

THE 'ARGUMENT-IS-WAR' AND THE DIALECTICAL DISCOURSAL PATTERNS: THEIR ACQUISITION AND USE BY TELF STUDENTS IN WRITTEN ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

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ABSTRACT: In a broad research context, the present study covers the grounds of, on the one hand, the interdisciplinary domain of discourse analysis and, on the other hand, the field of applied linguistics. This study is intended to research into intermediate TEFL students' development of their ability to interpret and use some of the basic argumentative writing resources that they are expected to develop as part of their academic studies and EFL teacher training. The study set out to account for the students' ability to employ two cognitive discursal patterns which influence the production of argumentative written discourse, that is: a) the 'ARGUMENT-IS-WAR' pattern (AIW), based on the seminal proposals by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) about the operation of 'conceptual metaphors' in discourse; and b) the dialectical mode of discourse, proposed by Ruiz and Zenteno (2004-2005).

KEY WORDS: argumentative discourse, dialectical approach, explicit instruction.

EL PATRÓN DISCURSIVO 'UNA DISCUSIÓN ES UNA GUERRA' Y LA MODALIDAD DIALÉCTICA DEL DISCURSO: ADQUISICIÓN Y USO POR PARTE DE ESTUDIANTES DE TEFL EN LA PRODUCCIÓN DE TEXTOS ESCRITOS DE TIPO ARGUMENTATIVO

Resumen: En un amplio contexto de investigación, el presente estudio abarca los dominios de, por un lado, el análisis interdisciplinario del discurso y, por otro lado, el de la lingüística aplicada. El estudio estaba destinado a investigar la capacidad que se esperaría que los estudiantes de TEFL de nivel intermedio desarrollaran para interpretar y utilizar algunos de los recursos argumentativos básicos de escritura. En el estudio se propone dar cuenta del uso de dos patrones discursivos cognitivos que influyen en la producción del discurso argumentativo escrito, a saber: a) el patrón 'UNA DISCUSIÓN ES UNA GUERRA' (DEG), basado en las propuestas seminales

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de Lakoff y Johnson (1980) sobre la operación de las “metáforas conceptuales” en el discurso, y b) la ‘modalidad dialéctica del discurso’, propuesta por Ruiz y Zenteno (2004-2005).

Palabras clave: discurso argumentativo, enfoque dialéctico, instrucción explícita.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present study is intended to research into intermediate TEFL students' development of their ability to use some of the basic argumentative writing resources that they are expected to develop as part of their academic studies and EFL teacher training. In their future professional role as, mainly, secondary school English teachers, and due to the fact that one of their tasks will be to help their students develop their critical and argumentative abilities (de Zubiria Samper 2006), EFL teacher trainees need to develop their own critical argumentative discourse abilities in order to meet the needs of their prospective students. On account of its nature and main objective, this study may eventually offer some proposals that might be implemented for the development of TEFL students' abilities to write argumentative texts.

As part of social and communicative interaction, being truthful and persuasive are two central communicative goals of an individual expressing their personal point of view and making an argumentative proposal on a given issue in spoken or written communication. They may want to persuade their interactant(s) about the validity of their point of view and succeed in their acceptance of their argument.

In a metaphorical sense, these two contestants are the participants of an 'argumentative battle' in which one of them is inevitably defeated by the 'strength', or argumentative efficacy, of their opponent's arguments. Thus, the writer/speaker, as winner of the controversy or contest, proves the validity of their viewpoint and demonstrates the validity of their argument. This is exactly what the arguer wants to achieve. Editorial writers, opinion writers, and columnists make a claim. That is, they formulate a thesis (in formal argumentative terms), which may be disputed by their opponent's counterarguments in the progression of the interactive discourse. At the end of the interactive process, and after a series of argumentative clashes –i.e. attacks and counterattacks, in a metaphorical sense– the addresser achieves victory in the argumentative battle. As a result, their original claim may be accepted as valid or truthful and, consequently, worth subscribing to. Thus, the entire argumentation process comprises four stages: an opening stage, a confrontational stage, an argumentative stage and a concluding stage” (Walton and Godden 2007).

Some influential studies of informal argumentation, strongly influenced by the seminal work of, mainly, Toulmin (1958), have begun to pay greater attention to the role of the linguistic components in the analysis and modelling of the structure of argumentative discourse. In this respect, the argumentative process has begun to be viewed as being, mainly, of a pragmatic interactional nature in place of a strictly

logical nature. For example, 'pragma-dialectical theory' (van Eemeren et al. 2004; van Eemeren et al. 1993) proposes a descriptive model based on the interactional nature of argumentation and suggests rules for interaction procedures in which the participants' abilities, attitudes, and power are characterised in the progression of the argumentative activity which, according to Walton (1989), has to follow certain patterns of politeness for the argument not to result in "a quarrel characterised by the fallacious *ad hominem* attack (attack against the person, rather than the argument)".

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. General objective

The main objective of this study is to account for TEFL intermediate learners' development of their ability to identify and employ both the AIW and the dialectical discoursal patterns as organisational components of argumentative written texts.

2.2. Specific objectives

2.2.1. To determine TEFL intermediate learners' ability to use the dialectical configurational discoursal pattern operating as an organisational rhetorical structure in written argumentative compositions, which are formatted as opinion articles.

2.2.2. To determine TEFL intermediate learners' ability to use the grammatical constructions and components which realise the dialectical configurational discoursal pattern laid out in written argumentative texts.

2.2.3. To determine TEFL intermediate learners' ability to use the AIW discourse pattern underlying the argumentative mode operating in written argumentative texts, such as editorials and opinion articles.

2.2.4. To measure TEFL intermediate learners' ability to use both the dialectical mode and the AIW patterns in the writing of argumentative texts involving the expression of a personal viewpoint, or claim.

