

## **Argumentative Indicators and Moves in Selected American Police Interrogations**

**By**

**Yousir Sabah Iden <sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>College of Education, Department of English language, University of Kerbala- Iraq  
Corresponding Author's Email: [Yusur.s@s.uokerbala.edu.iq](mailto:Yusur.s@s.uokerbala.edu.iq)

**Muayyad Omran Chiad <sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>College of Education, Department of English language, University of Kerbala- Iraq  
Email: [muyyadomran2@uokerbala.edu.iq](mailto:muyyadomran2@uokerbala.edu.iq)

### **Abstract**

The present study investigates the role of argumentative moves and indicators in two American police interrogations with two suspects: George Huguely and Bryan Greenwell. The study aims at identifying argumentative moves and indicators and their functions, and the most and least exploited argumentative indicators utilized by American police and suspects. In association with aims, the study sets out two hypotheses: 1) each stage has a specific set of indicators that are utilized rather than others. For instances, request for clarification and dispute indicators mark the confrontation stage. 2) argumentative indications vary in frequency depending on the functions they fulfill. The most frequent argumentative indicator of the confrontation stage utilized by American police, for example, is request for clarification to elicit information; while the least frequent argumentative indicator is semi-assertive to express an opinion. The most frequent argumentative indicator used by the American suspects is strong assertive to express an opinion; while the least frequent is dispute indicator to deny a standpoint. To achieve the aims and verify these hypotheses the study adopts the model of critical discussion by (van Eemeren, Houtlosser, & Henkemans, 2007). Based on the findings the study concludes not all the argumentative indicators explained in the model are found in police interrogations. This type of discourse requires a specific set of indicators in each stage as follows: The confrontation stage includes request for justification, request for clarification, strong assertive, weak assertive, semi-assertive and doubt indicators, the opening stage is marked by challenge to defend standpoint, acceptance of the challenge, and agreement and disagreement with the other arguer's proposition, the argumentation stage comprises coordinative and subordinative arguments and the concluding stage encompasses withdrawal of standpoint and maintenance of an opinion. Requests for clarification, agreement with the opposing arguer's proposition, coordinative arguments, and indicators of maintenance are the most frequent argumentative indicators utilized by American police, while the least frequent argumentative indicators utilized by American police are strong assertives, challenges to defend a position, subordinative argument, and elimination of suspicion. Strong assertives, denying the other arguer's proposition, subordinative argument, and acceptance of the other arguer's proposition are the most prominent argumentative indicators used by American suspects, while semi-assertives, acceptance of the burden of proof, coordinative indicators, and non-acceptance of a proposition are the least frequent argumentative indicators employed by American suspects.

**Keywords:** argumentative indicators, police interrogations, argumentation, stages of argumentation.

## 1. Introduction

Since the eighties, argumentation has been studied within the pragma-dialectical framework of (Frans & Grootendorst, 1992; Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2010). The study of argumentative discourse entails digging into a complex mode of communication.

The study of argumentation is handled from several perspectives over the centuries, dating back to Greek antiquity. Although there are clashing perspectives that come from the ancient sciences of logic, rhetoric, and dialectic, yet, there are also theoretical similarities and reciprocal influences amongst the many perspectives in the subject (Drid, 2016).

Argumentation, according to both (Cohen, 1973; Searle & Searle, 1969) is an illocutionary act, whereas convincing is a perlocutionary act. They also mention that arguing and persuasion have a unique relationship. Within the same vein, van Eemeren et al. (2007) define argumentation as:

A speech act consisting of a constellation of statements designed to justify or refute an expressed opinion and calculated in a regimented discussion to convince a rational judge of a particular standpoint in respect of the acceptability or unacceptability of that expressed opinion. (p.18).

Police interrogation is a hybrid type of argumentation. It involves persuasion and information seeking arguments. The research focuses on the study of argumentative indicators and their significance in tracing argumentation processes. The current study comes at the argumentative moves and indicators through the analysis of police-suspect interrogations, which are the means through which the arguer might develop his argumentation to obtain a given conclusion. The present seeks to bridge this gap by identifying the argumentative indicators of each stage in the data under analysis and specifying the most and the least frequent argumentative indicators used by the American police and suspect to resolve the argumentation and highlighting their functions.

## 2. Review Of The Related Literature

### 2.1 Argumentative Indicators

Argumentative indicators are specifically "words and expressions that refer to any of the moves that are significant to the argumentative process" (van Eemeren et al., 2007). These argumentative indicators provide critical information for detecting arguments, since they serve as effective cues to lead the argument to a particular conclusion (van Eemeren et al., 2007).

Argumentative indicators are the words and phrases that are used to guide the flow of a debate and how it is structured and organized (Houtlosser, 2002). According to the previous studies, the pertinent component items in the text, as well as the links between these things, are the argumentative indications. van Eemeren et al. (2007) state that:

There are two senses of argumentative indicators: the limited and the wide senses. The limited sense of argumentation refers to the specific expressions that are used in the moves of the discussion. These expressions are, for instance, "in my opinion", "thus", and "because". On the other hand, the wide sense of argumentative indicators is related to any word or articulation which is utilized by the participants in the discussion. (pp.1-2).

