

**Frans H. van Eemeren (2012): *Maniobras estratégicas en el discurso argumentativo*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas & Editorial Plaza y Valdés (Series “Theoria cum Praxi”, No. 9). Spanish translation, by Cristián Santibáñez and María Elena Molina, of: Frans H. van Eemeren (2010): *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse: Extending the Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Argumentation*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam (Series “Argumentation in Context”, No. 2)**

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Each one of the five books authored or co-authored by Frans van Eemeren which have so far been translated into Spanish clearly fulfills a different role. Following the chronological order, we first have *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; Spanish translation 2013), a book that contains the theoretical spadework in the field of pragmatics on which the whole edifice of pragma-dialectics is erected. Then follows *Argumentation, Communication, and Fallacies* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992; Spanish translation 2002, <sup>2</sup>2007), which is the first full presentation of the Standard Theory of Pragma-Dialectics complete with its explanation of fallacies as violations of the rules of critical discussion. In the third place comes my favourite book—*Argumentation: Analysis, Evaluation, Presentation* (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2002; Spanish translation, 2006)—a rare combination of sophisticated theory (again, the Standard Theory) tersely and lucidly expounded with an excellent collection of real life arguments selected to allow the student to check whether he has really understood what the theory is about. (For only application to concrete cases can tell; I know by experience that my students go from finding the theory easy as pie to struggling hard to complete the exercises and special assignments. As a plus, teaching argumentation has never been such fun as when discussing the answers.) The fourth book is *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation* (van Eemeren and

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Grootendorst 2004; Spanish translation 2011), the most complete and up-to-date presentation of the Standard Theory as seen in the context of the whole field of argumentation studies, a work of rare erudition and sovereign command of the issues.

Yet, as the reader of this journal very well knows, the Amsterdam School has not stood still, and ever since the end of the '90s, the Standard Theory of Pragma-Dialectics has started to yield to an Extended Theory, whose central concern has been a *rapprochement* of dialectics with rhetoric (see, for the earliest beginning, van Eemeren and Houtlosser 1999). After a substantial series of papers (published in journals as well as in collective books), there appeared *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse: Extending the Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Argumentation* (van Eemeren, 2010; Spanish translation 2012), the fullest and most authoritative version of the Extended Theory. Since it is a common mistake in the Spanish-speaking world that pragma-dialectics only consists of the Standard Theory, it is no exaggeration to say that having this book in Spanish *is* an event. I have often met the objection that the staples of Standard Theory—the ideal model of ‘critical discussion’, the ‘four stages’ of argumentative discourse and their embedded speech acts, the reconstruction of fallacies as violations of the ‘ten commandments’—are too weak to allow for an accurate analysis of real-life argumentative texts. And although the objectors have had to temper down their criticism as soon as they are confronted with the strenuous discipline of having to solve the above-mentioned exercises in the *Argumentation* textbook—it is difficult to maintain those objections when people show themselves struggling to apply what they had deemed to be an ‘over-simple’ theory—, the fact that one can now direct rash critics to this translation of *Strategic Maneuvering*, which offers so many more resources for analysis than the Standard Theory, is apt to make them think again.

The availability of this translation will also do much to dispel one particularly harmful prejudice, viz that pragma-dialectics is somehow inimical to the rhetorical perspective. This prejudice is of special importance in view of the extraordinary renaissance of the rhetorical tradition and of rhetorical studies not only in literary departments but also in philosophy, law, linguistics, social and cognitive science. Many readers in Spain and Latin America who are taking part in that renaissance have so far found nothing appealing in pragma-dialectics. To them I would suggest first to read chapter 3 of the book under review, for it contains an excellent 60-page comparison of the dialectical and rhetorical traditions. They will be able to run through well-known material yet from a new and distinctive perspective. After that, they should read chapters 1 and 2, which in a very user-friendly manner recapitulate the Standard Theory as well as the reasons which have led van Eemeren and his group to revise it so as to make room for rhetorical insights. I am pretty sure that they will then be prepared and interested to read chapters 4-9, which explain the nitty-gritty details of the Extended Theory of what one would now like to call Pragma-Dialectical Rhetoric or Pragma-Rhetorical Dialectics.<sup>1</sup> As for chapter 10, the closing one, it is

<sup>1</sup> Although the translation is mostly quite accurate, I at least would like to point out one glaring error that escaped revision by the translators and copy editors. The English word ‘figure’ in the phrases ‘figures of speech’ and ‘figures of thought’ (corresponding to Greek *lexeōs schēmata* and *dianoias schēmata*) on no account can be rendered by Spanish *cifra* (‘number’), *factor* (‘factor’) or *forma* (‘form’, ‘shape’). But it

really a first-class dessert, because in it van Eemeren not only admits that the Extended Theory is work in progress and will need amendment, but also because he clearly gives his take on the open questions, appeals to all readers to contribute to their solving them and to offer their own suggestion for improvement. This *esprit de corps* is, as the readers of this journal well know, a mark of the Amsterdam School.

With the recent publication of the Spanish translation of *Strategic Maneuvering* we can say that all Spaniards and Latin Americans interested in argumentation studies and for some reason unable to read the English original texts have now access to the most important materials on both versions of pragma-dialectics, which, as another expert recently wrote, ‘has become the internationally most influential and sophisticated paradigm in modern argumentation theory’ (Kienpointner 2010: 519). In fact, if somebody should endeavour to translate the two recent collective efforts on *Argumentative Indicators in Discourse* (van Eemeren, Houtlosser, and Snoeck Henkemans 2007) and on *Fallacies and Judgments of Reasonableness* (van Eemeren, Garssen, and Meuffels 2009), as well as the older study on *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse* (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson, and Jacobs 1993), then the Spanish-speaking world would have at his disposal the core of this very lively and active research program.

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Footnote 1 continued

was thus rendered on pp. 155 (note 110), 198, 199, and in the whole of section 4.7 (the worst offender being the compounding of error in *cifras de expresión* instead of *figuras de elocución/lenguaje/estilo* and *factor de estilo* instead of *figura de estilo*). This strange procedure will doubly confuse the reader—first, because such translations do not make any sense in Spanish, and secondly, because of the inconsistency of offering both the correct *figura* and the incorrect *cifra-factor-forma*, sometimes within the same paragraph or even sentence.

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