conditions for those acts:

Felicity conditions provide us a very powerful device for examining the relationships among individual speech acts in conversations because they specify a range of beliefs to which a speaker is committed in performing any given speech act. Thus it becomes possible to assess the bearing of one utterance on another through an inferential network supplied by the felicity conditions (...). (Jacobs & Jackson, 1982, p. 221)

For argumentation in particular, the felicity conditions of a speech act determine which lines of argument are relevant:

We argued that when people made or implied arguments that these sequential expansions were substantively connected to the main adjacency pair by virtue of addressing the felicity conditions for that pair; digressions and irrelevancies

occurred where no such connection could be found. In this way, the felicity conditions could be seen as “stock issues” for conversational argument. (Jacobs & Jackson, 1989, p. 183)

Due to their general disagreement regulating role, arguments in conversations are, according to Jacobs and Jackson, often about speech acts other than assertives and are often conveyed by means of non-assertive speech acts (Jackson, 1992, p. 260). For the purpose of laying bare the structure of the argument presented by each of the arguers concerned individually, it is possible to reconstruct those non-assertive speech acts as assertives. Jacobs and Jackson emphasize, however, that the character of the speech acts by means of which the argument was originally presented and the practical activity context in which these acts were performed should still be taken into account in the analysis (Jackson, 1992, p. 260). The commitments of the speaker that are reconstructed in the form of assertions depend on the speech acts actually performed in the dialogue in the following way:

The fact that speakers are already committed to the acceptability and relevance of the speech acts they are intendedly performing means that those speakers will also be committed to the acceptability and relevance of any assertions that can be reconstructed from that speech act, as say, pragmatic presuppositions, felicity conditions, or implicatures (Jackson, 1992, p. 260).

Every speech act thus implies a large set of associated beliefs that could be treated as standpoints. If that happens, they are termed *virtual* standpoints to emphasize that they are not put forward *as* standpoints, but only start functioning as such because they concern commitments of the speaker that have been problematized by the interlocutor and therefore require defense (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jacobs & Jackson, 1993, pp. 95–96). In this way, the speech act performed can be said to be decisive for what may become arguable:

Every speech act performance creates a structured but indefinitely expandable disagreement space, an open-ended set of virtual standpoints, any one of which, on being “called out,” might require defense. (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jacobs & Jackson, 1993, p. 95)

A third level of discourse organization that plays a role in conversational argument according to Jacobs and Jackson is the *rational* level: at this level conversational contributions are viewed as “the result of a problem-solving process whereby people generate and infer means to achieve ends

according to principles of cooperative action and practical reasoning” (Jacobs & Jackson, 1989, p. 165). Speech acts are then seen as conventional means for achieving (perlocutionary) goals that may themselves be sub-goals in a higher order plan. According to Jacobs and Jackson, in conversations language users often do not respond directly to the speech act that is performed as a first main pair part, but instead to the higher order aim that they can identify as underlying this speech act (Jacobs & Jackson, 1989, p. 164). Example (4) may illustrate this type of cooperative respondent behaviour:

- (4) Customer: What’s the chicken marsala like?
Waiter: I’m sorry, we’re all out of that tonight.

According to the analysis given by Jacobs and Jackson (1989, p. 164) of this example, the waiter is not responding to the utterance of the customer as a question, nor as an indirect request (“Could you bring me some chicken marsala?”), but as part of a plan of what to order: “The waiter’s response serves to indicate only that chicken marsala need not be taken into account in the decision-making process” (Jacobs & Jackson, 1989, p. 164). The virtual standpoint ascribed to the customer (“The chicken marsala is one of the dishes that I should consider in deciding what to order”) is thus determined by the waiter by identifying the customer’s question as a means of achieving the higher aim of arriving at a decision about what to order.

In the analysis of conversational argument, all three levels of discourse organization come together: arguments are seen as expansions of adjacency pairs, which are related to the main adjacency pair by virtue of addressing the felicity conditions for this pair, and are designed “to establish or cancel a precondition necessary for the valid performance of some higher-order action within a plan” (Jacobs & Jackson 1989, p. 166).