Finally, the indicators can enlighten this research because the main aim of the study is to explore how police and suspects use these argumentative indicators to resolve their opposing positions.

## ***2.2 Police interrogations***

Royal and Schutt (1976) define police interviewing as "the art and mechanics of questioning for the purpose of exploring or resolving issues". Interrogation is a theory-driven social interaction guided by an authority person who has a strong a priori belief in the target and assesses success by his or her ability to elicit a confession (Kassin, 2005).

According to Tiersma and Solan (2005), police interrogation refers to the words or acts used by the police to elicit a reaction from the suspect in order to learn the truth about a certain criminal case.

Law enforcement authorities frequently obtain confessions from criminal suspects in order to incriminate people accused of committed a crime. According to Kassin (2005), between 42 and 55 percent of suspects confess during interrogation. Confessions are often interpreted as substantial, and often unequivocal, proof of guilt by legal professionals and jurors (Kassin & Sukel, 1997).

For social scientists and legal experts, police interrogation is an essential and intrinsically fascinating topic. The current interrogation technique, the confessions it frequently produces, and the crimes it occasionally solves, and the clashing interests and ideologies it involves pose plenty of critical questions. The importance of police questioning and confession-taking to society is significant (Kassin & Sukel, 1997).

Mason (2016) states that police interrogations frequently follow a four-stage process. The formative stage, which specifies how evidence can be collected, is the initial stage. The second stage is known as the preliminary stage, and it is during this stage that the questioner formulates the questions for the suspects, for example, depending on what the person accusing the suspect has told the police. The third stage is referred to as the argumentation stage, and consists of the suspect-interrogator's questions and answers. This step consists of the actual questioning which includes the exchanges between the police and the suspects. The fourth stage is referred to as the closing stage. The police officers had finished gathering the information they were looking for at this point, as the term implies.

## ***2.3 Suspects' Rights in the United States***

Suspects' Right, or sometimes called "Miranda Rights" refers to the warnings that are recited to the suspects by the police as they are arrested and before any kind of questioning and interrogation. The Court's purpose in Miranda Rights is to provide sufficient protections. When a suspect in custody is interrogated by police, s/he must be "adequately and efficiently informed of his rights" and given "constant chance to exercise them." To that end, the police are to inform the suspect "in clear and unequivocal terms" that s/he has the right to remain silent, anything said "can and will" be used against him/her in court, s/he has the right to consult a counsel prior to questioning, and if s/he could not afford an attorney, one would be appointed for him/her prior to any questioning if the defendant so desired (Medalie, Zeitz, & Alexander, 1968).

At least three premises seem to underpin the Court's decision:

1. The police provide adequate and effective warnings of legal rights and respect the accused's exercise of those rights.
2. The defendant will understand the meaning of the warnings and their significance in relation to himself, giving him enough information to decide whether or not to remain silent and whether or not to seek counsel in his own best interests (Medalie et al., 1968).

### **3. Methodology**

The current study adopts a qualitative method. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as delving into and comprehending the significance that individuals or groups attach to a social or human issue. The research process entails developing questions and processes, gathering data in the participants' environment, inductively analyzing the data, expanding from specifics to broad themes, and producing interpretations of the data's significance. Denzin (1994) assert that qualitative research is multi-method focused, incorporating an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. It is an umbrella concept for a variety of interpretive strategies that aim to characterize, decode, translate, and otherwise find a way to deal with the meaning of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social environment, rather than their frequency.

The current study used an internet-based data collection method. Initially, the researcher looked for data and discovered roughly 50 police interrogation scripts. She later reduced these interrogations to two American video-recorded police interrogations. The website from which the data are obtained is (<https://criminalwords.net/police-interrogation-transcripts/>), where by videos of the police interrogations along with their scripts are published.

The following criteria are taken into account:

1. As the current study is presented in English, American police interrogations are thought to be able to meet the researcher's need to complete her task because the interrogations are conducted in English and the subjects are native English speakers.
2. It concentrates solely on real video-recorded police interrogations that have been documented as part of normal police process and then uploaded to YouTube. In the analysis, however, the study is reliant on their scripts.
3. All of the data include male suspects to eliminate gender differences interfering with the interpretation of the results.
4. The data contains information about suspects who would subsequently be found guilty.
5. Finally, all texts focus on suspects accused of murder rather than other crimes like robbery or fraud, in order to avoid the impact of crime type on the severity of suspects' resistance. They are all murderers in the current cases.

The model of critical discussion is applied to the data analysis. It seeks to resolve disagreements between arguers in a rational discussion by determining if the point of view is acceptable or not (van Eemeren et al., 2007).

