

Chapter 6

Analysis as Resolution-Oriented Reconstruction



6.1 The Need for Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse

For various reasons the reality of argumentative discourse is generally not entirely in agreement with the ideal model of a critical discussion. It is, for instance, not always immediately clear what standpoint exactly is at issue, who precisely is to be convinced of its acceptability and whether the difference of opinion is mixed or non-mixed. In a great many cases the procedural and material starting points of the argumentative exchange are to a large extent regarded to be understood, just as the division of the discussion roles of protagonist and antagonist among the participants. As a rule, the protagonist's argumentation remains partly unexpressed and the antagonist's criticism is to a great extent left implicit, especially when the argumentative discourse does not take the form of a full-blown dialogue. When it comes to stating the outcome of the exchange, in actual argumentative practices the conclusions that have been reached are sometimes only suggested or just taken for granted.

From these striking observations it can neither be concluded that the model of a critical discussion is not adequate nor that the argumentative discourse is deficient. That the model of critical discussion is not adequate, is contradicted by the problem-validity of the dialectical insights expressed in the model for resolving a difference of opinion on the merits that was discussed in Chap. 4. That, because of the deviations, the argumentative discourse is automatically deficient, is contradicted by pragmatic insights concerning the conduct of ordinary communication and interaction. More often than not actual argumentative discourse is implicit and incomplete, redundant and repetitive, indirect and ambiguous, and disorderly and messy, but this does not mean that it cannot be instrumental in resolving a differ-

This chapter is primarily based on van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 13–102) and van Eemeren et al. (1993: 37–90).

ence of opinion on the merits. From a pragmatic perspective the phenomena just mentioned may well be perfectly functional in conducting argumentative discourse in real-life argumentative practices. The efficiency of the discourse, for instance, can be served by leaving out or implicit what is self-evident, its clarity by stressing and reemphasizing what is vital, its smoothness by keeping hidden what is impolite or face-threatening, and its naturalness by dealing with issues at the very point where they happen to come up.

Of course, in argumentative discourse certain indispensable parts of the resolution process may remain unexpressed or get expressed in a long-winded, concealed or disorganized way not only because they seem self-evident or for other respectable reasons, but also out of carelessness, lack of responsibility or unreasonableness. This can apply equally to the definition of the difference of opinion, the division of the discussion roles, the establishment of the procedural and material starting points, the advancement of reasons in defence of a standpoint, the introduction of the argument schemes that are employed, the specification of the relationship between the reasons that are advanced, and the presentation of the outcome. In cases in which the defence of a standpoint happens to take place by means of a monologue in which only one of the parties participates explicitly, the other party's views may just be presupposed or cited only partly and other ingredients of the hidden dialogue will be represented at the discretion of the speaker or writer or even left out altogether. This means that, in order to do justice to what happens in the argumentative discourse, in all these cases a *reconstructive analysis* is needed in which all elements in the discourse that are relevant to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits are brought explicitly to the fore.

A reconstructive analysis is required in order to go beyond a naïve reading of the discourse that does not do justice to the commitments of the participants and what they intend to convey by what they say in the discourse. An analysis of a discourse is not the same as a mere interpretation but differs in several ways from it. First, an analysis is in principle more focused than an interpretation: it concentrates on a certain aspect of the discourse, in this case the argumentative aspect, instead of reporting a more or less subjective general impression. Second, an analysis is always undertaken from a specific disciplinary angle, in this case from the angle of argumentation theory and not, for example, from a psychological, logical, linguistic or historical angle. Third, in an analysis the observations that are made are situated in the conceptual and terminological framework of a certain theoretical perspective, in this case the pragma-dialectical perspective and not, for instance, a formal-dialectical or classical-rhetorical one. Fourth, whereas an interpretation can be disposed of as "just my interpretation", an analysis is intrinsically connected with the requirement of accountability: the analyst must be able to justify, for instance, why a certain speech act is to be considered as the standpoint at issue and another speech act as a reason advanced in its defence.

The kind of reconstructive analysis that is called for when approaching argumentative discourse from the theoretical perspective of pragma-dialectics involves the employment of the conceptual tools of that theory in order to interpret the discourse systematically in terms of that theory. This means that the analysis will

make use of the pragma-dialectical classifications of standpoints (descriptive/evaluative/prescriptive standpoints), differences of opinion (single non-mixed/single mixed/multiple non-mixed/multiple mixed differences), argument schemes [(subtypes of) causal/comparison/symptomatic argumentation], and argumentation structures (single/multiple/coordinative/subordinative/combined structure). Because it is a reconstructive analysis, the analysis carried out should as much as possible boil down to a methodical reconstruction of the speech acts performed in the argumentative discourse as argumentative moves that are instrumental in resolving a difference of opinion on the merits as they are distinguished in the model of a critical discussion that constitutes the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics. In this way the kind of resolution-oriented reconstruction can be achieved that is aimed for in the analytical component of the pragma-dialectical research program in order to establish a systematic connection between the insights into reasonable argumentative discourse developed in the theoretical component and the understanding of argumentative reality that is gained in the empirical component.

