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EMOTION IN ARGUMENTATION – INTRODUCTION

This special issue aims at deepening the understanding of the role of emotion in argumentation across a wide variety of contexts, from legal and political reasoning to personal narratives and well-being. Within this shared focus, the issue brings together topics, methodologies, and disciplinary traditions, ranging from theoretical contributions, through psychological studies, to computational linguistics approaches. We believe that this special issue will contribute to the discussion of the problems faced, providing key points that anyone working on the relationship between emotions and argumentation should be aware of, if not offering clear answers. Furthermore, the volume also reflects the international character of current research on argumentation and emotion, with contributions representing different European countries, Canada, and South America.

The growing interest in emotion within argumentation theory reflects a broader shift within the field. Contemporary approaches increasingly analyze emotions as an inherent part of argumentative interaction, moving away from perceiving them as fallacies and/or as a peripheral dimension. This development is connected to several broader transitions in the study of argumentation: from abstract argument products toward situated communicative processes, from purely normative models toward cognitive-pragmatic and empirical approaches, and from isolated analyses of reasoning toward interdisciplinary accounts of persuasion, interaction, and discourse in context.

The place of emotion in argumentation has long been debated. Classical rhetorical traditions, especially Aristotle's account of pathos, already recognized that emotions shape judgment and persuasion. However, many



later traditions, particularly those influenced by formal logic and positivist ideals of rationality, treated emotional appeals with suspicion, often reducing them to instances of fallacious reasoning. Important developments in contemporary argumentation theory challenged this dichotomy, most notably the work of Douglas Walton, who demonstrated that emotional appeals may function as rational and contextually appropriate elements of argumentative dialogue and not only as inherently irrational deviations from it.

Other works expanded this perspective in several directions. Michael Gilbert's theory of multi-modal argumentation challenged narrowly logical conceptions of argument by demonstrating that emotional, visceral, and interpersonal dimensions are integral parts of natural argumentative practice. Cognitive and rhetorical approaches developed by scholars such as Cristián Santibáñez further contributed to understanding argumentation as an embodied and context-sensitive persuasive process shaped by affect, cognition, and social interaction. Research by Christopher Tindale stressed the centrality of audience adaptation, emotions, and values in rhetorical argumentation, emphasizing that persuasive force cannot be understood independently of audience engagement and situated relevance.

Christian Plantin and the French tradition of discourse analysis emphasized that emotions emerge within interactional and discursive processes themselves. Scholars such as Sara Cigada, further explored how emotion terms, emotional tension, and evaluative language function within argumentative discourse. Research by Sara Greco and collaborators demonstrated how naming emotions may play an important role in mediation, deliberation, and conflict management.

The relationship between language, affect, and persuasion has also become increasingly important in contemporary studies of argumentation. Fabrizio Macagno, often in collaboration with Walton, demonstrated how emotive words and evaluative lexical choices shape argumentative framing and influence audience perception. Their work on emotive meaning contributed significantly to understanding how emotional language functions as part of argumentative reasoning itself. Relatedly, Francesca Ervas and collaborators explored the role of metaphor, affective framing, and cognitive processes in persuasive reasoning, showing how metaphorical language may influence interpretation, evaluation, and argumentative acceptability.

Recent years have also seen growing interest in empirical approaches to emotional argumentation, including psycholinguistic studies, corpus analysis, experimental methods, and computational modeling. These developments increasingly allow researchers to investigate emotional appeals

not only as theoretical constructs but also as observable phenomena in natural language discourse and real-world persuasive interaction. Experimental approaches inspired by cognitive pragmatics, such as the ones from Steve Oswald and collaborators, have contributed to a more precise understanding of how emotional appeals influence perceived argument strength, audience engagement, and persuasive effectiveness. At the same time, computational linguistics and affective lexicons provide new methodological possibilities for identifying and analyzing emotion-eliciting language in large-scale discourse data, as shown by Barbara Konat.

The topic of emotion in argumentation is also gaining increasing recognition among younger scholars. Across many recent PhD dissertations and postdoctoral projects, researchers combine technological developments with empirical approaches, including psychological experiments, corpus analysis, and computational methods. This ongoing shift toward approaches more grounded in language use, interaction, and cognition has broadened the conceptual framework of argumentation studies itself. As a result, emotions are increasingly treated as an important dimension of natural argumentative practice, further demonstrating both the momentum of the topic and the need for continued work on its theoretical and empirical foundations. All this is not only the result of a conceptual and technical updating of argumentation studies to address the role of emotions in reasoned exchanges, but also because, paradigmatically today, the contemporary public international arena demands a more complex and proper understanding of real communication in which emotions are core components.

The contributions collected in this issue reflect many of these theoretical and methodological developments. Taken together, they show how the study of emotion in argumentation has evolved into an interdisciplinary area situated at the intersection of philosophy, rhetoric, linguistics, psychology, communication studies, and computational approaches to language and persuasion.

