A Rhetorical Analysis of Fallacy in a Selected English Drama Movie

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Abstract

Fallacies are incorrect reasoning that make an argument seem less logically credible and easier to be identified as unsound. They are widespread; individuals commit them while engaging in various activities, including at work, at home, while creating advertisements, and in the media. This study aims to investigate the rhetorical strategies accompanied with producing the fallacious arguments selected from the American Film "12 Angry Men (1957)". The study adopts Damer's (2009) model for the identification of fallacy. As for rhetorical analysis, the study adopts Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and McGuigan's (2007) taxonomy of rhetorical devices. The results uncover that the most violated criteria are relevance, acceptability and sufficiency. Besides, the arguers try their best to achieve persuasion by employing their own personalities, by depending on logic or manipulation of other's emotion. The most frequently used rhetorical device is rhetorical question.

Keywords: Fallacy, reasoning, argument, rhetorical appeals, rhetorical devices.

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تحليل بلاغي للمغالطة في فلم انكليزي درامي مختار

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الملخص: المغالطة هي خطأ في الحجاج يضعف من حجية المنطق في الجدل ويجعله عرضة ليكون منطقا غير سوي. المغالطات شائعة الحصول في كل زمان ومكان حيث يرتكب الناس المغالطة في نشاطات حياتهم اليومية في المنزل وفي العمل وفي صناعة الاعلانات وكذلك في الاعلام. تهدف هذه الدراسة لايجاد الاساليب البلاغية المصاحبة لارتكاب المغالطة في نصوص مستقطعة من نص الفلم الامريكي "اثنا عشر رجلا غاضبا" (1957). تبنت الدراسة نموذج ديمر (2009) لتحديد المغالطة. اما بالنسبة للتحليل البلاغي فتعتمد الدراسة على مفهوم ارسطو للبلاغة وكذلك تصنيف ماكوين لتحديد الصورالبلاغية. توضح الدراسة ان اكثر المعايير التي تم كسرها هي معيار الترابط والمقبولية والكفاية. علاوة على ذلك، يحاول المتحدثون جهدهم لاقناع الاخرين اما باستخدام شخصيتهم او عن طريق المنطق او بالتلاعب بمشاعر الاخرين لتحقيق اهدافهم و السؤال البلاغي هو اكثر صورة بلاغية استخداما.

الكلمات الدالة: المغالطة، الحجاج، الجدل، الاساليب البلاغية، الصور البلاغية.

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1. Introduction

This study is concerned with examining the rhetorical techniques associated with committing the fallacious arguments in certain extracts that reflect disputes among the characters in the film "12 Angry Men" (1957). The arguers use rhetorical strategies to support their fallacious arguments and make them sound acceptable. These strategies include two levels: The level of rhetorical appeal and the level of using the rhetorical devices. Prior to rhetorical analysis, the identification of fallacy must be accomplished by adopting the approach of Damer (2009) in which he considers fallacy as a violation of one or more of the five criteria of good argument.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Pragmatics

Contemporary linguistics and the philosophy of language have recognized pragmatics as one of the most significant and rapidly expanding fields of inquiry. Pragmatics has attracted the attention of researchers from different disciplines such as cognitive science, artificial intelligence, sociology, language pathology, and other fields. Pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning in relation to or as a result of language usage (Haung, 2007, pp.1-2). Pragmatics is the study of language use by individuals and the choices they make social circumstances. However, pragmatics as a

subfield of linguistics owes a lot to the contributions of many linguists (Crystal,1997, p.68). Pragmatics helps people use and interpret language based on the context in which the speech event occurs because it goes beyond the literal meaning of words (Ali, 2020, p. 49).