A crucial precondition for carrying out a reconstructive analysis of argumentative discourse is that the oral or written discourse that is to be analysed is indeed argumentative, i.e. designed to resolve a difference of opinion between two parties by a reasonable discursive exchange aimed at testing the acceptability of the standpoint(s) at issue. Another kind of precondition is that there are no unfulfilled higher order conditions for reasonable argumentative discourse that prevent achieving a resolution of a difference of opinion on the merits (e.g. because one of the party's state of mind is such that it lacks the willingness to come to any agreement or because the situation concerned is such that speaking up would lead to negative sanctions against one of the parties). Still other preconditions of a more general kind are that the parties involved in the discourse should make a serious effort to resolve the difference of opinion on the merits, to act cooperatively, and to try to maintain a working consensus during the discussion. When discussing the characteristics of a reconstructive analysis we will assume that the various kinds of preconditions just mentioned have been fulfilled.

6.2 Analytical Transformations in a Theoretically-Motivated Reconstruction

Providing the resolution-oriented reconstructive argumentative analysis aimed for in pragma-dialectics only makes sense if the discourse concerned is indeed wholly or partly argumentative, i.e. directly or indirectly aimed at overcoming someone's doubt regarding the acceptability of a standpoint. Although there are certainly cases in which the discourse is evidently not argumentative, even a discourse that is not presented as argumentative but, for instance, as a story reporting a series of events, may on closer inspection prove to have an argumentative function all the same. A speech event can sometimes serve various purposes at the same time and

resolving a difference of opinion may be one of them. In such cases it may, as in some other cases, make sense to analyse the same discourse from different perspectives, each of the analyses highlighting a different aspect of the discourse and the various analyses being complementary. An ordinary conversation, for example, might be fruitfully subjected to a psychological, a linguistic as well as an argumentative analysis. It depends on the purpose of the analyst which kind of analysis will be the most appropriate in a particular case.

If the purpose of the analysis is to achieve an overview of the speech acts performed in the discourse that offers an adequate starting point for a critical evaluation of the contributions these speech acts make to the resolution of a difference of opinion, then an argumentative analysis is called for. An argumentative analysis abstracts deliberately from aspects of the discourse that would only be relevant to other types of analysis. If for some reason this seems useful, the argumentative analysis and the analyses of other aspects of the discourse can later always be integrated. A pragma-dialectical reconstructive argumentative analysis starts from the idea that resolving a difference of opinion on the merits requires going through the four discussion stages that are analytically distinguished in the model of a critical discussion and performing the various types of speech acts which according to the model contribute to the resolution process. That is why the ideal model of a critical discussion serves as a “template” in the analysis, providing a point of reference for interpreting the discourse in terms of argumentative moves relevant to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits.

The model of a critical discussion serves as a heuristic and analytic tool in reconstructing the speech acts performed in an argumentative discourse from a resolution-oriented perspective. Its heuristic function involves indicating which argumentative moves are analytically relevant in the various stages of the resolution process, so that in the reconstruction it can be checked if any such argumentative moves have been made in the speech acts performed in the discourse.¹ The analytic function of the model consists in providing the conceptual and terminological means required for identifying and pinning down the argumentative moves that are made in the various speech acts. The way in which in an argumentative discourse a difference of opinion is handled will in the one case come closer to the conduct of a critical discussion than in the other. In argumentative reality the analytically relevant argumentative moves are generally not all fully represented in the discourse, let alone explicitly; more often than not they are concealed in speech acts that do not seem argumentative at first and they are not necessarily performed in the order indicated in the model of a critical discussion. As a rule, the argumentative moves that have been made in an argumentative discourse therefore need to be systematically identified and reconstructed in the analysis (van Eemeren 1986; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004: 100–110).

¹Analytically relevant means relevant to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. See Sect. 5.1 of this volume.

A resolution-oriented reconstruction of an argumentative discourse entails carrying out four kinds of analytic operations, known as *reconstruction transformations*, which are instrumental in tracing the argumentative moves in the discourse that play a part in resolving a difference of opinion.² These reconstruction transformations, carried out from the perspective of a critical discussion, are aimed at externalizing all argumentative commitments the speaker or writer has contracted in the discourse that are relevant to evaluating the contribution of the speaker or writer to resolving the difference of opinion at issue on the merits. Each type of transformation represents a particular way of reconstructing the discourse, which is expressed in its name. The operations involved in the transformations result in a *deletion*, an *addition*, a *substitution* or a *permutation* in the way in which the discourse is presented.³ As a consequence, the reconstruction of the discourse resulting from the analysis will be in several respects different from the original – in some cases even considerably different.⁴

The transformation of deletion amounts to identifying and subsequently leaving out of consideration those parts of the discourse that do not play a part in resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. Such redundant parts may, for instance, consist of mere repetitions, side-lines devoted to other topics, irrelevant interruptions, digressions and asides. The transformation of addition consists of completing the discourse by supplementing it with elements that have been left implicit in the discourse and are immediately relevant to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. Such additions may, for instance, concern anticipated doubt, starting points that are just presupposed or only elliptically phrased, unexpressed premises, and implied or implicated conclusions. In the transformation of substitution parts of the discourse that are relevant to the resolution process but whose function or content is due to their presentation insufficiently clear are put in unequivocal formulations which clarify their role in a critical discussion. Such substitutions may, for instance, pertain to speech acts whose communicative function or propositional content remains unnecessarily vague, to confusingly synonymous phrasings of the same propositional content and to ambiguous or indirect speech acts conveying relevant argumentative moves. The transformation of permutation entails rearranging parts of the discourse that belong to the same stage of the resolution process but appear in the discourse at different or inappropriate points by putting them in the order that reflects their relevance to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. Such permutations may, for instance, remedy overlap of discussion stages and rearrange premature or delayed contributions to a certain discussion stage, such as

²Next to reconstruction transformations, pragma-dialectics also distinguishes *presentation transformations*, which are used in writing or rewriting argumentative texts (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1999).

