

## Dialectics and pragmatics

### Dialéctica y Pragmática

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**Abstract:** The aim of this contribution is to make the dialectical dimension of pragma-dialectics more explicit by giving a philosophical analysis of the ‘standard version’ of the theory as it has been developed since the publication of *Speech Acts*. The analysis shows that the standard version of the theory is premised on three ‘dialectical’ starting points, pertaining to: (I) the aim; (II) the structure; and (III) the regulation of a critical discussion respectively.

**Keywords:** Dialectics, critical discussion, pragma-dialectics, reasonableness.

**Resumen:** El objetivo de esta contribución es hacer más explícita la dimensión dialéctica de la pragma-dialéctica ofreciendo un análisis filosófico de la ‘versión estándar’ de la teoría así como ha sido desarrollada desde la publicación de *Speech Acts*. El análisis de la noción teórica de ‘discusión crítica’ muestra que la versión standard de la teoría está contenida en tres puntos de partida ‘dialécticos’, siendo éstos: (I) el objeto; (II) la estructura; y (III) la regulación de una discusión crítica.

**Palabras clave:** Dialéctica, discusión crítica, pragma-dialéctica, razonabilidad.

### 1. Introduction

In *Speech acts in argumentative discussions*, published in 1984, van Eemeren and Grootendorst have laid the foundation for what has become known as the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. As the name indicates, this theory is based on a combination of pragmatic and dialectical starting points

with respect to argumentation. The term ‘pragmatic’ refers to pragmatics as the study of the use of language for various purposes, whereas the term ‘dialectical’ refers to dialectic as the art of debate.<sup>1</sup> Whereas several scholars have analyzed the pragmatic dimension of pragma-dialectics, my aim in this paper is to make the *dialectical* dimension of pragma-dialectics more explicit. I will do so by giving a philosophical analysis of the ‘standard version’ of the theory as it has been developed since the publication of the seminal work mentioned above.<sup>2</sup>

First, in order to get a general impression of what van Eemeren and Grootendorst mean by a dialectical approach to argumentation, I will analyze the way in which they have contrasted their approach with other approaches to argumentation – in particular the rhetorical one (§ 2). Next, I will examine more precisely which of the theoretical starting points of pragma-dialectics are considered to be of a ‘dialectical’ nature (§ 3). Further, I will analyze the way in which these dialectical starting points are reflected in the various components of the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics (§ 4). Finally, on the basis of these analyses, I will present a schematic overview of the standard version of pragma-dialectics and its applications (§5).

## **2. Dialectical and rhetorical approaches to argumentation**

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s exposition of the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics is preceded by a general overview or ‘topography’ of studies on argumentation.<sup>3</sup> This topography takes the form of a description of a dialectical and a rhetorical variant of a comprehensive program for research in the field of argumentation theory. The program includes five interrelated components: (1) a philosophical component, describing the con-

<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of the name ‘pragma-dialectics’ see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 52, 95).

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘standard version’ is understood to mean the version of the theory as expounded in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1992 and 2004). Unlike the recently developed ‘extended version’ of the theory, the standard version does not take into account rhetorical views on argumentation. My philosophical analysis is mainly based on the most recent iteration of the standard version in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004).

<sup>3</sup> See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 11) and earlier van Eemeren (1987).

ception of reasonableness on which a certain approach to argumentation is based; (2) a theoretical component, making clear what model of argumentation is developed in the approach concerned; (3) an analytical component, indicating how argumentative discourse should be reconstructed in order to evaluate it by means of that model; (4) an empirical component, explaining by which empirical findings the reconstruction of argumentative discourse can be justified; and (5) a practical component, indicating how the approach concerned can contribute to the improvement of the argumentative skills of language users as well as the improvement of argumentative procedures in various institutional contexts.

From their description of the dialectical and rhetorical variants of the philosophical component of this research program it can be learned that van Eemeren and Grootendorst take the dialectical approach to be based on a 'critical' conception of reasonableness and the rhetorical approach to be based on an 'anthropological' conception of reasonableness.

