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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Fallacies and Ideological Arguments in Ammar Bendjama's Speech at the UN Security Council's Meeting for the Adoption of Resolution 2797 (2025) on the Moroccan Sahara Dispute: A Synergy of Critical Discourse Studies and Pragma-dialectical Theory**

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**| ABSTRACT**

This paper analyzes and evaluates the argumentative discourse of Ammar Bendjama, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, during his speech at the United Nations Security Council's meeting for the adoption of Resolution 2797 (2025) concerning the Moroccan Sahara dispute. Using a synergy of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and Pragma-dialectical Theory, the study examines how fallacies in argumentative discourse stem from Ammar Bendjama's ideopolitical background, the antagonist, which distorts reasonable and effective argumentation as both a process and a practice. It argues that, instead of providing a constructive contribution to resolving the dispute, Ammar Bendjama's argumentation represents a derailment of strategic maneuvering. The paper identifies multiple fallacies, including the red herring fallacy, the violation of the standpoint and relevance rules of ideal critical discussion's ten commandments, and the use of ethos to amplify Algeria's egocentric political narrative. In addition to pathos, which manipulates the audience's mental models through an appeal to emotions, Ammar Bendjama's reliance on ideological arguments structured around empty and floating signifiers, such as 'decolonization,' leads to deep disagreement and renders a meaningful exchange impossible. Moreover, the speaker's contribution flouts Grice's Cooperative Principle, especially the Maxims of Quantity and Quality, in addition to the sincerity condition of his speech act of argumentation. His contribution to the vote on Resolution 2797 was more destructive than constructive, further obstructing progress towards a resolution. Bendjama commits the appeal to authority fallacy by invoking Woodrow Wilson's statement on self-determination, implying that his authority on the matter legitimizes the argument. Additionally, his argument is further weakened by the begging the question fallacy, assuming the truth of the point he seeks to prove when he speaks about 'resistance,' without providing evidence to support this claim, misleading the audience by promoting a conspiratorial inference. Ultimately, this research is part of a broader and ambitious doctoral thesis about disinformation discourse and deceptive narratives in Algerian electronic news stories on the Moroccan Sahara issue. The study is situated within the transdisciplinary school of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and calls for further research into the role of disinformation and propaganda in international discourse, particularly in the context of the Moroccan Sahara issue, emphasizing the power of words, language, and semiotics as the foundation of any discourse involving conflict and controversy.

**| KEYWORDS**

Moroccan Sahara - Resolution 2797 (2025) - Pragma-dialectical Theory - Critical Discourse Studie - Argumentative discourse – Fallacies - Ideological Arguments

**| ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 15 January 2026

**PUBLISHED:** 03 February 2026

**DOI:** 10.32996/ijllt.2026.9.2.15

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## 1. Introduction

The Moroccan Sahara issue, referred to as "Western Sahara" in the United Nations' resolutions, is a legacy of the colonial period. It dates back to 1975, when Morocco's colonial era ended following the Madrid Accords, signed on November 14, 1975, by Spain, Mauritania, and Morocco.

Historically, "many Moroccan dynasties ruled over Western Sahara for nearly a thousand years" (Hasnaoui, 2019: 12). However, Algeria has consistently refused to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the region, despite both legal and historical evidences. This opposition is rooted in Algeria's colonial and post-colonial eras: "*What belongs to Caesar shall return to Caesar!*"—the inevitable reclamation of Morocco's historical territories that it once ruled, territories which Algeria inherited from French colonization and has since considered as part of its lands. The history of the Cherifian Empire witnessed the division and annexation of significant regions by colonial powers—particularly France, which annexed large portions of the Moroccan Eastern Sahara into Algeria, as an extension of *L'Algérie Française*.

### 1.1 The Moroccan Sahara issue from 2007 to 2025: the turning point

In 2007, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 11 April, titled "Moroccan Initiative for Negotiating an Autonomy Statute for the Sahara Region."<sup>1</sup>

The initiative was a response to the UN Security Council's reiterated appeal to "the parties and States of the region to continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations to end the current impasse and to achieve progress towards a political solution." First and foremost, this was "the only new positive initiative, offering the best chance for a political resolution," as emphasized in the letter, which was considered to offer "the best chance of a political, lasting, and mutually acceptable solution to this regional dispute." The letter and the annexed document were an expression of the Kingdom's political will and good-faith commitment to resolve the Moroccan Sahara dispute through a long-term, strategic vision aimed at building the Maghreb region and promoting sustainable regional peace, security, and stability, hoping that its positive and constructive stance would resonate with the concerned parties.

Indeed, Resolution 1754 (2007) (**see Annex 1**) was unanimously adopted by the Security Council at its 5669<sup>th</sup> meeting, on 30 April 2007 "*Taking note of the Moroccan proposal presented on 11 April 2007 to the Secretary-General and welcoming serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution*" (original emphasis).<sup>2</sup>

On 31 October 2025, Resolution 2797 (2025) was adopted by the UN Security Council during its 10030<sup>th</sup> meeting. Eleven members voted in favor, none against, and three abstained (Russia, China, and Pakistan), while Algeria did not participate in the vote. The resolution renews the mandate of MINURSO, the longstanding United Nations peacekeeping mission in the disputed Western Sahara, for one year. It references Morocco's Autonomy Plan, presented in 2007, as the basis for negotiations aimed at implementing self-government under Moroccan sovereignty.

The UN session for the vote on Resolution 2797 (2025) marked not only a turning point with significant geopolitical implications for the settlement of the Western Sahara issue under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco, but also a moment of great interest for both proponents and opponents of Morocco's autonomy plan. The session, the vote, and the diplomatic and political officials' statements were widely covered by national and international media, with live broadcasts of the session shared on social media platforms, by both private and public channels, including influencers and others.

The draft resolution, proposed by the United States as the penholder, marked a pivotal moment in the session, highlighting three distinct standpoints: those in favor of the resolution supporting Morocco's autonomy plan, those choosing neutrality by abstaining from the vote, and Algeria, which, despite abstaining from the vote, was the only country to explicitly oppose the resolution. It is noteworthy that Algeria, a non-permanent member of the UN at the time, opted not to participate in the vote, as confirmed by Ammar Bendjama, Algeria's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Morocco. (2007, April 13). *Letter dated 11 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/206)*. United Nations.  
<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/597424?ln=fr&v=pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council. (2007, April 30). *Resolution 1754 (2007) [on extension of the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)]*. S/RES/1754(2007).  
<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/599527?ln=fr&v=pdf>.

## 2. Aim and rational of the study

This study has two objectives. Theoretically, it seeks to combine insights from Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and the Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Argumentation, exploring how these two approaches can complement each other. Specifically, it addresses a key limitation within Pragma-Dialectical Theory, which predominantly focuses on the externalization of argumentation as a complex speech act, yet tends to exclude internal factors such as beliefs, ideologies, and cognitive elements that shape the process and the production of argumentative discourses. The study demonstrates how these internal factors—especially ideology—must not be isolated from argumentation discourse and vice versa, and how this potentially leads to fallacies that weaken the validity or soundness of the argumentation.

Empirically, the research evaluates the argumentation of Ammar Bendjama's speech at the UN Security Council, focusing on how it diverges from the norms of critical discussion, which aim through constructive efforts to achieve consensus and resolve differences in opinion. The analysis does not focus solely on ideology and political discourse but is interested in the way ideology, in the case of Ammar Bendjama's discourse, weakens argumentation and gives rise to fallaciousness. This empirical investigation aims to reveal how these fallacies, combined with ideological bias, critically impacted the quality of the speaker's argumentation in terms of reasonableness and effectiveness (van Eemeren, 2015). Effectiveness, closely related to reasonableness, consists of rules that van Eemeren refers to as the "Ten Commandments"—that must be taken into account in resolving a difference of opinion on the merits" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 187–196, cited in van Eemeren, 2015: 45).

## 3. Background of the study

Regardless of the historical background and motivations behind Algeria's involvement in the Moroccan Sahara issue, as documented by scholars from different disciplinary perspectives (Hasnaoui, 2017; Matsumoto, 2025), it is widely argued that "a major reason for the Polisario's string of diplomatic successes in the 1970s and 1980s was its support from Algeria" (Zunes, 1995: 27). For Algeria, "a successful conquest of the territory by Morocco would be a dangerous precedent, so keeping the Polisario alive was necessary" (Ibid.: 28).

Algeria's involvement in the Moroccan Sahara conflict and its support for the Frente POLISARIO are indisputable and cannot be denied. These include diplomatic support, particularly at the UN level; attempts to incorporate human rights monitoring into MINURSO's agenda; calls for the independence of "Western" Sahara; and the rejection of UNSG personal envoys who have favorably assessed Morocco's efforts to reach a just and lasting political solution to the conflict (e.g., De Soto & Van Walsum). As the host state, Algeria has delegated its sovereign powers to a non-state armed group. The Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (CIRAC)<sup>3</sup> documented that "the Tindouf refugee camps are characterized by a complete absence of Algerian judicial control," urging Algeria "to protect the right to life and to investigate any arbitrary deprivation" (Written statement submitted by CIRAC to the UNSG), particularly due to the "systematic use of lethal force by Algerian military units and members of the armed group known as the Polisario Front against Sahrawi civilians without legal justification or judicial process" (CIRAC, 2025, May 23). These issues have been highlighted by consistent testimonies, NGO reports, and communications from UN Special Procedures; Algeria also refused an independent census conducted under the auspices of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to qualitatively and quantitatively determine the population of the Tindouf camps.

Algeria's involvement was reaffirmed recently by the UN Security Council, which recognized and confirmed that it is also a concerned party in the Moroccan Sahara issue (as reaffirmed in the preamble of Resolution 2797). The resolution urges "advancing the political process, including through the continuation of consultations between the Personal Envoy and Morocco, the Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, and Mauritania" (Resolution 2797, 2025).

Despite all these pieces of evidence and facts, both from scholars and international organizations, mainly the UN Security Council, Algeria still denies and rejects its involvement and the threat to the Kingdom of Morocco's territorial integrity and sovereignty from the perspective of the Western Sahara issue. The Algerian political and diplomatic behavior is problematic due to the contradiction between intentions, discourse, and practices: words are inconsistent with actions and, to a great extent, are very hard to be trusted or taken for granted.

<sup>3</sup> Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples. (2025, May 23). *Written statement submitted by Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (CIRAC), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status.* Human Rights Council, Fifty-ninth session, 16 June–11 July 2025, Agenda item 3. United Nations Economic and Social Council. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/59/NGO/82>.

#### **4. Hypothesis, statement of the problem and research questions**

Given that a key aspect for a critical discourse analyst is examining text and talk within context, particularly focusing on "naturally occurring" language use by real language users" (Wodak and Meyer, 2016: 2), the main research paper's assumption is that Ammar Bendjema's argumentative discourse, delivered immediately after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2797 (2025), is fallacious from a pragma-dialectical perspective. The analysis argues that the discourse relies on argumentation that is inconsistent with Grice's Conversational Principles (CP), as the speaker violates the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Quality, and subsequently, his contribution fails to be reasonable and effective in terms of deploying constructive efforts to resolve a difference of opinion regarding the Moroccan Sahara dispute, and the speaker instead shifted from his supposed role as a rational discussant to a rhetor.

In light of this hypothesis, the central research question is the following:

How does Ammar Bendjema's argumentative discourse in's statement contribute to the perpetuation of the difference of opinions regarding the Moroccan Sahara issue?

To address this, the following questions must be explored:

- In what ways do the argumentative moves in Ammar Bendjema's speech deviate from the principles of critical discussion, particularly in resolving differences of opinion?
- How does his argumentative discourse fall into fallacies and violate the rules of critical discussion from a Pragma-Dialectical perspective?
- How can Ammar Bendjema's fallacious argumentation and his flouting of Grice's Conversational Principles (CP) be interpreted from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, and in what ways can ideology distort reasonable and effective argumentation?

#### **5. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks**

##### **5.1. The United Nations: A global political decision-making body**

If the UN Security Council, a global platform, through which people worldwide are informed about political, economic, or cultural issues, it also serves as a venue for many countries for "*the expression of political ideas aimed at influencing the immediate actions of other countries*" Dennet (1949: 423, original emphasis). A perspective widely shared by realists who consider "all international disputes to be political disputes" (Kahng, 1969: 2).