³For a more elaborate account of the reconstruction transformations, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1990, 2004: 100–110).

⁴The original discourse comes into play again when the strategic manoeuvring is taken into account in the analysis. See Chap. 7 of this volume.

argumentation that is advanced already before the confrontation stage has been completed and precizations of the standpoint at issue only coming about in the argumentation stage.

To illustrate the use of the four reconstruction transformations, we make use of the following conversation between John and Harry about inviting Miriam to John's birthday party.⁵ In this conversation there is a difference of opinion between Harry (and Michael) and John about inviting Miriam to John's birthday party. If it is reconstructed as a critical discussion, the conversation is viewed as an exchange aimed at resolving the difference of opinion about whether to invite Miriam or not.

- Harry Now that we have a quiet moment: have you thought any more about your birthday? Are you going to celebrate it or not?
- John I thought about **having a party. That seems a good idea, I think. Don't you?** *Let's get down to how I should do the invitations right away. I mean, do you think I ought to invite Miriam or not?*
- 5 **Miriam? Definitely ask her. By all means!**
- Harry **I don't think so myself**
- John [Michael comes in and joins John and Harry]
- Michael OK guys, what's new?
- 10 John What do you mean, what's new? Have a coffee.
- Harry Hello, Michael. You've come at a good moment.
- Michael That coffee's too strong. What were you talking about?
- John **Whether I should invite Miriam to my birthday party.**
- Michael **Of course, no doubt about it.**
- 15 Harry Michael, you just keep out of it. Let John and me sort this out together.
Now I'd like you to tell me, John, exactly what you've got against the idea of inviting Miriam to come.
- Michael **I want her to come!**
- Harry But I'm talking with John now. *What's wrong with her coming? It's your birthday, so it's up to you.*
- 20 John But you're the one who's so keen to have her.
I think it's up to you first to say why you think it's so necessary to invite her at all.
- Harry It's your birthday, so *it's up to you to say why she isn't welcome.*
- 25 John I have the impression that you have a view on it too. *So you have to tell me why.*
- Michael Have the two of you sorted it out? **Just let her come.** Stop making such a fuss all the time. By the way, has either of you seen Peter?
- John No, Peter's out – the creep.
- 30 Harry Do you want it to be another boring affair? Miriam's the liveliest woman I've met for ages.

⁵This text was introduced for this purpose in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 100).

- John Do you want me to stay away from my own party?
 We mustn't invite Miriam or Peter will come too!
- Harry OK, EXIT MIRIAM.
- 35 Michael Have you agreed?
- Harry Just give me a beer.
- John So what are we going to do? Invite her?
- Harry NO, I'VE GIVEN IN, HAVEN'T I? HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY.
 DON'T INVITE HER.

In providing a resolution-oriented reconstruction of this argumentative discourse a transformation of deletion is, for example, carried by leaving out of consideration the parts of the conversation in which greetings takes place, the coffee is discussed (lines 10–12) and Harry asks for a beer (line 36), which are not immediately relevant to the resolution process. A transformation of addition reconstructs, for instance, both “Miriam? Definitely ask her. By all means!” (line 6) and “Of course, no doubt about it” (line 14) as a standpoint. By means of another transformation of addition, “Peter will come too!” (line 33) and “Do you want it to be another boring affair? Miriam’s the liveliest woman I’ve met for ages” (line 30) are reconstructed as argumentation. A transformation of substitution is, for example, carried out in reconstructing all three different formulations “Definitely ask her. By all means!” (line 6), “Of course, no doubt about it” (line 14) and “I want her to come!” (line 18) as expressing the same positive standpoint with regard to the proposition that Miriam should be invited. Harry’s indirect argumentation for this standpoint by means of the rhetorical question “Do you want it to be another boring affair?” (line 30) and John’s equally indirect counter-argumentation by means of a rhetorical question, “Do you want me to stay away from my own party?” (line 31), are both for the sake of clarity through a substitution transformation replaced by a direct formulation (A party should not be boring; I cannot stay away from my own party).

The use of the permutation transformation deserves some special attention. In the birthday party discussion there are various points in the discourse where parts of the confrontation stage are realized. First, in lines 6–7, Harry puts forward a positive standpoint and John a negative one. Second, in lines 14–17, Michael adopts the same (positive) standpoint as Harry, while John disagrees. Third, in line 19, once again Harry tries to draw John out by asking for arguments to back up his standpoint, thus calling the acceptability of John’s negative standpoint with regard to inviting Miriam into question. For the sake of clarity, the parts of the discourse belonging to the confrontation stage are in our reproduction of the text indicated **in bold**.

Parts of the opening stage are expressed at various points. The clearest in lines 21–22, where Harry explicitly draws John’s attention to his responsibility as protagonist of the standpoint that Miriam should not be invited. John draws Harry’s attention to his obligations as protagonist of the opposite standpoint and considers that Harry must first fulfil his role as protagonist by coming up with arguments. The second opening passage occurs in line 24 with a repetition of the remark that Harry

did already make in lines 19–20. The third opening passage is in line 25, when John draws Harry’s attention to his responsibility as protagonist of the positive standpoint that Miriam ought to be invited. Small skirmishes take place at these three points in negotiating the division of roles and the sequence that is desired. The parts of the discourse that belong to the opening stage are put *in italics*.