Viewed from the anthropological perspective, argumentation is evaluated as sound when it complies with standards that vary with the cultural and temporal characteristics of the argumentative situation as well as the 'epistemic background' of the audience – i.e. the whole of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values and preferences of the individuals that constitute it (2004, pp. 14-15). Taking this perspective as a starting point for the development of a theoretical model of argumentation has the advantage of considering the context in which the argumentation has been put forward: '[T]he anthropological approach does justice to factors that formal logic abstracts from, but that are all the same relevant to the evaluation of argumentation, such as the contextual circumstances in which the argumentation is advanced' (2004: 129, n. 9). However, it has the disadvantage of the evaluation of argumentation potentially being of a highly relativistic nature:

[In adopting] an anthropological norm of reasonableness [...] they ultimately equate the soundness of argumentation with its effectiveness on those who act in a particular case as the judges. The consequence is that argumentation that is sound in one case need not be sound in the other case. [...] This means that the norm of reasonableness is potentially relativistic to a high degree: Potentially, there are as many kinds of reason-

ableness as there are judges – or even more, if one bears in mind that judges may change their mind and in the course of time come to apply other evaluation criteria. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 129-130)

Viewed from the critical perspective, argumentation is evaluated as sound when it complies with standards that can be characterized as procedural and formal at the same time. The procedural nature of these standards is connected with the ‘principle of fallibility’ as it is formulated in critical rationalism. Following on this principle, the theoretical model of argumentation to be developed takes the form of a procedure for the critical testing of standpoints ((2004: 14, 16-17, and 131-132).<sup>4</sup> The formal nature of the standards is expressed in the desideratum that the proposed discussion procedure has ‘the form of an orderly arrangement of independent rules for rational discussants who want to act reasonably’ (2004: 16).<sup>5</sup>

From their description of the dialectical and rhetorical variants of the other four components of the research program it can be learned that van Eemeren and Grootendorst take the dialectical approach to argumentation to be premised on the view that argumentation is aimed at the resolution of a difference of opinion and the rhetorical approach to be premised on the view that argumentation is aimed at convincing or persuading an audience.

As far as the theoretical component is concerned, it is stated that dialectical models of argumentation specify the role of argumentation in the resolution of a difference of opinion and that rhetorical models specify the role of argumentation in convincing or persuading an audience (2004: 20-22).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See also van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson & Jacobs (1993: 170-171), where it is emphasized that within the dialectical approach to argumentation, reasonableness is not understood as a property of standpoints or arguments (or of the way they are related to one another), but rather as a property of the testing procedure: ‘Our approach locates argumentative reasonableness in procedures for critical discussion rather than in the form of reasoning or in the substance of initial premises per se. [...] Reasonableness, then, is located in the self-correcting capacities of a discussion procedure and not in the security of substantive starting points.’

<sup>5</sup> See also van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002: 132, n. 5): ‘Because pragma-dialectics involves the development of a model of regimented ways of resolving a difference of opinion, this approach to argumentation is formal in a procedural sense.’

<sup>6</sup> See also van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 59-60, n. 40): ‘The discussion stages distinguished in a dialectical approach [confrontation stage, opening stage, argumentation stage, and concluding stage, JW] overlap to some extent with the various stages that are generally distinguished in a rhetorical approach (*exordium, narration, argumentatio,*

As for the analytical component, it is stated that a dialectical analysis is aimed at clarifying which parts of the text or discussion play a role in the resolution of a difference of opinion, while a rhetorical analysis is aimed at discovering what tools the author used to convince or persuade his audience (2004: 24-25). Concerning the empirical component, it is stated that a dialectical analysis is justified by knowledge derived from empirical research into 'factors and processes [that] are important for the force of conviction or argumentative discourse aimed at resolving a difference of opinion' (2004: 30), while a rhetorical analysis is based on empirical research that it aims to discover 'which rhetorical patterns have persuasive force for what kinds of audiences' (2004: 29). And finally, as far as the practical component is concerned, it is stated that dialectical recommendations aim at furthering reflection 'on the possibilities of using argumentation to resolve differences of opinion' (2004: 35), while rhetorical recommendations aim at instructing a speaker how to convince or persuade an audience (2004: 34).

Summarizing, from their topography of studies on argumentation it may be concluded that van Eemeren and Grootendorst consider it to be typical of the dialectical approach that the argumentative quality of texts and discussions is evaluated by means of procedural and formal standards pertaining to the reasonableness of argumentation and that the model in which these standards are reflected is premised on the idea that argumentation is aimed at resolving a difference of opinion.