According to Tindale (1999), the model of critical discussion integrates the dialectical and rhetorical components and combines a reasonable manner to affect the audience.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2010) states that conversation among the participants is based on critical exchanges achieved by the speaker's questions and the listener's responses. The critical discussion links the logical viewpoint or dialectical perspective, and the various exchanges or pragmatic perspective in the argumentative discussion.

## **4. Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Analysis of Case 1**

The subsequent inquiry is focused on the murder of Yeardeley Love, George Huguely's ex-girlfriend. Yeardeley and George were both students at the University of Virginia. They were also part of the collegiate lacrosse squad. The couple's relationship was tumultuous, with regular fighting, excessive drinking, and physical violence. In the following police interrogation, the participants are George Huguely, the suspect, and two police investigators (Love, 2022).

#### ***Illustrative Excerpt***

**George Huguely:** I held her arms and stuff but like I never struck her, never like hit her... I was holding her but I never struck her or anything. And I think that might have been when her nose started to bleed, actually.

**Investigator1:** Just be honest.

**George Huguely:** Yeah, actually it was locked because I think I put a hole. Pretty sure it was locked now that you said that.

**Investigator1:** Why would you do that?

**George Huguely:** Because I wanted to talk to her. She's been sending me like emails.

**Investigator1:** So you kinda like tossed her on the bed and left.

**George Huguely:** Yeah.

**Investigator1:** Did you go back to check on her at any point?

**George Huguely:** No I did not.

**Investigator1:** Did you touch her neck area at all? Choke her at one point?" (**Appendix A. Case1**)

#### ***Confrontation Stage***

After reciting Miranda rights, the interrogator addresses basic questions concerning George Huguely's job and academic status. The suspect takes the lead and presents his first standpoint (negative standpoint), using assertive type of speech act, which he will be responsible for defending later on during the interrogation: "I was holding her but I never struck her or anything." He claims that he has never struck or hit his girlfriend. The interrogator doubts George's alleged saying and engages in a debate with George using directive speech act, asking him to be honest: "Just be honest" and to clear things up. The two participants confront each other in a single non-mixed dispute. Now, George has to defend his standpoint against the doubts of the interrogator.

The detective asks George why he put a hole in the door utilizing directive speech act to ask for usage declarative: "Why would you do that?". George gives clarification for his deed by employing usage declarative: "Because I wanted to talk to her. She's been sending me like emails."

When George is first questioned about how he got to the victim's residence, he claims that the door was left open. However, the expressions he uses indicate that he is lying; he employs force modifying expression, i.e., weak assertive: "Actually, it might have been locked". His answers vary from weak assertives to strong ones. He uses weak assertive when he says the door was open which is a lie. Soon he shifts to use proportional attitude indicator, strong assertive, when he tells the truth: "I'm Pretty sure it was locked now."

The interrogator is not convinced by George's mentioned standpoint, detective Best tries to obtain more information and makes her position clear that she is in a dispute with the suspect and demonstrates that by utilizing a dispute argumentative indicator, such as requests for clarifications and requests for justifications: "Did you touch her neck area at all? Choke her at one point?" "Did you go back to check on her at any point?"

The confrontation stage is marked by a series of requests for clarifications and justifications that pave the way for the next stage, in which Mr. Huguely is given the chance to justify his mentioned standpoint. This stage is recycled again during the interrogation. The events of the investigation have developed. The interrogator has an entirely different standpoint of what has been offered by the accused.

### ***Illustrative Excerpt***

**Investigator1:** Alright. So when you left out of there you saw she was bleeding out her nose. Did you try to call rescue or anything to make sure she was alright?

**George Huguely:** No, I did not...

**Investigator1:** Why?

**George Huguely:** Uh... I didn't think it was like, I didn't think she was like in need of going to the emergency room. She had like, a bloody

**Investigator1:** Why did you think that?

**George Huguely:** I don't know. I mean." (**Appendix A. Case1**)

### ***The Opening Stage***

In the opening stage, the disputants lay out their mutual concessions and agree to use them as a common starting point for discussion. Since George has proposed the original position, he is in obligation of defending it at this stage. As there are no apparent indicators rather than requests for clarifications, the opening stage appears to be implicit in the excerpt above. The nature of police interrogation, which is logically deviant as a type of discourse, contributes to the implicitness of the stage.

Mr. Huguely has stated that he has never hit or assaulted Yeardley during the confrontation stage, however the interrogator says that Yeardley's nose is bleeding in the above excerpt; the interrogator uses an assertive speech act: "Alright. So when you left out of there you saw she was bleeding out her nose". The interrogator asks if George did anything about that or not: "Did you try to call rescue or anything to make sure she was alright?". She utilizes directive speech act challenging the suspect to defend his earlier statement. Since the interrogator has the legal authority to ask such questions, the suspect has the legal obligation to respond and accept the challenge to defend his position.

