Invited Contribution

THE LANGUAGE OF ARGUMENTATION

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Problems of argumentation are specially and intensively discussed from the beginning of the second half of the 20th century. Many books and articles, proceedings of many international congresses and conferences on argumentation are being published. There were formed schools and centers for the study of argumentation in different countries, particularly in the USA (Pennsylvania State University), Belgium (Free University of Brussels, Gent University), in the Netherlands (Amsterdam University), as well as in Armenia (Yerevan State University). There was also founded in 1991 the International Institute for Argumentation, which moved from Yerevan (Armenia) to Amsterdam (the Netherlands) in 2004[1]. During many years special seminars involving professors and students from Yerevan different educational and research institutions productively have been working. Seminars are the part of the activity of the Armenian Philosophical Academy (President G.Brutian).

On the basis of his international experience Academician Brutian – head of the Yerevan School for Argumentation, makes the conclusion that all the necessary works has been done to study the different aspects of argumentative discourse in principle. It is time to construct a general model of argumentation. I underline *in principle* because according to Professor Brutian's point of view there are some lacuna in the study of argumentation. He thought that one of the main lacunas in this study is the problem of the language of argumentation. He (with Professor H. Markarian) gave a paper on the Language of Argumentation at the Second International Conference on Argumentation in Amsterdam. Since that, seminars on argumentation, held in Yerevan, concentrate their attention on different aspects of the language of

[1] News and views, 2004, N 3, p. 8.

argumentation. Many participants of seminars gave papers on the main idea of G.Brutian's seminars.

The Vice-president of the Armenian Philosophical Academy Philosopher and Linguist E.Atayan, Professor at Yerevan State University, published a booklet **The Language of Argumentation** (Yerevan, 1998), M.Avakian – Professor at Yerevan State Linguistic University, devoted his thesis of Ph to the problem **Argumentation and Language**. He also published two brochures: **The Style of Argumentation and Language** (Yerevan, 1998), **The Different Functions of Language in the Process of Argumentation** (Yerevan, 1998), G.Brutian's book **Logic, Language and Argumentation in Projection of Philosophical Knowledge** (which includes chapters **The Language of Argumentation**, **The Problem of Translatability in Argumentation**) is published in English in Lisbon (Portugal, 1998).

It is necessary to add that Brutian's, his followers' and students' studies on the language of argumentation are based on his works devoted to the language of Philosophy, which are published in Yerevan, Moscow, etc.

The analysis of the language of argumentation in this paper is based on the ideas discussed on the above-mentioned seminars. In this case I'd like to underline that according to **Who's Who in the World**, "The development of the investigation of argumentation in the Soviet Union is connected first of all with Brutian's name. His students and followers from a number of newly independent countries, as well as from other countries investigated the conception of argumentation on the basis of his ideas. The Yerevan School of Argumentation was founded which is known in the world centers for investigations of argumentation" (Who's Who in the World, 18th Ed., p.301; see also P.V.Alekseev. Filosofi Rossii XIX-XX stoletiy, p. 125-126; A.P. Alekseev. Argumentatciya, poznanie, obtchenie. M., 1991, p4). Additionally it is worth to mention the great scientist of our time Victor Ambartzumian's word's "With great satisfaction I must mentioned that the Yerevan School of Argumentation got a wide international acknowledgement" (Viktor Ambartzumian. "Sovetakan Ayastan", 21.02.1990).

The concept *language of argumentation* is polysemanticl. I would like to concentrate my attention on two aspects: linguistic and conceptual ones.

By saying *the linguistic aspect of the language of argumentation* we mean special words used in argumentative discourse and some grammatical rules which can be regarded as a means of combination of words in argumentative acts. So, we have two different sets, the first one includes some special words, the second one – some special rules.

The first set indicates the specificity of the semantics of argumentation, the second one – the specificity of the syntax of argumentation - from the point of view of linguistic approach to them. It must be noted that we are not satisfied by those two sets. It means that during argumentation we use not only the set which includes words characteristic for argumentation, but also some sets of other words: words from everyday conversation, a set, which includes special words from the field of knowledge where our argumentation happens. It is possible to use some other sets too. In any case semantics for the linguistic point of view consists of three sets at least: a set of argumentative words, a set of words taken from the field in which we argue, and a set of common words used in spoken language which can be named an intermediate set.

It must also be noted that in this paper we use the term "semantic" in two different senses: (1) "Semantic" means the lexical meaning of words which we use and (2) The study of the meaning, which is an object of lexicology. When we use semantics or semantic aspects of the language of argumentation from the point of view of linguistic approach we mean (1) the meaning of words in an argumentative discourse.