### 3. The dialectical starting points of pragma-dialectics

The general impression of what van Eemeren and Grootendorst mean by a dialectical approach to argumentation can be substantiated by analyzing their exposition of the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics. At the heart of this framework is the procedural model of a 'critical discussion' – a discussion in which two parties subject one or more standpoints to a critical test:<sup>7</sup>

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*peroratio*), but the rationale of the distinctions is different. The rhetorical stages are considered to be instrumental in securing the agreement of the target audience, the dialectical stages, in resolving a difference of opinion.'

<sup>7</sup> For an explanation of the term 'procedural model' see note 13.

A critical discussion can be described as an exchange of views in which the parties involved in a difference of opinion systematically try to determine whether the standpoint or standpoints at issue are defensible in the light of critical doubt or objections. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 52)

The model of a critical discussion expresses a conceptual, theoretical account of argumentation by means of which real, empirical argumentative texts and discussions can be analyzed and evaluated.<sup>8</sup> The following analysis aims at giving a description of the constituents of the theoretical notion ‘critical discussion’ that are considered to be of a dialectical nature.

In their presentation of the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics, van Eemeren and Grootendorst regularly refer to the dialectical approach to argumentation. First of all, they mention this approach in relation to their view of the *aim* of a critical discussion – the determination of the acceptability of the standpoint(s) to which a difference of opinion between two discussants pertains: ‘Ever since classical antiquity, the dialectical approach to argumentation has concentrated on the way in which standpoints can be critically evaluated in an argumentative discussion’ (2004: 51-52).<sup>9</sup> The dialectical nature of this view is also emphasized in the following passage, in which Wenzel’s general characterization of the dialectical approach to argumentation is quoted with approval:

According to Wenzel, argumentation in the dialectical approach is regarded as the “systematic management of discourse *for the purpose of achieving critical decisions*” (1979: 84). The purpose of the dialectical approach is to determine how discussions that are *aimed at scrutinizing*

<sup>8</sup> In order to terminologically accentuate the distinction between the *ideal* conception of argumentation and the *real* phenomenon argumentation, I will reserve the term ‘critical discussion’ to designate the *ideal* conception of argumentation as it has been developed in pragma-dialectics, and I will use the term ‘argumentative texts and discussions’ to designate *real* texts and discussions of an argumentative nature.

<sup>9</sup> For a description of the aim of a critical discussion see for instance van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 58): ‘In a critical discussion, the parties involved in a difference of opinion attempt to resolve this difference of opinion by achieving agreement on the acceptability or unacceptability of the standpoint(s) involved.’

*the acceptability of standpoints* should be conducted. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 57, n. 36, my italics)

Finally, the view of the aim of a critical discussion is connected with the dialectical approach by stating that a ‘critical discussion reflects the Socratic ideal of subjecting everything one believes in to a dialectical scrutiny’ (2004: 57, n. 37). The intended result of such a dialectical scrutiny (also known as a ‘socratic elenchus’) is to determine whether or not the standpoint of Socrates’ interlocutor is sustainable in light of the views he has committed himself to in the course of the discussion.<sup>10</sup>

In their exposition of the theory, van Eemeren and Grootendorst do not describe the aim of a critical discussion as the determination of the acceptability of the standpoint(s) involved, but rather as the resolution of the difference of opinion. At first sight, these formulations are interchangeable, for a ‘difference of opinion is only resolved when the parties involved in the difference have reached agreement on the question of whether the standpoints at issue are acceptable or not’ (2004: 57-58). However, in the exposition of the applications of the model of a critical discussion, the term ‘resolution’ is not only used to designate the aim of a critical discussion, but also to designate the alleged efforts of the discussants to conform to certain standards regarding the reasonableness of argumentation (or to designate the alleged awareness of the discussants to be committed to these standards). In order to avoid confusion on this point, I will describe the aim of a critical discussion as ‘the determination of the acceptability of the standpoint(s) to which the difference of opinion between the discussants pertains’.<sup>11</sup>

Second, van Eemeren and Grootendorst mention the dialectical approach to argumentation in relation to their view of the *structure* of a critical discussion – a systematic exchange of discussion moves between two parties. The dialectical nature of this view is stressed in a passage in which they

<sup>10</sup> For a reconstruction of the aim of the socratic elenchus see Wagemans (2009: 82-85).