The argumentation stage is represented in lines 30–33, where Harry advances an indirect argument for his positive standpoint that Miriam should be invited: a party should not be boring, which is part of a more complex argumentation that remains partly implicit. John’s argumentation for his negative standpoint that Miriam should not be invited is also indirect: if Miriam is invited, Peter will come too, and that is apparently not what John wants. Although the argumentation of the two protagonists is not explicitly presented as such, an indirect form of argumentation is used in both cases and several unexpressed premises play a part, the argumentation stage of the discussion is here not so difficult to identify. The parts of the discourse that belong to the argumentation stage are underlined.

The concluding stage is represent in line 34 and 38, where Harry makes it unequivocally clear that he gives up his own positive standpoint and accepts John’s negative standpoint that Miriam should not be invited. So the difference of opinion is resolved in John’s favour. The parts of the discourse that belong to the concluding stage are put IN CAPITALS.

Various deletion, addition, substitution and permutation transformations are thus carried out in a resolution-oriented reconstruction of the conversation about the birthday party. Carrying out these transformations is in the analysis of an argumentative discourse in principle part of a cyclic process of reconstruction, in which transformations are carried out recursively. Because the result gained in carrying out a certain transformation may trigger a new round of reconstruction, involving the execution of still more transformations, the process of analysis can entail several rounds of reconstruction. When, for instance, a non-assertive speech act consisting of a rhetorical question, such as “Do you want it to be another boring affair?” (line 30), has been reconstructed by means of a substitution transformation as a direct assertive (A party should not be boring), this reconstruction has to be followed by a transformation of addition to attribute the communicative function of argumentation to this assertive (Miriam should be invited, because a party should not be boring [and people preventing a party from being boring should be invited]).

6.3 Making an Analytic Overview of an Argumentative Discourse

In order to do justice to the argumentative discourse that is analysed, a resolution-oriented reconstruction should result in an “analytic overview” of the discourse that covers all stages of a critical discussion and represents all argumentative elements in the discourse that are relevant to the resolution of a difference

- (a) The standpoints at issue in the difference of opinion and the positions adopted by the parties.
- (b) The procedural and material starting points constituting the point of departure.
- (c) The arguments explicitly or implicitly advanced by the parties for each standpoint.
- (d) The argument schemes used to justify a standpoint in the various arguments constituting together an argumentation.
- (e) The structure of the argumentation advanced by each of the parties in defence of a standpoint.
- (f) The outcome claimed by the parties.

Fig. 6.1 Components of an analytic overview

of opinion on the merits and should contain nothing else. In this way the analytic overview provides an adequate basis for a fair assessment of the discourse by systematically bringing together everything that must be taken into account in a critical evaluation. This means that the analytic overview needs to recapitulate the difference of opinion at issue, to identify the positions of the participants and the procedural and material premises serving as the point of departure of the exchange, to list the reasons that are advanced which constitute the argumentation in response to (expressed or anticipated) criticism, to determine the types of arguments that are used in the process and the argumentation structures that have developed, and to report what the outcome of the exchange is according to the participants.⁶ In the case of a discourse that is hard to come to grips with, it may be helpful to start the analytic overview with an outline of the way in which the four stages of the resolution process are represented in the discourse. To serve its purpose well, the analytic overview needs to satisfy the requirements of economy (no redundant elements), efficacy (no non-pertinent elements), coherence (no inconsistencies), realism (no unlikely elements), and well-foundedness (no unaccountable elements) (van Eemeren 2010: 16–19).

The points which, in principle, always need to be included in an adequate analytic overview are listed in Fig. 6.1.

All six points that are to be included in an analytic overview are pertinent to the evaluation of an argumentative discourse. If it is not clear what the difference of opinion involves, i.e. which standpoint or standpoints are at issue and which positions have been adopted by the parties, there is no way of telling whether the difference of opinion has been resolved and in whose favour. If the discussion rules and the explicit and implicit premises constituting together the point of departure of

⁶The pragma-dialectical method for making an analytic overview is explained in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (13–102). For its practical application see van Eemeren and Snoeck Henkemans (2016).

the argumentative exchange remain unclear, it is not clear either on which procedural and material starting points the evaluation must be based. If not all the reasons that are explicitly and implicitly advanced in support of a standpoint are taken into account, including the unexpressed premises, crucial parts of the argumentation may be overlooked, so that the evaluation will be inadequate. If the argument schemes that are employed in the various arguments advanced are not recognized, it is impossible to determine whether the supporting link supposed to be established in each individual argument can stand up to criticism. If the structure of the argumentation in defence of a standpoint is not disclosed, it cannot be judged whether, when taken together, the arguments put forward in defence of a standpoint constitute a coherent and cogent whole. Finally, if the parties' views of the outcome are not taken into account, it cannot be checked to what extent the evaluator's assessment agrees with their judgments.