Doing politics at the UN Security Council is not always innocent or moral, nor is it always intended to achieve and sustain the noble mission of the UN and its organs, particularly peacebuilding and peace-making. These platforms, however, are often instrumentalized by states, as outlined by Dennett (1949: 422), who argues that "for propagandizing their political ideas and values, countless hours of discussions in the Security Council have been devoted to what can only be called propaganda by individual states, intended to show how much better their political values are than those of other members."

Text and talk in this context have gained special interest following the "linguistic turn" that has influenced political science. As a result, political scholars "have moved towards the view that both the terms of political debate and political processes themselves are constituted and communicated through text and talk" (Chilton and Schäffner 2011: 305). In this respect, Chilton and Schäffner, (2011) state that "politics cannot be conducted without language," emphasizing the role of "language in the constitution of social groups" (p. 303), thereby broadening the concept of politics.

For Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 21), if the field of politics is viewed by Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) Discourse-Historical approach "as segmented into a number of 'fields of action,'" including, among others, the "organization of international/inter-state relations," with an emphasis that "each field of action is associated with a distinct set of political sub-genres" (Wodak 2009a: 41, originally Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 91, cited in Fairclough and Fairclough, 2013), they nevertheless outline that this taxonomy is not exhaustive, since some "sub-genres that are most obviously oriented to action (e.g., parliamentary debates or consultations within government) are not included" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 21-22).

Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) propose an approach that accounts for the diversity of political discourse, with a particular focus on specific activities, such as parliamentary debate and government reports, with the implementation of certain argumentative genres like deliberation and negotiation. Their treatment of political discourse intersects with CDS tradition and argumentation theory, notably because by accounting for dispute and disagreement as externalized and verbalized by proponents and opponents for a given premise or a claim, their discursive activity is "oriented towards a normative goal, where

what is possible to achieve (hence reasonable) is constrained by the institutional context and the rationale of the institution in question, e.g., what it is designed to achieve" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 22).

From this perspective, the UN Security Council debate and Resolution 2797 (2025) regarding the Moroccan Sahara dispute represent a sub-genre of political discourse. As such, they constitute a set of activity types associated with fields of action "in the sense that they all involve practical argumentation, a process in which agents give and receive reasons that attempt to justify or criticize a proposal for action, which can subsequently ground decision and action" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 22). The same principle applies to the UN Security Council session for the adoption of Resolution 2797 (2025), with Ammar Bendjama's discourse as one such activity type.

The UN Security Council debate and Resolution 2797 (2025) represent a form of political communication involving institutionalized and commonly recognized linguistic features and interactions, which are generally verbalized through different types of speech acts. Such linguistic patterns and interactions include "politeness norms, legislative proposals, legislative enactments, and voting procedures" (see Chilton, 2025: 4). Discourse production and processing in the context of the UN Security Council is a social interaction as well as an argumentative activity type, a field of action where the boundaries between the diplomatic, political, and ideological are blurred, given that each actor representing his country's geopolitical interests not only provides information, but also argues, defends, and justifies his worldviews. Therefore, "language users actively engage in text and talk not only as speakers, writers, listeners or readers, but also as members of social categories, groups, professions, organizations, communities, societies or cultures" (van Dijk, 1997: 3).

Accordingly, the UN Security Council session for the vote on Resolution 2797 (2025) "can be conceptualized and analyzed as the interplay between three levels of social reality: social structures, practices, and events" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, cited in Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 82).

## 5.2. Pragma-Dialectical Theory: Core principles, concepts, and their implications for the current study

In pragma-dialectical theory, the ideal critical discussion progresses through four stages: first, the confrontation stage, which corresponds to the point at which the difference of opinion is made clear; the opening stage, where the initial positions of the participants are established; the argumentation stage, which corresponds to the phase where each side defends its stance and arguments are tested; and finally, the concluding stage, where it is determined whether the difference has been resolved based on the previous exchanges (see van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). Argumentation is theoretically defined as an "activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 1).

From the pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, proponents and opponents regarding a difference of opinion are ideally supposed to be engaged in argumentative discourse with the aim of resolving the difference, but generally pursuing their own advantage (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 1999: 481). Argumentative discourse, in addition to being a social practice following the Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) tradition, is particularly defined by pragma-dialectical theory as any "*verbal, social and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by advancing a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint.*" (van Eemeren et al., 1996, cited in van Eemeren, 2001: 11, original emphasis).

Argumentative discourse is, therefore, a structured process and a discursive activity aimed at resolving a difference of opinion that van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2016: 13, original emphasis) refer to as a *discursive text*, i.e., "the fully fledged constellation of utterances (which may be either written or spoken) that have been advanced in defense of a standpoint."

In van Eemeren and Garssen's (2023) revised version of the pragma-dialectical theory of fallacies, argumentative discourse follows a set of structured stages, and each stage are rules governed and whenever these are flouted, fallacies arise. This version of the pragma-dialectical theory of fallacies integrates both dialectical and normative pragmatics: the dialectical perspective views arguments as part of an interaction aimed at resolving a difference of opinion, while the pragmatic perspective sees these arguments as communicative acts with a specific function, that is, a complex speech act.

According to van Eemeren and Garssen (2023), fallacies are not merely logical errors, as traditional approaches suggest. Instead, from a pragma-dialectical perspective, the view is broadened by considering fallacies as violations of various standards that ensure the reasonableness of discourse. Fallacies can arise in any of the stages of a critical discussion whenever the rules for that stage are violated. The key distinction between traditional approaches, as discussed in Hamblin (1970), and the pragma-dialectical approach is that fallacies are not evaluated in terms of logical validity but in terms of the appropriateness of the argumentative moves made at each stage. The authors explain that argumentative discourse is considered reasonable when "the argumentative moves are made for serving the purpose of resolving a difference of opinion on the basis of their merits" (Eemeren and Garssen, 2023: 168). In van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 175), a fallacy is defined as any "violation of any of

the rules of the discussion procedure for conducting a critical discussion (by whichever party and at whatever stage in the discussion)."

Thus, the presence of fallacies in argumentative discourse can be directly linked to violations of the rules governing each stage of the critical discussion. When any rule is violated, it obstructs the resolution of the difference of opinion and constitutes a fallacy. For van Eemeren and Garssen (2023: 169, original emphasis), "the rationale for calling an argumentative move a *fallacy* is that it obstructs or hinders the resolution of a difference of opinion." Accordingly, moves in an argumentative discourse or text may be characterized as less than constructive, or even destructive, "because they are violations of a well-defined system of rules for the resolution of differences of opinion that the discussants intersubjectively accept" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 175).

The theory provides a code of conduct for maintaining reasonable discourse and outlines a range of fallacies based on these rules. By systematically analyzing these fallacies, the pragma-dialectical approach connects them to the specific type of rule they violate, offering a clearer understanding of what constitutes a fallacy in argumentative discourse (see also van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2016).

Argumentation theory, from the pragma-dialectical perspective, is primarily concerned with "*expressed opinions and argumentative statements*" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010: 6, original emphasis), explicitly excluding "thoughts, ideas, and motives that may underlie them" (Ibid.), which are labeled as 'psychologizing.' The authors caution against internalizing the subject of investigation, warning that this would bring argumentation theory back to philosophically outdated eras. In other words, it focuses on the externalization of complex speech acts while neglecting internalization and the cognitive interface between discourse and the social context in which it is produced and processed.<sup>4</sup>

Van Dijk (1991: 110-11) advocating for a sociocognitive approach to discourse analysis, asserts that "such a complex analysis of discourse is not limited to textual analysis, but also accounts for the relations between structures of text and talk, on the one hand, and of their cognitive, social, cultural, or historical contexts, on the other hand."

In the same vein, Fairclough (2017: 14) emphasizes the need to account for ideas, beliefs, and representations, arguing that these should be integrated into CDA since "social reality is mediated by ideas and discourse: there are social entities (people, events, practices, institutions), and there are beliefs/ideas about and representations of them," and calling for critical social analysis to take "an 'argumentative turn' that incorporates argumentation theory into CDA (p.16). Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 80) acknowledge the effectiveness of argumentation theory in its contribution to CDA, notably in shedding light on innovative "critical questions which lead into and contribute to analysis of relations of power and domination manifested in particular bodies of texts," in addition to investigating how "particular beliefs and concerns shape practical reasoning and, contingently, decisions and actions on matters of social and political importance," as well as raising "critical questions about how contexts of action, values, and goals are represented in the premises of arguments, which can feed into critique of ideology." Ideology is used to refer to a system of ideas or beliefs inscribed in rhetorical texts, as a structural feature of argument, and also as a distorted communication practice (Jasinski, 1988), that is a form of illegitimate manipulation by means of text and talk (see van Dijk, 2006).

### **5.3. Interdisciplinary Synergy: Bridging Argumentation Theory and Critical Discourse Studies**

Taking into account the advantages of the articulation and synergy between argumentation theory and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), this research extends the traditional boundaries of CDS by adopting an interdisciplinary, multimethodological approach. Following the principle of triangulation—one of the four key characteristics of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), namely, "interdisciplinary, problem-oriented, and application-oriented" (Wodak, 2015: 1)—triangulation is a powerful methodology, as it "integrates knowledge about historical sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded" Wodak, 2011:38).

The discourse-historical approach (DHA), part of the broadly defined field of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (Wodak, 2018), "was developed by Ruth Wodak and other scholars in Vienna working in the traditions of Bernsteinian sociolinguistics and the Frankfurt School" (Fairclough *et al.* 2011: 364). This approach is particularly well-suited for investigating historical and political topics. In this framework, context is considered critical for both discourse production and reception. Talk and context are

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that despite their warning about cognitive factors, such as intention, embedded in argumentative discourse, and the broader social context and communicative goals like persuasion, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2010) do, for specific purposes, allow reference to cognition in terms of "'thoughts' or 'ideas' expressed by the speaker," provided that the study of argumentative discourse using psycho-pragmatic primitives is directly tied to statements.

mutually and dialectically interwoven and historically determined. There is no text without context, and no context without text—whether written or spoken. This relationship is analogous to the interconnection between signs and context, which now encompasses visual and sound signs as part of a multimodal account of discourse (see Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 81) advanced the term ‘semiosis’ to refer to the most abstract and general sense of discourse suggesting that “discourse analysis is concerned with various ‘semiotic modalities’ of which language is only one (others are visual images and ‘body language’).” The authors extend the semiotic aspect of events traditionally limited to texts, both spoken and written, to electronic texts and ‘multimodal’ texts that combine language, image, music, body language, etc. (p. 82). Ideology is also one of the cornerstones of CDS: “The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs,” as outlined by Vološinov (Bakhtin) (1973:10). Any sign in this respect “does not simply exist as a part of a reality – it reflects and refracts another reality” (Ibid.). Therefore, the sign is neither neutral nor transparent to reality, as “it may distort that reality, be true to it, or perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth” (Ibid.).

In Wodak’s (2011) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), three dimensions constituting textual meanings and structures are distinguished: the topics which are spoken/written about in my case study, Ammar Bendjama’s speech at the UN Security Council session for voting for Resolution 2797 (2025); the discursive strategies employed, such as argumentative discourse; and the linguistic means that are drawn upon to realize both topics and strategies, in this case, argumentative discourse as externalized and verbalized by complex speech acts, with an account of interdiscursivity and intertextuality in Ammar Bendjama’s speech when quoting Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America, and arguments (*topoi*). Additionally, DHA transcends the purely linguistic micro-level of discourse production to encompass the broader context understood in historical, political, sociological, and psychological terms. Such an approach facilitates a creative analysis and a relevant interpretation of the discursive practice of the speaker and the way his statement, while at the surface appearing as an expression of a standpoint and a defense for an opinion regarding Resolution 2797 (2025), nevertheless obscures the speaker’s ideology and the biased representation of the Moroccan Sahara issue. Naturalization is at play, giving the speaker’s ideological representation “the status of common sense, and thereby makes them opaque, i.e., no longer visible as ideologies” (Fairclough, 2013: 44).