3. HYPOTHESIS

The research hypothesis formulated for this study is the following:

Intermediate TEFL students' ability to write argumentative texts is effectively developed after the presentation and practice of the fundamental argumentative writing resources present in both the AIW and the dialectical discoursal patterns.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Argumentation and polemic editorials

Argumentation is the way in which human reasoning develops when a series of statements are made in order to support a thesis or claim. From a purely rational standpoint, de Zubiria Samper (2006) suggests that there are three functions that the process of argumentation fulfils in the context of the organization of the arguments supporting a given thesis. They are the following:

- a. Support; which comprises causes, evidence or reasons supporting an idea.
- b. Convince; which aims at persuading the audience of the convenience and appropriateness of a claim, or thesis, with the objective of attracting supporters.
- c. Evaluate; which allows the addresser to investigate and evaluate different alternatives with the purpose to choose the best.

The classical study of argumentation has given rise to a number of emerging argumentative approaches that propose a wide variety of views which will help writers defend opinions, or points of view, in communicative interaction involving argumentation. According to the proposals made by Ferrari and Giammatteo (1996), argumentative written texts, such as polemic editorials or essays, are, by their very nature, macro speech-acts intended for the expression of a personal claim, or opinion, and a series of arguments that support that thesis. In such interactions, there are always two interactants, or contestants, participating in the exchange of ideas and reasons supporting their respective points of view: a) the 'protagonist', i.e. the addresser, making their personal 'claim' and b) the 'antagonist', i.e. the holder of the 'counterclaim'. They are both referred to by the addresser in the progression of discourse. The initiator of the polemic argument tries to persuade their 'audience', i.e. reader(s), about the validity of their personal opinion concerning a controversial issue on the basis of its strong points, or supporting evidence.

In a similar vein, Lo Cascio (1998) constructed a theoretical model that defines argumentation as being formed by at least two statements: an explicit or implicit stated thesis and an argument of its own. The presentation of the thesis can also be defined as a macro-speech act, which serves the purpose of persuading the intended addressee. In other words, argumentation can also be viewed as an interaction, or difference of opinion, between someone who puts it forward and someone who challenges it.

Some theoretical conceptions of the structure of opinion articles have been developed by León (1996), who suggests that they are intrinsically argumentative, since columnists present their opinion/standpoint with the objective of persuading the reader of the validity of their ideas and use the article to express their personal viewpoints without being unaware of the existence of different opinions. León (1996) proposes that in the configuration of opinion articles it is not necessary to maintain universally acceptable premises—which is a must in the philosophical type of argumentation—but premises that are realistic enough to persuade a very delimited audience.

A different approach to the study of argumentation is proposed by van Eemeren et al. (1997). This is defined as a 'pragma-dialectical theory'¹ and is based on the Aristotelian concept of dialectics. It suggests three main parts or components which are central to the process of argumentation and the arguments produced in that process:

- a. Propositions are stated as claims and other propositions or reasons are given to support those claims;
- b. the existence of a protagonist, who states a claim, and an antagonist, who contradicts that claim; and
- c. a particular arrangement of arguments and reasons.

According to van Eemeren et al. (2002), argumentation is fulfilled in the context of a discussion between speaker/writer and those who do not agree with their claims. This argumentative discussion, seen as a social process of interaction, takes place when the two parties try to put forward an implicit or explicit difference of opinion to an end, either through the oral or written medium. Therefore, argumentation is viewed as a social activity *per se*.

Focused on how opposing views are reconciled in a specific communicative context is Toulmin's influential model of argumentation (Toulmin 1958). He proposes an interactional-functional approach in which the argumentation process is defined by answers to certain characteristic questions and a substantive context, each of them being related to the central components of argumentation. These answers are formulated as follows:

- a. Claim: thesis that controls the argumentation. It is implicit or explicit and we can find it by asking the question: What does the author try to prove?
- b. Ground: evidence, reasons or arguments presented on the part of the protagonist in order to support the claim. You can find it by asking the question: What is the author saying in order to persuade the interlocutor or addressee?
- c. Warrant: Accepted beliefs and values. The addresser and the addressee may not agree on the acceptance of such a belief. One can obtain the warrant by asking the question: What explains, in general terms, the author's opinion?

Consider the following example:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| (1) | Claim
<i>These cigarettes are killing you.</i> | Ground
<i>Carcinogenic compounds are found in
cigarettes.</i> |
| | Warrant
<i>Lung cancer is a lethal disease.</i> | |

¹ van Eemeren et al. 1997.

In (1), the claim that cigarettes kill people is supported by the empirical evidence constituting the ground, namely, *carcinogenic compounds are found in cigarettes*. This argument is founded on the implicit principle, i.e. warrant, *cancer is a lethal disease*.

The discussion of the literature that we have presented thus far brings to light certain similarities that lay the groundwork for one of the models presented below in section 4.3. In all the studies above, there is a protagonist, who presents an original thesis, based on certain shared beliefs. These beliefs are in opposition to the tenets of other(s), namely the antagonist. What proceeds in the structure of the dialectical activity is a series of clashes between the protagonist's arguments and the subsequent counterarguments on the part of the antagonist until a conclusion is made.