In representing the various components of an analytic overview the conceptual and terminological apparatus of pragma-dialectics is put to good use (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992; van Eemeren and Snoeck Henkemans 2016). To begin with, in reconstructing the difference of opinion at the centre of the argumentative discourse, a distinction is made between single non-mixed, multiple non-mixed, single mixed, and multiple mixed differences of opinion. In order to determine which points are at issue, it is necessary to identify precisely which standpoints with regard to which propositions are assumed and questioned in the discourse. The difference of opinion is single when there is a difference about just one proposition (A: "Turkey should join the European Union"; B: "Should it?"); it is multiple when there is difference about more than one proposition (A: "Turkey should join the European Union and Greece should leave the Union"; B: "I am not sure whether I agree with either of your views"). The difference of opinion is non-mixed when only one (positive or negative) standpoint is adopted with regard to a proposition (A: "Turkey should join the European Union"; B: "Should it?"); it is mixed when both a positive and a negative standpoint are adopted with regard to the same proposition (A: "Turkey should join the European Union"; B: "No, it should not!"). A single non-mixed difference of opinion represents the basic type of a difference of opinion. Other types of differences of opinion consist of a combination of differences of opinion of the basic type.

As for the positions of the parties in a difference of opinion, a distinction is to be made between taking on the role of a protagonist who is committed to a standpoint and taking on the role of an antagonist who is in doubt about its acceptability. In order to determine which positions have been assumed by the parties, it is necessary to identify precisely which participants take on the role of protagonist with regard to the standpoint(s) at issue and which participants the role of antagonist. Assuming the position of antagonist of the other party's standpoint can be combined with taking on the role of protagonist of the opposite standpoint, but this is not necessary: a party that calls a standpoint into question need not necessarily assume the opposite standpoint. Both the discussion roles of protagonist and antagonist can also be fulfilled by a group of people or a representative of such a group and it may

even be the case that one and the same person takes on the role of protagonist as well as the role of antagonist regarding one and the same standpoint.

In listing the arguments that have been put forward on behalf of a standpoint, next to reasons for accepting a standpoint that are advanced explicitly, there may well be reasons that are only implicitly or even indirectly expressed. All reasons that are in some way or other advanced in the discourse should be externalized in the reconstruction and included in the analytic overview. In this way it can be guaranteed that in the evaluation also reasons that are put forward in the form of a rhetorical question or another form of indirect argumentation will be taken into account. In the reconstruction of unexpressed premises the logical minimum consisting of the “associated conditional” *if explicit reason, then standpoint* can be used as a heuristic tool to get to the pragmatic optimum involving a generalization or specification of this conditional that goes as far as context, available background information and other relevant pragmatic resources allow (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 60–72).

In particular when the resolution process is directly based on a premise left unexpressed in the discourse because a reason supporting this unexpressed premise is advanced at the next level of the defence, it is necessary to represent the unexpressed premise in the analytic overview. In the birthday party conversation, for instance, this is the case when Harry supports the unexpressed premise that Miriam’s presence will mean that the party is not boring with the argument that Miriam is a lively woman (and the presence of lively women means that a party is not boring).

In a great many cases the unexpressed premise rendered explicit in the reconstruction can serve as a basis for the identification of the argument scheme that connects the reason advanced in the discourse with the standpoint that is to be justified. Depending on the different sets of critical questions associated with the kind of relationship that is established between the reason advanced and the standpoint defended, as has been explained in Sect. 3.5, pragma-dialectics makes a distinction between argumentation of the causal, the symptomatic and the comparison type (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 94–102). Starting from the reconstructed unexpressed premise, it is as a rule easy to determine which of the argument schemes characterizing these three types of argumentation has been used in a particular case. In the conversation about the birthday party, for instance, starting from the unexpressed premise that the presence of a lively woman can prevent a party from being boring, which has been left unexpressed in Harry’s argumentation that Miriam is a lively woman that he advanced in support of his unexpressed standpoint that Miriam’s presence will mean that the party is not boring, it can be reconstructed that a symptomatic relationship is supposed to exist between, on the one hand, this standpoint and, on the other hand, Miriam being the liveliest woman Harry has met for a long time and the unexpressed premise that the presence of a lively woman means that a party is not boring. In the same vein, a causal relationship can be reconstructed between Harry’s standpoint that Miriam should be invited to the party and the argument that a party should not be boring (and Miriam’s presence will prevent the party from being boring) combined with

the bridging unexpressed premise that people preventing a party from being boring should be invited.

In reconstructing the way in which a standpoint has been defended by means of argumentation consisting of more than one reason, pragma-dialectics distinguishes between multiple, coordinative and subordinative argumentation structures (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 73–89; Snoeck Henkemans 1997). The analysis of the argumentation structure concentrates on the way in which combinations of reasons that have been put forward to justify a standpoint support the standpoint separately or when taken together. The simplest argumentation structure comes into being when a standpoint is defended by just one single reason (and an unexpressed premise). When the speaker or writer considers giving more reasons necessary in defending a standpoint, the argumentation structure becomes complex. The argumentation is multiple when the individual reasons (or combinations of reasons) advanced in support of a standpoint are in principle independent of each other and each of them constitutes a separate defence of the standpoint. The argumentation is coordinative (i.e. coordinatively compound) when only in combination with one another two or more reasons (or combination of reasons) constitute a defence of the standpoint. In subordinative (i.e. subordinatively compound) argumentation one reason (or combination of reasons) supports the other reason at the next level of the defence. The structure of Harry's argumentation in the birthday conversation, for instance, contains both coordinative and subordinative argumentation:

- 1 Miriam should be invited to the party
 - 1.1a A party should not be boring
 - (1.1b) (Miriam's presence will mean that the party is not boring)
 - ((1.1a)–(1.1b))' (People whose presence means that a party is not boring should be invited)
 - (1.1b).1 Miriam is a lively woman
 - ((1.1b).1') (Lively women prevent a party from being boring).

