Means of argumentative strategies in Spanish dialogue

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Abstract: The process of argumentation in the paper is connected to the usage of mixed clauses with an accumulation of causality. Different models of argumentative strategies will be analyzed in the paper. For example, in Spanish, causal, final and consecutive clauses can be postponed to intensify the argumentation and in this case they function as external modifiers. It is important that when organizing the text speakers use complex mechanisms of argumentation such as the combination of different types of causal modifiers (internal and external). Expressing causality in the clearest possible way leads to a higher perlocutionary effect. According to the argumentation theory the transition from cause to effect goes through one's background knowledge; that is why it is applied to the analysis of causal clauses. The clauses that express causality play a very important role in the process of argumentation and they are a part of the discourse strategies for maintaining communication.

Key words: argumentation, cause, effect, consequence, causality, background knowledge.

Introduction

The authors of the theory of argumentation in language are O. Ducrot and J. K. Anscombre (1994). The theory studies whether an utterance is adequately used (in terms of its validity as an argument) in language context or not. Argumentation can be commented from the point of view of rhetoric as a combination of strategies used to persuade someone and from the point of view of logic as a type of reasoning. Mercier and Sperber even claim that: "The main function of reasoning is argumentative: Reasoning has evolved and persisted mainly because it makes human communication more effective and advantageous". [1] Different means of argumentation are going to be analyzed, all within causation's range (It is necessary to explain what is meant by *causation*: it is a more complex category of clauses expressing a reason or an argument because of which something is done in the main clause. Such notions as objective, cause, condition, illation and concession are included in the range of causation.), e.g. causal, final and illative clauses.

For Ducrot and Anscombre argumentation is the adducing of arguments that can lead to a certain conclusion. According to this theory it is not necessary that a strong from a logical point of view argument be also strong from the point of view of argumentation in language. Logical argumentation and argumentation in language differentiate because in the former the number and type of premises are known in advance and the conclusion is calculated automatically, whereas in the latter this is not always true. Besides, "the accumulation of arguments never imposes the logical need of drawing a specific conclusion" [2], it depends on the speaker's intention. As García says: "Argumentation is determined by the linguistic elements that a speaker chooses and not by their referents". [3] It is possible that the arguments in argumentation in language are implicit. The conclusion may also be implicit but only if it can be easily inferred.

Argumentative markers are language elements that determine the argumentative *orientation*. They have a different argumentative *strength*. There are two types depending on their field of

activity: *operators* and *connectives*. The former affect an utterance and influence its argumentative strength. The latter connect two or more utterances and are a part of an integrated argumentative strategy. Operators can be classified as increasing the argumentative potential or constraining it. A typical connective may be an adverb, a phrase or a conjunction.

Markers are classified according to three criteria. First, according to their *function*, whether they introduce an argument or a conclusion. "The type of the chosen connective may impose its own limitations on the word order of the language elements". [4] The order of the arguments and conclusions is not fixed. It depends on the language specifications of the marker. The second criterion is the *valence*. It represents the number of arguments controlled by the core. It is possible that the connective relates to two or three elements. If they are three, it is obligatory that two of them are arguments leading to the same conclusion. Sometimes one element could be implicit. The third criterion is the *orientation* according to which the markers may lead to one and the same conclusion or to different ones. Each connective provides a very specific instruction concerning the interpretation that the listener has to make. When the valence is double the orientation is only towards the conclusion, but when it is triple there are two options: that the second argument can actually be a counterargument and it is also possible that the conclusion is converse to the arguments. The arguments directed towards the same conclusion form an argumentative *class* that has an internal structure depending on the argumentative strength.

Arguments are organized by their strength into an argumentative *scale*. Anscombre and Ducrot claim that words do not refer to only one object or concept, but that there are scripts underneath them. That is why in different communicative situations an expression could turn out to be a stronger or a weaker argument to a certain conclusion (García 2007).

Argumentative acts have their own logic that is valid only in the dialogue. In order to explain how the connection of language elements is possible Ducrot adds to the theory the term *topos* which is an argumentative rule shared by the participants in the communication. Topoi are scalar in nature. They can be rejected by the interlocutor because of their dependence on the situation or on the context. The sum of the topoi and the scales underlies the argumentative logic. "The topos is a basic reasoning rule that establishes conformity between two argumentative scales". [5]

Another kind of implicit information common to the communicants is background knowledge. It has a particularly strong effect on causal clauses and explains the possibility to perceive the causal connection even if there is no such connective. On the other hand, its presence (of the connective) is not always a *conditio sine qua non* to establish causality. "The argumentative difference between the causal clauses does not depend on the different values of the connectives, but on the strength of the implicit arguments they are based on". [6] Causation is drawn on the basis of inferential processes. In the syntactic analysis of all types of clauses that are in its range background knowledge has to be taken into account because it explains the relation between cause and effect. It is the third obligatory element in the causal structure after the cause and the consequence.