4.2. *The dialectical approach to argument and the dialectical mode of discourse*

In the past 30 years, informal logicians have developed an approach that explains everyday reasoning and argumentation from a dialectical standpoint. Informal logic (IL) has rejected the traditional treatment of formal logic by challenging the pedagogical, sound-related and deductive ideas of traditional logic programmes (Walton and Godden 2007). Effective theoretical and methodological tools have been developed in order to treat arguments embracing a dialectical approach as to lay considerable emphasis on the "analysis, interpretation, evaluation, critique and construction of argumentation in everyday discourse" (Johnson and Blair 1977; cited in Walton and Godden 2007). Blair and Johnson (1987, cited in Walton and Godden 2007) conceived argumentation as dialectical in nature and "identify it as a human practice, an exchange between two or more individuals in which the process of interaction shapes the product". Moreover, by following a dialectical approach, they have identified four central characteristics in the process of argumentation. These have been outlined by Walton and Godden (2007) as follows:

1. The link between product and process: "An argument understood as product—a set of propositions with certain characteristics—cannot be properly understood except against the background of the process which produced it—the process of argumentation".
2. Argumentation roles: "The process of argumentation presupposes a minimum of two roles [the questioner and the answerer]".
3. Argument start: "The process of argumentation is initiated ... by a question or doubt—some challenge—to a proposition".
4. Argumentation activity purpose: "Argumentation is a purposive activity. Each participant has it as his or her goal to change or reinforce the propositional attitude of the interlocutor or of himself or herself".

Argumentative activity is normally viewed as a discussion or debate between two or more participants on any kind of controversial issues. Their claims will be attacked, defended and will eventually be modified by the force of the other contestants' arguments. Here, we are in front of a 'dialogical situation' (Freeman 1992) as

the process of argumentation is experienced in the context of a dialogue between participants. Nevertheless, one and the same participant may play the roles of the questioner and challenger at the same time, exposing their personal points of view and providing further questions to their theses as if they were engaged in a dialogue. This type of situation is called 'dialectical situation' and has different structures: it may have the form of a protagonist, who makes a claim, and an antagonist challenging such a claim by means of further questions and attacks (basic), or we may have a situation where different participants play the two roles explained above, i.e. proponent and challenger, where different arguments are being developed simultaneously (complex).

As part of the rhetorical organization of some discourse genres and modes, Ruiz and Zenteno (2004-2005) have proposed a configurational pattern that they call the 'dialectical mode of discourse'. This view of the configuration of argumentative texts of various types (editorials, opinion articles, etc.) is based on the presence of two central components or referents at the discoursal-cognitive level and in the discoursal-textual organisation. These two referents are interrelated by means of either contrast or analogy and are made explicit at the different levels of linguistic communication, as outlined below:

1. Discoursal-pragmatic component: dichotomical macro- / micro- speech acts
 - i. Opinions, or central theses, in opposition
 - ii. Dichotomical/dual descriptions in expository, narrative, or argumentative text classes
2. Semantic component
 - i. Contrast of referents / description of two interrelated referents
3. Textual component
 - i. Lexical level
 - a) Adjectives
 - b) Adverbs
 - c) Nouns
 - ii. Syntactic level
 - a) Noun phrases
 - b) Comparative constructions
 - c) Ellipsis
 - d) Coordinators
 - e) Subordinators
 - f) Correlative conjunctions

In a pilot study, two editorials were analysed following the characteristics of the dialectical discoursal mode proposed by Ruiz and Zenteno (2004-2005). Part of the analysis is presented below:

The semantic component:

A contrast of two central referents is made by foregrounding of adverbials of time indicating good/happy/successful/past period of the Internet compared to bad/sad/unsuccessful/present times of the Internet as shown in the examples below:

- (2) [*In the early days of the Internet*] versus [*In this day of jihadi Web sites*]
- (3) [*At the dawn of networked computing*] versus [*As the Internet became the mainstream*]

The linguistic-textual component:

Syntactic level:

- (4) Noun phrases indicating the contrast of referents: *early adopters/the bulk of the Internet users of today*
- (5) Comparative constructions: *as zombies , as realistic as ...*
- (6) Conjuncts marking cause-effect relationship: *First , Then*

Ruiz and Zenteno (2004-2005) state that the dialectical mode operates in the total text configuration or, alternatively, only in some segments of it. Also, as a descriptive construct, the dialectical mode of discourse can also account for other discoursal-textual configurations in several discourse genres, e.g. the cause-effect relationship or discoursal metaphor. This last configuration is based on the proposals by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which accounts for a global metaphorical process in the textual realisation found on the contrast and analogy principles mentioned by Ruiz and Zenteno (2004-2005). It is their belief that the discoursal configuration underlying some textual classes, argumentative texts being no exception, are at least partially controlled by our inherent conceptual system.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that a person's thoughts and actions are ruled or structured by conceptual metaphors². They suggest that the human conceptual system rules the way in which we both think and communicate via language. Our conceptual metaphor system can also become manifest in argumentative discourse. Thus, the conceptual metaphor 'ARGUMENT IS WAR', proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), can be viewed as determining the structuring of the configuration of arguments and the communicative moves made in an argumentation process. First, the participants in argumentative discourse –the protagonist and antagonist– are positioned to one of the two opposing sides as if involved in a war conflict. Additionally, the different stages of argumentation are viewed as the different stages in war. Finally, the conclusion of an argument is viewed as the end of a war situation.

² 'The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

4.3. The 'ARGUMENT-IS-WAR' model

Based on the findings from the study cited above, a preliminary pedagogical model can be suggested. This model combines some of the argumentative constructs and configurational patterns which are part of the theories and approaches referred to above. It also includes the pragmatic functions of the linguistic forms that make explicit the 'war of argumentation' pattern. A brief outline of the components of this argumentative model is provided.

4.3.1. An initial question is asked by the initiator of the argumentative activity. This question is asked in order to delimit the original standpoint taken by the initiator and the subsequent moves made throughout the text. According to Toulmin (1958), the protagonist will try to answer the question by stating their claim.