2.2 Rhetoric

Kennedy (1994, p.3) mentions that rhetoric can be defined as the impact that words have on circumstances in which they are spoken or received. Rhetoric may be traced back to the human intrinsic need to survive, control the environment, and influence the actions of others in what seems to be the best interests of ourselves, our families, political and social organizations, and our kids. It may be achieved by direct action such as the use of force, bribery, and threats, or through the use of signals; nevertheless, the most important instruments for achieving this goal are spoken or written words. Many ancient civilizations had some type of rhetoric, typically under multiple labels. Roberts (1954, p.7) states that the characteristic of persuasion of rhetoric is highlighted by who produces a definition for rhetoric as "the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever". Based on Aristotle's concept of rhetoric, rhetoric may be generally applied to any conversation whose primary purpose is audience persuasion.

There are two types of persuasive strategies, according to Aristotle's rhetoric: extrinsic and intrinsic. In contrast to the latter (intrinsic) style, which depends on the arguer's skills in reasoning, the former (extrinsic) method relies on tangible elements such as laws or papers to support the arguer's arguments. According to Aristotle, there are three fundamental types of rhetorical appeal: ethos (persuasion via appealing to the credibility of the speaker or writer), pathos (persuasion through appealing to the audience's emotions), and logos (persuasion through appealing to the audience's reasoning) (Kuypers and King, 2009, p. 2-3).

According to McGuigan (2007, p. 11), the four primary goals of rhetoric are persuasion, information, expression, and amusement. The interest of this study is the use of rhetoric for the purpose of persuasion. Persuasion is one of the oldest and best-known uses of rhetoric. Numerous rhetorical strategies affect readers and enable the speakers to influence their thinking in ways that are not feasible with a direct approach. Rhetoric provides the speaker with a great deal of persuasive power to convey his/her message since it may generate an emotional response, evoke vivid imagery, or appeal to well-established authority. Politicians and lawyers are the two groups that use rhetoric the most and participate in the act of persuasion the most. Practically every political speech written in the previous several centuries contains multiple creative uses of rhetoric, since a savvy lawyer or politician controls language like a surgeon who is wielding a scalpel with knowledge, confidence, and precision.

2.3 Argumentation

Van Emeren, Garssen, & Meuffels (2014) show that humans are all acquainted with the notion of argumentation, which is not limited to formal debates and controlled legal conversations, but can also be used in less formal everyday conversations and talks, such as the discussion of beliefs or the reasoning of how something should be accomplished. They explain that argumentation is a reaction to a kind of viewpoint difference, which may be represented by a total or partial disagreement in which one person has a certain concept or perspective, and others may debate its appropriateness or reject it outright.

Argumentation is classified as a verbal activity since its major tool is language. It also can be considered social in nature since it requires at least two individuals to make an argument. Considering that it is regarded as a logical process,

it should be grounded on intellectual considerations. Another key property of argumentation is that it is always built on a certain viewpoint about a specific issue. The aim of the arguer is to argue for this position in order to persuade a listener or reader who disagrees with him or has an opposite opinion. Therefore, the purpose of argumentation is to convince the audience to adopt the speaker's viewpoint or stance.

 2.4 Fallacy

There are fallacies everywhere; individuals create them in their numerous activities, including at home, in the workplace, while creating advertisements, and in the media. Several argumentation theories have previously been discussed, and within these theories, the idea of fallacy has always been stressed. As with arguments, fallacies have a rich and diverse history that encompasses both classical and modern approaches to the issue, which makes it difficult to establish a specific definition (Mirza, 2016, p.2). The interest in the study of fallacies dates back to the origins of argumentation and logical studies. There has been a considerable lot of disagreement over how to precisely define the idea of fallacy, which has led to several methods and interpretations of fallacy (Walton, 1995, p. 45). Fallacies are flawed lines of reasoning that undermine the logical validity of an argument and enable it to be identified as invalid. In a broad sense, fallacies are argumentation errors. The primary objective of committing fallacies, whether purposefully or accidentally, is to convince the listener. The arguers utilize persuasion as an active attempt to convince another person to embrace a certain viewpoint. Ghane (2020, p.19) mentions that in order to achieve his goal, the arguer uses persuasive language to try to modify the worldview of his audience. Yet, despite persuasive language, s/he may not be able to change the audience's mind.