For not hurting or striking his dead girlfriend, George Huguely must bear the burden of proof. He appears cooperative and willing to bear the burden of proof by responding to the interrogator's questions, but he does not provide any excuses for his actions. All of his replies denote his guilt and he has indeed hit the victim.: " Uh... I didn't think it was like, I didn't think she was like in need of going to the emergency room. I don't know. I mean ..."

### *The Argumentation Stage*

The murder of Yeardley is based on several standpoints, so the accused must defend every point in this case with a convincing argument. The interrogator brings up a point about the bruises on George's arm, hinting that these scars are there because he has hit Yeardley. George asserts that the scars are from lacrosse and not from his wrestling with his girlfriend. He employs a subordinative argument: "This is all tanned because that's where gets sun, compared to like my legs [shows leg] the difference in color and that's, I got whacked. I remember one hundred percent. Got whacked when I was trying".

The second argument George advances is about the reason for kicking Yeardley's door. George utilizes a subordinative argument to support his defense: "because I sent her emails. Like six emails that were like "we need to talk, I'm coming over to talk to you" and like, and she actually did respond to those. Actually She did respond to those. She was like "fuck you, I'm not talking to you" like something along those lines."

An argument by analogy is another argument given by George. He wants to provide a strong evidence of his innocence, so he constructs a reasonable argument to explain why he took the victim's laptop in the first place. He claims that when he removed her laptop, he had no intention of hiding anything. Therefore, he uses an analogous argument to get over the interrogator's questioning: " you could look at my computer and see emails that are on my computer that are on her computer. Emails are It's not like her email account is erased because I took her computer. I have no idea why I took the computer. Probably because she was like not talking to me, and not like, she's did like all this stuff and I just walked out of there with her computer."

The investigator wants to get more information about how the suspect's entered into the victim's house and why he entered in such ways. He uses directive speech act to request for more clarification: "understand you had a lot of alcohol in you last night, okay? Do you think that maybe could have lead you to, why you, fed your emotions to kick in that door?". Huguely defends his position again and asserts that he just wants to talk and that he does not have any intention of breaking the door or hitting his girlfriend. This time, Huguely employs a coordinative argument: "But it was all strictly to go in there and talk to her. I wanted to talk to her. I told her, I sent emails, you can see the emails, you can see everything. Said "we need to talk about this", I sent like three emails like "I want to come talk to you" then like "fuck yourself". I should not have gone over there when like, when I was drinking. But like that, that made me emotional so I wanted to go talk to her. That's why I kicked to the door. That's why I was trying. I wanted to talk to her".

The investigator requests another argument from Huguely, this time about the blood that comes out of the victim's nose. She asks: " How did you see the blood and stuff coming out her nose?". George offers a subordinative argument to justify seeing the blood while the lights were off: "Because she has a big bay window by her room and there's lights from the parking lot. And I mean, it's not hard, it's easy to see".

A final subordinative argument has been advanced by the investigator. He argues that George took the computer because he had threatened to kill Yeardley: "Because you had threats to kill her on that from a past email because she hooked up with a player from UNC."

In this excerpt, the suspect is required to defend his position, so most of the arguments are advanced by him to defend him.

### ***The Concluding Stage***

Prior to this stage, the suspect has repeatedly denied striking the victim; nevertheless, following a series of extended conversations with the detectives, he provides a partial confession of tossing her on bed and leaving her bleeding from her nose. In this stage, the investigator returns to the scene and confronts George of Yeardley's death with the previously provided information.

Detective Lisa informs the suspect that Yeardley is no longer alive at this stage. She makes it plain that she does not buy what George is saying and she totally rejects the suspect's earlier viewpoint. Detective Lisa employs commissive speech act to refute George's point of view: "I don't believe that. I don't believe she banged her own head in the wall."

George is astonished and couldn't believe the death of Yeardley: "She is not dead, she is not dead," he says, rejecting detective Lisa's claim. George repeats, assertively, that the detective's statements are not to be believed.

The second interrogator begins to question the suspect. The interrogator maintains detective Lisa's point using a directive speech act to extract more information: "Did you hold her head into the wall? Did you crack it? ". George keeps denying and refuses to withdraw his viewpoint utilizing a usage declarative: "It didn't. I told you what happened. It didn't get out of control. She's not dead..."

George employs usage declarative to maintain his position and denies the victim's death moreover. His reaction was exaggerated: "It didn't. I told you what happened. It didn't get out of control. She's not dead, she's not dead, she's not dead. There's no way she's dead. There's no way! I didn't do! No way! There's no way!". Three argumentative indicators are employed by George: "I refuse to believe that she is dead.", "There is no way" and " If you were honest you would have said murder charges". All of these statements indicate that Huguely is not convinced by the police and he refuses to withdraw his standpoint. Both of the parties maintain their position establishing the result of the discussion.