The process of argumentation in the current paper is related to the use of mixed clauses with an accumulation of causation. It is represented not only by causal clauses, but also by final, illative, conditional and concessive clauses because they all contain an argumentative element.

Different models of argumentative strategies will be analyzed in the paper. For example, in Spanish, causal and final clauses can be postponed to intensify the argumentation and in this case they function as external modifiers. As commented on earlier, according to the theory of argumentation the transition from cause to effect goes through background knowledge and that is why it is applied to the analysis of causal clauses. It is important for the speakers to use complex

mechanisms of argumentation such as the combination of different types of causal modifiers (internal and external) when organizing a text.

According to the Royal Spanish Academy (RSA) (2011) causal clauses are divided into two groups: those that express an internal cause and those that express an external cause. The first group "specifies the cause of the event or the state of affairs that the predicate describes". [7] Clauses that express an external cause are used to justify the articulation of the main clause and they introduce explicative clauses. They are separated by a coma, it is not possible to formulate a question regarding them and they cannot be focalized or used in a negative form. There are three ways to express external causality: by tropicalizing a real cause, by subordinating the clause to an implicit speech verb (*say*) and by postponing it to a speech act, such as a question, an order or a wish, and justifying the articulation of this act.

Final clauses are also divided into the same two groups according to the cited academy. The difference consists in the relation between them and the main predicate. The internal final clauses express the purpose of the action or the process expressed by the main predicate and the external ones bring only an explicative nuance to the main clause and its articulation. The second group is subdivided into the same three types: tropicalized, subordinated to an implicit speech verb (*say*) and postponed to a directive speech act. According to the politeness theory when the social balance between the communicants is threatened it is necessary to use strategies in order to compensate the addressee.

The RSA differentiates consecutive clauses from *illative* clauses. The former emphasize the consequence and the latter express only a logical consequence. This new classification for Spanish language is presented in an academic textbook for the first time in the latest practical grammar published by RSA in 2011. The different types of clauses are commented in groups according to similar semantic characteristics and these two types are included in different chapters of the grammar. This is done not only because they use different formal markers, but because they express different kinds of conclusions. Causal, final and illative clauses are grouped in one chapter in the cited grammar because the idea of causation is always present in them.

Now three quotes excerpted from modern Spanish-language novels will be adduced. The first one combines external cause and illation: "El próximo tiro es para usted y le aseguro que puedo dispararle antes de que me maten, **así es que** mejor nos vamos respetando, **porque** si nos morimos, yo no le voy a hacer falta a nadie, pero […] la nación sentirá […] su pérdida". [8] ("The next shot is for you and I guarantee you that I can shoot you before you kill me, therefore it would be better if we respect each other because if we die, I will not be missed, but […] the whole nation will mourn […] your death"). This quote is an example of the accumulation of clauses that express causation – illation, cause and condition. An explanation of this phenomenon can be found in the communicative situation in which the author of the statement, a woman, is trying to protect her home from a group of revolutionaries who want to sack it in the name of their cause. The proprietress' wish to protect her family and possessions makes her try to influence her interlocutors by strengthening the perlocutionary effect of her words. She aims at avoiding the conflict by good argumentation.

The following quote represents a complex utterance combining several types of clauses: "- No te avergüences, que por lo menos a ti te llegó [el Síndrome del Carcamal] temprano. Debe ser porque no tienes hijos, si los hubieras tenido serían demasiado pequeños y todavía estarías ocupado criándolos". [9] ("Don't be ashamed because at least you got it [the "old wreck" syndrome] recently. It must be [so] because you do not have children, if you had them, they would be too small and you still would have to be taking care of them"). The situation in which it is pronounced is connected to the fact that the listener is still young, but he feels tired all the time

like an old person. The speaker is trying to calm him with a directive speech act. Even though his intention is to encourage him, he still explicates his reasons with a postponed causal clause functioning as an external causal modifier in which he states the positive aspect of the inevitable problem. After that he offers an explanation to his own utterance by another external causal clause. Its articulation is explicated with a conditional clause for an impossible condition in the past with a consequence in the present which is another element of causation's range: "If you had little children that you had to take care of, you wouldn't even have time to think that you are tired". A complex sequence of phrases expressing causation is formed. Their pragmatic objective is to strengthen the argumentation. The first external causal clause contains an argumentative marker (*por lo menos / at least*) that constrains the argumentative strength, but is directed towards emphasizing the positive aspect of the situation. Since mental processes occur at very high speed, their verbalization sometimes is inadequate and imprecise. Because of that the speaker is obliged to give additional explanations to his utterances in order for them to be correctly understood by the listener. That is why it is possible to see such sequence of clauses that have different forms, but one and the same pragmatic objective – a clearer utterance, a better communication and a stronger argumentation.