6.4 Exemplary Analysis of a Specific Case (Part 1)

To illustrate how an argumentative discourse can be reconstructed in the way we have just explained, we now provide an analytic overview of the press release 'KLM apologies for destroying squirrels', dating from 1999.⁷ In April 1999 the Dutch airline company KLM was in the spotlight because it had finished off 440 North-American banded ground squirrels after it had been ordered to do so by the national agency for the inspection of cattle and meat. The required exportation and health documents were lacking, and the squirrels were not adequately packaged.

⁷This analysis is based on van Eemeren (2015: 521–542).

The animals were put through a chopper alive. The squirrels came from Beijing and were on their way to Athens. The sender in Beijing did not want to take the squirrels back and no country outside Europe volunteered to receive the animals. The chopper in which the squirrels came to their end was a kind of shredder that is also used in the bio industry to cut up cocks. Cocks, however, are substantially smaller than squirrels, and with cocks one can therefore make sure that the head goes first. With the ground squirrels, whose size equals that of three hands, this was not feasible. In the press release below, KLM accounts for having destroyed the squirrels.

- [I] KLM sincerely apologizes for having been forced to have 440 squirrels destroyed, last Monday in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel. KLM has acted in a way that is formally justified, but admits that an ethical assessment mistake was made. KLM fully endorses the criticisms that have been voiced by the public and the various organisations.
- [II] The airline company has decided to start a thorough investigation into what exactly happened at the reception of the package in Beijing. The events in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel will also be investigated.
- [III] Pending this investigation and in view of the emotions that these events have aroused, the Board of KLM has deemed it desirable that the employee concerned will stay home for the period of this investigation.
- [IV] On Sunday, April 11, 1999, KLM has received orders from the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Fishing (AEMF) to destroy the animals. KLM is of the opinion that this order, in this form and without feasible alternatives, was unethical.
- [V] The Board of KLM holds, however, that the KLM employee concerned has acted formally correct in this matter by promptly following the directives of the Department of AEMF, but also acknowledges at the same time that this employee has made an assessment mistake.
- [VI] KLM once more emphasises that the company regrets the course of events and offers its sincere apologies to all animal lovers and all those whose feelings have been hurt by the events.
- [VII] KLM has informed the Animal Protection Society, the AAP Foundation, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Cites Netherlands Foundation, the Foundation for the Shelter of Squirrels in De Meern, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, and the Dutch Association of Zoos of the above and has invited these organisations to come to a consultation on how to avoid deplorable situations of this kind at a short term.

Our resolution-oriented reconstructive analysis starts off by identifying the four stages in the process of resolving a difference of opinion on the merits in KLM's discourse. This results in the following analysis of the discourse in which the parts belonging to the confrontation stage are indicated **in bold**, the parts belonging to the

opening stage are put *in italics*, and those belonging to the argumentation stage are underlined:

- [I] *KLM sincerely apologizes for having been forced to have 440 squirrels destroyed, last Monday in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel. **KLM has acted in a way that is formally justified**, but admits that **an ethical assessment mistake was made**. KLM fully endorses the criticisms that have been voiced by the public and the various organisations.*
- [II] The airline company has decided to start a thorough investigation into what exactly happened at the reception of the package in Beijing. The events in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel will also be investigated.
- [III] Pending this investigation and in view of the emotions that these events have aroused, the Board of KLM has deemed it desirable that the employee concerned will stay home for the period of this investigation.
- [IV] *On Sunday, April 11, 1999, KLM has received orders from the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Fishing (AEMF) to destroy the animals. KLM is of the opinion that this order, in this form and without feasible alternatives, was unethical.*
- [V] **The Board of KLM holds, however, that the KLM employee concerned has acted formally correct in this matter** by promptly following the directives of the Department of AEMF, *but also acknowledges at the same time that this employee has made an assessment mistake.*
- [VI] *KLM once more emphasises that the company regrets the course of events and offers its sincere apologies to all animal lovers and all those whose feelings have been hurt by the events.*
- [VII] KLM has informed the Animal Protection Society, the AAP Foundation, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Cites Netherlands Foundation, the Foundation for the Shelter of Squirrels in De Meern, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, and the Dutch Association of Zoos of the above and has invited these organisations to come to a consultation on how to avoid deplorable situations of this kind at a short term.

a. *The difference of opinion*

KLM advances two standpoints explicitly: (1) KLM has acted in a way that is formally justified, (2) AEMF is to be blamed for giving an unethical order. KLM also puts forward a standpoint implicitly: (3) KLM has acted appropriately after the destruction of the squirrels had taken place. Implicitly they also ascribe a standpoint to their accusers: (4) KLM is to be blamed for what went wrong with the squirrels. (1), (2) and (3) are supposed to meet with doubt from the undefined audience to which the press release is addressed, so that there is a multiple non-mixed difference of opinion between KLM and them. The additional difference of opinion concerning (4), which KLM implies to have with their accusers, is single mixed.

b. *The point of departure*

KLM has decided to start a thorough investigation into what exactly happened at the reception of the package in Beijing. The events in the KLM Cargo animals'

hotel will also be investigated. Pending the investigation and in view of the emotions that these events have aroused, the Board of KLM has deemed it desirable that the employee concerned will stay home for the period of this investigation. KLM has received orders from the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Fishing (AEMF) to destroy the animals, without feasible alternatives. The KLM employee concerned has acted formally correct in this matter by promptly following the directives of the Department of AEMF.

c. The arguments advanced

Ad standpoint 1 KLM received orders from the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Fishing, in this form and without feasible alternatives, to destroy the animals, and KLM's employee followed these directives.