## 6. Methodology

Given this theoretical backdrop, the present context of the Moroccan Sahara issue is seen as the outcome of longstanding historical processes involving geography, politics, and conflict. Each historical moment is enacted and performed in discourse, recorded in talk and text.

Since “argumentation is always situated: it always occurs in context” (van Eemeren and Garssen, 2012: xiii), our first aim, through Critical Discourse Analysis, is to contextualize Ammar Bendjama’s statement, focusing on the social context and the political positioning of the speaker in relation to the UN Security Council’s adopted resolution. This process involves an in-depth analysis of how discourses both influence and are influenced by social structures and historical circumstances. For example, the resolution text and the related statement from a prominent Algerian diplomatic figure are not just linguistic constructs; they are discursive events, shaped by the historical context of the Moroccan Sahara dispute, characterized by significant progress and a turning point toward resolving the dispute with widespread recognition and support for the Moroccan Autonomy Plan under the Kingdom’s sovereignty.

In line with the DHA, this research also incorporates hermeneutics, the theory of textual interpretation, to engage with the discursive data. Immanent critique (see Antonio, 1981), a key tool in this approach, helps detect contradictions and inconsistencies within the discourse. By revealing contradictions in claims and contexts—such as fallacies, pragmatic inconsistencies and rhetoric.

The methodology is designed to be eclectic <sup>5</sup> (Kuypers, 2009) based on synergy and articulation between disciplines, including sociodiagnostic critique (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; 2016). This extends beyond internal critique concerned with the analysis of internal incoherencies or contradictions (Herzog, 2016). By going beyond internal contradictions in a given discourse, it focuses on “exposing the persuasive, propagandist, and sometimes manipulative aspects of discursive practices” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 32). It seeks to uncover the social and political functions of discourse from the analyst’s normative-ethical perspective, examining the underlying intentions, claims, and interests of the speakers, which may be contradictory, disguised, or polyphonic (Wodak, 2001). Criticism in this research paper is also meant to engage in a process of analysis, interpretation, and assessment of a situational speech event (Sillars and Gronbeck 2001). In investigating the Moroccan Sahara issue from the

<sup>5</sup> In this study, “eclecticism is the selection of the best standards and principles from various systems of ideas. It requires more orderliness to be a pluralist than to apply a single theory” (Kuypers, 2009: 233).

perspective of discourse-historical approach integrates knowledge of the historical and political context of the subject of argumentation, and explores how discourse genres change over time and shape political action.

Discourse, as defined within critical discourse analysis (CDA), is a way of signifying particular domains of social practice from specific perspectives. Like critical discourse analysts, this study assumes a dialectical relationship between discursive practices and the fields of action in which they are embedded. The cornerstone of this perspective is that "social practices 'mediate' the relationship between general and abstract social structures and particular and concrete social events; social fields, institutions, and organizations are constituted as networks of social practices" (Fairclough, 2016: 88). On one hand, situational, institutional, and social settings shape and affect discourses; on the other hand, discourses influence social and political processes and actions. Thus, discourses are both constitutive of and constituted by non-discursive social practices. From Halliday's SFL perspective, this means that "language use is in a dialectic relationship with society which it both reflects and creates, since language not only transmits the social order, it also potentially modifies it" (Catalano and Waugh, 2020: 18).

Through Pragma-Dialectical Argumentation Theory, our second aim is to analyze and evaluate Ammar Bendjama's speech. This theory offers the advantage of systematizing the assessment of the speaker's argumentative moves, defining his role in the critical discussion, and evaluating his adherence to the codes of conduct and rules that govern critical discussions, or identifying whether his argumentation is fallacious, and whether his contribution is relevant regarding the major objective of these rules: the resolution of differences in opinion and the prevention of deep disagreement.

One of these rules, which systematizes the analysis of argumentative moves, is the identification of the stages of critical discussion. If an ideal critical discussion involves four stages—the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage, and the concluding stage—in the case of Resolution 2779 (2025) adopted by the UN Security Council, it is very difficult to clearly and easily identify these stages. This is because the critical discussions concerning the Moroccan Sahara issue are part of a broader and discontinuous process, generally determined by different factors that all depend on the geopolitical power relationships among states, which are perpetually changing in a climate of tension and conflict in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, etc. Instead, we suggest taking the context of the vote for Resolution 2797 (2005) and the vote for it as a reference and contextualizing background for Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse. In this way, context is indispensable to identify, analyze, and evaluate the speaker's arguments (Macagno and Walter, 2017), including rhetoric strategies used to react against the adopted UN Security Council's Resolution 2797 (2025).

## **7. Data description, analysis and critical evaluation of Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse**

### **7.1 Resolutions in the language of the UN's language: Definition**

Before delving into the analysis and the evaluation of the Ammar Bendjama's speech, it is essential to first define what 'resolution' means in the language of the UN.

According to the official UN website, the term "resolution" is defined as follows:

"United Nations resolutions are formal expressions of the opinion or will of United Nations organs. They generally consist of two clearly defined sections: a preamble and an operative part. The preamble generally presents the considerations on the basis of which action is taken, an opinion expressed or a directive given. The operative part states the opinion of the organ or the action to be taken".<sup>6</sup>

A resolution in the context of the UN is any formal expression of the opinion or will of a given UN organ (in this case, the Security Council). Under the UN Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Security Council decisions. Member States refers to any country recognized as a UN member in terms of statehood. The structure of a resolution consists of two components: the preamble, which outlines considerations that provide the context and rationale for the resolution. These considerations serve as the background for any action to be taken, any opinion expressed, or any directive to be executed, and are typically preceded by gerund-form verbs (italicized) in accordance with UN conventions. The second component is the operative part, where the opinion of the organ is expressed and specific action to be undertaken, often using commonly

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. (n.d.). *Editorial manual: Resolutions and other formal decisions of United Nations organs*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual/res-dec-index>

employed verbs (see Annex VII: Resolutions: Frequently Used Terms in UNITAR Guidelines),<sup>7</sup> conjugated in the third person singular.

In the case of Resolution 2797 (2025), the members of the UN Security Council, both permanent and non-permanent, expressed their opinion through a voting procedure on the draft resolution. Following the UNITAR guidelines (2020: 12), “members of the body may vote: Yes, or in favor; No, or against; or Abstain.” Algeria was an exception regarding the voting procedure, as it chose not to participate and to be absent as stated by Ammar Bendjama: “My country did not participate in the vote on this draft resolution.”

## 7.2 Identifying the protagonist and antagonist roles in the UN Resolution 2797 debate

Ammar Bendjama’s statement is not monologic; rather, it is a reaction and response to the adoption of the resolution. The speaker’s argumentative moves are therefore part of a process and an interaction with the UN Security Council, which we consider to be virtually the first party to put forward a standpoint on the Moroccan Sahara issue, while Algeria’s representative at the UN, Ammar Bendjama, opposes the UN’s resolution and challenges its core statements, decisions, and actions. According to pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, Ammar Bendjama’s speech is “part of an exchange of views between two parties that do not hold the same opinion, even when the exchange of views takes place by way of a monologue” (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 59).

Theoretically, a difference of opinion leading to disagreement always involves two parties (van Eemeren and Henkemans, 2016: 3): a protagonist and an antagonist. In the context of the vote for Resolution 2797 (2025), different parties are externalizing and verbalizing their standpoints by voting, with the right of every member of the UN Security Council to comment and argue for the choice they have made. This process of interactions aligns with van Leeuwen’s definition of what is a social practice and how these enter into talk and text: “a social practice first of all needs a set of participants in certain roles” (van Leeuwen, 2008: 7).

The distinction and assignment of the two roles, protagonist vs. antagonist, are both theoretical and practically standard. In their account of “Who will assume the role of protagonist, and who the role of antagonist?” van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 141) provide the following answer: “The discussant who has put forward a standpoint in the confrontation stage must assume the role of the protagonist, and the discussant who has called this standpoint into question must assume the role of the antagonist.” Although this is “how things will normally proceed in practice,” the authors explain that it is not necessarily the case and emphasize that “the roles can be reversed.” In terms of critical discussion rules, the protagonist and the antagonist are bound by institutionalized rules called *conventions* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004) that each party should observe and respect at the argumentation stage (for further discussions, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). Conventions are also, to some extent, institutionalized constraints, closely related to ‘deontic power,’ according to Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 337), citing Searle (2010), and then involving “rights, obligations, duties, commitments, permissions, authorisations, and prohibitions,” arguing that “all institutions enable and constrain human action, and the point of institutional reality is to create and regulate power relationships.”

In our case study, we consider the UN Security Council as the protagonist, given that the resolution was adopted without any recorded opposition, except from the Algerian UN representative who, instead of voting for or against the resolution or abstaining, chose not to participate and declared his absence from the vote. This is an exceptional case, following the UN Security Council’s rules and procedures for voting on a given draft resolution, with three standpoints institutionally established and recognized: “members of the body may vote: Yes, or in favour; No, or against; or Abstain” (UNITAR guidelines, 2020: 12).

Ammar Bendjama’s statements immediately after the vote constitute an argumentative discourse, involving mixed opinions regarding the resolution and related topics highlighted in the draft resolution, which conventionally contains both a preamble and an operative part, each dealing with the context, decisions, and actions voted on. The Algerian standpoint, expressed through Ammar Bendjama’s statement, represents an explicit disagreement with the resolution and the vote in favor of it. The dispute in this case is ‘qualitatively multiple,’ given that two parties are involved: the UN Security Council, which voted in favor of Resolution 2797 (2025) and advanced pro-standpoints, while the Algerian diplomat, Ammar Bendjama, took a position opposed to those pro-standpoints (see van Eemeren *et al.*, 2007).

## 7.3 Critical discussions and argumentation in the Context of Resolution 2797

Echoing pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010), the expressed opinion in Ammar Bendjama’s speech, representing the subject of the argumentation, is a challenge and disagreement about Resolution

<sup>7</sup> UNITAR. (2020). *UNITAR guidelines for United Nations resolutions*. United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). <https://www.unitar.org/ny>.

2797 (2025)- a protest against the UN Security Council's vote for this resolution. Thus, Ammar Bendjama, while expressing a negative stance, positions himself as the antagonist to the UN Security Council's decision, which serves as the protagonist in this case. The difference of opinion is explicit in Ammar Bendjama's standpoint, once verbalized, it is theoretically externalized i.e., explicitized verbally. Ammar Bendjama's discursive and argumentative practice is a speech event that van Eemeren (1984: 4) refers to as "an expressed and controverted or disputed opinion that is the subject of argumentation."

The disagreement with the UN Security Council and the negative standpoint are manifest in the following propositions extracted from Ammar Bendjama's statement:

**Excerpt 1:** "Mr. President, **my country did not participate in the vote on this draft resolution** for the renewal of the United Nations mission for the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara. **Through that absence** and acting fully responsibly, **Algeria wanted to illustrate the distance that we put between ourselves and a text which does not faithfully reflect, does not sufficiently reflect the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization**" (my emphasis).

#### **7.4 Exploring and analyzing the argumentation structure in the antagonist's speech**

This section analyzes the argumentative structure of the speaker's discourse to determine whether it presents a single argument or multiple interconnected arguments. The following fragments are extracted from the antagonist's full speech:

"Mr. President, my country did not participate in the vote on this draft resolution for the renewal of the United Nations mission for the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara. Through that absence and acting fully responsibly, Algeria wanted to illustrate the distance that we put between ourselves and a text which does not faithfully reflect, does not sufficiently reflect the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization."

"It's the implementation of that doctrine that has made it possible for a number of countries to be represented here amongst us in the United Nations organization."

"But... but unfortunately, unfortunately the text which was finally submitted still has a number of shortcomings."

"So, what is lacking in this text?"

"The complicated framework for the proposed negotiation which puts one option ahead of others prevents creativity and the flexibility that are necessary to be deployed to be deployed in order to reach an agreement freely entered into in accordance with the United Nations doctrine in matters of decolonization."