### ***4.2 Analysis of Case 2***

Jodie Cecil and Bryan Greenwell were found guilty of murdering a woman and injuring her husband in Louisville's Shelby Park area. Derrell Wilson and Jennifer Cain, who lived next door to Jodie and Bryan, were the victims (Lee, 2019a).

### ***Illustrative Excerpt***

#### ***"Bryan Greenwell:***

Man, I can't, I just got out of jail. I don't know if she had that before I went in, or before right before I got out, or what. I think I was only there a couple weeks, maybe? Something like that. Maybe a little longer. I know it was like between two, two weeks. Two to three weeks. Something like that.



***Investigator:***

And you guys never went back to that apartment? Bryan Greenwell: Yeah, we went back. Investigator: You did?

***Bryan Greenwell:***

Yeah. We went back and got some of our stuff. I mean, we've seen the landlord and nothing was ever said. We've seen cops sitting there and nothing was ever said to us. And I was thinking "well, this aint got nothing to do with us, I hope"

***Investigator:***

Did you know those neighbors? Ya'll never, you ever seen them before? Bryan Greenwell: Yeah, we've seen them in passing....

***Investigator:***

If I showed you a picture of them, would you know who they are? Bryan Greenwell: Pretty sure I would be.

***Bryan Greenwell:***

Yeah, yeah, that was her. Now the guy? Investigator: Now this is a little older picture. I think he had probably just got done. His hair may have been a lot longer. Bryan Greenwell: Hm, yeah. If you put long hair on him it looks like him.

***Investigator:***

So you all didn't have any interaction with them?"

***The Confrontation Stage***

Detective Royce has informed the suspect of his rights and initiated the discussion, acting as the party who introduces the point of view in the critical argument. The investigator does not challenge Greenwell directly during this police questioning, but he tacitly opens a conversation about Bryan's residence and confronts him as being part of the murder case being investigated: "Let me take you back to that apartment on Shelby. How long did ya'll stay there?"

Greenwell's neighbor and his wife are another implied viewpoint on which this research is based. This police interrogation is taking place because Greenwell and Jodie Cecil are accused of murdering Jennifer Cain and badly injuring her husband.

Bryan Greenwell and Detective Royce are involved in a multiple mix dispute. The investigator presents two opposing viewpoints, both of which Bryan rejects: "Man, I can't, I just got out of jail. I don't know if she had that before I went in, or before right before I got out." Greenwell follows this statement by proportional attitude indicator, weak assertive, which indicates that he might be hiding some facts.

The investigator asks Bryan about whether he knows his neighbor or not, utilizing the directive speech act: "Did you know those neighbors? Ya'll never, you ever seen them before?" Bryan confesses knowing them and utilizes proportional attitude indicator, strong assertive, saying: "pretty sure I would be". He asserts knowing his neighbors. The investigator employs an implicit dispute indicator to make a request for clarification of whether Bryan has had any interaction with his neighbors or not: "So you all didn't have any

interaction with them?". Greenwell denies any engagement with them other than few chats, yet his argumentative indicator is weak assertive, which indicates that he is dishonest: "I think it was what? One, two, two [crosstalk] yeah"

At this stage the investigator raises two differing standpoints to be discussed. The first one is about Bryan and Jodie's apartment which is terminated during the argument and the other is about their neighbors. This point is to be proved in the coming stage.

### *Illustrative Excerpt*

#### **"Investigator:**

What happened over there? What have you heard? What do you know?

#### **Bryan Greenwell:**

I just heard that somebody got shot, somebody got killed or something like that. Then we stayed away for a couple days because that's when I found out that supposedly they were there for her, and us, you know what I'm saying? It was supposed to be us. I was like, you know, um, we made the decision to stay away for a couple of days because hell, somebody wanted to talk to her they, the landlord knew her phone number, her cell phone number, knew her name, everything else. Nobody ever tried to contact us. At least, as far as I know, nobody ever tried to contact us. Which I mean the house, the apartment wasn't even, it was her apartment, wasn't in my name, or nothing like that.

#### **Investigator:**

Right. Alright. Did you know that there were two victims there? Did you know that?

**Bryan Greenwell:** No.

**Investigator:** Both of those two people I showed you.

**Bryan Greenwell:** No, they told me it was just the.. uh.. lady.

**Investigator:** Well, both of them were shot. And uh, this is what I want to show you." (Appendix B. Case2).

### *The Opening Stage*

In the previous stage, two points of view are offered. One of them, which is about the residents of Bryan and Jodie, is terminated. The other is that Jodie and Bryan are accused of murdering their neighbors. This point is opened for discussion in this excerpt.

Detective Royce utilizes the directive speech act to challenge the suspect to defend his position as being innocent: "What happened over there? What have you heard? What do you know?" He asks the suspect to clarify the events that has happened near their resident to confirm his innocence.