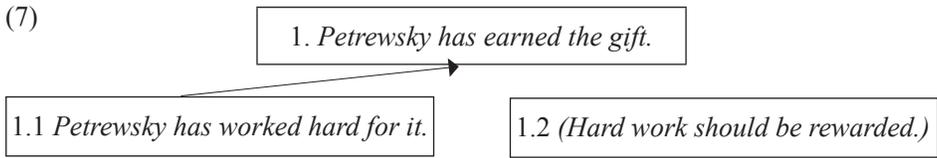
4.3.2. There are always two parties, or contestants, involved in the argumentative confrontation: the protagonist, i.e. the addresser or writer, versus a contending party, namely, the antagonist. Their roles and opposing standpoints are made explicit by the addresser throughout the discourse development. Following Ruiz and Zenteno (2004-2005), these two contending participants are present at both the discoursal-cognitive and textual levels, thus structuring a dichotomised rhetorical format throughout the text.

4.3.3. The argumentation process comprises some systematic stages in the argumentative activity, namely, a) the protagonist's opinion, or claim, i.e. the 'attack', versus the antagonist's opinion, or 'counterattack'; b) the defence of the protagonist's opinion, or attack, versus the defence of the antagonist's counterattack, c) the subsequent counterattack on the part of the protagonist versus the subsequent counterattack by the antagonist, etc. (van Eemeren et al. 1997).

4.3.4. The protagonist, upon achieving victory, expresses their conclusion, that is, the ending of the argumentation/war, thus supporting the answer to the initial question (Toulmin 1958).

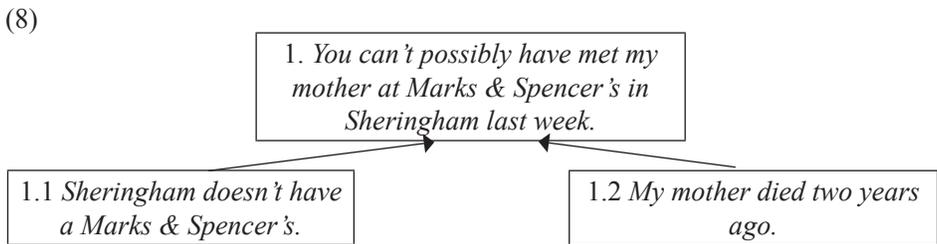
We think that the attempt to analyse argumentative texts in a schematic format could be helpful for learners to identify the different discoursal moves made by the initiator of the argumentative activity and the subsequent attacks made by the antagonist. Van Eemeren et al. (2002) suggest that different structures can be identified when analysing a piece of argumentation. The simplest case is when there is only one argument serving as the defence of the standpoint. This argumentation in its fully explicit form consists of two premises, but most of the time only one is made explicit. Here is an example of a 'single argument'³:

³ Example taken from van Eemeren et al. 2002.



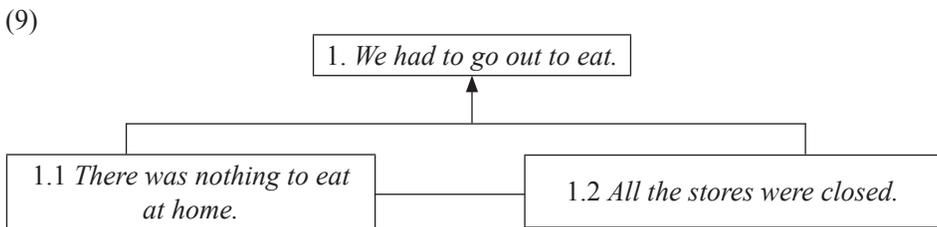
In (7), 1.1 is the explicit argument, which is seen on the surface of the text. 1.2 represents the underlying implicit premise.

When there are independent defences of the same standpoint, we are in front of the phenomenon of ‘multiple argumentation’. These defences do not depend on each other and have the same weight. Here is an example of ‘multiple argumentation’⁴:



In (8), 1.1 and 1.2 are separate arguments supporting the same standpoint.

Another type of complex argumentation is ‘coordinative argumentation’. The supporting arguments work together in order to give the standpoint solid reasons to be accepted. Here is an example of this type of argumentation⁵:



In (9), the two arguments are linked together to support the original standpoint.

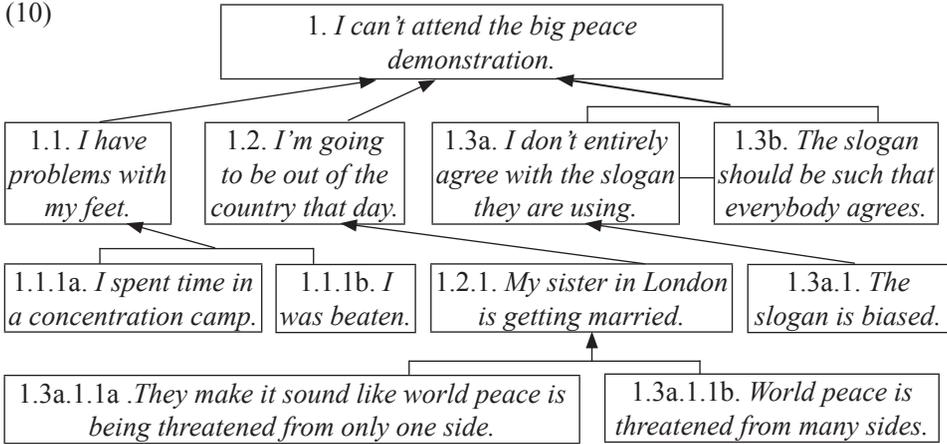
The last type of complex argumentation is called ‘subordinative argumentation’, which is characterised by arguments or subarguments that support other higher level arguments when they cannot stand on their own. This process goes on until the defence seems conclusive. ‘Multiple’, ‘coordinative’ and ‘subordinative argumentation’ may occur together in the same text in order to support the same thesis. Here is an example of the combination of the three types⁶:

⁴ Example taken from van Eemeren et al. 2002.

⁵ Example taken from van Eemeren et al. 2002.