We are opening this issue not with a typical research paper, but with a personal essay by Michael Gilbert. This unique text, which the author themselves calls a “memoir,” addresses the topic of emotion and argumentation while also being deeply emotional in its own right. In a moving way, it shows how a scholar’s personal story can become intertwined with their intellectual work. Gilbert’s text, as the work of one of the founding figures in the study of emotion in argumentation and a source of inspiration for generations of scholars, opens the door for the other papers collected in this issue.

Christian Plantin presents a continuation of his work on spoken emotions, enriching it with a model of emotions as episodes. He examines what happens when a speaker experiences an emotion and then gradually returns to an initial or neutral state, while showing how language itself can shape and mediate this process. The value of the paper also lies in its practical contribution to discourse studies. Plantin focuses on everyday emotional language, examining forms of expression embedded in the lexicon of ordinary communication and showing how emotions are articulated through common linguistic practices.

David Hitchcock works within the well-known framework of arguing for and against emotions, a phenomenon that, much like the issues discussed by Plantin, can be observed in everyday language while also remaining deeply rooted in the tradition of ancient rhetoric. Hitchcock further develops the concept of arguing for emotion by concentrating on what it means to argue against emotion and by examining the acceptability conditions for both kinds of argumentative acts.

In his contribution, Cristian Santibáñez takes the wonderful book on emotions written by Miceli and Castelfranchi (2015) as a point of departure. He aims to demonstrate how Miceli and Castelfranchi's approach, which involves the motivational cognitive functioning of emotions for communicative and persuasive purposes, could enhance the conventional argumentative approach to emotions, thereby clarifying their role in reason-giving exchanges. Using a couple of basic examples analyzed with Walton's argument diagrams, Santibáñez provides insights into how changes in beliefs and courses of action can be better understood by incorporating Miceli and Castelfranchi's view on the matter. In other words, by complementing classical rhetorical and argumentative theories about the role of emotions in argumentation with a motivational cognitive angle, processes of self- and audience-influencing are more realistic and properly conceived.

Morales Vidales begins from what the author identifies as a conceptual gap in the understanding of reason and emotion in argumentation and proposes the additional concept of "sensible reason." For Morales Vidales, this concept is connected to "sensing": it includes affective states, but also extends beyond them to encompass symbolic and cultural configurations that situate argumentation within lived experience. The paper illustrates this through an analysis of the *digna rabia* ("dignified rage") articulated by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Jagodziński moves the discussion into the area of law, which at first glance might seem an unexpected field for the study of emotional

argumentation. Yet, as Douglas Walton already observed, emotional arguments frequently appear in legal contexts and often play an important role in court cases. Jagodziński develops this perspective through a discussion of the “Law and Emotion” movement, which in recent years has gained increasing recognition within legal studies. This approach examines how emotions are embedded both in legal norms and in legal practices. The paper illustrates these issues through the case of Administrative Monetary Penalties, showing how emotional and evaluative dimensions remain present even within areas of law commonly regarded as highly formalized.

Konat and Żelewska, moving into the corpus studies and natural language section of this issue, focuses on a phenomenon closely related to emotional argumentation and, in many ways, underlying it: the affect heuristic. Widely recognized as a psychological phenomenon, the affect heuristic has rarely been studied as something manifested in natural language and, more specifically, in natural language argumentation shaping persuasive processes in social media discourse. In this paper, the authors combine human analysis with automated models in order to identify patterns of affect heuristic as they emerge in heated debates on social media platforms. The study shows how emotional reactions and immediate evaluative responses can shape argumentative exchanges, often influencing persuasion before more reflective forms of reasoning take place.

Moving to the psychological and experimental part of this issue, the article by Cieśla, even though not directly concerned with argumentation, addresses an important question related to emotion regulation and elicitation. Emotion is often understood as something that happens to us, something of “unbidden occurrence,” to use Robert Plutchik’s formulation. In Cieśla’s work, we see that emotional states can be self-regulated, even if they are not entirely self-induced.

The article by Kleka is also empirical in character and is the only paper in this issue published in Polish. The reason for this is that it presents a Polish adaptation of the Perceived Argument Strength Scale, a useful research tool that has already been applied in empirical studies on argument strength. The scale is particularly valuable for studying the strength of emotional appeals in argumentation because it shifts attention away from the question of whether a given appeal is fallacious or not. Instead, it focuses on audience perception and reception, in the spirit of Christopher Tindale’s view that the audience plays a central role in the study of argumentation.

As these brief summaries of the authors’ contributions to this special issue on emotion and argumentation show, and as we have already pointed

out, interdisciplinarity, diversity in theories and methodological approaches, and diversity in the types of cases and emotions analyzed, are indeed represented. We hope that experts, students and even laypeople will enjoy reading them and, more importantly, will be motivated to challenge, continue or complement the authors' ideas.

<https://doi.org/10.14746/cis.2026.61.1>