"Moreover, this text creates an imbalance between the two parties to the conflict by stressing simply the territorial ambitions of one party and saying nothing about the aspirations of the other party"

"The proof of this is that this text ignores the proposals of the Polisario front which nevertheless were recently passed on to the United Nations Secretary General and to the Security Council and which were published under document number S/2025/664"

"They are a party to the conflict and their opinion must be heard if not taken into consideration"

"Finally, this text raises, and here I really want you to tune into what I'm saying. This text raises legal questions, serious, legitimate questions with regard to the legal foundation for the negotiating framework being proposed in order to resolve the Western Sahara conflict."

"Indeed, this resolution does not still not create the necessary momentum and conditions for it to be successful"

"Mr. President, a just and lasting solution can only come about in the presence of the respect for the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to decide on their own future. This is the only guarantee of genuine peace and of lasting stability in the region"

"and Algeria in a way we have proceeded and I'd like to reaffirm it here and please all be my witness. Algeria remains faithful to the principle of the Pacific settlement of disputes. We remain faithful to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter."

The extracted patterns are an example of both subordinative and coordinative argumentation (see van Eemeren and Henkemans, 2017), two types of complex argumentation in which arguments are either supported by additional arguments or are interdependent. Indicators of coordinative argumentation in the fragments include 'and,' 'moreover,' and 'finally.'

To accurately evaluate argumentation in Ammar Bendjama's statement, the extracted fragments are broken down into single arguments and reconstructed as follows:

**Initial assertion:** "My country did not participate in the vote on this draft resolution for the renewal of the United Nations mission for the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara"

Because Algeria wanted to illustrate the distance it places between itself and a text that does not faithfully reflect, nor sufficiently reflect, the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization;

Because the implementation of that doctrine has made it possible for numerous countries to be represented in the United Nations organization;

Because the text which was finally submitted still has a number of shortcomings;

Because the framework for negotiation in the resolution puts one option ahead of others, which prevents flexibility and creativity needed for a fair agreement;

Because this text creates an imbalance between the two parties to the conflict by emphasizing one side's territorial ambitions and failing to address the aspirations of the other party;

Because the resolution ignores the proposals of the Polisario Front, which represents the Saharawi people and is a party to the conflict;

Because this text raises serious legal questions about the foundation of the negotiating framework being proposed.

The first observation to outline from the reconstructed argumentation patterns is that they constitute a complex argumentation, or what Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 96) refer to as "multiple argumentation." Each reason provided by the speaker here is sufficient in itself to justify the conclusion, though there is an intuitive coherence in meaning between all the reasons, as they resonate with each other—an important point that we will explain later. Premises in Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse follow the scheme of conductive argumentation; the support patterns are convergent, given that the premises are put forward as separately or independently considered by the speaker to be relevant to the claim, in this case, the claim for action which is the conclusion performed by a specific action, i.e., the non-participation in the vote for Resolution 2797 (2025). Regardless of whether the argument is strong or weak, an empirical question that we are going to deal with, each premise can provide sufficient justification even in the absence of the others (see Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 95-98).

### 7.5 Analysis of the premise-arguments in Ammar Bendjama's speech

In the **Excerpt 1**, Ammar Bendjama's statement is introduced by the expression "my country," indicating that an argumentative move is being made. The presence of such a linguistic signal of argumentation in the speaker's statement is helpful to accurately interpret it as an argumentative indicator, through which the speaker explicitly expresses his standpoint, and the difference of opinion is then accessible to be further operationalized in terms of detection and analysis.

The conclusion is: "*My country did not participate in the vote on this draft resolution for the renewal of the United Nations mission for the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara.*"

The reason for Algeria's absence (conclusion) is explained as: "*to illustrate the distance that we put between ourselves and a text which does not faithfully reflect, does not sufficiently reflect the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization.*"

From a logical perspective, this represents a piece of argumentation constituted by a premise and a conclusion. The proposition "*Through that absence and acting fully responsibly, Algeria wanted to illustrate the distance that we put between ourselves and a text which does not faithfully reflect, does not sufficiently reflect the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization*" serves as the premise, while "*Mr. President, my country did not participate in the vote on this draft resolution for the renewal of the United Nations mission for the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara*" serves as the conclusion.

The premise provides the reason or justification for the conclusion, explaining why Algeria decided not to participate in the vote. The proposition, "*Algeria wanted to illustrate the distance that we put between ourselves and a text which does not faithfully reflect, does not sufficiently reflect the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization,*" is the conclusion, which corresponds to Algeria's action: its absence from the vote. The premise supports this conclusion by explaining the reasoning behind the non-participation. The argumentation structure follows the premise-conclusion scheme.

Despite the conclusion (the action of abstaining from the vote) logically follows from the premise (the belief that the draft resolution does not reflect the UN doctrine on decolonization), Ammar Bendjama's argumentation is questionable. The

argument may be deductively *valid*, but it is not sound. According to Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 37), a sound argument is "one which is both deductively valid and has true premises."

In the case of Ammar Bendjama's argumentation, even if the premise is not true, the conclusion remains true. This needs further exploration and explanation by answering the following question:

To what extent does Ammar Bendjama's statement adhere to the rules of critical discussion, mainly *Rule III*, which stipulates that "an attack on a standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has really been advanced by the protagonist (Walton, 1995: 11)," and *Rule IV*, which stipulates that "a standpoint may be defended only by advancing argumentation relating to that standpoint (286)"?

To answer this question, we need to consider the UN Security Council's Resolution 2797 (2025) and its related expressed opinions, decisions, and actions to be taken.

In the second operative clause, it is written:

**Excerpt 2:** "*Expresses* (The Security Council) its full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in facilitating and conducting negotiations taking as basis Morocco's Autonomy Proposal with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute, consistent with the UN Charter, and *welcomes* any constructive suggestions by the parties in response to the Autonomy Proposal" (originally italicized with added emphasis).

In the excerpt 2, the UN Security Council's standpoint can be broken down into two main opinions: First, the support of the Secretary-General's efforts and the Personal Envoy's role in advancing negotiations, with Morocco's Autonomy Proposal as the framework and the basis for these negotiations rooted in a political solution that aligns with the principles of the UN Charter. Second, the clause invites constructive input from all parties which are supposed to resolve the disagreement and the dispute. These parties are cited in the second preamble clause of the resolution: "the continuation of consultations between the Personal Envoy and Morocco, the Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, and Mauritania to build on the progress achieved."

### **7.6 Evaluating Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse through the commandments of critical discussion**

Regarding the question of whether the argumentation defends the standpoint put forward by the protagonist, particularly *Rule III* — the third commandment (van Eemeren, 2015), the standpoint rule is examined as follows:

Since the UN Security Council's standpoint is not about decolonization, Ammar Bendjama's argument does not directly engage with the standpoint the Security Council is defending. Instead, he argues that the resolution is inconsistent with a broader, unrelated stance (decolonization), which is neither the focus of the Security Council's resolution nor its subject matter.

Besides, in his argumentation, which implicates *Rule IV*, he fails to make his argument relevant to the expressed standpoint: Ammar Bendjama's standpoint is defended by considering the text as not faithful to the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization. His argumentation is irrelevant, not only with respect to *Rule III*, as we have shown, but also with regard to Grice's Maxim of Relevance, also known as the maxim of relation, which "mandates that contributions be pertinent to the current topic of discourse" (Krause and Vossen, 2024: 471).

Ammar Bendjama's response and comment, which were supposed to be coherent and contextually appropriate with the UN Security Council's adopted resolution, shift and deviate from the resolution's content and related issues. This is primarily a result of his use of the token "decolonization," the latter which is mentioned neither in the preamble nor in the operative part of Resolution 2797 (2025). The token "decolonization," as a central element of Ammar Bendjama's premise, violates *Rule III*, as it does not relate to the standpoint advanced by the UN Security Council, and *Rule VI*, as it misrepresents the resolution's content by introducing an unrelated concept.

At this stage of critical discussion, Ammar Bendjama's argumentative strategy, in addition to flouting Grice's Maxim of Relevance, represents a fallacy from pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. Regarding the critical discussion rules, the antagonist in this case is the guilty party (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 162). In such a case, and with respect to *Rule III*, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987: 286) explain that this rule can be evaluated as "broken if a fictitious standpoint is imputed to the opponent, or if his standpoint has been distorted," which is in this case a red herring fallacy.

Ammar Bendjama's statement represents a derailment of strategic maneuvering, turning into a fallacy due to his violation of *Rule III*. However, it may be premature to categorize it as a red herring fallacy because such a fallacy is context-dependent, as noted by van Eemeren (2015: 233): "the distinction between fallacies and reasonable argumentative moves is not always immediately crystal clear, in some cases being even context-dependent, it often is rather complicated to determine

whether it really is a case of fallaciousness." Additionally, Reisigl and Wodak (2016: 36) state: "It is not always easy, however, to decide without precise context knowledge whether an argumentation scheme has been employed as a reasonable topos or as a fallacy." Furthermore, a fallacious argument presents a problem in terms of validity, because in certain cases, the argument may seem to be valid but is not (Hamblin, 1970), and vice versa.

Therefore, to avoid reaching a hasty conclusion when evaluating and criticizing Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse and prematurely categorizing it as an instance of the red herring fallacy, the antagonist's argumentation must be adequately contextualized.

The principle of charity holds that "one should not attribute logical fallacies, irrationality or falsehoods to the argument of another when an alternative interpretation of the utterance is available" (Pruś and Sikora 2023: 579), provided that relevant contextual features are taken into account, since judgments of fallaciousness are ultimately context-dependent (van Eemeren, 2015).

From a pragma-dialectical perspective, "fallacies are speech acts intended by the speaker to make a contribution to the resolution of the dispute but often in fact obstructing the way to a resolution" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010: 151). The evaluation of whether a fallacy has occurred is inherently context-dependent; argumentation should be assessed in terms of the rules governing dialogue and the goal of reaching a mutual agreement on a justified conclusion. Given that evaluating an argumentative move as fallacious is based on the interaction and negotiation between the participants in the discourse, the proponent's standpoint should be also taken into account.

### 7.7 The Proponent's standpoint vs the opponent's standpoint: Confrontation of opinions

The proponent's goal is to facilitate negotiations based on a specific proposal (Morocco's autonomy proposal), leaving space and opening opportunities for negotiation and input from other parties on the basis of the recognized plan, with emphasis that this should be under the Moroccan sovereignty, as it is explicitly stated in the fourth preamble clause: "**affirming** that genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty could constitute a most feasible solution; and **further welcoming** the commitment of Council members to facilitate progress" (Resolution 2797 (2025), originally italicized with added emphasis).

The opponent's goal, in contrast, is to demonstrate the inconsistency of Resolution 2797 (2025) with the UN's broader doctrine of decolonization. The antagonist's critique seems to distort the protagonist's position, presenting it as a firm engagement in favor of one-sided will (Morocco's autonomy) rather than a call for negotiations. In this case, the resolution of disagreement is made more difficult, notably because a preliminary condition for rational discussions is not met.

The representative of Algeria, who is supposed to act as a rational discussant and align with established and recognized rules for critical discussions under the auspices of UN traditions, that is "the dialectical code of conduct for rational discussants" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010: 152), chose to advance information that appears relevant, but is not, because the main topic under critical discussion is not the question of decolonization, but "assisting the parties to achieve a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution based on compromise consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle of self-determination," following the third preamble clause of the resolution within a definite framework, which is reemphasized in the fourth preamble clause: "**Taking note in this context** of the support expressed by many Member States for Morocco's Autonomy Proposal, presented on 11 April 2007 to the Secretary-General, as the basis for a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable solution to the dispute" (Resolution 2797 (2025), originally italicized with added emphasis).

The protagonist's aim is the achievement of "a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable solution to the dispute." This represents the ultimate goal and the central focus of the critical discussion at the UN Security Council. Resolution 2797 (2025) outlines this objective in the following clauses:

- In the **third preamble clause**: "Reaffirming its commitment to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution...; recognizing the momentum and urgency, and recognizing also the important role of MINURSO in supporting the Personal Envoy to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution;"
- In the **fourth preamble clause**: "Taking note in this context of the support expressed by many Member States for Morocco's Autonomy Proposal... as the basis for a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable solution to the dispute;"
- In the **second operative clause**: "Expresses its full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in facilitating and conducting negotiations, taking as the basis Morocco's Autonomy Proposal with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute;" and
- In the **third operative clause**: "Calls upon the parties to engage in these discussions without preconditions, taking as the basis Morocco's Autonomy Proposal, with a view to achieving a final and mutually acceptable political solution."