⁶ Example taken from Van Eemeren et al. 2002.

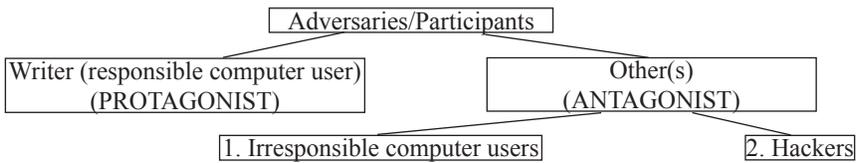
(10)



An example of how the AIW model operates is provided as follows, based on the theories and approaches mentioned above⁷:

⁷ 'Wake up your computer', The New York Times. Article retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/12/opinion/12fri3.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=wake+up+your+computer+12+january+2007&st=nyt

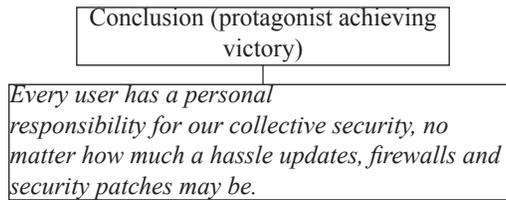
- (11) I. Initial question: Is it important to maintain computing equipment regularly?
- II. Protagonist and antagonist (Adversaries/ Participants)



III. Protagonist and antagonist’s opinions and subsequent moves



IV. The protagonist's conclusion



In (11), we can see the two opposite sides of this argumentative 'war': writer (i.e. responsible computer users) versus other(s), who are divided at the same time into two sub-classes: irresponsible computer users and hackers. They are noticeable disputants since each has opposite points of view about the initial question that the writer implicitly asks just before giving his first opinion: *Is it important to maintain computing equipment regularly?* The protagonist, on the one hand, has a responsible attitude towards technology and the way people should use it. On the other hand, the antagonist does not even know that there are certain devices designed to keep computers and computing programmes clean. After expressing their own points of view, or answers to the initial question, they exchange attacks, defences and counterattacks in order to convince and refute the arguments of the other part. Finally, the 'responsible computer user', as protagonist, gives their final opinion as the last resource he has to defeat his opponent.

The AIW model reflects the moves that both protagonist and antagonist take when trying to persuade their opponent. As in van Eemeren et al.'s model, AIW provides the L2 writer with a clear diagramming of how the argumentative process, or conflict, develops throughout the text.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Participants

We arranged to have 12 upper intermediate English university students participate in the research experiment. The participants were selected from an EFL undergraduate programme from a university in Santiago. Those selected were students in their third academic year of English studies and were required to have basic knowledge of writing techniques in English. It was also required that the participants in this study should have passed all their courses up to the time the research was conducted. The participants were between 19 and 23 years old, born and raised in Chile. They were arranged into two groups: an experimental group (6 participants: 2 women and 4 men) and a control group (6 participants: 1 woman and 5 men).

5.2. Procedure

The experimental group was given a ten-session induction to the models under study. Each induction session lasted 60 minutes. On the other hand, the control group received only the instruction prescribed by the traditional writing curriculum. That is, they received instruction on making outlines, creating introductory, body, and conclusion paragraphs, and providing support for topic sentences and assertions. They did this for the same period of time as the experimental group following the standard procedures suggested in writing textbooks. No attention was paid to any of the characteristics of the models under scrutiny.

Experimental and control group participants were asked to write a 250-word opinion article during the first session of the procedure. After an eight-session induction to the models and, conversely, instruction prescribed by the traditional curriculum, given to the experimental and control group participants, respectively, they were asked to write their final opinion article of 300 words which was contrasted with the first sample.

5.3. Data analysis procedures

The polemic/opinion articles written by the participants during the pre- and post-test procedures were analysed by the researcher following the models presented to the experimental group. For the purpose of the analysis, each group and each participant were assigned an identifying label. The groups were labelled *E* for participants in the experimental group and *C* for participants in the control group. Each participant was given a number. In the end, each sample was labelled with the name of the group plus the number of the participants. For example, *E1* or *C2*.

The 12 opinion editorials (6 written by the participants of the experimental group and 6 written by the participants of the control group) collected after the writing of the editorials during the first session were analysed in terms of some of the textual components at the lexical and syntactic levels found in the text configuration of the ‘dialectical mode of discourse’ (Ruiz and Zenteno 2004-2005). This configuration is outlined below.

Textual component

- i. Lexical level
 - a. Adjectives
 - b. Adverbs
 - c. Nouns
- ii. Syntactic level
 - a. Noun phrases
 - b. Comparative constructions
 - c. Coordinators
 - d. Subordinators
 - e. Conjuncts

A decision was made by the researcher that the focus of this paper would utilise only a part of this model due to the specific scope of the study. The pragmatic and semantic components were not taken into consideration in this part of the analysis because these aspects can be indirectly observed by the operation of the AIW model.

As mentioned above, the lexical elements of the configuration of the dialectical mode were also described. However, what seems more important in this study is the syntactic configuration, not the imagery that a lexical level analysis would involve. To illustrate this point, the analysis of conjuncts, which are used to make explicit syntactic relationships, includes such semantic meanings and connections as enumeration, apposition, result, inference, contrast, etc. (Quirk et al. 1985).

The number of instances of the textual component were registered and contrasted with the post-test material results obtained from the opinion editorials written by the subjects of the experimental and control groups during session 9 (6 written by the participants in the experimental group and 6 written by the participants in the control group).

Additionally, the researcher diagrammed the articles that the participants of both groups wrote in sessions 1 and 9 along the lines of the diagram formats in which the four components of the AIW model are shown.