The last quote to be analyzed because of the interaction between different elements of the causation range is: " […] usted llega a Lublin un viernes al atardecer, seguramente para esperar el tren de mañana a Praga, porque para qué otra cosa iría un judío a Lublin un viernes y por qué pasaría alguien por Lublin si no fuera judío. Así que después de esa estúpida conversación […] me voy a ver obligado a invitarlo a mi mesa, porque no podría dormir tranquilo dejando a un judío solo". [10] (" […] you come to Lublin on a Friday evening most likely to wait for tomorrow's train to Prague because for what other purpose would a Jew go to Lublin on a Friday evening and why would anyone pass by Lublin if he weren't a Jew. Therefore after this stupid conversation […] I will see myself obliged to invite you to my home because I wouldn't be able to sleep peacefully leaving a Jew alone"). In these two sentences connected in one semantic whole with the coordinating conjunction *así que* there are six clauses from the causation's range (two causal, two final, one illative and one conditional). The first final structure is external to the main predicate because the real purpose of the journey is known to the speaker due to a series of conclusions, which he reaches at through inferential processes and which he explicates in the next clauses. In order to substantiate the supposition about the real purpose of the journey: "you come to Lublin on a Friday evening most certainly to wait for tomorrow's train to Prague" an external causal structure is used: "because for what other purpose would a Jew go to Lublin on a Friday evening and why would anyone pass by Lublin if he weren't a Jew". It contains rhetorical questions explicating the background knowledge of the speaker. For the correct interpretation of his conclusions it is necessary to paraphrase the rhetorical questions since in communication they are interpreted as statements with a converse meaning: "A Jew goes to Lublin on a Friday evening in order to wait for tomorrow's train to Prague" and "Someone passes by Lublin on a Friday evening because he is a Jew". The speaker has drawn the conclusion that his interlocutor is a Jew based on two implicit causes that have an extralinguistic explication – first, because he is travelling to Lublin *precisely on a Friday evening* (with the final purpose to go to Prague by taking the Saturday train) and second, because he is going *specifically to Lublin* (again with the same final purpose). Without doubt the speaker is performing a complex inferential process basing his arguments on his background knowledge which is inaccessible to the reader (and also to the listener in the dialogue). Therefore the speaker uses an external causal clause to bring clarity in the situation and to justify his statement. The comment of the "stupid conversation"

reveals the attitude of the speaker towards the listener and justifies on a semantic level the necessity of all the external explicative structures.

After this complex combination of cause, purpose, condition and consequence follows an utterance that states the illation of the whole situation: "Therefore after this stupid conversation […] I will see myself obliged to invite you to my home". After the author's consideration that his interlocutor is a Jew, the former reaches the conclusion that he has to give the latter a shelter. The inference is based not only on the information from the previous context, but also on the implicit information connected to the speaker's personality, alluded by the phrase "because I wouldn't be able to sleep peacefully leaving a Jew alone". The reader realizes the fact that the speaker is also a Jew through the subtle nuances reflecting the relation of the implicit and the explicit information in the process of argumentation.

The quote represents an example of a complex deductive process. It shows clearly how linguistic and extralinguistic characteristics are related through clauses containing implicit and explicit information, the former ones being used by the speaker for explicating the train of his thought. It is obvious that in order to make an adequate syntactic analysis of a sentence similar to the previously commented one we must include in it the relevant parameters of the communicative context − background knowledge and communicative intentions of the participants in the dialogue. It is of extreme importance to take into account the pragmatic information of the communicants because without it sometimes the meaning of what they say is incomprehensive. The context and the entire communicative situation influence the structure of the utterance, namely the order of its clauses. Sometimes in compound-complex sentences additional explications to the content of the main clause are necessary in order to increase its argumentative strength. Another time the cause for articulating the utterance is stated and that is done through an external structure because it is based on an implicit, not only on linguistic information.

Resuming, the clauses that express causation play a very important role in the process of argumentation and they are a part of the discourse strategies for maintaining communication. A complex interaction between explicit and implicit information is observed when combining internal and external causal and final structures and illation clauses. The latter could also be defined as external because the conclusion is drawn by deduction and they are connected to the communicative context. The necessity of this kind of combinations broadens the idea of interaction between conventional and unconventional models of language functioning, e.g. inferential enrichment of the explicatures from the context.

It was found that with some speech acts such as justification for example, the communicative situation requires that the speaker give very detailed explications and the greater the need of an excuse is, the longer and more complex his utterance will be.

The speaker perceives the relations of cause and effect in their integrity and for this reason, while expressing them, he does not differentiate them in separate clauses, but combines them in complex modifying sequences. The participants in a conversation are trying to be as clear as possible when expressing causation in order to facilitate processing the information of the text or in order to reach a stronger perlocutionary effect. The more complex the cause-effect relation is, the more determined by one another the clauses are. Sometimes, the implicit arguments are common to the participants in the dialogue but, if needed, they are explicated by the speaker.

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