The fallacy is the backbone of every substantial argumentation theory, and the proper handling of fallacies may be seen as the validation test for any given argumentation technique. Dealing effectively with logical fallacies is a positive indicator of the applicability and explanatory power of an argumentation theory (Eemeren, Garssen & Meuffels, 2009, p.1). Damer (2009, p.51) provides his own conception about fallacy in which he considers it as the violation of one or more of the five requirements for valid arguments. These criteria include the structure of the argument, its relevance, its acceptability, its sufficiency, and its rebuttal. This study adopts Damer's (2009) approach for the identification of fallacious arguments.

2.4.1 Approaches of Fallacy

1. Post-Hamblin conceptions of Fallacies

The work of Hamblin (1970) has served as a major source of inspiration for contemporary argumentation students who are seeking an alternative approach to the concept of fallacy than that provided by Aristotle and logic textbooks. In light of Hamblin's critiques of the common approach to correcting logical fallacies, several answers have been presented. Scholars such as Copi (1953), Rescher (1964), and Carney and Scheer all tried to respond to Hamblin's critiques, but the influence on textbooks that retained the traditional method was minimal. As an example, although Cope's treatment of fallacy in "Introduction to Logic" (1972) borrows some from Hamblin's views, it is obvious that Cope has mostly stuck to the mainstream approach of fallacy seen in logic textbooks (Emeren, 2010, p. 190).

2. The Approach of Fallacy of Toulmin

According to Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik (1984, p.132), fallacies are faulty arguments that seem persuasive. Their persuasiveness stems from the fact that they seem similar to solid reasoning procedures. Arguers may produce intended or inadvertent fallacies throughout the course of an argument, and we will react

differently to intentional and unintentional fallacies, accordingly. He lists the following five primary categories of fallacies:
1. Fallacies that result from missing grounds;
2. Fallacies that result from irrelevant grounds;
3. Fallacies that result from defective grounds;
4. Fallacies that result from unwarranted assumptions; and
5. Fallacies that result from ambiguities in our arguments.

This technique is described in depth by Ali and Mahmood (2022) in their paper, which explains each of the fallacies that come from each of the above five kinds. The present research, however, utilizes Damer's (2009) definition of fallacy.

3. Walton's (1995) Pragmatic Approach

Prior to Walton, other scholars struggled to identify fallacies. Walton's (1995) approach resolved this problem by proposing that a fallacy happens when an argumentation scheme or subject is used inappropriately in a way that alters the proper sequence of conversational stages. This demonstrates that the idea of fallacy is not only committed by insufficiently supporting argumentation schemes or subjects, but also by improperly leveraging them to hinder the dialogue's aims. Walton (1995) defines an argumentation scheme as a three-part framework consisting of a premise, a warrant, and a conclusion, which together reflect the most prevalent types of arguments employed by arguers. A dialogue profile, often called an argumentation topic, is a tree-like depiction of a conversation's sequence of stages, showing the many possible ways in which a positive discussion may develop (Walton, 1995, p.23).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The data of this study are obtained from the 1957 American courtroom drama film '12 Angry Men'. Four arguments from the screenplays of the film are selected for analysis. Twelve jurors are put in the position of deciding the fate of a young man accused of murdering his father. Eleven of the twelve jurors first believe he is guilty, but the last juror does not. At the conclusion, however, one juror succeeds in persuading the other eleven that the youngster is innocent, and the whole panel switches its verdict. Because the art of persuasion is one of the film's major topics, it inevitably shows several logical fallacies. While trying to convince the jury of their own point of view, arguers often make logical fallacies that are not deliberate but still problematic. The common feature between rhetoric and fallacy is that both of them involve the concept of persuasion.