6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1. Analysis of the textual component of the dialectical discoursal pattern

6.1.1. Experimental and control groups pre-test results of the textual component of the dialectical discoursal pattern

Table 1: Experimental group

CATEGORY		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6
No. of adjective opposition pairs	Lexical level	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of adverb opposition pairs		0	0	0	0	1	0
No. of noun opposition pairs		0	1	1	0	0	0
No. of noun phrase opposition pairs	Syntactic level	2	0	0	0	1	0
No. of comparative constructions		0	0	2	0	0	0
No. of coordinators		0	1	4	0	0	0
No. of subordinators		3	4	0	1	1	3
No. of conjuncts		3	4	2	2	2	5

Table 2: Control group

CATEGORY		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
No. of adjective opposition pairs	Lexical level	1	1	0	0	0	0
No. of adverb opposition pairs		0	0	0	0	0	1
No. of noun opposition pairs		1	1	0	1	0	0

No. of noun phrase opposition pairs	Syntactic level	2	2	1	1	2	1
No. of comparative constructions		2	1	1	0	0	0
No. of coordinators		2	2	0	2	2	1
No. of subordinators		6	2	0	1	0	3
No. of conjuncts		2	0	2	4	2	1

The tables above show that the participants in the experimental group used mainly subordinators and conjuncts to express opposition of ideas in their discourse (12 and 18 occurrences, respectively, which constitute 69% of the total instances of lexical and syntactic devices used). On the contrary, the participants in the control group used a wider variety of devices to express differences of opinion. Not only did they use mainly subordinators and conjuncts but also coordinators and noun phrase opposition pairs (12, 11, 9 and 9 occurrences, respectively, which constitute 80% of the total instances of lexical and syntactic devices used).

6.1.2. Experimental and control groups post-test results of the textual component of the dialectical discursal pattern

Table 3: Experimental group

CATEGORY		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6
No. of adjective opposition pairs	Lexical level	0	0	0	0	1	0
No. of adverb opposition pairs		0	0	0	0	1	0
No. of noun opposition pairs		0	0	1	1	1	0
No. of noun phrase opposition pairs	Syntactic Level	4	2	0	4	2	0
No. of comparative constructions		2	0	0	1	1	0
No. of coordinators		1	3	4	2	6	2
No. of subordinators		5	1	2	0	0	1
No. of conjuncts		4	3	4	7	0	3

Table 4: Control group

CATEGORY		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
No. of adjective opposition pairs	Lexical level	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of adverb opposition pairs		2	0	0	1	0	0
No. of noun opposition pairs		2	0	0	1	0	0
No. of noun phrase opposition pairs	Syntactic level	1	0	2	0	0	1
No. of comparative constructions		1	0	0	1	1	3
No. of coordinators		3	2	5	1	1	2
No. of subordinators		0	0	0	3	1	0
No. of conjuncts		2	0	1	4	2	2

The experimental group post-procedure results indicate that the number of instances increased by 60% (from 43 to 69) and a wider variety of devices was employed: 21 conjuncts, 18 coordinators, 12 noun phrase opposition pairs and 9 subordinators, which then constitute 87% of the total instances of lexical and syntactic devices used. On the other hand, the control group decreased by 15% (from 51 to 44). The participants from this group used mostly coordinators and conjuncts (14 and 11 instances, respectively) to show opposition. This constitutes 57% of the total instances. It is also worth mentioning that there was a significant decrease (67%) in the use of subordinators (from 12 to 4).

6.2. Analysis of argumentative structure (AIW pattern)

6.2.1. Experimental and control groups pre-test results of argumentative structure analysis (AIW pattern)

Table 5: Experimental group

CATEGORY	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6
presence of protagonist	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
presence of antagonist	no	no	no	no	no	no
presence of protagonist's opinion	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
presence of antagonist's opinion	no	no	no	no	no	no
No. of protagonist's defences	2	3	3	2	0	2
No. of antagonist's defences	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of protagonist's counterattacks	2	3	1	2	0	0
No. of antagonist's counterattacks	0	0	0	0	0	0
presence of conclusion	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no

Table 6: Control group

CATEGORY	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
presence of protagonist	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
presence of antagonist	no	no	no	no	no	no
presence of protagonist's opinion	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
presence of antagonist's opinion	no	no	no	no	no	no
No. of protagonist's defences	3	2	2	2	0	2
No. of antagonist's defences	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of protagonist's counterattacks	4	2	2	2	0	1
No. of antagonist's counterattacks	0	0	0	0	0	0
presence of conclusion	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no

The tables above show that all the participants in the experimental group make explicit the presence of a protagonist (i.e. the initiator of an argument) and their corresponding opinion, but completely disregard the presence of an antagonist (i.e. the opponent

in the argumentative activity). This is also reflected in the number of defences and counterattacks of each contestant –12 and 8 occurrences, respectively, made by the protagonist and 0 occurrences by the antagonist. 5 out of 6 participants also included a conclusion (i.e. the protagonist reaching victory).

The control group results show a similar argumentative structure. 5 participants presented the protagonist and their corresponding opinion, while ignoring the antagonist. As demonstrated above by the experimental group, this phenomenon entails an overall significant difference in the number of defences and counterattacks on the part of the protagonist (11 occurrences each) and on the part of the antagonist (0 occurrences). 4 out of 6 participants provided a conclusion.