Greenwell employs an opening stage indicator to accept the change: "I just heard that somebody got shot, somebody got killed or something like that". The norms of police interrogations require the accused to defend his position, but they do not require the investigator to do so. As such, Bryan accepts the challenge to defend his viewpoint in one-sided burden of proof. Greenwell defends his position with a lie: "I just heard that somebody got shot, somebody got killed or something like that". He denies shooting them. This move leads to undesirable consequence on the part of the suspect.

The police interrogator utilizes a directive speech act to request a usage declarative: "Did you know that there were two victims there?" Despite the fact that he is the one who

shot them, the suspect denies knowing there were two victims. He emphasizes that he was told that the woman was the only one who was shot: "I just heard that somebody got shot, somebody got killed or something like that..." Bryan wants to establish his previous assertion that he had no connection to the victims and knows them only through cross-talk.

This stage is brought to a close by Detective Royce's presentation of new evidence: A video clip in which the injured guy claims Bryan and Jodie are involved in his wife's murder was shown to Jodie, who stated that Bryan was the one who shot them. Greenwell must now defend himself against a novel viewpoint.

### ***The Argumentation Stage***

At this point, both the suspect and the investigator provide a number of counter-arguments. Each one tries to persuade the other of his point of view. According to the dialectal profile for the argumentation stage, this stage starts with a directive speech act to seek an argument.

Detective Royce asks for an argument using the directive speech act: "Does that sound like a fair statement of how things may have occurred?" The suspect advances two arguments; coordinative argument: "But, that's it. You can find my fingerprints on a couple of things if you finger print the place." and the subordinative one: "because where I walked into the room, I kind of picked some stuff up, you know, because it was laying everywhere so I was like, I mean, other than that." In both of them, the suspect wants to prove that he was just trying to help and had no intent to hide anything since his finger prints were all over the house and he did nothing to remove them.

To get Greenwell supply further information, the investigator accepts these arguments and uses the directive speech act to request a usage declarative: "What do you mean you do this every time?" Bryan, on the other hand, uses usage declarative to emphasize that he is always protecting and helping people: "I always try to protect everybody."

Detective Royce makes several arguments to persuade Greenwell to share his side of the incident. Subordinative argument is used by the investigator to encourage the suspect to reveal the truth about what happened to Jennifer Cain and Derrell: "Because there's a big difference between you going in and saying "I'm going to f\*\*\* kill somebody" and you going in "I'm trying to help somebody" and then shit goes bad." He backs up his previous argument with a second coordinative argument in order to persuade Bryan that there is a substantial difference between killing and helping: "And one's a whole lot better than the other." Detective Royce uses another coordinative argument to persuade Bryan that he has enough information to leave the room, but he wants a fair interrogation: "because I believe in getting everybody a fair shot at this".

Bryan Greenwell insists that he was just trying to help and he had no intention to harm the couple utilizing subordinative argument: "Cause I guess her or something like that. So I walked in there and I separated them and this and that. That's when, to be honest with you, I don't even, I can't even remember how the gun came into play, for real"

### ***The Concluding Stage***

The parties must determine the outcome of a considerable disagreement at the end of the discussion. This means they must work together to decide whether the protagonist has

effectively defended his initial position or whether the antagonist has successfully attacked it. The goal is to determine who has the right to preserve his initial opinion at the conclusion of the debate and who must withdraw his first position.

Bryan Greenwell utilizes a commissive speech act to accept the standpoint initiated by detective Royce: "Yeah. There's a big difference. I mean, I shouldn't have went with my gut and just stayed out of it." Again, he employs assertive speech act to repeat Detective Royce's viewpoint is accepted: "that wasn't what I wanted."

The investigator utilizes indirect directive speech act to request a usage declarative: "No?". He establishes the end of the discussion employing usage declarative: "And you've done yourself big time favors here. You've done the best you can for yourself with the"

The suspect employs two argumentative indicators at this stage to suggest that he has changed his mind at the end of the conversation: "I shouldn't have went with my gut and just stayed out of it." He regrets going into their apartment. Finally, he states they just needed help and he wanted to help them: "If I see somebody needs help, I try to help."

## **5. Results And Discussion**

### *5.1 The Frequencies and percentages of the Individual Analysis*

#### *1- The Argumentative Indicators Used by the Police in Case 1*

##### *The Confrontation Stage*

The most frequent argumentative indicators of the confrontation stage are the dispute indicators. A request for clarification occurs 23 times (74.1%). police detectives utilize the dispute indicators (request for clarification) more than requests for justification, which occurs 6 times (19.5%) to provide George an opportunity to be comfortable and not to coerce the him during questioning.

Proportional attitude indicators and force modifying expressions are only used once (3.2%) and in weak assertive form. Detective Lisa is being friendly and tries to exclude strong assertives which makes her look forceful.

##### *The Opening Sage*

The interrogator employs the challenge to defend the arguer's position twice (28.5%) to extract more information and reveal the truth. An agreement with the other arguer's proposition is used 5 times (71.5%). These frequencies demonstrate that the investigator is tactful and does not frequently challenge the defendant, but rather agrees with his claims.