Given the repeated emphasis on the ultimate goal of the critical discussions surrounding the Moroccan Sahara dispute, as highlighted in both the preamble and operative parts of Resolution 2797 (2025), this is what constitutes the foundation of the discussions and serves as the starting point for negotiations, and in this case it is plausible to state that there is no need for an elaborate heuristic tool to determine the precise initiation and duration of the resolution's discourse on this matter, nor is extensive background knowledge required to understand the communicative context (van Eemeren, 2015).

However, in the **Excerpt 1**, the antagonist's argument appears to misrepresent the protagonist's position, particularly in how the Algerian diplomat disregards the more context-specific and negotiation-oriented nature of the protagonist's strategy. This represents a red herring fallacy, where the antagonist attacks a distorted version of the protagonist's argument. According to Walton (2004), a red herring occurs when the arguer shifts the focus of the discussion to an unrelated issue. Ammar Bendjama's argumentative move is fallacious because it diverts the discussion away from the main issue, thereby drawing attention away from the subject of argumentation. Rather than engaging as a rational discussant in line with pragma-dialectical principles, he acts more as a rhetor, using persuasive tactics to captivate the audience's attention with the topic of "decolonization," thus diverting from the primary concern: the credibility and feasibility of the Moroccan Autonomy Plan as the basis for resolving the disagreement over the Moroccan Sahara issue.

The premise, in this case, is actually false because the main issue of critical discussion at the UN Security Council is the vote for a resolution aiming at achieving a mutually acceptable political solution based on the Moroccan Autonomy Plan under the Kingdom's sovereignty, not "decolonization" as stated in the premise, while the conclusion still remains true. The difference of opinion cannot, therefore, be resolved because Ammar Bendjama, the antagonist, criticizes and expresses opposition to a different standpoint, while the protagonist defends another. The antagonist critiques the resolution as if it were about decolonization, while the protagonist, represented by the UN Security Council, seeks a resolution to the Moroccan Sahara dispute by defending the Autonomy Plan under Moroccan sovereignty. Therefore, Ammar Bendjama's derailment of strategic maneuvering stems from a violation of the relevance rule of critical discussion, stating that: "Standpoints may not be defended by non-argumentation or argumentation that is not relevant to the standpoint" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 192).

### **7.8 Ammar Bendjama's abuse of the freedom rule**

Given the general rule (a) for speech acts in rational discussions which stipulates that "by language user 1 at the confrontation stage and at the concluding stage in order to express, maintain or retract his point of view in respect of the initial expressed opinion, and at the argumentation stage in order to perform the illocutionary act complex of argumentation," the "code of conduct for rational discussant" is fixed while "limiting the permitted speech acts to specific categories" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010: 152).

Consider **Excerpt 3**:

"It's the implementation of that doctrine that has made it possible for a number of countries to be represented here amongst us in the United Nations organization." Do we need to even recall this? The final decision on the future cannot, must not belong to anyone other than the people under colonial domination."

Ammar Bendjama's statement can be broken down as follows:

*"It's the implementation of that doctrine that has made it possible for a number of countries to be represented here amongst us in the United Nations organization."*

This is an assertive speech act. The speaker (Ammar Bendjama) is stating that the implementation of the United Nations' decolonization doctrine has facilitated the representation of newly independent countries at the UN. The assertive speech act seems to align with *Rule 2 (a)*, which stipulates that "*No special conditions apply to the propositional content of the assertives by means of which a point of view in respect of an expressed opinion is expressed or to the propositional content of the commissive (or its illocutionary negation) by means of which a point of view is accepted or called into question*" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2010: 155, original emphasis), implying that no special conditions apply to the content of the assertive and that it can be debated freely within the context of the discussion. This is what van Eemeren (2015: 166) refers to as "the first commandment of the code of conduct." In the case of Ammar Bendjama, the freedom rule is fully respected, as the discussant is neither prevented from advancing his standpoint nor from calling the UN Security Council's position into question.

The truth-conditional value of Ammar Bendjama's proposition is indisputable, particularly with the international recognition of the United Nations' decolonization doctrine and its critical role in facilitating the representation of newly independent countries. However, Ammar Bendjama's argumentative move is not sound. The issue he raises—decolonization—is disconnected from the matter at hand, namely, the UN Security Council's resolution, which is focused on a political solution to

the Moroccan Sahara dispute. By introducing decolonization into the argument, Ammar Bendjama shifts the focus and distorts the relevant issue.

Ammar Bendjama's exercise of the unconditional right to express a point of view, the freedom rule, may be interpreted as a misuse of this right. While *Rule 2* grants language users the freedom to "advance a point of view" or "express doubts" at any time, it does not authorize contributions that divert attention from the actual issue under discussion. In this case, Ammar Bendjama introduces the issue of "decolonization," which is not the stated focus of the UN Security Council's resolution, thereby introducing an irrelevant consideration that disrupts the purpose of the dialogue. As van Eemeren and Grootendorst emphasize, although a speaker has the right to express a viewpoint, a critical discussion must maintain topical relevance in order to advance toward resolution. By shifting the focus to "decolonization," Ammar Bendjama's argument obstructs the resolution process and thus constitutes a misuse of the right to express a point of view, insofar as it prevents the constructive exchange required to address the actual issue at hand (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2010).

### 7.9 Rhetorical questioning: Use and Function in argumentation

*"Do we need to even recall this?"*

This utterance is also problematic from a pragma-dialectical perspective. This is because the utterance's assertive force is controversial. In van Eemeren and Grootendorst's example (2010: 97): "Let's take an umbrella, or do you want to get wet?" they explain that "A satisfactory description of this example would seem to be that the speaker makes the listener a *proposal* which he tries to justify with a (rhetorical) *question*" (p. 98, original emphasis). Although Ammar Bendjama's inclusion of the UN's doctrine of decolonization is not explicitly suggesting a *proposal*, recalling decolonization is significant for the investigation of the eventual interplay of the speaker's ideopolitical background and argumentative discourse. This is what Minsky (1975: 212) refers to as a "*frame*" which he defines as "a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation."

In Ammar Bendjama's speech, the use of the question "*Do we need to even recall this?*" can be interpreted as follows.

Regardless of the argumentation implicated, the elementary illocutionary act performed does not belong to the class of assertives. Instead, the question serves as a rhetorical challenge to the proponents of the resolution. Ammar Bendjama's rhetorical question, positioning him as the opponent, implies that recalling this fact (about decolonization and UN representation) is unnecessary because it is self-evident or already well known. As per *Rule 2*, this statement is also open to challenge. The propositional content—the idea that this fact is well known—can be accepted or questioned by others, without any special conditions.

The use of the token "decolonization" in Ammar Bendjama's speech constitutes the macrostructure of his discourse, that is to say, the macrosemantics of his statement. "Decolonization," a key word or pivotal token extracted from the discursive patterns of the antagonist's speech, is, intuitively, the "theme, topic, upshot, or gist denoting semantic macrostructures" (van Dijk, 1980: 27). This is evident when considering Ammar Bendjama's following sequence of propositions:

"a text which does not faithfully reflect does not sufficiently reflect the UN doctrine with regard to **decolonization**;"

"The final decision on the future cannot must not belong to anyone other than the people under **colonial** domination;"

"...to reach an agreement freely entered into in accordance with the United Nations doctrine in matters of **decolonization**,"

"...this text ignores the proposals of the Polisario front which nevertheless were recently passed on to the United Nations Secretary General and to the Security Council and which were published under document number **S/2025/664**;"<sup>8</sup>

"... all parties involved with the final goal of once and for all the **decolonization** of Western Sahara according to the United Nations Charter".

<sup>8</sup> The document in question focuses more on defending separatism (decolonization) and advancing Algeria's geopolitical agenda, rather than offering a legitimate and viable proposal from a legal and practical standpoint. This is why it was removed from discussion and debate at the UN Security Council. It is important to note that Algeria, taking advantage of its status as a non-permanent member, attempted to shift the focus from the draft resolution to supporting the Polisario Front's document, presenting it as an extended proposal—though there was no actual proposal—aimed at challenging and weakening the Moroccan autonomy plan proposed in 2007, which had been recognized as serious and credible before being legally and explicitly adopted by UN Security Council Resolution 2797 (2005). The political dynamics and various roles at play are evident when we observe how the document attributed to the Polisario Front, although crafted by the Algerian government, was transmitted by South Africa (which supports separatism in the region and diplomatically endorses the Polisario Front) to the UN and defended by Algeria.

Another token used in Ammar Bendjama's speech and Resolution 2797 (2025) is "self-determination." Despite the presence of this token in both discourses, the context of its use differs significantly. In the resolution's text, "self-determination" is coherently linked to Morocco's Autonomy Plan, while in Ammar Bendjama's discourse, it is closely associated with the token "decolonization," frequently co-occurring and collocating with it. Collocation refers "the binary relation between two lexical components, the *base* and the *collocate*, where the collocate fully realizes its meaning only when coupled with its base" (Orlandi and Giacomini, 2016: 9, original emphasis).

### **7.10 Empty and floating signifiers as irrelevant patterns for rational argumentation**

The concordance and the collocation of "decolonization" and "self-determination" in Ammar Bendjama's statement, though appearing as a part of strategic maneuvering moves from the speaker when challenging the resolution's adoption, are, from post-structuralist perspectives, *empty* and *floating signifiers* (Laclau, 2005; 2007), "signifiers without signifieds" as explained by Laclau (2007: 36).

Though the signifiers "decolonization" and "self-determination" seem to be *equivocal* rather than being *empty*, mainly, their signification may be interpreted from a context-dependent assumption, since "the same signifier can be attached to different signifieds in different contexts (as a result of the arbitrariness of the sign)" (Ibid.), and consequently "the function of signification in each context would be fully realised" (Ibid.), but they are not *equivocal*; instead, they are *ambiguous*: with overdetermination in the case of Ammar Bendjama's speech of "decolonization" and "self-determination," preventing them from being fully fixed, and in such a case, Laclau (2007) speaks about the *floating* of the signifier.

Though the question of the legal and historical status of the use of 'decolonization,' 'self-determination,' and 'people(s)' in multiple orders of discourse is beyond the scope of this study, since these terms are ubiquitous in the UN's resolutions regarding the Moroccan Sahara issue — except for the term 'decolonization,' which is generally used in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), of 14 December 1960<sup>9</sup> — it is nevertheless relevant to take into consideration the historicity of the speaker's discourse production, following the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), including both the political and legal aspects of the discourse as a process and practice.

In 1963, Morocco requested the UN to classify the Sahara region (referred to as "Spanish Sahara") under "Non-Self-Governing Territories," as it had been colonized by Spain. Following the liberation and departure of the Spanish colonizer, the region has since been known as the Moroccan Sahara, or the South Provinces. However, the UN continues to refer to this territory as "Western Sahara," whose status shifted from "Non-Self-Governing Territories" and "non-autonomous territories" to Moroccan sovereignty with the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 16 October 1975.<sup>10</sup>

Given this brief historical context, the Moroccan Sahara is no longer related to the decolonization process, as largely propagated by Algeria, based on the illusory and misleading claim: "The Sahara region is the last colony in Africa." (For full description of illusions about Moroccan Sahara see El Khalfi, 2019), nor even to the principle of self-determination traditionally associated with the process of decolonization and referendum.

Based on these basic legal and historical documented facts, the tokens "decolonization" and "self-determination" are, in the context of Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse and rhetorical question, empty signifiers since they are detached from their conceptual signifieds (i.e., the self-determination of colonial peoples, signifiers that are fundamentally historically determined and historically dependent) (Archibugi, 2003), failing to refer to a single, fixed, universally accepted meaning. Another indication of their emptiness in signification is that, when used in the political realm (see Laclau, 2005; 2007), they become a site of contestation and struggle over meaning—where different political actors, as in Ammar Bendjama's case, actively attempted to project his own country's vision of what "decolonization" and "self-determination" should signify and entail at the UN Security Council.

