ARGUPOLIS
Argumentation practices in context

FNSNF
Pro*Doc

ARGUMENTATION AS REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CONFLICT IN FAMILY CONTEXT

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BACKGROUND

Argupolis is a doctoral program, jointly designed and developed by scholars of the Universities of Lugano, Neuchâtel, Lausanne and Amsterdam, that is specifically devoted to argumentation practices in context. Its special focus on argumentative practices in different social context distinguishes it among all doctoral schools at international level.

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OBJECTIVE

The main goal of the project is to consider the role and effectiveness of argumentative strategies for conflict prevention and resolution in family context.
More precisely, I focus on the conditions under which a disagreement or incompatibility of positions can be managed through argumentative means instead of leading to overt interpersonal hostility, where each party is committed to hinder the adversary's realization of his/her own goal.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CORPUS

The research has as its empirical base a quasi-homogeneous corpus constructed from two different sets of data: sub-corpus A1: a set of 15 dinner table interactions video-recorded in 5 Italian families; sub-corpus A2: a set of 15 dinner table interactions video-recorded in 5 Ticinese (Swiss Italian) families.
All the 30 interactions selected share the same following characteristics:
- all family members are present during the interaction;
- researchers are not present during the recording process;
-the selected families are constituted by both parents and at least two children, of which the younger one is in preschool age (3-6 years) and the second one is older;
-the language of interaction is largely Italian.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(1) the pragma-dialectic model of a critical discussion, developed by the Amsterdam school of argumentation (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 1992a, 2003);
(2) the model of Topics, proposed in Rigotti and Greco (2006) and the model of communication contexts, proposed in Rigotti and Rocci (2006), which elicits the fundamental features that must be taken into account when analyzing argumentative interactions;
(3) a conceptual model for mapping conflict development (Greco Morasso 2008, 2009), which allows eliciting the steps that bring from a disagreements expressed through communicative means to the escalation to hostility.

PRINCIPAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Does argumentation in the families always correspond to a reasonable resolution of the difference of opinion?
- What kind of difference of opinion is more frequent (non-mixed, mixed, multiple)?
- Are there typical recurrent argumentative strategies deployed by family members?
- Is the choice of arguments affected by the type of issue discussed?
- Is there a relation between the quality of argumentation and the resolution conflict?
- Is there a relation between the success of the argumentation and family roles?
- What are the most frequent discursive alliances?

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