The language of argumentation from the linguistic point of view also includes the concept of *the style of argumentation*. We can define this concept on the basis of the term "language style". "Language style" in some sense is a changing, deflection from the stereotype, deviation from norms of grammar of the language by which we express our thought. In this sense we use such terms as "Shakespeare's style", "Gjote's style", "Pushkin's style" and etc.

We use *the style of argumentation* in different senses among which two must be specially mentioned: (1). "*the style of argumentation*" shows the specificity of the language, which we use in argumentation acts. (2). But we also use the "*the style of argumentation*" in individual sense: "Cicerone's argumentation style", "Churchill's argumentation style" and etc. Cicerone's set of semantics from the point of view of

language has, of course, similarity with the Churchill's set of semantics and there must also be some differences between them.

The style *of argumentation* has not only a semantic indicator but also a syntactical indicator. From my point of view the latter is on the deeper level of the language than semantic indicators. The syntactical level of the language of argumentation is a changing from regular rules of the syntaxes of the language. I mean the change of places of the subject and predicate of the given language, the use of rhetorical stress and other similar means.

The *language of argumentation* from the point of view of its conceptual aspect has also its semantics and syntaxes. They are included in the conceptual apparatus of the language of argumentation from the similar apparatus of the language of argumentation from the point of linguistic aspect of argumentation. In other words, semantics and syntaxes on the level of conceptual interpretation of the language of argumentation are extrapolated from the grammar of spoken language on the basis of explication of corresponding concepts.

The semantics of the language of argumentation in conceptual sense is a set of concepts which is characteristic of argumentative acts.

The syntaxes of the language of argumentation is a set of logical-methodological rules, which give us opportunity to make necessary conclusions on the basis of corresponding concepts and their combinations.

According to the analysis of the main works on argumentation we can suggest that its semantics be studied comparatively much more and much detailed than its syntaxes. As illustrations of the said, we can bring privately the papers published in many volumes of the proceedings of the conferences of the International Society of the Study for Argumentation. As exclusion, some works of the Netherlands' leading experts on argumentation – F.H.van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, can be outlined. The rules of political argumentation are studied in the works of the representatives of the Yerevan School of Argumentation -Ara Brutian and Georg Brutian. By generalizing the practice of political discussions, especially the debates on parliamentary sessions of the Republic of Armenia, the reflections of debates in the media, the Armenian authors described in their work more than one hundred and fifty rules of political argumentation. They have classified the rules of political

argumentation on the basis of the analysis of empirical datum. According to the typology of the rules of political argumentation they can be of the following character: methodological, logical, axeological, ethical, rhetorical.

The consideration of this typology and its result can be helpful for some conclusions from the point of view of the modern stage of the study of the syntaxes of argumentation. It is interesting that according to G.Brutian's and A.Brutian's classification of argumentation[2] there are much more rules of methodological character than that of logical character in political argumentation. One can think that from the point of view of authors, logic does not play essential role in argumentation, particularly in political argumentation. There is indeed such view in works of modern experts of argumentation. I mean, first of all, the Belgian well-known experts Chaim Perelman and L.Olbrechts Titeka's "The New Rhetoric and Treatise on Argumentation" originally published in French and translated into English. Meanwhile G.Brutian in his discussions with Professor Perelman (they have met several times in international conferences and other meetings) criticized Perelman's negative view on role of logic in argumentation[3] and defended the theses according to which the logic is one of the main components of any argumentation and it plays very important and essential role in any argumentative discourse. So, which is the reason that G.Brutian and A.Brutian described in their book much more rules of methodological character than logical rules. It doesn't depend on the specificity of political argumentation. The explanation of the authors' attitude to this question is very simple. The logical rules of the reasoning are studied in detail, starting with the time of ancient philosophers especially Aristotle coming to our days. There is no necessity to choose special logical rules for argumentation and especially for political argumentation. Only some logical rules are described in the above-mentioned book, with the illustration from political debates to show the important role of logic in argumentation. And it is also underlined that any logical rule is a necessary element of argumentative discourse. The same is possible to say about other elements of the classification under consideration.

Two additional comments are necessary in connection with the language of argumentation.

[2] A.Brutian, G.Brutian. 101 Rules of Political Argumentation (in Armenian). Yerevan. §Nairi¦, 2003.

1. While considering the sets of the concepts as well of the syntactical rules (which will be more correct to call them methodological-logical rules), we note that there are special layers, maybe special elements in the sets, which are characteristic of political argumentation. This specificity is determined by the very nature of political argumentation, where the process of argumentation is not only a logical action. Rhetorical, emotional elements here play very essential role.
2. The construction of the language of argumentation demands corresponding methods.

It is evident that the exposed language of argumentation is a structure, which consists of two sets, one of which is a set of concepts, the second one is a set of rules. It is also evident that they are the results of some kind of abstraction and generalization.