As for the signifier "people(s)" in Ammar Bendjama's speech, its signification also underwent the same process as the tokens "decolonization" and "self-determination," shifting from floating signifier to empty signifier. Linden (2025: 328) explains Laclau's original perspective on 'the people.' Written in inverted commas, the term does not refer to a sociological concept but

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (1960). *Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples* (Res. 1514 (XV)). United Nations. [https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments\\_mechanisms/instruments/declaration-granting-independence-colonial-countries-and-peoples](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments_mechanisms/instruments/declaration-granting-independence-colonial-countries-and-peoples).

<sup>10</sup> The full text of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Moroccan Sahara issue on this link: <https://icj-web.lemman.un-icc.cloud/sites/default/files/case-related/61/6196.pdf>.

to “a notion that functions as an ‘empty signifier’ or ‘floating signifier’ in his terminology, “an identity that is devoid of any substance that either constitutes it or refers a priori to an already-given fact in the social realm.” The term is an empty signifier in discourse, as well as when it is the subject of politics at the ontological level.

The manipulation of the linguistic sign in Ammar Bendjama’s discourse is further evidence of how texts become “sites of social struggle, in that they manifest traces of a range of ideological fights for dominance and hegemony” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016: 26). Ammar Bendjama’s speech, representing his country as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, does not merely put into action his discourse but also discursively realizes a form of power: “the possibility of enforcing one’s own will within a social relationship against the will or interests of others” (Weber, 1980, cited in Reisigl and Wodak, 2016: 26). This power is exercised “not only through grammatical forms, but also through a person’s control of the social occasion, the genre of a text, or the regulation of access to specific public spheres.” Power, which is supposed to be productive for resolving the difference, is instead used for destructive purposes: perpetuating the difference and seeking impasse.

The overemphasis of “decolonization,” “self-determination,” “people,” in addition to “referendum,” is a challenge to and a distortion of some established epistemological and ontological facts. For instance, in this case, these terms have undergone transformation and manipulation to serve as empty and floating signifiers instead of being accurately contextualized and contributing to a successful critical discussion at hand. Rather than being either dropped or genuinely adapted, they are used in such a way that social reality—where argumentation takes place—is treated not as being in continuous change but as a static ontological social reality, while discourse is for the construction of a static epistemological reality. This produces a certain ideologically charged knowledge whose main aim is not only the deformation or deviation from the main issue, but also the deception of the audience. We agree with Searle (1995: 60) when, in his philosophical inquiry on how language is essentially constitutive of institutional reality, he argues that “the feature of language essential for the constitution of institutional facts is the existence of symbolic devices, such as words, that by convention *mean* or *represent* or *symbolize* something beyond themselves.”

Van Eemeren (1984), when defining the situation to which the protagonist and the antagonist are confronted in terms of the specific circumstances in which argumentation takes place, anticipated that in some cases the situation is not only significant for the course of argumentation, but that interlocutors—the proponent(s) and the opponent(s)—are at liberty to take certain “‘peripheral conditions’ into account, to create a certain situation for themselves and thus impose their own definition on the situation” (p. 11).

This is what Ammar Bendjama is actually engaged in through his combination of carefully selected terms, not only to annihilate the inherent feature of social reality as dynamic and continuously transforming, but also to virtually reconstruct, through his discursive strategy—namely lexical choice, emphasis, and overemphasis through repetition—the situation of the critical discussion. That is, he reframes the argumentation as if it were about “decolonization,” “self-determination,” “people,” and “referendum,” rather than about the reasons behind the adopted resolution and its legal and geopolitical implications.

Ammar Bendjama’s interpretation of the actual situation is not an arbitrary intellectual activity; rather, it constitutes a deliberate strategy to orient his argumentation in order to validate his interpretation and to oppose the UN Security Council’s interpretation and assessment, both at the macro-level of the context of the Moroccan Sahara issue and the micro-level of the resolution itself. The two interpretations are indeed different, as each expresses a distinct worldview and vision of the issue at hand; consequently, Ammar Bendjama’s defense of such an interpretation renders the exchange of ideas not only meaningless but also impossible, thereby giving rise to a deep disagreement (Ibid.).

Ammar Bendjama’s rhetorical question, “*Do we need to even recall this?*” - used to affirm the self-evidence of the principle of self-determination, actually weakens his position by presupposing consensus on the principle, as if it were so universally acknowledged that it shouldn’t need further discussion or to be questioned in light of the context, history, and Morocco’s efforts and successes in establishing sustainable development in the Moroccan Sahara territory. Ammar’s statement deliberately ignores the opposing argument or counter-narrative based on Morocco’s autonomy proposal, which is widely recognized as a valid form of self-determination, offering a concrete alternative to the shortcomings of the self-determination framework.

The statement following the rhetorical question: “The final decision on the future **cannot, must not** belong to anyone other than the people under colonial domination” (added emphasis), is a modalized proposition expressing certainty with the auxiliary verbs “*cannot*” and “*must*” followed by the negation “*not*,” which further complicates the resolution of the dispute. This is a kind of “deep disagreement” that van Eemeren (2010: 1) refers to as “extreme case of the seemingly irresolvable controversies.” The proposition, though it is externalized in the context of an argumentative exchange, is assumed to be normal, rewording Fogelin (2005: 6), only and only if “it takes place within a context of broadly shared beliefs and preferences, i.e., “there

must exist shared procedures for resolving disagreements." Fogelin (2005) outlines that even if "people often disagree over simple questions of fact, they generally agree on the method for resolving their disagreement" (p. 6).

However, Ammar Bendjama's speech presupposes a lack of common ground and shared beliefs, which should align with the UN Security Council's Resolution 2797 (2025). This resolution calls for mutual negotiations and efforts toward a final resolution of the Moroccan Sahara dispute based on the widely accepted proposed plan. Ammar Bendjama's proposition advances a particular assumption that has to do with what van Eemeren (1984: 12) calls "*particular presuppositions*"; "these relate to such things as the knowledge, ideas, attitudes, and values which interlocutors ascribe to one another." Ammar Bendjama's appeal to presupposition attempts to manipulate the mental models of the audience by leading them to believe they are in possession of certain facts, thereby imposing the presupposition that "there is no need for him to apprise them of them," (Ibid.) i.e., there is no need for him to inform them of what he considers to be facts. The speaker is actually not only supposing that his audience possesses the knowledge that his argumentative moves are constructing about the issue, but also attempting to normalize and naturalize it as if it were shared knowledge, ideas, and beliefs among the UN community. This, however, is not true given the result of the vote on Resolution 2797. The consequence is that such general and particular presuppositions jointly constitute the point of departure for the argumentation, but they violate Rules III and IV of ideal critical discussions, in addition to flouting Grice's CP and the related maxim of Quality and Quantity.

However, in the case of Ammar Bendjama's speech, this presupposes a lack of common ground and shared beliefs, which were supposed to be aligned with the UN Security Council's Resolution 2797 (2025). This resolution calls for mutual negotiations and efforts toward a final resolution of the Moroccan Sahara dispute based on the predefined and largely recognized proposed plan. Ammar Bendjama's proposition not only implies a strongly restrictive stance but also constitutes an assertive, complex speech act. The emphatic prohibition in his proposition suggests that the final decision cannot be made by anyone other than the people under "colonialism" (impossibility). Furthermore, it introduces an additional layer by stating that it must not belong to anyone else, explicitly prohibiting such action (prohibition). The power performed linguistically and pragmatically in the speaker's argumentation speech act is aimed at "the manipulation of *mental models* of social events through the use of specific discourse structures" (van Dijk, 2008: 66, original emphasis), rather than contributing constructively to the resolution of the differences of opinion regarding the question of the Moroccan Sahara.

Regardless of the power of the speaker's discourse through a modalized assertive complex speech act—which requires further investigation from a critical discourse perspective (see van Dijk, 2008)—it is important to note that Ammar Bendjama's standpoint, which raises a deep disagreement, is, on the one hand, an intentional argumentative strategy aimed at shifting the critical discussion from dialectic to rhetoric, from argumentation (*logos*) to persuasion. This strategy deliberately redirects attention from the main topic of the critical discussion to another one. While this may seem contextually sound, it fails to comply with the rules of critical discussion. On the other hand, it is a continuation of the red herring fallacy previously discussed, which serves as the main and shaping background for Ammar's argumentation, as the speaker distorts the proponent's claims and premises as stated in the adopted resolution.

To put it in other words, the speaker's externalization of complex speech acts is a case of red herring fallacy, which is subtly and rhetorically disseminated before dominating the pragmatic macro-structures of the discourse, what van Dijk (1977: 107, original emphasis) refers to as the "*pragmatic topic of conversation*." The discursive strategy at play implicates that it is the question of decolonization which is both the macrosemantics of the resolution discourse and the discussants' macro-speech-acts. Therefore, it is safe to state that the antagonist "failed to meet an obligation of good argumentation by not ensuring that the position criticized is the actual position held" (Tindale, 2007).

#### **Intertextual quotation in argumentation: Use and Function**

**Excerpt: 4** "And in that regard, allow me to quote here President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America who stated, and I'll quote this in English, "peoples are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or an understanding between rivals and antagonist. National aspiration must be respected. Peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action". I would invite you all, all of you to think deeply about what was said in that statement."

In this excerpt, the speaker shifted from French to English to quote Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America. This is an example of "'hybrid' discourse combining elements from other political discourses (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 85). Some critical questions arise about this shift from one linguistic system to another, particularly since

Ammar Bendjama is a non-native speaker of both English and French, which are among the six official languages of the UN, including Arabic, the official language of the speaker's country.<sup>11</sup>

Ammar Bendjama's speech in French and English (while quoting Woodrow Wilson) takes place within a multilingual global community represented by the United Nations (UN). Since interpretation and translation of both spoken speeches and written texts are guaranteed, it can be assumed that the choice of French and English was not an arbitrary decision, given that interpretation of his speech was simultaneously provided in the other official languages of the organization. Otherwise, it would not have been possible to access the English version of his statement, which serves as the corpus for this study.

The implementation of multilingualism within the UN organizations is neither accidental nor arbitrary; rather, it is rooted in the UN's institutional agenda: "The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system included in its programme of work for 2019 a review on multilingualism in the United Nations system on the basis of a proposal made by the United Nations Secretariat" (Lozinskiy, 2020: 1). The rationale for multilingualism lies first and foremost in its importance for achieving the goals of the United Nations, particularly in enhancing multilateral communication and ensuring that "the decisions of intergovernmental bodies are understood, observed, implemented and accepted by the peoples they serve" (Ibid.).

What is important in raising this issue is not the study of multilingualism in the context of the UN and its cultural implications, but rather the choice made regarding the language used by Ammar Bendjama. From a historical and cultural perspective, one may assume that the use of French is due to Algeria's history as a francophone country colonized for about 130 years by France. However, considering the context, it is likely that his target audience was both the French delegation, addressed in French, which recognized the Moroccan autonomy plan as the sole and unique solution to the Moroccan Sahara dispute, and the American delegation, whose President, Donald Trump, recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara.

The second assumption seems to be the most relevant, as language creates proximity between the speaker and the listener, avoiding any translation that may not be faithful or may be culturally and communicatively inappropriate or inaccurate. Thus, through his choice of language, Ammar Bendjama addresses the American delegation when he says, "I'll quote this in English."

Quotation in the context of argumentation can be conceived as "reminders of another's commitments" (Macagno and Walton, 2017: 2). This process is selective, as the speaker chooses which patterns to revoice while omitting others that do not align with his argumentative strategy. Ammar Bendjama's quotation serves as a tool for reminding the interlocutor of a past commitment: the right of peoples to self-determination. This right encompasses not just a discourse—a mere phrase—but a shift towards action: the principle that peoples must govern themselves by their own consent.

Quotations are generally used not only to support the speaker's thesis but also to counter opposing positions through counter-argumentation (Constantinescu, 2012). In the case of Ammar Bendjama's quotation, and in his role as the antagonist, he revoices Woodrow Wilson, the former president of the United States, to support his own standpoint and to challenge the United Nations Security Council's resolution by providing additional evidence drawn from the past, particularly from a historically authoritative figure. This corresponds to what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 305) refer to as a prestige argument, in which the speaker "uses the acts or opinions of a person or group of persons as a means of proof in support of a thesis."