According to data analysis, the data is analysed first qualitatively based on the approach of Damer (2009) which aims to identify the fallacious argument based on the violated criteria of a good argument. After that the rhetorical analysis is accomplished by identifying both the Aristotle's rhetorical appeals and McGuigan's (2007) rhetorical devices used to produce the fallacy. Second, the data is analyzed quantitatively based on descriptive statistics.

3.1.1 The Identification of Fallacy Based on Damer's (2009) Approach

A fallacious argument, as defined by Damer (2009, p. 51), is one that fails to meet one or more of the standards for logical arguments. These standards are:

1. Structural Condition

Any argument, whether in favor of or in opposition to a certain viewpoint, should adhere to the standard conventions of sound reasoning. A valid argument does not make any assumptions about the conclusion's truth or contain any premises that are inconsistent with it. In order for us to accept the conclusion, the argument must persuade us that it is correct. The begging-the-question fallacy holds that there is no

independent explanation for the conclusion; hence an argument should never begin with a premise that implies the truth, has the same claim, or gives the same assertion as the conclusion (Damer, 2009, p. 31). In the following example a woman presents no logical reasons to prove that she was cheated other than implying what she has mentioned in the premise.

"Since I was cheated, (premise)
Therefore, you should conclude that I was cheated. (conclusion)"

2. Relevance and Acceptability Conditions

Damer (2009) mentions that if the premise is not relevant to the conclusion, it is, then, unacceptable. That is why this study puts them under one heading. According to relevance, he demonstrates that when providing an argument for or against a position, only solid and trustworthy grounds that support the conclusion's truth should be presented; that is, the premises of a sound argument must be pertinent to the conclusion's truth. One's judgement of an argument quality and validity might be grounded on whether or not one finds its premises to be plausible. In order for a conclusion to be legitimate, the evidence supporting it must be acknowledged. A sufficient justification is one that may be accepted by a reasonable person in light of all relevant information. However, we should be cautious of implying that a proposition is genuine just because its proponents are convincing. When determining whether or not a claim is credible, only those that a reasonable adult human being would accept can be taken into account based on the established standards of credibility.

3. Sufficiency Condition

A convincing argument does not necessarily need to rest on solely relevant and acceptable evidence. A valid argument must adhere to the sufficiency principle. In order for us to agree with the end result of an argument, there must be sufficient premises of the right kind and weight. There are a number of ways in which the sufficiency requirement might be broken. The premises, which are based exclusively on the arguer's own experience or the experience of a selected group of the arguer's friends and acquaintances, may give evidence based on a too small sample or erroneous data. Incorrect causal reasoning about the problem might be the foundation for such evidence. More importantly, the most common violation of this concept is seen in arguments that fail to account for crucial facts (Damer, 2009, pp. 37-38).

4. Rebuttal Condition

It argues that if you present an argument for or against a perspective, you should also give a suitable rebuttal to any major objections that may be raised to your argument. There are many potential methods to go against the rebuttal principle. Some individuals use all sorts of distraction techniques to avoid having to deal with a dispute they'd rather avoid (Damer, 2009, pp. 38-40).

The following example shows how these conditions are applied to evaluate an argument:

> I think that Governor Reichard is doing a great job, in spite of all her Republican critics. Just last week, Don LaPlant said in a news conference that he thought Governor Reichard was one of the best governors in the South and that she was doing an excellent job dealing with the complex problems of the state. And he should know! He's the state chair of the Democratic Party.

Damer (2009) reconstructed this argument into:
"Since Don LaPlant, the chair of the Democratic Party, says that the Democratic

governor is doing a good job, (premise)

Therefore, Governor Reichard is doing a good job. (conclusion)"

Based on Damer's (2009) approach, this is a sound argument with no obvious flaws in its structure. However, the premise does not meet the requirement of relevance. Since the governor and Don Laplant are both members of the same political party, the arguer is committing the fallacy of irrelevant appeals by using them to support the claim. Given that the party chair of the governor is unlikely to be objective about her performance; his view is worthless since evidence from a biased authority cannot be used to prove the veracity of premise. Since there are no further premises to support the conclusion, this argument also falls short of satisfying the other three requirements of acceptability, sufficiency, and rebuttal (Damer, 2009, p. 42).