<sup>11</sup> This formulation serves the goal of distinguishing clearly between the aim of a critical discussion and the way in which this aim is accomplished. As will become clear in the formulation of the third dialectical starting point, the pragma-dialectical theory is also premised on the idea that the determination of the acceptability of the standpoint should take place by critically testing that standpoint on the merits.

explain that the ‘theoretical model of a critical discussion is dialectical because it is premised on two parties who try to resolve a difference of opinion by means of a *methodical exchange of discussion moves*’ (2004: 22, my italics). Further, the dialectical nature of this view is highlighted in a passage referring to Aristotle’s conception of dialectics: ‘For Aristotle, dialectics is about conducting a critical discussion that is dialectical because *a systematic interaction takes place between moves for and against a particular thesis*’ (2004: 43, my italics). From the following passage, it can be concluded that van Eemeren and Grootendorst even see this ‘systematic interaction’ as a distinctive feature of a dialectical view of the structure of argumentation. On the basis of the absence of such an interaction, they label Toulmin’s approach as a rhetorical one:

At first sight, Toulmin seems to set argumentation in the dialectical context of a critical discussion between a speaker and a listener, but on closer inspection, his approach turns out to be rhetorical. [...] Although the reactions of others are anticipated, the model [that Toulmin developed, JW] is primarily directed at representing the argumentation for the standpoint of the speaker or writer who advances the argumentation. The other party remains in fact passive: The acceptability of the claim is not made dependent on a *systematic weighing up of arguments for and against the claim*. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 47, my italics)

Third, van Eemeren and Grootendorst mention the dialectical approach to argumentation in relation to their view of the *regulation* of a critical discussion:

[The] interaction [between the speech acts of the protagonist and the speech acts of the antagonist] can, of course, only lead to the resolution of a difference of opinion if it proceeds in an adequate fashion. This requires a regulation of the interaction that is in accordance with certain rules of critical discussion. *It is the task of dialectical argumentation theorists to formulate these rules* [...]. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: pp. 33-134, my italics)

In a similar passage, it is stated that the ‘purpose of the dialectical approach is to determine how discussions that are aimed at scrutinizing the acceptability of standpoints *should* be conducted’ (2004: 57, n. 36, my italics). Further, the dialectical nature of this view of the regulation of a critical discussion is emphasized in a description of Aristotle’s conception of dialectics as ‘the art of *regulated* debate’ (2004: 42, my italics). Finally, it is expressed in the name of one of the four meta-theoretical principles of pragma-dialectics – the principle of ‘dialectification’. This principle implies that the language activities expressed in argumentative texts and discussions are to be understood ‘as part of an attempt to resolve a difference of opinion *in accordance with critical norms of reasonableness*’ (2004: 53, my italics).<sup>12</sup>

Summarizing, from the analysis of passages in which the theoretical notion ‘critical discussion’ is associated with the dialectical approach to argumentation, it may be concluded that the pragma-dialectical theory is premised on three dialectical starting points. A critical discussion is conceived as a discussion that is: (I) *aimed* at determining the acceptability of the standpoint(s) to which the difference of opinion between two parties pertains; (II) *structured* as a systematic exchange between discussion moves for and against the standpoint(s) involved; (III) *regulated* by means of a set of procedural rules that express a critical conception of reasonableness.

#### **4. The dialectical dimension of the model of a critical discussion**

The dialectical dimension of pragma-dialectics can be made more explicit by analyzing the way in which the three dialectical starting points distinguished above are reflected in the various components of the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics – the procedural model of a critical discus-

<sup>12</sup> See also van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 57, my italics): ‘Dialectification of the research object is achieved in pragma-dialectics by regarding the speech acts performed in an argumentative exchange as speech acts that should be performed *in accordance with the rules* that are to be observed in a critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion.’

sion. This model consists of three, interrelated components: (1) a description of the stages of a critical discussion; (2) a description of the way in which the relevant types of speech acts are distributed over the stages of a critical discussion; and (3) a description of the rules for the performance of these speech acts.<sup>13</sup>