4. Recent applications of insights from speech act theory to the analysis of argumentative discourse

The analysis of argumentation from a speech act perspective undertaken by van Eemeren and Grootendorst and by Jacobs and Jackson in the 1980s has provided argumentation scholars with a basic framework for the application of pragmatic insights to problems of analysis in argumentative discourse. In this section, I will discuss two types of such applications. In the first type, an analysis of the conditions of a particular (argumentatively

relevant) speech act is given on the basis of which it can be established which textual clues may be used for the identification and reconstruction of that speech act. The second type of research is concerned with the analysis and evaluation of strategic manoeuvres in particular argumentative activity types.¹¹ In this type of research, speech act theory is used to give an analysis of speech acts which play a central role in the activity concerned, thereby providing a starting-point for the analysis and evaluation of particular strategic manoeuvres.

An example of the first type of research is Peter Houtlosser's (1995, 2002) work on the identification and reconstruction of points of view. Analogously to van Eemeren and Grootendorst's analysis of the complex speech act of argumentation, Houtlosser (2002) gives a specification of the felicity conditions for the speech act of advancing a standpoint (or point of view). According to Houtlosser, these felicity conditions, in particular the correctness conditions, provide useful clues for identifying standpoints in cases that have not been explicitly advanced as such:

In particular the first preparatory condition, which states that a speaker who advances a point of view must presuppose doubt on the part of the interlocutor, provides a useful clue. Apart from being a necessary condition for treating a speech act as a point of view, it is also almost a sufficient condition. If a speaker has performed a particular speech act while anticipating (or even knowing) that this speech act is not acceptable to his interlocutor, he must justify the performance of that speech act – at least if he wants it to have the intended interactional effect. (Houtlosser, 2002, p. 172).

Since the condition that the speaker must presuppose doubt as to the acceptability of his speech act plays such a central role in the identification of a point of view, Houtlosser subsequently identifies a number of textual clues or 'indicators' of anticipated doubt that may be used by the analyst to make a well-founded decision on whether a speaker can be held responsible for maintaining a point of view.¹²

An example of the second type of research is Corina Andone's monograph on strategic manoeuvring by politicians in their responses to accusations of inconsistency in political interviews (Andone, 2013). Andone defines accusations of inconsistency in speech act terms by giving an analysis of both the identity and the correctness conditions of accusations of inconsistency. As a point of departure she takes the analysis given by Kauffeld (1986, 1998) of the speech act of *accusing*. Andone further specifies these general speech act conditions so that they can be applied to the particular accusation at issue: the accusation of inconsistency.

The identity and correctness conditions formulated by Andone not only make clear what is understood by the act of accusing someone of an inconsistency, but also help in identifying ‘analytically relevant’ responses to such an act. The essential condition connects the performance of an accusation of inconsistency with the effect of ‘securing a response that answers the charge’; i.e., a response which is intended by the speaker that is based on rational considerations and shows understanding of the accusation of inconsistency. In a critical discussion, only two such responses can be identified: maintaining one of the inconsistent standpoints or retracting it. Accepting the charge as correct is the preferred response, which requires the protagonist accused of the inconsistency to withdraw a standpoint.

Another example of the second type of research is Lotte van Poppel’s (2012, 2013) analysis of the use of different variants of pragmatic argumentation as a strategic manoeuvre in health brochures. In order to explain that the choice for pragmatic argumentation in health brochures can be seen as contributing to the resolution of the dispute at issue, and thus as dialectically relevant, van Poppel makes use of the speech act theoretical perspective. This perspective is suitable, according to van Poppel, since the argumentative discussion in this context “resolves around the acceptability of the main speech act ‘advising’” (2012, p. 102). In anticipation of doubt or criticism, writers of health brochures can attempt to justify their advice by arguing that certain felicity conditions are fulfilled. Pragmatic argumentation can be a means to show that the preparatory condition for advising is fulfilled:

An important preparatory condition for accepting health advice advocating an action is that the writer believes that the action is in principle advantageous for the reader’s health. For accepting advice that discourages an action, the action should be considered disadvantageous for the reader’s health. (van Poppel, 2012, p. 103)

By removing anticipated doubt with respect to the fulfillment of the preparatory condition of advising, pragmatic argumentation contributes to the resolution process.

