

ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis is to defend and explain the claim that traditional logical analysis is not the best tool for studying natural language argumentation.

The most common critique directed at employment of logical formalisms as tools for analysis of the natural language is usually based on pointing out of differences between structure and semantics of natural languages and languages of logical formalisms. This is not the main issue, I believe.

According to my findings the most fundamental problem of the traditional analysis is that it is based on many problematic epistemological assumptions, which are inherited from empiricist-positivist tradition. Namely the positivist version of the classical model of rationality as deductive reasoning from some basis of immediately verifiable and therefore unquestionable knowledge. The doctrine that every reasonable argumentation is reducible on deductions of such kinds is supposed to justify the traditional analysis of argumentation.

My original contribution is mainly in showing that without abandoning those presuppositions, we cannot hope to arrive at better understanding of natural language argumentation by developing new and more precise logical formalisms.

Logical formalisms are mere tools, which we have to use for the right purpose in the first place. If we can reflect more deeply on the role of deductive reasoning for argumentation as such, we can study some aspects of it more fruitfully, with the aid of standard logical formalisms.