



## Argumentative Dialogue

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### What is it?

Argumentative dialogue refers to a type of communicative interaction within social processes. Its goal is to solve disagreement in a reasonable fashion through weighting arguments pro and against each position in a constructively critical fashion. Individuals who are taking part in an argumentative dialogue are given freedom to advance discussion issues, standpoints and arguments. They commit to collaborate in finding a *reasonable* solution to their difference of opinion and accept that their standpoints and arguments are submitted to critical scrutiny. For its emphasis on finding a reasonable solution of disagreement through dialogue, argumentative dialogue counts as an alternative to physical or verbal violence.

### Who uses the concept?

Forms of reflection on argumentative dialogue are present in different cultural and scientific traditions. In a Western perspective, the concept originates with Aristotle's works, which can be seen as a reaction to the abuse of rhetoric typical of the Sophists. For Aristotle, ultimately what is true and good will also be more *persuasive*: that is why argumentative dialogue helps making better decisions and constructing healthy social interactions.

Today, this legacy is developed within *argumentation theory*. Scholars analyze and design argumentative dialogues in different contexts, ranging from education, to business and finance, to health communication, to public debate, conflict prevention and Alternative Dispute Resolution practices. The idea behind studying and

implementing argumentative dialogue is to improve the *quality* of communicative interactions, while learning how not to be deceived by manipulation.

### Fit with intercultural dialogue?

Intercultural dialogue is one of the social and communicative interactions that may most directly benefit from argumentative dialogue. In fact, given its potential of helping to manage disagreement, argumentative dialogue is particularly suited to intercultural situations, in which interlocutors need to construct common ground for mutual understanding. As differences (in views and background) are part and parcel of intercultural dialogue, approaching them by means of a reasonable discussion is particularly important.

### What work remains?

We still need to extend research about the conflict resolution potential of argumentative dialogue, especially in intercultural encounters. We also need to design and implement applications and spaces for argumentative dialogue in intercultural situations.

### Resources

- Van Eemeren, F. H., & R. Grootendorst. (2004). *A systematic theory of argumentation: The pragma-dialectical perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greco Morasso, S. (2011). *Argumentation in dispute mediation: A reasonable way to handle conflict*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.