5. Conclusion

The use of pragmatic insights in the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation has enabled development of a model for critical discussion in which the constitutive moves are described as speech acts: the basic units

of communication. This, in turn, has made it possible to use pragmatic insights concerning indirect speech acts and conversational implicatures to solve problems of analysis with respect to argumentative discourse. Jackson and Jacobs' analysis of conversational argument has made it clear that argumentation in ordinary discourse can be seen as a 'repair mechanism': a means of regulating disagreement over all types of speech act. Their work has shown the importance of taking into account in the reconstruction of argumentation which speech act functions as the arguable speech act, and in which context of practical activity argumentation takes place. Recent publications in argumentation theory bear witness to the fruitfulness of a speech act perspective to the analysis of argumentative moves made within particular argumentative activity types.

N O T E S

¹ David Hitchcock (2007, p. 102) is an example of an informal logician who also considers arguing as a speech act.

² Another important tradition in which a pragmatic perspective on argumentation is taken is that of the Polish School of Argumentation (Debowska-Kozłowska, 2014; Koszowy & Araszkievicz, 2014).

³ Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, pp. 40–42) split up Searle's felicity conditions into two categories of conditions: identity (or recognisability) conditions which have to be met in order for an utterance to count as a particular speech act, and correctness conditions, which need to be fulfilled for a correct performance of the speech act. The essential condition and propositional content conditions of a speech act are its identity conditions. The correctness conditions consist of the preparatory and responsibility (or sincerity) conditions. The reason for distinguishing between identity and correctness conditions is that violations of these two types of conditions have different consequences. If one of the identity conditions has not been fulfilled, no performance of the illocutionary act of argumentation has taken place. If one of the correctness conditions has not been fulfilled, the speech act of argumentation is in some respect not wholly happy (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1982, p. 11).

⁴ Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, p. 31) list conditions for both 'pro-argumentation', i.e. argumentation aimed at justifying a standpoint, and 'contra-argumentation', i.e. argumentation aimed at refuting a standpoint. Only the first type of conditions are presented here.

⁵ Van Eemeren and Grootendorst prefer the term 'responsibility' condition to Searle's term 'sincerity' condition, since for their purpose it is what the speaker can be held accountable for that counts, not what the speaker privately thinks (1992, p. 32n).

⁶ By defining the perlocutionary effect of argumentation in this way, van Eemeren and Grootendorst make it possible to distinguish the type of perlocutionary effect that lends itself to systematic research in a speech act theoretical framework from the diverse category of other possible consequences of speech acts that are mentioned in the speech act literature. To this end, they also introduce a terminological and conceptual distinction between *inherent* perlocutionary effects (consisting solely of the acceptance of the speech act by the listener) and *consecutive* perlocutionary consequences (all other consequences of the speech act) (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984, p. 24).

⁷ Since the model specifies which speech acts can contribute to resolving the dispute in each of the stages of the resolution process, the model also serves as a heuristic or guide for the analysis of argumentative discourse (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 96).

⁸ A more defensible pragmatic optimum would be: “People whose landline is busy are generally at home.” In this formulation the possibility of exceptions to the rule is not excluded. The strong modality used in the presentation of the standpoint (“must be at home”), however, justifies ascribing a stronger premise to the speaker.

⁹ The same applies to unexpressed standpoints, which may also be seen as indirect speech acts (van Eemeren, 1986; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1991, pp. 162–163).

¹⁰ Some conversation analysts have criticized speech act theory as an instrument for the analysis of ordinary conversations. Van Rees (1992) defends speech act theory against such criticisms.

¹¹ This type of approach is based on the extended pragma-dialectical theory (van Eemeren, 2010) in which rhetorical insights have been integrated within the dialectical framework by making use of the concept of ‘strategic manoeuvring’: arguers’ attempts at being reasonable and effective at the same time.

¹² Clues for a point of view may also be found in the fact that an arguer provides an argumentative follow-up to his assertive. Since such argumentative follow-ups may in practice be difficult to distinguish from explanatory follow-ups, Houtlosser also contrasts the felicity conditions for arguments with those of explanations to clarify the conceptual difference between arguing and explaining. The differences in felicity conditions can subsequently provide clues to the analyst for distinguishing between argumentation and explanation (Houtlosser, 2002, pp. 178–179).

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A. Francisca Snoeck Henkemans

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