#### 8. Main fallacies in Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse: a pragma-dialectical and critical discourse analysis

A sound argumentation is crucial for effective discourse, especially in the context of a UN Security Council debate. When evaluating the soundness of an argument, one must assess the "validity" and strength of the claims, ensuring that the reasoning aligns with principles of critical discussion. Fallacies — or violations of these principles — weaken the overall argument. In Ammar Bendjama's discourse, several fallacies emerge, as well as violations of key communication rules, that undermine the effectiveness of his reasoning. These include:

- The Fallacy of Argument from Authority (via Woodrow Wilson's Quotation).
- Flouting Grecian's CP and Maxim of Quantity and Maxim of Quality.
- Weakness and irrelevance in symptomatic argumentation.
- Begging the Question.

<sup>11</sup> « Art. 3. — L'Arabe est la langue nationale et officielle. L'Arabe demeure la langue officielle de l'Etat ». Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne. (2020, Décembre 30). *Constitution de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire*. N° 82, 15 *Joumada El Oula* 1442.

### **8.1. The Fallacy of Argument from Authority: Quoting Woodrow Wilson**

Argument from authority is a frequent tactic in argumentation through which the speaker enhances his ethos. It is commonly represented as a fallacious form of reasoning, as illustrated by the following scheme:

**"X is an authority on facts of type T.**

**X said S, which is of type T.**

**Therefore, S is true."** (Hamblin, 1970: 43).

In this case, Woodrow Wilson, as the 28<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1913–1921), embodies a political and historical authority. The quotation is taken from his speech delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress on February 11, 1918.<sup>12</sup> The central idea of Wilson's statement is that lasting peace and legitimate government depend on the will of the people themselves, namely the principle of self-determination. Through this quotation, which concerns facts of type **T**—specifically, the right of peoples to self-determination—Wilson advances statement **S**.

The conclusion under consideration is whether **S** should be taken as true. Ammar Bendjama's reasoning relies on the authority of **X** (Wilson): since Wilson is presented as an authoritative figure expressing a claim within a political and historical context corresponding to type **T**, and since he asserted **S**, **S** is treated as valid and acceptable for argumentative purposes. Even though **S** undergoes a process of decontextualization and recontextualization, it is still considered, from the speaker's perspective, adequate and relevant for argumentative support.

Quotations are not mere reported speech but "acts in a discourse aimed at pursuing a specific communicative goal" (Walton and Macagno 2011, 27–28, cited in Constantinescu 2012: 266). As we have explained, they function as reminders of past commitments. Revoicing the American President constitutes a confrontation between two political standpoints of the American government—those of Woodrow Wilson and Donald Trump—not on the same issue and in the same historical and geopolitical contexts. The former defended U.S. neutrality during the early phase of the First World War, whereas the latter operates in a globalized world marked by highly complex challenges, ranging from economic issues to safety and security concerns.

### **8.2. Flouting Grecian's CP and Maxim of Quantity and Maxim of Quality**

The confrontation discussed in the previous section is instrumentalized and functions as an argumentative tactic used by Ammar Bendjama to lead the audience to infer potential contradictions in U.S. positions regarding the principle of self-determination. As the penholder, the speaker simultaneously challenges U.S. power and raises doubts about its neutrality, particularly in Ammar Bendjama's statement: "I deplore the fact that the penholder, despite all their efforts, were not able to overcome resistance—and you all know what resistance that is—in order to make the changes necessary and render the text acceptable to everyone."

This statement is highly implicit and opaque, particularly because the speaker does not specify what form of resistance he is referring to, nor which party was exercising power or pressure that prevented the resolution from meeting Algerian aspirations. The interpretation of Ammar Bendjama's statement, whether for the analyst or for the audience, is therefore practically difficult, even from a hermeneutic and sociodiagnostic critique, through which the analyst goes beyond the purely textual or discourse-internal sphere and draws on background and contextual knowledge (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). Through his use of conversational implicature, Ammar Bendjama seems to expect his statement to be contextually relevant, inasmuch as it is governed by the Cooperative Principle (CP), "which states that a participant in a conversation should make her contribution "such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1975: 67). Furthermore, Grice's rules for an ideal and cooperative exchange include conversational maxims such as 'avoiding ambiguity' and 'being relevant'. However, Ammar Bendjama's statement is ambiguous and irrelevant with regard to the point of departure and the subject matter of the critical discussion that has taken place about the adoption of Resolution 2797 (2025).

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<sup>12</sup> Wilson, W. (1918, February 11). Address of the President of the United States delivered at a joint session of the two houses of Congress. In *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1918, Supplement 1: The World War, Volume I (Document 59)*. Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1918Supp01v01/d59>.

### 8.3. Violation of pragma-dialectical theory's principles of communication

By referencing the existence of "resistance" without specifying its source or providing any evidence, the speaker raises an issue with the Maxim of Quality, which states one should "not say that for which you lack adequate evidence" (Grice, 1975). At the same time, he flouts the Maxim of Quantity, which requires speakers to "make [their] contribution as informative as is required," by withholding essential information, and the Maxim of Manner, which demands speakers to "avoid ambiguity," by using a vague and indeterminate token. This lack of specification makes it difficult for the audience to identify the actor involved or to reconstruct the causal mechanism at stake, rendering the utterance pragmatically opaque and weakening its relevance within the ongoing critical discussion.

The statement not only flouts Grice's CP and the related maxims of Quantity and Quality, but also presents an unexpressed premise, constituting weak argumentation, since the antagonist fails to provide any argumentation to defend and validate this unexpressed premise. This can be further assessed by considering the following rules for communication:

**1 Be clear.**

**2 Be sincere.**

**3 Be efficient.**

**4 Keep to the point** (van Eemeren and Henkemans, 2016: 45).

With regard to Rule 1, the speaker's use of "resistance" in "*despite all their efforts, they were not able to overcome resistance—and you all know what resistance*" fails to clarify the nature of resistance or identify the actors involved. As for Rule 2, this requires an in-depth analysis. Manipulation is of primary interest to argumentation analysts, as stated by van Eemeren (2005). This concept is addressed in association with one of the 'sincerity conditions' of argumentation. According to van Eemeren (2005: x), the sincerity condition "is violated if a proposition is presented as an acceptable justification or refutation of a standpoint while the speaker or writer does not really believe that it constitutes an acceptable defense." Verifying Ammar Bendjama's reference to 'resistance,' and whether it satisfies the sincerity condition or not, reveals that the speaker is performing a complex speech act of argumentation in which he knows in advance that it is not relevant for effective and reasonable argumentation. He does not really believe that it constitutes an acceptable defense. Ammar Bendjama is committing an infelicity that is difficult for an ordinary audience to detect, thus violating Searle's sincerity conditions, which are referred to in pragma-dialectical theory as the *responsibility conditions* (Ibid.). Thus, his reliance on the undetermined token "resistance" in his argumentation process constitutes an insincere speech act of argumentation. Infelicity, in this case, means that Ammar Bendjama's argument, particularly his use of the term "resistance," is not appropriate, thus violating the expected conditions for sincerity in discourse.

As far as efficiency (Rule 3) is concerned, the speaker's reference to the pressure exerted in shaping the resolution's content is irrelevant, as it does not contribute to an efficient critical discussion aimed at resolving the disagreement. This shift away from the main issue in favor of an irrelevant one leads to a failure to keep to the point (Rule 4).

Given that "evaluating the argument as having been used correctly or incorrectly, as being fallacious or not, requires judging how well the argument contributes to the goals of dialogue for the type of dialogue in that case" (Walton, 1998: 8), the question arises as to whether the antagonist's earlier statement effectively and genuinely contributes to achieving "a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable solution to the dispute, based on the Moroccan Autonomy Plan under the Kingdom's sovereignty." Due to the discrepancy between the speaker's statement and the stated objective of the resolution, his argumentation can be considered neither correct nor relevant, as it deviates from the main issue and diverts attention toward what seems to be a form of strategic insinuation, particularly through the vague invocation of "resistance."

In the absence of clarification or evidence, this term implicitly invites a conspiratorial interpretation. This diversion serves to obscure the weakness in the speaker's argumentation and his apparent intention not to align with the UN Security Council's commitments regarding the resolution of the dispute. In this context, the antagonist's discourse seems to set the stage for anticipated criticism while simultaneously maintaining and defending a political agenda rooted in a preconceived plan aimed at detaching Morocco from its Sahara territory and denying it full sovereignty.

### 8.4. Critical evaluation of symptomatic argumentation in Ammar Bendjama's speech

Ammar Bendjama's argumentation refers to "resistance" and how it is supposedly symptomatic of the failure of the resolution to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Saharawi people.

In symptomatic argumentation, an arguer tries to support a standpoint (**Y**) by showing that a certain symptom (**Z**) is present, implying that the symptom reveals something about the underlying issue (**Y**). The symptomatic argument scheme is:

**"Y is true of X,**

**because: Z is true of X,**

**and: Z is symptomatic of Y"** (van Eemeren and Henkemans, 2016: 85).

This is to be explained as follows:

Premise 1: (Z is true of X): Characteristic **Z** is observed in entity, situation, or process **X**.

Premise 2: (Z is symptomatic of Y): Characteristic **Z** is a symptom or indicator of condition, property, or state **Y**.

Conclusion: (therefore X is Y): Therefore, **X** has property or condition **Y**.

Symptomatic argumentation in this case can be reconstructed as follows:

**Premise 1 (Z is true of X)**: "Resistance" occurred during the process of finalizing the resolution.

**Premise 2 (Z is symptomatic of Y)**: "Resistance" is symptomatic of the resolution's failure to align with the legitimate aspirations of the Saharawi people and UN decolonization principles.

**Conclusion (therefore X is Y)**: Therefore, the resolution fails to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Saharawi people.

In order to evaluate this argumentative move, the following critical questions are to be considered:

**Is Z indeed symptomatic of Y?**

This question cannot be answered affirmatively on the basis of the information provided. The symptom relation is asserted by the speaker but not justified.

**Aren't there also Ys that do not have the characteristic Z?**

Are there cases where a resolution fails to meet the aspirations of a people without encountering resistance during negotiations?

Yes, this is entirely possible. A resolution may fail due to power imbalances, diplomatic compromises, or procedural constraints even in the absence of explicit resistance. "Resistance" is then not a necessary condition for failure. Therefore, the presence of resistance cannot, by itself, reliably indicate failure.

**Aren't there also non-Ys that have the characteristic Z?**

Are there cases where resistance occurs even though a resolution does not fail to meet the aspirations of the concerned people?

Yes. "Resistance" may arise from negotiation strategies, opposition by some members, procedural constraints, or institutional limitations within the Security Council. None of these necessarily imply that the final text fails to meet Saharawi aspirations. This shows that resistance is not a sufficient condition for failure. Thus, resistance lacks diagnostic exclusivity.

Therefore, the core weaknesses of Ammar Bendjama's argumentation are the following:

Lack of specification: The term "resistance" is undefined: no actor is identified; no form of resistance is specified; no causal or normative link is explained. Without specification, **Z** remains analytically indeterminate.

Unsupported symptomatic premise: The crucial premise—that "resistance" is a symptom of failure—is left implicit and undefended. This violates the requirement that symptomatic relations be grounded in empirical regularity or accepted institutional or normative conventions, which the speaker fails to provide.

Ammar Bendjama's mention of "resistance" relies on an unexpressed premise: that the resistance is a sign of the resolution's failure. However, this premise is not substantiated. He does not explain what resistance refers to, who is involved, or why resistance is inherently linked to the resolution's failure to meet the Saharawi people's aspirations.