##### *The Argumentation Stage*

Police interrogators deploy a number of arguments to clarify the evidence they possess against the suspect; they utilize these arguments to provide the suspect with proof of the events under inquiry. The result shows that there are a total of 7 argumentative indicators. Subordinative argument is utilized to present a reason to support the detectives' opinions and it occurs 6 times (85.7%). These arguments are employed to motivate the George to confess his crime as he keeps denying hitting or harming his girlfriend.

### ***The Concluding Stage***

The investigators maintain their opinion at the concluding stage and they reject George standpoint. Both interrogators have suspicions, but George refuses to admit the girl's death.

## ***2. The Argumentative Indicators Used by the Suspect in Case 1***

### ***The Confrontation Stage***

Strong assertive is the most frequent indicator used by the George. It is used 15 times (55.6%). He appears to be certain of his innocence, and he is unaware that Love has died, thus his statements are emphatic. The least frequent indicator is dispute indicator which occurs 4 times (14.8%). This shows that the George wants to express his innocence rather than be in disagreement with the police.

### ***The Opening Sage***

The George implicitly accepts the burden of proof by answering the questions directed to him by the police. At the same time, he utilizes the denying argumentative indicators only. Denying the other arguer's proposition is the only explicit indicator used by the suspect as he employs it 4 times (66.6%). Huguely accepts the burden of proof and is cooperative in answering almost all of the questions directed to him by detective Lisa and the other interrogator; however, at the end of the interrogation, detective Lisa tells him that Love is dead and he is the one who killed her. When this has happened, he denies knowing anything about the victim's death and preserved this position until the final moment of the interrogation.

### ***The Argumentation Stage***

The George utilizes the subordinative indicators 6 times (54.5%) to present a reason and to support an opinion. He provides a series of arguments to back up his position as being innocent. He also joins additional arguments to support his opinion.

### ***The Concluding Stage***

The Huguely maintains his position and does not accept the police viewpoint. He totally rejects the idea of the victim's death. Hence, the only argumentative indicator used by him is non-acceptance of the arguers' standpoint.

## ***3. The Argumentative Indicators Used by the Police in Case 2***

### ***The Confrontation Stage***

The most frequent indicator used by Detective Royce is the request for clarification which occurs 8 times (47%). Weak assertive is utilized 5 times (29.4%). The least frequent indicators are Semi-assertives and dispute indicators. Both occur only one time (11.7%). This demonstrates that the investigator provides the suspect with the opportunity to confess. He does not utilize requests for justification or strong assertions, but rather weak assertions to inform the suspect that the investigator is not certain and would want to hear the events from Greenwell himself.

### ***The Opening Sage***

The interrogator employs the challenge to defend the arguer's position once (33.4%) to force Greenwell to defend his position. An agreement with the other arguer's proposition is used twice (66.6%). These frequencies demonstrate that the detective Royce is being diplomatic and does not often challenge Greenwell, but rather agrees with his allegations.

### *The Argumentation Stage*

Detective Royce employs a number of arguments to clarify the evidence he possesses against the suspect. He uses these arguments to convince Greenwell that the police have quite enough details of the incident and that he should confess. Detective Royce utilizes the subordinative argument 4 times (26.6%) and the coordinative argument 11 times (73.4%). These frequencies show that the investigator employs rational persuasion using reasoned argumentation to extract accurate information from the respondent.

### *The Concluding Stage*

Detective Royce removes his suspicions of the suspect viewpoint as the suspect has confessed. No other argumentative indicators are used because both parties agree on the settlement of the incident.

## **4. The Argumentative Indicators Used by the Suspect in Case 2**

### *The Confrontation Stage*

Weak assertives, dispute indicators, and semi-assertives are used 4 times (30.7%). Strong assertive is used once (6.9%). This indicates that the Greenwell's statements are unstable. He uses weak assertives at the start of the interrogation, then switches to semi-assertive statements, and then enters into a disagreement with Officer Royce, denying the events. Strong assertive is used to describe an ordinary event.

### *The Opening Sage*

The Greenwell accepts the burden of proof by answering the questions directed to him. Denying the other arguer's proposition is utilized at the beginning of the opening stage. The argumentative indicators of denying the other arguer's proposition are used 2 times (33.3%). The agreement with the other arguer's proposition indicator is utilized 3 times (50%) because the suspect denies at first, then confesses.

### *The Argumentation Stage*

The suspect utilizes the subordinative indicators 6 times (54.5%) to present a reason to support his standpoints and to assure his innocence. And he joins additional arguments to clarify his viewpoints.

### *The Concluding Stage*

One type of concluding stage indicator is used, which is the acceptance of the other arguer's proposition. This indicator is utilized 3 times (100%) because Greenwell agrees with the police's standpoint and establishes the end of the discussion.