The first component of the model of a critical discussion is a differentiated description of the procedure by means of which the discussants determine whether or not the standpoint(s) to which their difference of opinion pertains are acceptable. This procedure consists of four stages: (i) the confrontation stage, in which the difference of opinion is made explicit when the standpoint put forward by the one discussant is questioned or contradicted by the other; (ii) the opening stage, in which the discussants establish agreement on the formal and material starting points of the discussion; (iii) the argumentation stage, in which the protagonist supports his standpoint with arguments in response or anticipation of the criticisms of the antagonist; and (iv) the concluding stage, in which the parties jointly decide upon the outcome of their attempt to determine the acceptability of the standpoint.<sup>14</sup>

The four stages of a critical discussion are explicitly considered to be 'dialectical' discussion stages (2004: 57). From an analysis of the relevant

<sup>13</sup> In the exposition of the individual components, the first two components are considered to make up the 'model' of a critical discussion (2004: 42-68) and the third component is considered to be the 'procedure' for a critical discussion (2004: 123-157). However, there does not seem to be a strict terminological distinction between 'model' and 'procedure'. Sometimes, the three components together are called a 'procedure' (2004: 57 and 59), sometimes a 'model' (2004: 58-59 and 188) or an 'ideal model' (2004: 95-122). From the following passage it can be inferred that the relation between the components is such that the third component 'implies' the first two components: 'Together, the rules combine to constitute a dialectical discussion procedure. This discussion procedure systematically indicates the structure of the process of resolving a difference of opinion, and it specifies the speech acts that play a role in the various stages of the resolution process' (2004, p. 57). Therefore, I will designate the theoretical framework of pragma-dialectics as the 'procedural model' of a critical discussion, understanding the first two components – the 'model' – to be integral parts of the third component – the 'procedure'.

<sup>14</sup> For the various descriptions of these stages see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 60 and 135; 60 and 137; 61; 61-62 and 154). Since the externalization of the difference of opinion is a necessary condition for resolving it, the confrontation stage is to be understood as part of a critical discussion, and not merely as a preamble: 'Without such a real or presumed confrontation, there is no need for a critical discussion' (2004: 60).

passages in the exposition of these stages it can be learned that all of the three dialectical starting points that were distinguished in the previous section are reflected in this part of the model: (I) for each of the stages, a subgoal is formulated in such a way that the successive realization of these subgoals leads to the realization of the aim of the discussion as a whole<sup>15</sup>; (II) throughout the stages, the discussants alternately make a move, the discussion moves of the one party constituting a defense of the standpoint and those of the other party constituting an attack on the standpoint<sup>16</sup>; (III) the acceptability of the standpoint at issue can only be determined ‘in a reasonable way if each stage of the resolution process is properly dealt with, whether explicitly or implicitly’ (2004: 60).

The second component of the procedural model of a critical discussion is a description of the distribution of the different types of speech acts over the discussion stages. Unlike the first component of the model, the distribution is nowhere explicitly characterized as ‘dialectical’. Understandably, the distribution mainly reflects the pragmatic starting point of pragma-dialectics, being that the contributions of the discussants consist of speech acts: ‘The various moves that are made in the different stages of a critical discussion in order to arrive at the resolution of a difference of opinion can be pragmatically characterized as speech acts’ (2004: 62).<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, an analysis of the relevant passages in the exposition of the distribution of

<sup>15</sup> See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 21, 59 and 59-60, n. 40).

<sup>16</sup> This characterization is particularly applicable to the discussion moves in the confrontation stage and the argumentation stage. The arguments put forward by the protagonist in the argumentation stage are either a response to the doubts put forward by the antagonist in the confrontation stage or a response to the criticisms put forward by the antagonist in the argumentation stage (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 61). The precise configuration of the discussion moves of the parties in these stages are specified by means of the notions ‘argumentation scheme’ and ‘argumentation structure’. For an account of the dialectical nature of these notions see Wagemans (2009: 33). The moves in the other stages – the opening stage and the concluding stage – are indeed instrumental in determining the acceptability of the standpoint, but do not reflect the different roles of the parties in the discussion.