Ad standpoint 2 The Department of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Fishing's orders did not have the correct form and the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Fishing did not offer any feasible alternatives.

Ad standpoint 3 KLM started a thorough investigation into what happened at the reception of the package in Beijing; KLM started a thorough investigation into what happened in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel; KLM let the employee who let out the orders stay at home for the period of the investigation. The investigation is still to be carried out. The emotions concerning the destruction make the employee's staying at home necessary. And KLM made sure that such disasters will not happen again in the future. KLM informed all interested parties and has started consultation with them.

Ad standpoint 4 KLM acknowledges that their employee has made an ethical assessment mistake.

d. The argument schemes employed

In virtually all cases the argument schemes used are symptomatic.

e. The argumentation structure

KLM advances coordinative argumentation, (1.1a–1.1b), in support of their standpoint 1, multiple argumentation, 2.1 and 2.2, in support of their standpoint 2, and coordinative argumentation, (3).1a–(3).1d, in support of their implicit standpoint (3). KLM supports some parts of the latter coordinative argumentation, (3).1c and (3).1d, in turn by means of subordinative argumentation, (3).1c.1, (3).1c.2, and (3).1d.1, respectively. The accusers offer single argumentation, (4).1, in support of the standpoint (4), which KLM implicitly ascribes to them.

1. KLM acted in a way that is formally justified
 - 1.1a KLM received orders from AEMF to act in this way
 - 1.1b KLM's employee followed AEMF's directives
 2. AEMF is to be blamed for giving an ethically wrong order
 - 2.1 AEMF's order did not have the correct form
 - 2.2 AEMF did not offer any feasible alternatives
 3. (KLM acted appropriately after the destruction of the squirrels)
 - (3).1a KLM started a thorough investigation into what happened at the reception of the package in Beijing
 - (3).1b KLM started a thorough investigation into what happened in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel
 - (3).1c KLM let the employee who carried out the orders stay at home for the period of the investigation
 - (3).1c.1 The investigation is still to be carried out
 - (3).1c.2 The emotions concerning the destruction make the employee's staying at home necessary
 - (3).1d KLM made sure that such disasters will not happen again in the future
 - (3).1d.1 KLM informed all interested parties and has started consultations with them
 4. (KLM is to be blamed for what went wrong with the squirrels)
 - (4).1 KLM acknowledges that their employee has made an ethical assessment mistake
- f. *The outcome*
- No outcome is mentioned.

6.5 Resources for Accounting for an Analytic Overview

In the case of a resolution-oriented reconstruction, unlike in the case of a purely subjective interpretation, the analyst can be held accountable for the reconstructive analysis that is provided. In accounting for an analytic overview several kinds of resources can be brought to bear (van Eemeren 2010: 16–19). In all cases there is, first of all, the text that is reconstructed, i.e. the organized collection of speech acts that are performed in the discourse and the words and expressions used in doing so. In a reconstructive analysis of an argumentative discourse, the text that is analysed is invariably the most important source. This is where the reconstruction process

starts from and this is where the analyst should return to in accounting for the analysis that is provided.

Even when a text is fully explicit and seems the only resource that needs to be utilized in accounting for a reconstructive analysis, the analyst should always be aware of the possibility that a different interpretation is called for than the one suggested by the literal meaning of what has been said. In the case of irony, for instance, the opposite interpretation is usually the right one. Generally, when the interpretation of an ambiguous or partly implicit speech act needs to be accounted for, additional resources, such as the context, need to be exploited. Often the linguistic “micro-context”, consisting of the speech acts preceding and following the speech act at issue, will offer the required support – sometimes in combination with visual or other information provided by the situational “meso-context” in which the speech act is performed. Other contextual resources that may come in useful are the institutional “macro-context” of the communicative practice in which the argumentative discourse takes place and the “intertextual context” consisting of relevant other texts, such as the article to which a letter to the editor reacts.

Other resources that can be utilized in accounting for the reconstruction of certain components of an analytic overview are one’s cognitive ability to draw logical inferences which reveal pertinent presuppositions or implications of what has been said in the discourse and pragmatic inferences bringing out pertinent “implicatures” conveyed by the discourse. In justifying the reconstruction of indirect speech acts, and particularly unexpressed premises, the “rules of communication” play a part that are formulated in pragma-dialectics to integrate the identity and correctness conditions for the performance of communicative acts with interactional principles based on the Gricean maxims in dealing with argumentative discourse (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 49–52).

The rules of communication resist in ordinary communication and interaction the performance of speech acts which are (1) incomprehensible, (2) insincere (i.e. not resulting in a commitment), (3) redundant, (4) pointless or (5) not appropriate in the context in which they occur. If a speech act occurs which seems to go against these rules and there is no reason to assume that the idea of communicating and interacting seriously has been abandoned, the analyst should make a concerted effort to reconstruct this speech act in such a way that the rule violation is remedied and the reconstructed speech act agrees with the five rules of communication. In this way it is possible to account for a reconstructive analysis of indirect speech acts and unexpressed premises (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 52–59, 60–72).

A last resource that can be brought to bear in accounting for a resolution-oriented reconstructive analysis is background information. First, there may be general background information, which refers to background knowledge that is in principle available to everyone who is part of the community. An example is our shared knowledge that in a public swimming pool you need to wear a swimsuit. Second, there is specific background information, which may vary from expert knowledge to knowledge someone happens to have as a result of certain particular experiences. An example of the latter is the knowledge a witness has of a

criminal act. In all cases where information is used, the information concerned may offer reliable support to the justification of a particular reconstruction.