6.2.2. Experimental and control groups post-test results of argumentative structure analysis (AIW pattern)

Table 7: Experimental group

CATEGORY	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6
presence of protagonist	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
presence of antagonist	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
presence of protagonist’s opinion	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
presence of antagonist’s opinion	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
No. of protagonist’s defences	1	3	2	1	0	2
No. of antagonist’s defences	1	1	2	2	0	0
No. of protagonist’s counterattacks	0	3	1	0	0	0
No. of antagonist’s counterattacks	0	1	1	3	0	0
presence of conclusion	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no

Table 8: Control group

CATEGORY	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
presence of protagonist	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
presence of antagonist	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
presence of protagonist’s opinion	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
presence of antagonist’s opinion	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
No. of protagonist’s defences	2	0	0	2	0	0
No. of antagonist’s defences	1	0	0	2	0	0
No. of protagonist’s counterattacks	1	0	0	0	0	0
No. of antagonist’s counterattacks	1	0	0	2	0	0
presence of conclusion	yes	no	no	no	no	no

The post-test experimental group results show a significant difference in the overall presence of both protagonist and antagonist. 5 subjects make explicit the presence of a protagonist and 4 of them make explicit the presence of an antagonist. This is demonstrated through the expression of opinions, defences and counterattacks on the part of the two contestants. The 5 opinion articles which included a protagonist also included the protagonist’s defences (8 occurrences). Within these articles, 2 of them

presented protagonist's counterattacks (4 occurrences). The 4 opinion articles with antagonist's opinions displayed a total of 6 defences. Of these, 3 also included a total of 4 antagonist's counterattacks. The same 3 articles with antagonist's counterattacks also included conclusions.

The control group post-test results do not clearly indicate adherence to argumentative structure. 2 of the 6 participants included a protagonist in the articles. The same 2 participants were also the only participants to include antagonists and the corresponding opinions, defences and counterattacks. Both had protagonist's defences (4 total), but only one had a protagonist's counterattack. There are 3 occurrences of antagonist's defences and counterattacks in the 2 articles. The same article which included a protagonist's counterattack also included a conclusion.

The same participant who had no structure in the pre-test had the same results with the post-test. The 3 remaining participants who had initially displayed the presence of a protagonist subsequently displayed no argumentative structure in the post-test.

6.3. Correlations holding between the dialectical discoursal and AIW use per participant

Regarding the post-test use of the textual component of the dialectical discoursal pattern and the argumentative structure of the AIW pattern, we aimed at examining the differences and similarities between the two groups concerning the use of lexical and syntactic devices marking a difference of opinion in the discourse and the presence of the argument parts in the articles.

We can observe that the participants in the experimental group have a more homogeneous performance. This is demonstrated by the fact that the 4 participants who displayed a larger number of argumentative parts in the discourse (E1, E2, E3 and E4) also increased the overall number and variety of lexical and syntactic devices, namely, from 30 to 51 occurrences. In the case of E5, although lacking in the AIW structure in the post-test, their increased use of lexical and syntactic devices is noticeable (from 5 to 12 occurrences). E6's performance remained relatively constant in the post-test results. As regards the use of the textual component devices, it calls our attention that there is a clear tendency for all the participants in this group to rely more on syntactic (93%) than lexical devices (7%).

Regarding the post-test control group results, we can observe that the argumentative performance of the participants in this group is quite heterogeneous. C1 showed some improvement in the use of argument parts, but did not use as many textual component devices as they did in the pre-test (from 16 to 11). C2 did not present any argument part in the post-test and showed a significant decrease in the use of lexical and syntactic devices (from 9 to 2). The presence of argument parts in the article by C3 was not detected, which contrasts with the substantial increase in the use of devices (from 4 to 8). C4 made improvements in the use of the components of both patterns. The use of the dialectical discoursal and AIW patterns remained the same in C5's article. Finally, in C6's article there is no presence of argument parts, but we can observe a small increase in the use of textual component devices (from 7 to 8).

As noticed in the results from the experimental group, the control group participants also showed strong reliance on the use of syntactic devices (86%) compared to the use of lexical devices (4%) to make explicit the existence of two opposing parties in the argumentative activity.

6.4. Discussion of results

In this section it will be possible to discuss the results of the present study. For the sake of clarity, this discussion will be done following the objectives presented in section 2.

The general objective of this study sets out to account for TEFL intermediate learners' development of their ability to identify and employ both the dialectical discursal mode and the AIW discourse pattern as organisational components of argumentative written texts. As can be seen in the presentation of the results above, there is a clear tendency for the participants who have received systematic instruction on how to use the relevant lexical and syntactic devices in the discourse to increase the corresponding number of occurrences. After the ten-session induction given by the researcher, 56% of the participants in the experimental group used at least one of the dialectical discursal mode components, which can be compared with 42% showed in the pre-test. The participants mainly included syntactic devices to show differences of opinion in the text. Some examples of coordinators and conjuncts will be offered as an illustration of the latter result:

- (12) (E2) *However, they are always complaining about the system and the country, but they do not want to participate.*
(Coordinator, linking a) 'young people want changes' with b) 'they are not willing to participate in the process')
- (13) (E3) *The arrival of a new member to a family should be considered as a blessing and something that we should celebrate. But, when a girl is pregnant and it isn't desired, what is the morally correct thing to do?*
(Coordinator, linking a) 'the expected feeling of joy when a woman is pregnant' with b) 'the problems that an unwanted pregnancy could bring to the mother')
- (14) (E1) *On the one hand, there are some countries that approve death penalty, as USA, for example, because they feel execution as a real solution to clean society of rapists and murderers.*
(Conjunct, introducing 'death penalty as the correct sentence to major crimes', contrastive-antithetic meaning)
- (15) (E1) *On the other hand, we have the murdered and raped boys and girls' families. They see death penalty as freedom, because murderers don't pay the real price of their acts.*
(Conjunct, contrasting a) 'death penalty as the correct sentence to major crimes' with b) 'life imprisonment as a more effective punishment for murderers and rapists', contrastive-antithetic meaning)

As observed in the results presented in the previous section and the examples above, there appears to be a link between the realisation of two opposing opinions and the use of syntactic devices in the discourse. On the contrary, such lexical devices, as nouns, adjectives and adverbs are not recurrent in the manifestation of such an opposition. We claim that, at least in the field of EFL, binary oppositions, such as 'good/evil', 'black/white', 'live/die', 'male/female', 'master/slave', etc., are not used in the writing of opinion articles by TEFL students, because the formal writing instruction that they receive at their institutions seems to focus on mastering the structure/format of essays and not on the principle that the text development needs to include rhetorical features. This result could also be due to a lack of relevant vocabulary on the part of the participants. The researcher did not pay greater attention to vocabulary-centred instruction during the experimental procedure as the participants, third year English students, were already expected to have solid vocabulary knowledge. Conversely, the methodology of the study presupposed a possible deficiency in the use of the syntactic devices that are necessary to connect and contrast ideas.