<sup>17</sup> See also van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 52): ‘The pragmatic dimension of our approach manifests itself primarily in the fact that the moves that can be made in a discussion aimed at resolving a difference of opinion are conceived as verbal activities (“speech acts”)’ and (2004: 95, original italics): ‘[A]n analytic reconstruction of an argumentative discourse or text [...] derives its *pragmatic* character from the fact that the discourse or text is viewed as a coherent whole of speech acts [...].’

speech acts shows that all of the three dialectical starting points are reflected in this part of the model: (I) the distribution only pertains to representatives of types of speech acts that are relevant to the realization of the aim of a critical discussion<sup>18</sup>; (II) the distribution is to be viewed as a specification of the systematic interaction between the moves of the discussants<sup>19</sup>; (III) the distribution consists of a normative overview of possible contributions to the discussion: '[T]he only speech acts that may be performed are the ones listed in the model that have the specific role indicated in the model, at the stage of the discussion indicated in the model, and by the party indicated in the model' (2004: 163).

The third component of the procedural model of a critical discussion is a description of fifteen discussion rules that specify the rights and obligations of the discussants with respect to the performance of speech acts in the various discussion stages.<sup>20</sup> Van Eemeren and Grootendorst explicitly characterize this set of rules as 'dialectical': 'Together, the rules combine to constitute a dialectical discussion procedure' (2004: 57).<sup>21</sup> The three dialectical starting points of pragma-dialectics are reflected in this part of the model in the following way: (I) the discussion procedure is instrumental for the realization of the aim of a critical discussion: 'By following a dialectical process, the protagonist of a standpoint and the antagonist attempt to achieve clarity as to whether the protagonist's standpoint can be defended in light of the antagonist's critical reactions' (2004: 58); (II) some of the rules pertain to moves that constitute the defense of the standpoint, others to those moves that constitute the attack; (III) by specifying the rights and obligations of the parties with respect to the performance of speech acts, the discussion rules form a detailed account of the pragma-dialectical view of the reasonableness of argumentation: '[The rules] indicate for each stage when exactly the parties are *entitled* to perform a particular kind of speech act, and if and when they are even *obliged* to do so' (2004: 135, original italics).

<sup>18</sup> See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 62 and 67-68).

<sup>19</sup> See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 163 and 67-68).

<sup>20</sup> See van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 135-157).

<sup>21</sup> See also van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 58 and 166).

