Argumentative Structure of Al Marjaya's Speeches during Iraqi Protestations in 2019

Hani K. Al-Ebadi[a], Ghaidaa Fahmie Yousif[b], cHayder Kubashi[c], [a,b,c]Thi-Qar University/ College of Education for Humanities Department of English, Email: [a]hanialebadi700@gmail.com, [b]gaidaah1979@gmail.com, [c]h197410@yahoo.com

This paper investigates the argumentative structure of Al Marjaya's, The Shia Muslim Supreme Religious Authority, speeches during the events of Iraqi protestations in 2019. It aims to find out three essential elements of argumentation: type of argumentation, type of difference of opinion and defence support. The study hypothesizes that complex argumentation, multiple non-mixed differences and multiple defence support are used due to the complicated nature of issues and events in the country. The study adopts Eemeren et al., (2002) as a model to analyse the data under scrutiny. The paper has reached some conclusions that validate its hypotheses.

Keywords: *argumentative structure, multiple non-mixed differences, Iraqi protestations in 2019*

Introduction

The process of persuading, influencing and conciliating people stands for the core task of argumentation. This means that arguing acquiesces minds to what one puts forward via a reasonable agreement among parties. This process is initiated whenever there is a difference of opinion that takes place between people. Throughout the Iraqi protestations, many differences of opinions have occurred between the authorities and the protesters. In this respect, the Islamic religious authority, AlMarjaya, as the spiritual authority for the two conflicting parties, attempts to convince these parties to behave reasonably and correctly. Linguistically speaking, AlMarjaya exploits argumentation as a convenient means to conduct the conflicting parties to find out suitable solutions. Therefore, AlMarjaya's speeches have influence upon all the parties of the conflict; they listen ad obey AlMarjaya's orders and directions to large extent. Owing to this, the study attempts to investigate this argumentative structure. Particularly, it is after the type of argumentation, the type of difference of opinion

and the types of argument support. It aims to find out the types of argumentation that AlMarjaya used, the types of differences of opinion that AlMarjaya tries to solve, and the support arguments that AlMarajaya advance to enhance the given standpoints. Therefore, the study hypothesizes that both main and subordinate standpoints are put forward, the single and multiple non-mixed differences of opinions are tackled by AlMarjaya's speeches, and finally the argument support is complex and diverse. As the model of analysing the data, the study adopts Eemeren et al,. (2002) for its suitability for the nature of the data and the aims of the study as well. Finally, the study has reached some conclusions that validate its hypotheses.

Argumentation

Linguistically, the employment of argumentation theory is necessary to identify and analyse conflicts and leads to a reasonable consequences (Besnard and Hunter, 2008: 8). In general, arguing is done to resolve, as Hample and Irions (2015, p. 1-2) state, disagreement or making a joint decision on some substantive issue. Argumentation takes place when people have differences of opinion, whether in explicit or implicit interaction. In such cases, people need to discuss their differences of opinion in order to reach some kind of resolution (Eemeren et al, 2002, p. 34).

Generally speaking, argumentative discussion is of two kinds: one-way (monological) and two-way (dialogical) argumentations. The first type entails the presence of only the protagonist. In monological argumentation, there is a set of conflicting pieces of information that has been collected by an agent, or pooled by a set of agents, and the role of argumentation is to construct a constellation of arguments pertaining to some particular claim of interest (Besnard and Hunter, 2008, p. 8 and Tindle, 2009, p. 49). The process of arguing entails comparing, handling and evaluating arguments according to principal criterion. The parties involved in an argumentative event are of two extremes: protagonist and antagonist. The former is the one who initiates argumentation via putting forward differences of opinion in terms of standpoints to be resolved while the latter is the recipient or the audience of those standpoints (Besard and Hunter, 2008p. 3).

Whether the difference of opinion is real or imaginary, any act of response or anticipation to this difference is a case of argumentation. Argumentation always arises in response to or in anticipation of, a difference of opinion, whether this difference of opinion is real or merely imaginary. When people argue their case, they depend on a opinion or standpoint that they assume not to be shared by the addressee or by some third party the addressee or might associate with (Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1984, p. 39-46). Argumentation is basically aimed at resolving a difference of opinion about the acceptability of a standpoint by making an appeal to the other party's reasonableness (ibid., 2004, p. 11,18).

Argumentation, according to pragma-dialectics, is considered to be part of a critical discussion in which participants try to resolve a difference of opinion in a rational fashion; the protagonist brings forward a standpoint and the antagonist raises doubt against that standpoint (2009, p. 47).