There is no proof provided to show that the resistance is genuinely a symptom of the resolution's flaws, making the argument weakened by a lack of connection between the symptom (resistance) and the underlying issue (the resolution's failure). Thus, the symptomatic argument is poorly formed, and the connection between resistance and the failure of the resolution is not clearly established. In other words, since all critical questions receive plausible affirmative answers, **the inference from Z to Y is weak.**

### **8.5. The fallacy of Begging the Question (Circular Reasoning or *petitio principii*) in Ammar Bendjama's argumentation**

The phrase "*and you all know what resistance that is*" is a clear example of the fallacy of begging the question (or circular reasoning), i.e. "what needs to be proven (the question at issue) has already been shown to hold" (van Eemeren *et al.*, 2009: 10). This occurs when the speaker assumes the truth of a claim without providing sufficient evidence to support it, effectively assuming what they need to prove. The speaker's argument relies on the assumption that the audience already agrees with the premise that resistance is a significant issue, without offering any supporting evidence. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969: 112) note, this is not so much "an error of logic, but rather of rhetoric," and its fallaciousness is evident, even though the argument may be logically valid.

**This argument has the following form:**

**(1.) X says that S is possible; this is a statement of type T**

**(2.) Everything X says about statements of type T is true**

**Therefore:**

**(3.) S is possible** (van Eemeren *et al.*, 2009: 13).

Following this scheme, Ammar Bendjama's statement can be reconstructed as follows:

(1) Ammar Bendjama says that the penholder, despite his efforts, these were not able to overcome resistance—and everyone knows what resistance that is; this is a statement of type T (an assertion about resistance).

(2) Everything Ammar Bendjama says about statements of type T (i.e., the resistance) is true.

Therefore:

(3) The resistance is well-known, and this lack of progress in overcoming it is a valid argument for the failure to render the text acceptable to everyone.

In this case, "*and you all know what resistance that is*" assumes that the audience is already aware of and agrees on what specific "resistance" is being referred to, without providing any justification for why that particular resistance is significant or relevant. By stating that everyone knows what resistance it is, Ammar Bendjama effectively assumes the truth of the very point he is trying to argue (that the resistance is well-known and the cause of the failure), without offering evidence or reasoning for this assumption. This circular reasoning makes it a form of begging the question.

To put it in other words, by stating "*you all know what resistance that is*," Ammar Bendjama assumes that the audience already knows the nature of the resistance and its impact on the resolution. This assumption is unjustified, as the speaker has not provided any specific explanation or evidence about the resistance. The argument is left vague and undefined, relying on the audience's presumed shared knowledge, which effectively bypasses the need for evidence.

In doing so, the speaker avoids proving the claim and instead implies that the audience should already accept it, which is a clear instance of begging the question. Circular reasoning is taking place here, as the speaker assumes what should be proved (the existence and nature of resistance) without offering any proof to support his claim. His statement overemphasizes and redundantly repeats the same meaning of the proposition, and it is a weak argument, given that the same proposition is circular in the sense that it is taken to support itself (Kooi, 2024). Fogelin (2005: 7) further emphasizes that "the language of argument may persist, but it becomes pointless since it makes an appeal to something that does not exist: a shared background of beliefs and preferences."

### **8.6. Critical analysis of rhetorical traces in Ammar Bendjama's argumentative discourse**

Given that "argumentation is basically aimed at resolving a difference of opinion about the acceptability of a standpoint by making an appeal to the other party's reasonableness" (van Eemeren, 2010: 1), Ammar Bendjama's role in critical

discussion shifted from being an antagonist, who is supposed to be a rational discussant, to deliberately taking the role of a rhetor, such that it is difficult to differentiate in his speech between Ammar Bendjama the rational discussant and Ammar Bendjama the rhetor. The shift from argumentation, with all its implications in terms of reasonableness and effectiveness, which is institutionally constrained and oriented to contribute to the resolution of differences and disagreements, toward rhetorical strategies aimed at persuading his audience of Algeria's opinion, are also observed in his statement. These rhetorical traces, articulated with argumentation (*logos*), are evident in the discourse, particularly through his appeal to *pathos* and *ethos*.

Van Eemeren (2015): "The difference of opinion that is at the heart of an argumentative discourse cannot be resolved if the protagonist advances arguments that do not pertain to the standpoint or resorts to rhetorical devices in which *pathos* or *ethos* take the place of *logos*."

An essential rhetorical device in Ammar Bendjama's speech is the use of *pathos*—appealing to the emotions of his audience. *Pathos* is employed to create empathy for the Saharawi people and to evoke a sense of pity, which fosters a feeling of injustice that emotionally engages the audience, motivating them. His description of the Saharawi as people who have "*resisted for more than 50 years to have their own say in their own future*" evokes empathy by recounting their long struggle for self-determination. Ammar Bendjama's speech is a prime example of what sociologists refer to as the social construction of victims and victimization. By assigning the *identity* of victims to the Saharawi populations, Ammar Bendjama is shifting blame to others, mainly Morocco and pro-actors of the adopted resolution. "Victimization is a method for absolving persons of responsibility and exempting them from blame" (Dunn, 2008: 1604), in this case Algeria and the Polisario Front.

One of the rhetorical strategies in Ammar Bendjama's appeal to *ethos*, a well-known rhetorical strategies that the speaker used to persuade the audience of his credibility and the credibility of Algeria. Ammar Bendjama's rhetorical strategy aims at carefully positioning Algeria as a country faithful to international law, peace, and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Additionally, Ammar Bendjama's frequent references to Algeria's good-faith involvement in the negotiation process, mainly at the end of his statement. Algeria's *ethos* is overemphasized by representing the country as engaged in international diplomacy, willing to collaborate for peace, and not merely obstructing progress.

Furthermore, Ammar Bendjama's use of frustration and regret toward the failure of the resolution to meet the aspirations of the Saharawi people taps into the emotions of disappointment and missed opportunity. The phrase "*we missed a chance here and we regret this*" serves as a lamentation that connects with the audience's emotional sense of what could have been achieved if diplomacy had been more flexible and fairer. This rhetorical choice creates a shared sense of loss and an emotional stake in the potential for future success.

Finally, Ammar Bendjama appeals to the audience's moral duty by reiterating the need for justice, peace, and respect for the inalienable right to self-determination. By emphasizing that only "justice and lasting peace" can provide stability in the region, he evokes a deep sense of moral responsibility, urging his audience to act in full commitment to universal principles of equity and human rights, as if the speaker's words, acting as a moralist, were what Kenneth Burke called "god terms," which should neither be challenged nor reduced to other ideas, nor criticized or counter-argued (Jasper, 1922).

From a critical discourse analysis perspective, we argue that it cannot be taken for granted that the resolution fails to address the aspirations of the Saharawi population, particularly with regard to the Moroccan Autonomy Plan proposed under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco, which has been valued as a serious, credible, and feasible proposal for resolving the dispute. The plan is, indeed, offering a form of internal self-determination, allowing for local self-governance while preserving territorial integrity, a model that is recognized in international practice as one possible way to implement the principle of self-determination. Ammar Bendjama's invocation of self-determination, as well as his reference to the popular will and collective consent of the Saharawi people, appears to align with a broader geopolitical narrative that risks reducing "the Saharawi people" to an empty signifier—a concept from Laclau's discourse theory. In Laclau's framework, as it has been illustrated, an empty signifier is a floating concept that gains meaning through political struggle, but lacks a stable, pre-existing referent. In this context, "the Saharawi people" is not necessarily understood as a clearly defined, cohesive community with fixed, uniform aspirations. Instead, it becomes instrumentalized—used as a symbol to advance particular political and ideological objectives, such as separatism, driven by Algeria's external geopolitical considerations. The term is thus emptied of its real, internal complexity and used strategically within a discursive framework that does not effectively and accurately reflect the actual aspirations and needs of the Saharawi population.

This is particularly evident when we consider Algeria's role in the conflict over the Moroccan Sahara. Algeria has long supported the Polisario Front, and its involvement is driven by geopolitical interests, particularly in opposing Morocco's territorial

rights. As a result, the idea of “the Saharawi people” is shaped and manipulated to serve these broader political goals, rather than reflecting the true and complex aspirations of the Saharawi population. By using this term as a tool in the geopolitical struggle, the notion of Saharawi people, their voices, and real aspirations are not only marginalized but also instrumentalized and distorted, particularly in the violation of the Saharawi population's right to self-determination by Algeria. This is evident in Algeria's continued refusal to accept the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' recommendations to swiftly register and conduct a census of the populations in the Tindouf camps in due form and in accordance with international standards (see for example, Parliamentary question - E-001049/2025 ([European Parliament](#))).<sup>13</sup>

## 9. Conclusion

Ammar Bendjama's statement is dominated by rhetorical traces. Rather than providing effective and reasonable argumentation to resolve differences of opinion, the antagonist fails to genuinely engage with the optimistic potential and opportunities for resolving the Moroccan Sahara dispute, one of the main remaining residues of colonialism, and then voting for Resolution 2797 (2025), as one may expect. In contrast, he unilaterally chooses to advance Algeria's political ambitions in the region, aiming to obstruct Morocco's efforts to build sustainable development—not only for the Kingdom but also for the benefit of the African continent and its population. This approach is based on the principle of win-win collaboration, rejecting domination, power, and the illegitimate exploitation of resources.

The speaker's ideological bias and narrow political view shape his argument in a way that not only fails to defend his country's position but also distorts the dispute, turning it into a deep disagreement. Instead of using his role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council to offer a constructive contribution, his approach ends up being more destructive. However, despite his efforts, his stance ultimately has little impact, as the consensus around the adopted resolution remains strong.

Relying on rhetoric disguised in argumentation, the speaker infringes rules and commandments for resolving the difference of opinion, and this is why we have interpreted it as fallacious, a term systematically connected with the rules for critical discussion taking place in different instances of Ammar Bendjama's speech. Violation of rules of critical discussion includes Rule III, referred to as the standpoint rule, as it has been described, where the antagonist misses the main issue under discussion and diverts attention to another issue, which is decolonization, and then implicates Rule IX, referred to as the rule of relevance. The red herring fallacy is committed, in addition to the irrelevance of decolonization regarding *Rule III* and *Rule IX* in the context of the topic at hand.

Ethos is an ideological rhetoric, amplifying egocentrism of Algeria, not as an abstract signifier but Algeria as nowadays represented by the ruling military and political elites through egocentric discourse, legitimizing the political system that is constructed and broadcasted, while providing the rationale for this configuration of power relations. Egocentric discourse, as manifested in the use of ethos, implicates the structure of the argumentative discourse, notably “meanings manipulated, structurally, by the principle of ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation” (van Dijk, 1995).

The speaker's violation of the relevance rule is an ethical fallacy, reflecting an illegitimate discourse practice that is ideologically driven to deceive and manipulate the audience's emotions and thoughts. Ideology, inherently, is a distortion of social truth, but whenever it interferes with argumentation, the argumentation no longer remains ethically driven, but is instrumentalized to obscure rather than expose. This is what is observed in Ammar Bendjama's use of false analogy when persuading his audience of the universality of the doctrine of decolonization—a kind of exaggeration of the denotation of the signifier, making it absolute and generalizing. Ammar Bendjama's overemphasis on decolonization, in addition to self-determination, as well as his reference to the popular will and collective consent of the Sahrawi people, is an example of how ideology and politics misuse language, giving rise to floating and empty signifiers—inherently irrelevant for argumentation but potentially useful for ideological rhetoric (see Weiler, 1993).

To conclude, the study remains non-exhaustive due to critical constraints related to space, the academic requirements of a research article, and the transdisciplinary nature of the study, in addition to some constraints related to time. The question under investigation, evaluation, and critique is only part of a broader academic thesis focusing on disinformation discourse and the war of words in the circulated discourses produced by Algeria against Morocco and its sovereignty over the Sahara region, as well as against the Kingdom's efforts to sustain peace and development in the region. These efforts are tacitly and overtly countered and attacked through propaganda and disinformation, particularly in Algerian media discourse, as part of the dominant Algerian order of discourse and its ideological discursive formation in general. That being said, further studies are

<sup>13</sup> Bay, N., Trochu, L., & Peltier, G. (2025, March 11). *Women's rights violations in the Tindouf camps in Algeria* [Question for written answer E-001049/2025]. European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001049\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001049_EN.html).

recommended to contribute to understanding this destructive phenomenon, which is largely driven by the power of words, language, discourse, and other semiotic devices.

**Annex 1 (The document is included as an attached file)**

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