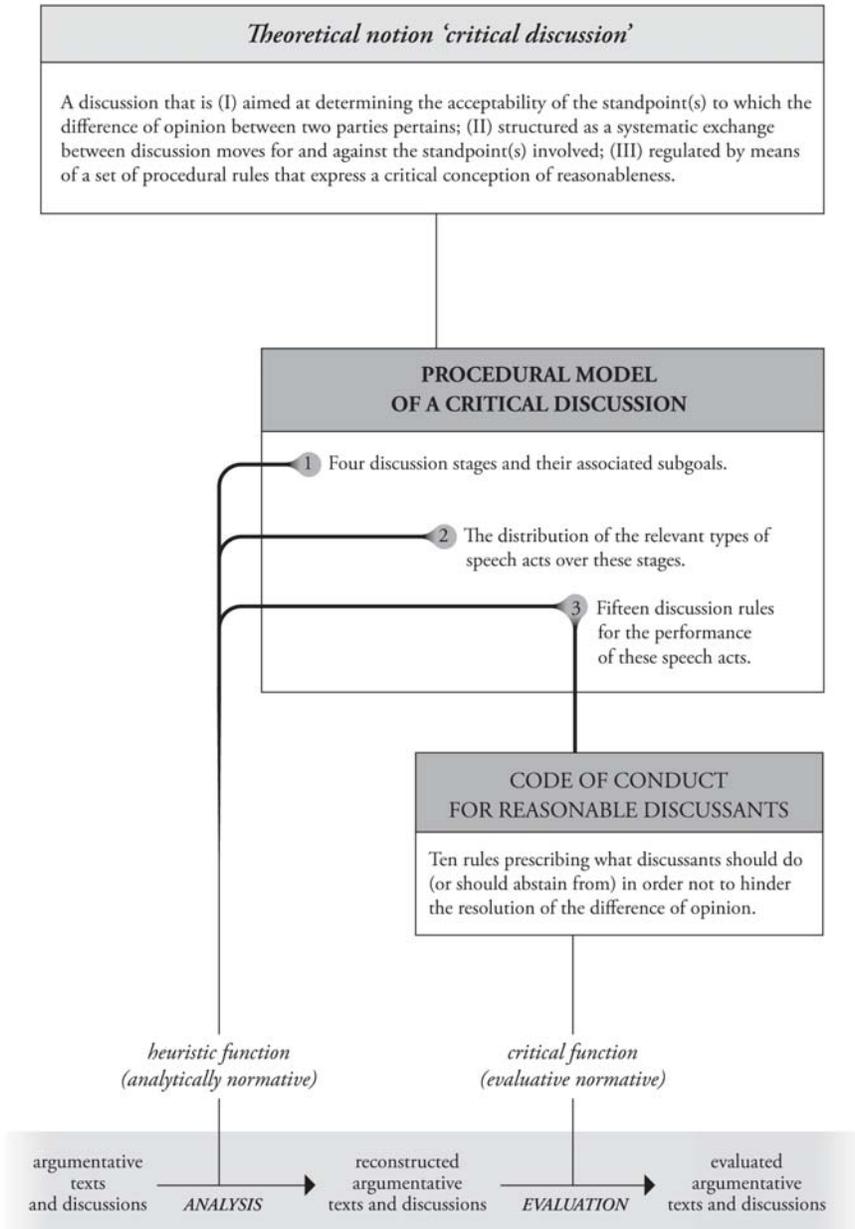
## 5. Conclusion

In this paper I have made the dialectical dimension of pragma-dialectics more explicit by analyzing van Eemeren and Grootendorst's topography of studies on argumentation, their explanation of the theoretical notion 'critical discussion', and their exposition of the components of the procedural model of a critical discussion. On the basis of these analyses, I will now present a schematic overview of the standard version of the pragma-dialectical theory, including its applications.<sup>22</sup>

Summarizing, the analysis of the topography has shown that a dialectical approach to argumentation is viewed of as characterized by two main features. First, the argumentative quality of texts and discussions is evaluated by means of procedural and formal standards pertaining to the reasonableness of argumentation. Second, the model in which these standards are reflected is premised on the idea that argumentation is aimed at resolving a difference of opinion. The analysis of the theoretical notion 'critical discussion' has shown that, more precisely, there are to be distinguished three dialectical starting points of pragma-dialectics. These starting points respectively pertain to: (I) the aim; (II) the structure; and (III) the regulation of a critical discussion. In Figure 1 below, I have mentioned these starting points in the text box titled *Theoretical notion 'critical discussion'*.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed analysis of the dialectical dimension of the pragma-dialectical analysis and evaluation of argumentative texts and discussions see Wagemans (2009: 37-44).

**Figure 1.** Schematic overview of the standard version of pragma-dialectics.



The subsequent analysis of the procedural model of a critical discussion has shown that all these starting points are reflected in all three components of that model. In the figure, I have indicated this by the line connecting the abovementioned text box with the text box titled *Procedural model of a critical discussion*. Within this text box, I have shortly described the three components of the model. As mentioned in the introduction to this analysis, the model expresses a conceptual, theoretical account of argumentation by means of which real, empirical argumentative texts and discussions can be analyzed and evaluated. In the figure, the ideal conception of argumentation is represented by the text box titled *Procedural model of a critical discussion*, whereas the real phenomenon argumentation is represented by the text box titled *argumentative texts and discussions*.

A pragma-dialectical analysis of argumentative texts and discussions takes place by reconstructing such texts and discussions in terms of the model. In the figure, this is reflected by the lines from all three components of the model to the arrow representing the analysis. The product of the analysis is represented by the text box *reconstructed argumentative texts and discussions*.

A pragma-dialectical evaluation has these reconstructed texts and discussions as an object and takes place on the basis of the rules described in the model. In practice, the evaluation takes place by making use of the rules described in a so-called ‘code of conduct for reasonable discussants’ – these ten rules being derived from the fifteen rules described in the model.<sup>23</sup> In the figure, this is indicated by the line from the third component of the model to the text box titled *Code of conduct for reasonable discussants* and by the line from the latter text box to the arrow representing the evaluation. Finally, the product of the evaluation is represented by the text box titled *evaluated argumentative texts and discussions*.

<sup>23</sup> Being formulated less technically, the rules of the code of conduct are more suitable for evaluative purposes. For a description of these rules see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 190-196).

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