Argument

Damer (2009, p.13) points out that an argument stands for a group of statements divided into premises, support and conclusions. The premises of an argument are the reasons behind providing the validity of the conclusion. The argument is intended to demonstrate the truth or falsity of a particular claim by presenting evidence that may persuade others to accept that claim. In the same vein, Besnard and Hunter (2008, p.2) state that an argument stands for assumptions, together with a conclusion that can be obtained by one or more reasoning steps. The assumptions used are called the support of the argument, and its conclusion is called the claim. The support of an argument provides the reason for the claim of the argument.

Argumentative Structure

In this paper, the argumentative structure involves the type of argumentation including main and subordinate employed in the speeches, types of standpoints involving single non-mixed, single mixed, multiple non-mixed and multiple mixed as well as the argumentation support covering a single argument, multiple argument support and coordinative argument support. This structure will be done according to the model adopted in the study.

Types of Argumentation
Main and Subordinate

Argumentation can be classified into two types in the same speech event: main and subordinate. The use of both at the same speech may be justified due to nature of topics to be discussed, the nature and complexity of the events to be tackled. Subordinate argumentation is used whenever it is necessary to maintain the main arguments put forward. Within the critical discussion, the discussants may have more than one difference of opinions. These can be both main and subordinate differences. The main ones represent the main standpoints put forward by the protagonist. On the other hand, the subordinate ones are employed in the case of complex argumentation. The utilisation of subordinate standpoints indicates the complexity of argumentation. In this regard, Eemeren et al., (2002, p. 66) argue that the discussant seems in need for further support for some parts of the argumentation. The part to be defended then becomes a standpoint, which is defended by means of sub-argumentation. This sub-argumentation can contain a substandard point and so on. Thus, subordinative argumentation can be best seen as a chain of reasoning (ibid.).

Differences of Opinion

Viewpoints between parties are referred to as differences of opinion in the theory of argumentation. They stand for topics the two parties argue each other to resolve in their attempt to find agreement or disagreement. Relying on the nature of the difference of opinion between the discussants, the standpoints that have been put forward are of the different types. Researchers in the field identify four types involving 'single non-mixed, single mixed, multiple non-mixed and multiple mixed', as shown in the following sections.

Single Non-Mixed Standpoint

The type of difference of opinion is usually determined by the number of propositions to be negotiated and resolved. When the protagonist carries out one proposition, one standpoint, and there is no another party who raises doubt in the form of an opposing standpoint, it is called 'single non-mixed standpoint'. In this respect, all forms of one-way argumentation are known as non-mixed (Rees, 2009, p. 48).

Single Mixed Standpoint

On the contrary to a single non-mixed standpoint, this type is characterised as single mixed when there is doubt on the behalf of the antagonist and it is expressed in the form of one opposing standpoint. In other words, the antagonist's disagreement about the protagonist's given single proposition is indicated by one proposition (single standpoint) (Eemeren et al., 2002, p.218). Put differently, while the protagonist arises a standpoint, the antagonist has the obligation to advance an opposing standpoint as a defence of the already given standpoint.

Multiple Non-Mixed Standpoint

In addition to the aforementioned types of difference of opinion (see 4-2-1 and 4-2-2), a further type is realised 'multiple non-mixed difference'. This type is raised when the protagonist sets forth more than one proposition in the same standpoint and there is no active antagonist to bring out his doubts in terms of opposing standpoints (ibid.).

Multiple Mixed Standpoint

In a similar way, this type of difference shares the characteristic of 'single mixed standpoint', in that, there is an active antagonist to utter his doubt about the protagonist's standpoint. The two types differ from one another in the number of propositions evolved in the standpoint. Through 'multiple mixed standpoint', there is more than one proposition contained in the standpoint (Eemeren et al., 2002, p. 9).

To sum up, the types of differences of opinion can be summarised into four ones as surveyed above: single non-mixed, single mixed, multiple non-mixed and multiple mixed. This taxonomy is adopted in this study to analyse the standpoints put forward by AlMarjaya's speeches for their suitability.

Argumentation Support

Through one-way argumentation, the protagonist has to advance arguments supporting the already given standpoints. It is worth mentioning that such supporting arguments help to reveal and prove the significance and effectiveness of the standpoint in order to convince the audience to accept them. Regarding the construction of the argumentation support, the types of support, it depends on the nature and complexity of the event to be argued. In relation to this, the type of the given standpoint has association with the type of the argumentation support. For instance, single standpoints may require simple (single) supporting argument while multiple standpoints demands complex supporting ones. Thus, such supporting arguments can be classified, following Eemeren et al., (2002), into single, multiple and coordinative argument supports.

Single Argument Support

Broadly, the simple case of argument support is single argument. It is worded as one proposition and conventionally designed to maintain the protagonist's advanced standpoint. It is mostly argued that this type of support is the common one employed in argumentation (Eemeren et al,. 2002, p. 64).