Is it possible to formalize the language of argumentation?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to underline that argumentation is a general process. Homo sapiens argue in any sphere of life. But each sphere influences itself on the character of argumentation. So, we can say that for example, political argumentation is not absolutely identical with the argumentation in science, particularly in mathematics. Such elements, procedures as *rhetorical means, persuasion (conviction), acceptance* have important role in political argumentation, meanwhile practically they have played no role in mathematical argumentation. Practically semantic and syntactical means of argumentation in general consist of sets that are open and the elements of which are if not endless, then are quite enough for argumentative processes in any sphere of our everyday life and in science. But it doesn't mean that we need this means, all the elements of the conceptual apparatus, all the constructions and rules in any argumentative act. The mental building of the argumentative discourse G. Brutian compares with the hall and scene of theatre with many bulbs of different colors possessing different strengths. It is not necessary to use always all the bulbs of all colors, we can use some of them and change their strength,

[3] G.Brutian. Logic of argumentation (The Perelman's view: Pros and Cons Arguments). In: Chaim Perelman et la Pense'e Contemporaine.Textes rassemble's par Guy Haarscher.Bruxelles, 1993.

etc. and all depend on our concrete aim. The same can be said in connection with the elements and rules of argumentative discourse[4].

If we have exact picture of semantic and syntaxes of argumentation, one can ask what kind of language of argumentation is built, is it a natural language or an artificial one? As we need argumentation in every sphere of our life then we can say that it is a natural language. So, we argue in German, English, French and so on, but it is such kind of national language, which includes the necessary conceptual set and a set of syntactical means as well, which are not only necessary, but also enough for our argumentative propose. It is a result of some kind of abstraction from everyday language (in some sense), generalization and systematization.

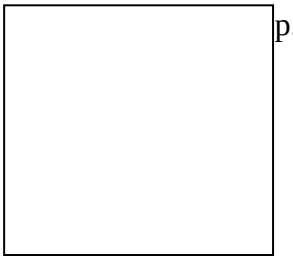
Now another question arises: is it possible to formulize this language which we call the language of argumentation? The answer in principle can be the following: any language is possible to formalize *more or less*. Having in mind the formalization of any knowledge, it helps the progress of our knowledge, we must try to formalize it. The formalization has difficulties of two kinds – subjective and objective. Subjective kind of difficulties is connected with the limits of the knowledge of a person, as well as of the whole mankind. But these difficulties can be solved and its solution depends on time. The limits of formalization of the knowledge, which is more or less rich in content, can be changed tomorrow and etc. But we can't achieve the entire formalization everywhere, in every sphere of knowledge, as there are objective difficulties of formalization of our knowledge too. There are some levels in our knowledge, which principally cannot be formalized (for example, intuition). What can we do in such cases? Famous mathematician and logician Kurt Gödel give the answer.

I don't want to analyze the mathematical essence of Kurt Gödel's achievements in connection with the principle of "possibility of full formalization of more or less rich in content fields of knowledge and of scientific knowledge of whole"[5]. I would like only to introduce graphically the main meaning of the process of formalization according to Gödel's viewpoint. If we have a fragment of knowledge, which is more or less rich in content (see the picture 1.), we can construct some principles of formalization of this fragment. As the result of this operation we can receive the

[4] See: G.Brutian. The Essence and Elements of Argumentation (in Armenian). "Science" Publishing House, Yerevan, 1997, p.9.
[5] G.Brutian. *Logic, Language, and Argumentation in Projection of Philosophical Knowledge.* Lisbon, 2000, p.72.

picture 2. It means that after the formalization of one of segments of the knowledge under consideration from the point of view of formalization remained not formalized. We can choose new axioms and rules for this segment and try to formalize this segment, too. As a result we realize a new situation from the point of view of the formalized system, where we have two different levels of formalized knowledge and one level or segment of non-formalized knowledge (see picture 3). We shall continue this process of formalization based on different kinds of axioms and roles, the result of which can be illustrated by pictures 4, 5 and etc.

p. 1



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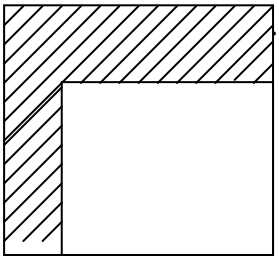

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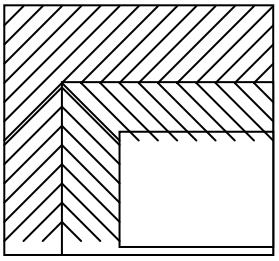

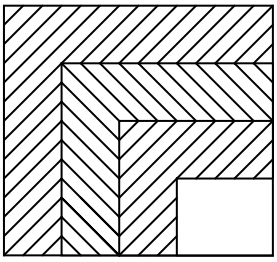

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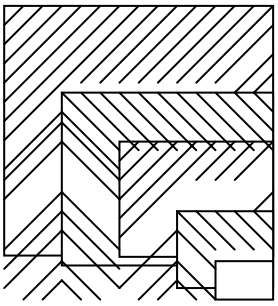

p. 5

This process is endless. So, we can conclude, that if we have knowledge, more or less rich in content, we cannot formalize it as a whole, not because of our insufficient possibility of formalization but because of the very character of the knowledge under consideration.