3.1.2 Aristotle's Rhetorical Appeals

1. Appeal to Ethos:

According to Bentley (2000, p. 91), ethos is concerned with the speaker's self-introduction or the shared characteristics with the listener in an effort to establish rapport and trustworthiness.

2. Appeal to Pathos:

Emotional appeals, or pathos, are used to sway an audience. A speaker may use this form of appeal if he or she wants the audience to take a stance on an issue (Walton, 2004, 108).

3. Appeal to Logos:

According to Demirdogen (2010, p.190), the notion of logos is defined as a logical appeal that employs what sounds to logical evidence presented within the same speech for the goals of persuasion.

3.1.3 The Rhetorical Devices

1. Rhetorical Question

Rhetorical questions are often phrased in a way that invites a yes or no response. On occasion, though, it may provide answers that are more involved. The impact of communication is amplified when the listener or reader is led to his own understanding of what the speaker or writer is trying to say. As a result, rhetorical questions should only be used to emphasize the most compelling arguments; otherwise, they lose their effectiveness even when used appropriately (McGuigan, 2007).

2. Anaphora

The use of the same word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences is called anaphora. The utilization of parallelism and climax is common in this method. This is because anaphora may be used in many different contexts and structures. When it is used in conjunction with a climax, a narrowing, or an expansion to establish the scene, anaphora becomes a powerful tool (McGuigan, 2007).

3. Simile

A simile makes an analogy between two different things that are similar in some way. Poets utilize similes for their artistic worth, but in any medium, they work as attention-grabbers and creative explanation tools. In light of this, we may say that similes are used to make metaphorical analogies between objects that are not really comparable (McGuigan, 2007).

4. Results and Discussion

Extract (1): Juror No. 3:

> Really? I've sat on juries, and it always amazes me the way these lawyers can talk, and talk and talk, even when the case is as obvious as this one. I mean, did you ever hear so much talk about nothing?

The premises and the conclusion of this argument are:

Premise1: Since I have been in a courtroom as a jury member before, and

Premise2: Since according to what I have experienced that the lawyers always talk and talk trying to defend their client even though they know that their client is a criminal.

Implicit conclusion: Therefore, this case will be also about nothing and the lawyer of the boy will do the same by only talking even though it's obvious that the boy is guilty.

The argument appears to fit the structural condition since it uses two independent premises to support the conclusion without any premises that contradict the conclusion or presuppose its truth. According to relevance condition, the first premise is not relevant since there is no truth relationship between it and the conclusion. This premise is also not acceptable. However, the second premise is relevant because it can be used to support the truth of the conclusion and it is also acceptable since it is based on the personal observation of the arguer. Only one relevant and acceptable premise is not sufficient to support the conclusion and the arguer doesn't include any rebuttal answer to any possible objection that might be produced against his thesis. As a result, this argument violates the relevance, acceptability, sufficiency and rebuttal conditions.

As for rhetorical appeal, the arguer presents himself as an authorized source of information that is why it looks like he appeals to ethos. He also uses the rhetorical question as a rhetorical device when he says "did you ever hear so much talk about nothing?" in which he looks for no answer but to emphasize his idea. He also uses the anaphora by repeating the same phrase 'and talk' two times.

Extract (2): Juror No.7:

> Well, what's there to talk about? Eleven men of us here think he's guilty. Nobody had to think about it twice, except you.

The premises and the conclusion of this argument are:

Premise1: Since, eleven jurors believe that the boy is guilty, and

Sub-premise: because no one had to think about this twice, except you

Implicit premise: And since we are eleven and you are only one

Implicit rebuttal premise: Since 11 votes vs one is undisputed fact

Conclusion: then, there is nothing to talk about and the boy is guilty.