Multiple Argument Support

On the contrary to 'single argument support' (see 4.3.1), what distinguishes this type of support is providing more than one different argument. More clearly, these arguments are characterised as alternative and independent. Specifically phrased, each argument can be used alone regardless using the other supporting argument. More interestingly, the total employment of these arguments aims at maintaining the same advanced standpoint (Eemeren, 2002, p. 46).

Coordinative Argument Support

Seen as a case of complex argumentation, this type of support requires more than one argument. In this regard, the support is viewed as a series of closely related arguments reinforcing the same advanced standpoint. It is worth mentioning that this type of support differs from multiple argument support (see 4.3.2) in terms of dependency. Phrased

differently, here arguments cannot stand alone, but they are coordinated together to support the same standpoint (ibid.: 65).

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data comprises some representative examples of the chosen speeches. Following the adopted model (see 4-4.3), the analysis covers three elements of the argumentative structure including main and subordinate standpoints, types of difference of opinion and argument defence. It is worth mentioning that it is unfeasible to analyse all the speeches, thus, some representative examples are chosen. The data under scrutiny have been taken from the official website of Imam Hussein shrine (http://imamhussain.org/english/gleamsoffriday) during the period from 1/10/2019 to 30/12/2019. In addition, the translation of the texts is quoted from the same website above.

Main and Subordinate Argumentation

Following the model (see 4.1.1), AlMarjaya's speeches involve two types of argumentation: main and subordinate, as it is shown below. It has been observed that the main argumentation expresses the main topic to be discussed. On the other hand, the subordinate argumentation comes to support the main ones, texts (1 and 2) illustrate:

Text One

(إن الحكومة وأجهزتها الأمنية مسؤولة عن الدماء الغزيرة التي أريقت في مظاهرات الأيام الماضية)

(The government and its security forces are accountable for the blood shed during the previous days' protests)   Gleam 12/10/2019

According to the model (see 4.1.1), the text stands for a main argumentation because it expresses the main standpoint of the speech. Put it another way, AlMarjaya argues and emphasises the duty and responsibility of the government and security forces to apply order and law to save citizens' lives under any circumstances.

Text Two

(تطالب بقوة الحكومة والجهاز القضائي بإجراء تحقيق يتّسم بالمصداقية حول كل ما وقع في ساحات التظاهر)

(The Supreme Religious Authority demands that the government and the judiciary undertake a creditable investigation into everything happened in the protest areas…) Gleam 12/10/2019

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This text represents a subordinate argumentation (see 4.1.1) supporting the main one in Text One above. In other words, carrying out a creditable investigation is one of the procedures that represent the responsibility of the government to stop killing and to prevent bloodshed. Besides, it is seen subordinate because its significance comes secondary to the main one since both refer to the same topic.

The employment of the two types of standpoints in most, if not all, AlMarjaa's speeches indicates two important things. First, it indicates the necessity of supporting and reinforcing the argumentation put forward by AlMarjaa. Secondly, it reflects the nature of the complexity of the argumentation used as a reflection to the complexity of the events in the political situation.

Differences of Opinion

According to the model (see 4.2), the analysis of most of AlMarjaya's speeches show that the types of 'single mixed and multiple mixed' differences of opinion are excluded in the this study because the type of argumentation here is one-way and then no antagonist takes part in the discussion; there is only the protagonist AlMarjaa's representative who addresses the audience. On the contrary, the other types of differences of opinion: single non-mixed and multiple non-mixed are utilised in the speeches. Some of these differences of opinion come complex and related to each other while some of them are separate and stand alone. The texts (3 and 4) clarify:

Text Three

(عدم قدرة أو جدية القوى السياسية الحاكمة في تنفيذ مطالب المتظاهرين حتى في حدودها الدنيا)

(This casts doubts on the government's ability or willingness in terms of responding to the protesters' demands,)
Gleam 16/11/2019

Text Four

(إنّ المرجعية الدينية ليس لها الاّ النصح والارشاد الى ما ترى انه في مصلحة الشعب)

(The Shia Muslim Supreme Religious Authority offers nothing but advice and guidance on whatever leads to the Iraqi people's interest) Gleam 30/11/2019

In texts (3 and 4) above and following the model (see 4.2.1), AlMarjia puts forward one standpoint in each. In (3), it expresses the disappointment towards the reaction of the

government and their respond to protesters' demands 'the inability and unwillingness of the government to respond to the protesters' demands'. In (4), AlMarjia argues mainly those who have doubt about its role which is 'advising and guidance'. Each standpoint is reflected by one proposition.

Text Five

(ولكن الذي حصل خلال الأيام التالية هو **تصاعد أعمال العنف بصورة غير مسبوقة واستهداف أعداد متزايدة من المتظاهرين بإطلاق النار عليهم، وحصول اعتداءات سافرة على بعض وسائل الإعلام** لمنعها من نقل ما يقع في ساحات التظاهر.)