It is obvious, that if we consider the process of argumentation, its argumentative apparatus and set of rules, we cannot formalize this language as a whole. We even do not need to formalize this language if we argue in some fields of everyday life, social and political life, etc. Maybe, we shall need some formalization of argumentation by using the formalized theories, but this is only a principle idea and I don’t know such kind of approaches to argumentative discourse. On the basis of such consideration of the language of argumentation we can say that as a result of some kind of abstraction and generalization we receive a construction which is a system of a kind of a set of

concepts and a set of rules. Said in other words, it is a conceptual language, which indicates the specificity of argumentative discourse. It must be noted that such systematization must be based on some preliminary works or processes. I mean, first of all, especially the explication of the meaning of argumentative approaches and syntactical rules of argumentation. Using Rudolf Carnap's terminology[6], every concept that we use in argumentative discourse we must consider as explicandums (well-known but non-exact concept) and we explicate or do some work of explication and transform these explicandums into explicatums (exact concept). It must be underlined that such kind of explication must be realized from the point of view of paradigm of the argumentative discourse.

The members of our seminars and especially the head of seminars G.Brutian came to the following conclusions: 1) that the process of explication of semantics and syntaxes of argumentation includes not only the meaning of open texts, but contextual meaning also (the meaning which can be discovered in the process of analysis of the content in which we use the concept which is very necessary for understanding the very text, and the subtextual meaning of words as well), 2) that the explication includes not only the process of transformation of some kinds of concepts (explicandums) into another kind (explicate) but also the process of exactness of the syntactical rules which we use in our argumentative discourse.

Transformational logic – the logical science which was created by G.Brutian,-is a helpful tool for the realization of the process of explication. The author gives the following definition of the above-mentioned logic: "…Transformational logic as a science studying the relationship between EXP (explicit) and IMP (implicit) forms and structures of thought, the essence of subtextual and contextual forms and structures of thought, the means and rules by which Imp forms and structures of thought are generated from the EXP forms and structures, as well as forms and structures of thought are made precise"[7] .

We pay special attention during our seminars to the problem of translatability in argumentation. This problem is understood by the members of seminars also in two senses. First, a problem arises when the members of the discussion use different

[6] R.Carnap. Meaning and Necessity. A Study Semantics and Model Logic. Chicago, 1956.
[7] G.Brutian. Transformational Logic. Yerevan, 1995, p.4.

spoken languages, for example, German, English. French, Russian and so on. In such situation we need interpreters. The task of interpreter is not only the translation of the exact meaning of words but also, which is not less important, to interpret the argumentative specificity of the members of the discussion. The latter plays important role in convincing the recipient. It means also that translator must know excellently not only the language in which he speaks and the language on which he translates, but also the specificity of argumentation, the language of argumentation. The first aspect has its special difficulties, for example the translation of phraseology. It is obvious that phraseologies cannot be translated. They must be transformed into equivalent phraseology, or mere sentences, which play equivalent role in oral and written translated texts. It must also be noted that some writers have their own special means of expression and it must also be taken into account in the study of fiction. It is well known that English speakers use not only phraseologisms but also Shakespearisms. There are some other difficulties from the point of view of translation from a natural language into another. But there is also another kind of translation that we can call a translation from the language of one science (or one point of science) into another language of science. English mathematician W.Saywer[8] shows the privilege of such translation. For example, the translation from the language of algebra into the language of geometry can visually show the meaning of algebraic expression and help us to understand some mathematical propositions.

Such translation helps us to discover hidden senses of the meaning of the words, to transform some implicit meanings into explicit ones and to make some meanings vivid which were not obvious in the translated text. It also means that such translation has an explicative meaning. It can help us to use our concepts as explicants.

We can also say that it is a translation from one model of knowledge into another model. I should like to underline, that such translation has a function of verification. Translation can show how this or that word or phrase is used in correct way in the original language. But what is very essential is that such translations with the different functions help us to make our argumentative means stronger and more powerful, on the one hand, and to show the weak points in their argumentation of our opponents, on the other hand.

[8] W.Saywer. A Path to Modern Mathematics. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969.

The study of the language of argumentation and its relevant elements are necessary for the contraction of the general model of argumentation.