As regards the identification and use of argumentative structure, we were able to find that the realisation of argument parts in the text increased. In the experimental group the presence of the components of the AIW pattern rose from 48% in the pre-test to 65% after the procedure. On the contrary, the overall control group results show that the realisation of argumentative structure decreased from 44% to 30% presence of argument parts. This could be preliminarily explained by the assumption that the greater the knowledge that a subject has of the rhetorical structure of English argumentative writing the better articles or pieces of writing they will be able to write. Explicit instruction on how to use argument parts throughout the development of the argumentative writing process seems to have produced a significant improvement on the performance of the experimental group participants.

Upon comparison of the results obtained from the experimental procedure, we may claim that there is not a one-to-one correspondence or correlation between the acquisition and employment of the two patterns. While the majority of the participants in the experimental group increased their ability to use the AIW pattern, the same cannot be said of the implementation of the dialectical discoursal mode. Although the overall number of dialectical discoursal devices employed increased, it was not consistent with the same participants that improved their performance regarding the argumentative pattern. That is to say, in some of the participants we saw improvement in both patterns, in others only one (either argumentative structure or devices).

7. CONCLUSIONS

We will now discuss how the main findings of this study relate to the processes involved in the production of argumentative texts and to the rhetorical, dialectical and textual characteristics of this text type. We will also examine whether the hypothesis formulated has been validated. Additionally, we will evaluate the methodology used,

present some limitations and put forward some suggestions to be considered in similar researches in the future.

7.1. Findings

We expected to find the components of the two models in the opinion editorials written by the participants in the experimental group. As this was an experimental study, it was expected that the participants would have acquired the ability to employ both of the organisational patterns under study through the systematic training that they were given. Additionally, these participants were also expected to acquire a solid competence on argumentative writing techniques after being systematically exposed to samples of the argumentative genre, mainly to opinion editorials in which the components of the models proposed are found.

We found that, to a large extent, our expectations were met. The systematic instruction on the patterns under study generated great progress made by the experimental subjects in both the display of argument parts and use of lexical and syntactic devices in the writing tasks. However, it cannot be concluded that the acquisition of one pattern presupposes the acquisition of the other, as seen in one of the participants. There does not seem to be a correlation between the amount and variety of lexical and syntactic devices and the AIW structure. As regards the processes involved in the production of argumentative texts and the rhetorical, dialectical and textual characteristics of this text type, we may claim that the structure of argumentative texts and the use of syntactic devices are acquired more readily and employed more efficiently than the lexical devices, revealed by the almost complete absence of the latter.

As regards the results obtained after the instruction, we observed that there were some important differences between the two groups: lack of knowledge of the dialectical and rhetorical structure of English argumentative writing and lack of ability to use the logical connectors and lexical devices which make explicit argumentative discourse. These become a major problem when it comes to writing persuasively. As a validation of our hypothesis, the results of this study allow us to conclude that the argumentative discourse, due to its complex nature, could be studied and taught by making a dialectical approach, including explicit instruction on how to use lexical (noun, adjective and adverb opposition pairs) and syntactic devices (noun phrases as opposition pairs, comparative constructions, coordinators, subordinators and conjuncts). We also think that an understanding of writing difficulties and needs from the learner's perspective is important because it can help teachers provide meaningful and relevant instruction by adopting teaching strategies to lighten L2 learners' difficulties.

7.2. Limitations of the study

We will conclude this study by pointing out some methodological issues and suggest proceedings for similar studies in the future. The pedagogical implications deriving

from the conclusions of this study are only tentative and partial, due to the fact that the study only involved the writing products of twelve participants. Even though the differences that we found between the results obtained from the two groups show that explicit instruction plays a crucial role in the development of argumentative writing, the size of the sample is small, thus constraining any definitive generalizations. We suggest that a larger corpus than the one we used is needed for further studies. Additionally, the procedure of the post-test was carried out in a way that allowed the participants to choose the topic to write about in order to motivate them to produce argumentative writing in a genuinely argumentative situation because of the strength of the opinions related to the issue in question. However, we may also suggest that, in future studies, the post-test should contain one single topic, according to the participants' interests.

As regards the employment of lexical items that involve an opposition of theses/referents/propositions, we observed that prior preparation of the participants on the use of writing techniques in producing persuasive texts did not have an effect on the results. In other words, the participants did not seem to be able to relate the existence of two opposing referents to the use of the opposition pairs that one of the patterns under study considered. Explicit instruction on the use of the lexical items was not given because the researcher assumed that the participants were familiar with the topic of the formal writing task. The almost complete lack of lexical device use indicates that in the future such explicit instruction should be undertaken. Several studies (Beaubien 1998; Chandrasegaran 2008; Varghese and Abraham 1998; Zhu 2001) have demonstrated the effectiveness of explicit instruction on the employment of rhetorical, syntactic and lexical features in good argumentative written texts. Moreover, further research is needed to suggest pedagogical methods that might test the efficacy of explicit instruction aimed at raising students' metacognitive awareness of their linguistic skills and at harnessing those skills for English argumentative writing in academic contexts.

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