There is no structural problem within the argument. The first premise and its sub-premise sound relevant and acceptable since they can be used to support the truth of the conclusion. Since there is no truth relationship between the implicit premise and the conclusion, then it is not relevant and as a consequence it is not acceptable. There are neither enough relevant nor acceptable premises for the argument to be sufficient.

The arguer also fails to provide an effective rebuttal against any objection since the rebuttal premise is hardly acceptable as a rebuttal answer. As a result, this argument violates the relevance, acceptability, sufficiency and rebuttal conditions.

Concerning the rhetorical appeal, since the arguer resorts to the idea that eleven vs one is, by logic, a benefit for the eleven, he tries to appeal to logos in which he attempts to depend on reason to justify his point of view. Again, the arguer uses the rhetorical question as a rhetorical device to emphasize that they are right and the boy is guilty by saying what's there to talk about?" without seeking any answer.

Extract (3): Juror No. 10:

Look, you listen to me now. These people are boozing it up, and fighting all the time, and if somebody gets killed then somebody gets killed. They don't care. Family don't mean anything to them. They breed like animals. Fathers, mothers, that don't mean anything. Oh, sure, there are some good things about'em. Look, I'm the first one to say that. I've known some who were okay, but that's the exception.

Premise 1: Since these people are boozing it up and fighting all the time, and
Premise2: Since they don't care if somebody gets killed
Premise3: Since they don't care about the family.
Implicit premise: Since the boy is one of them, he is more likely to be like them
Rebuttal premise: There are good people among them, but it's an exception.
Conclusion: Therefore, the boy is guilty and you don't have to change your decision to not guilty.

There is no structural problem within the argument. The first three premises are irrelevant and unacceptable because there is no true link between them and the conclusion. The implicit premise looks relevant but the problem is with its acceptability since it contains the idea of hast generalization. The sufficiency requirement is not met since the argument lacks enough evidence to support the conclusion. The arguer manages to include a rebuttal answer within his argument by saying that there is an exception to every rule. Then the argument violates the relevance, acceptability and sufficiency criteria.

Concerning the rhetorical appeal, the arguer appeals to emotions to affect the decision of the other jurors. He also uses simile by saying that these kids are "breeding like animals". By using this he wants to show them how savage these kids are which may affect the decision of the jurors.

In addition, the results of the data analysis show that the most violated criteria are relevance, acceptability and sufficiency (27%) because these requirements are interrelated and the least is the structural one as shown in Table 1

Table 1: The frequencies and the percentages of the violated criteria

The violated criteria	Frequency	%
structural	0	0
relevance	3	27
acceptability	3	27
sufficiency	3	27
rebuttal	2	19
Total	11	100

The analysis of rhetorical appeals shows that the characters try to use different appeals to reach the purpose of persuasion and that's why the results show equal percentages as shown in Table 2

Table 2: The frequency and the percentages of rhetorical appeals

The rhetorical appeal	Frequency	%
Ethos	1	33.33333
Logos	1	33.33333
Pathos	1	33.33333
Total	3	100

The analysis of rhetorical devices shows that the characters use the rhetorical question the most in order to get others' agreement with their point of view shown in Table 3

Table 3: The frequency and the percentages of rhetorical Devices

The rhetorical device	Frequency	%
Rhetorical question	2	50
Anaphora	1	25
Simile	1	25
Total	4	100

7. Conclusion

The findings of the data analysis reveal that the most violated criteria are the relevance, acceptability and sufficiency. They are interrelated criteria that if one of them is not met, it is difficult to meet the rest of them. The least violated condition is structural since it's the first condition and most of the arguers find it easier to deal with than the other conditions. As for the rhetorical appeals, the arguers try their best to achieve persuasion, whether by employing their own personalities, by leaning on logic or by manipulation of other's emotion. The most used rhetorical device is the rhetorical question because the arguer seeks agreement from other jurors.

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