(But what happened in the following days were an unprecedented escalation of acts of violence, targeting more protestors by opening fire on them, and blatant acts of aggression against some media outlets to prevent them from covering the happenings in the protest areas.) Gleam 12/10/2019

Following the model (see 4.2.3), this text stands as a multiple non-mixed standpoint since it contains three propositions about the same standpoint 'an unprecedented escalation of acts of violence, targeting more protestors by opening fire on them, and blatant acts of aggression against some media outlets'. The three standpoints stand for a case of multiple non-mixed differences issued by AlMarjaya. The use of this multiple difference indicates the seriousness of the event commented in the speech. In other words, the government has to do their best to stop these things in one way or another because of their dangerous effects.

Argument Support

The third component of the data analysis deals with argument support. Through the analysis of the data for most of the chosen speeches, it has shown that various argumentative techniques are utilised to support the standpoints put forward earlier by the protagonist, AlMarjaya. Such a use of complex support is intended to reinforce and increase the audience's conviction of the given standpoints. As has mentioned earlier (see 4.3), defence or support is used as reasons to justify and accept the given standpoints. The following are representative examples.

Single Argument Support

Text Five

(إنّ المرجعية الدينية ستبقى سنداً للشعب العراقي الكريم، وليس لها الاّ النصح والارشاد الى ما ترى انه في مصلحة الشعب، **ويبقى للشعب أن يختار ما يرتئي انه الأصلح لحاضره ومستقبله بلا وصاية لأحد عليه**)

(…and the Iraqi people can choose what they think is best for their present and future without having to be under the aegis of anyone)
Gleam 1/11/2019

Following the model (see 4.3.1), this text contains one supporting argument *'the Iraqi people can choose what they think is best for their present and future without having to be under the aegis of anyone'*. It maintains the main standpoint about AlMarjaya's role in the political events. Here, the argumentation reinforces the role and right of Iraqi people to commit their own decisions concerning their life and country.

Multiple Argument Support

Text Six

(إرادة العراقيين في تحديد النظام السياسي والإداري لبلدهم ... الا أن ما يلزم من الإصلاح ويتعين اجراؤه بهذا الصدد موكول أيضاً الى اختيار الشعب العراقي بكل اطيافه وألوانه من اقصى البلد الى اقصاه، وليس لأي شخص أو مجموعة أو جهة بتوجه معين أو أي طرف اقليمي أو دولي أن يصادر إرادة العراقيين في ذلك ويفرض رأيه عليهم.)

(…it is the Iraqis' willing to determine their political and administrative regime for their country… that reform has to be achieved by all the Iraqi people)
Gleam 1/11/2019

According to the model (see 4.3.2), the support consists of two alternative arguments: *'Iraqis' willing to determine their political and administrative regime; reform has to be achieved by all the Iraqi people'*. As has mentioned in the model, although each argument is independent of one another, they maintain the same standpoint *'no one can force Iraqi people or control their willing to decide anything'*. Phrased in another way, no one has the right to confiscate the Iraqis' decision because they are the owners of such a thing and second because of they have the right to reform.

Coordinative Argument Support

Text Seven

(إنّ هذا هو الإجراء الأكثر أهمية وإلحاحاً في الوقت الحاضر، وهو الذي يكشف عن مدى جدية الحكومة وصدق نيتها في القيام بخطوات واسعة للإصلاح الحقيقي.)

(This is the most important and urgent measure at the present time, **it's going to demonstrate how serious** and **well intended the government is in terms of taking large steps for reform**.)
Gleam 12/10/2019

Following the model (see 4.3.3), in the text, the support encompasses two coordinating arguments *'the seriousness of the Iraqi government to reform; the truth of their intention'*. They both fortify the same standpoint *'this is the most important and urgent measure at the present time'*. They come coordinative by the coordinative 'and'. In other words, this procedure is the most urgent because it reflects the seriousness of government and its sincerity.

Conclusions

The argumentative structure of AlMarjaya's speeches seems complex at its different levels. As proposed earlier, three levels of argumentative structure have been investigated. Regarding the first, type of argumentation, it has been observed that both main and subordinate argumentations are used. This indicates the complexity of events discussed in the speeches. As far as the second component, type of difference, two types of differences of opinion are used in the speeches: single non-mixed and multiple non-mixed. The employment of the two types stands for the variation of the topics put forward by AlMarjia. Concerning the third component of the argumentative structure, argument defence, it has been observed that the speeches are rich with diversity of types of support.

The complexity and prosperity of the argumentative structure of AlMarjia's speech indicates the awareness of the complicated events taking place in the country. In addition, further details seem necessary to be put forward to convince the audience to accept the given standpoints.

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