In accounting for a certain reconstructive analysis more often than not one kind of resource that is put to good use in supporting a reconstruction can be supplemented with the support gained from another kind of resource, as happens, for instance, in combining referring to contextual clues with mentioning specific background information provided by a specialist in the field. For an illustration by means of a few examples of how the reconstruction of the various components of the analytic overview can be accounted for we turn again to the analysis of KLM's press release. However, references to the institutional and intertextual context and to background information will largely be postponed to Sect. 7.5, because their use can be illustrated more clearly after we have enriched our theory with insights concerning strategic manoeuvring.

The difference of opinion

The first of the two standpoints that KLM advances (KLM has acted in a way that is formally justified) is explicitly formulated in paragraph I of the text; the second standpoint (AEMF is to be blamed for giving an unethical order) in paragraph IV, indicated by "KLM is of the opinion that". Based on KLM's emphatic elaboration on its measures to ensure that all will go well in the future, the implicit third standpoint (KLM has acted appropriately after the destruction of the squirrels had taken place) can be ascribed to the company. Because KLM's press release is motivated by the counter-claim that KLM implicitly ascribes to their accusers (KLM is to be blamed for what went wrong with the squirrels), this counter-claim must be viewed as the fourth standpoint that is part of the confrontation stage. Since KLM opposes this standpoint and the other three standpoints are supposed to meet only with doubt, the difference of opinion concerning the fourth standpoint is the only mixed one.

The point of departure

KLM states in paragraph I and IV of the text more or less explicitly the starting point that it was wrong that 440 squirrels had to be finished off and just as explicitly in paragraph I and VI the starting points that they fully endorse the criticism of the action by the public and various organisations, in paragraph I and IV that they were ordered by AEMF to have 440 squirrels destroyed, and in paragraph I and VI that they regret what happened and apologize emphatically for it to all animal lovers and other interested parties. Not much background information of whatever kind is therefore required to identify the starting points established in the opening stage.

c. The arguments advanced

Although the arguments are not explicitly indicated, in all cases the presentation and the ordering make clear what the arguments are. In this press release unexpressed premises do not lead to any further development of the argumentation.

- Ad defence standpoint 1* In support of the first standpoint (KLM acted in a way that is formally justified) KLM presents in paragraph IV the argument that KLM received orders from AEMF to act in this way and complements this argument in paragraph V by the argument that KLM's employee followed AEMF's directives.
- Ad defence standpoint 2* In support of the second standpoint (AEMF is to be blamed for giving an ethically wrong order) KLM presents in paragraph IV the argument that AEMF's order did not have the correct form as well as the argument that AEMF did not offer any feasible alternatives.
- Ad defence standpoint 3* In support of the implicit third standpoint (KLM acted appropriately after the destruction of the squirrels) KLM presents in paragraph II first the argument that KLM started a thorough investigation into what happened at the reception of the package in Beijing. Also in paragraph II, KLM advances the second argument that KLM started a thorough investigation into what happened in the KLM Cargo animals' hotel, followed in paragraph III by the argument that KLM let the employee who let out the orders stay at home for the period of the investigation. In paragraph VII the fourth argument is added that KLM made sure that such disasters will not happen again in the future. In paragraph II the third argument is in its turn supported by the argument that the investigation is still to be carried out and in paragraph III by the argument that the emotions concerning the destruction make the employee's staying at home necessary. In paragraph VII the fourth argument is supported by the argument that KLM informed all interested parties and has started consultation with them.
- Ad defence standpoint 4* In support of the fourth standpoint (KLM is to be blamed for what went wrong with the squirrels), which KLM implicitly ascribes to their accusers, KLM acknowledges in paragraph V that their employee has made an ethical assessment mistake

Ad d. The argument schemes employed

As an illustration of the similar nature of various argument schemes used in this press release it can be observed that KLM presents the fact that it started a thorough

investigation into what happened in Beijing at the reception of the package as a token that the company has acted appropriately after the destruction of the squirrels had taken place (their implicit third standpoint), so that the argument scheme that is employed can be characterised as symptomatic.

Ad e. The argumentation structure

As soon as the standpoints and the arguments that have been advanced in KLM's press release have been identified, the argumentation structure arises more or less automatically from the way in which the arguments are presented in the text. In support of their standpoint 1, KLM advances the coordinative argumentation 1.1a–1.1b. In the text the arguments are connected with each other by the use of the word “however” in paragraph V. In support of KLM's standpoint 2, the multiple argumentation 2.1 and 2.2 is advanced. The two reasons concerned are mentioned together but they are independent. The coordinative argumentation (3).1a–(3).1d is advanced in support of KLM's implicit standpoint (3). These arguments are presented as a series of reasons that justify the unexpressed standpoint when taken together. One part of this coordinative argumentation, (3).1c, is in its turn subordinatively supported by the independent arguments (3).1c.1 and (3).1c.2, which constitute a multiple argumentation. Another part of the same coordinative argumentation, (3).1d, is supported subordinatively by (3).1d.1. The accusers are supposed to support the standpoint (4), which KLM implicitly ascribes to them, by the single argumentation (4).1.

Ad f. The outcome

No outcome is mentioned, so that there is no explicit concluding stage. In this way it is suggested that the conclusion is clear.

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