## **5.2 The Frequencies and percentages of the Overall Analysis**

### **1. The Argumentative Indicators Used by the American Police**

#### **Confrontation Stage**

**Table 1:** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Confrontation Stage

Confrontation Stage								
Proportional Attitude Indicator	Fr.	Pr.	Force Modifying Indicators	Fr.	Pr.	Dispute Indicators	Fr.	Pr.
Weak assertive	6	12.5%	Weak assertive	1	2%	Show doubt	2	4.1%
Strong assertive	0	0	Strong assertive	0	0	Request for clarification	31	64.5%
Semi-assertive	2	4.1%				Request for justification	6	12.5%
Total				48		100%		

The most frequent argumentative indicators of the confrontation stage are the dispute indicators. A request for clarification occurred 31 times (64.8%). American police detectives utilize the dispute indicators, request for clarification, more than requests for justification, which occurred 6 times (12.5%) to provide the suspect an opportunity to be comfortable and not to coerce the suspect during questioning.

Proportional attitude indicators and force modifying expressions are only used 7 times (14.5%) and in weak assertive forms. The American investigator is being friendly and tries to exclude strong assertives which makes him sound forceful.

### *The Opening Stage*

**Table 2** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Opening Stage

<b>The Opening Stage</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>Pr.</b>
Challenge to defend standpoint	3	30%
An agreement with the other arguer's proposition	7	70%
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>

The American interrogators employ the challenge to defend the arguer's position three times (30%) to extract more information and reveal the truth. An agreement with the other arguer's proposition is used 7 times (70%). These frequencies demonstrate that American investigators are tactful and do not much challenge the defendant, but rather agree with his claims.

### *The Argumentation Stage*

**Table 3** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Argumentation Stage

<b>Subordinative Indicators</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>Pr.</b>	<b>Coordinative Indicators</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>Pr.</b>
Present a reason to support an opinion	10	45%	Join an additional argument to support an opinion	12	55%
<b>Total</b>			<b>22</b>		<b>100%</b>

Police deploy a number of arguments to clarify the evidence they possess against the suspect. They utilize these arguments to provide the suspect with proof on the occurrence under inquiry. Subordinative argument is utilized to present a reason to support the detectives' opinions and it occurs 10 times (45.4%). Coordinative argumentative indicators are utilized 12 times (54.5%). These arguments motivate the suspects to confess.

### *The Concluding Stage*

**Table 4:** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Concluding Stage

<b>Concluding Stage indicators</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>Pr.</b>
The investigator maintains his opinion	2	66.6%
The investigator removes his suspicion	1	33.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>

American interrogators maintain their position at the end of the discussion more than withdrawing their standpoints. As it is shown in Table 57, the argumentative indicator of maintenance is utilized 2 times (66.6%).

## 2. The Argumentative Indicators Used by the American Suspects

### The Confrontation Stage

**Table 5** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Confrontation Stage

Confrontation Stage								
Proportional Attitude Indicator	Fr.	Pr.	Force Modifying Indicators			Dispute Indicates	Fr.	Pr.
			Weak assertive	10	25%			
Strong assertive	4	10%	Strong assertive	12	30%			
Semi-assertive	4	10%						
Total				40		100%		

Strong assertive is the most frequent indicator used by the suspect. They are used 16 times (40%). The least frequent indicator is semi-assertive, it is utilized 4 times (10%). This shows that the suspect wants to assert his innocence rather than be in disagreement with the police. Both strong and weak assertives are utilized to express an opinion. American suspects express their opinions with strong expressions more than with weak assertion. This shows that they are stubborn and try to disguise the truth. Weak assertives are utilized 12 times (30%) and this indicates their hesitation and their untruthful statements.

### The Opening Stage

**Table 6:** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Confrontation Stage

The Opening Stage		Fr.	Pr.
Denying the other arguer's proposition		6	50%
Implicit acceptance of the burden of proof		3	25%
The suspect's agreement with the other arguer's proposition		3	25%
Total		12	100%

American suspects use denying the police proposition 6 times (50%). The suspect's agreement with the police is utilized 3 times (25%). These frequencies show that the suspect always denies the standpoint being introduced by the police. The suspect acceptance of the burden of proof, which is used 3 times (25%) shows their cooperation during interrogation.

### The Argumentation Stage

**Table 7** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in Argumentation Stage

Subordinative indicators	Fr.	Pr.	Coordinative indicators	Fr.	Pr.
Present a reason to support an opinion	11	65%	Join an additional argument to support an opinion	6	35%
Total		17		100%	

American suspects utilize the subordinative indicators 11 times (65%) to present a reason to support an opinion. On top of that, they join additional arguments to support their opinion. Suspects employ these rational reasoning to prop their viewpoints.



### *The Concluding Stage*

**Table 8:** Frequencies and Percentages of the Indicators in the Concluding Stage

<b>Concluding Stage Indicators</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>Pr.</b>
The suspect accepts the police's proposition.	5	63%
The suspect does not accept the police's proposition.	3	37%
Total	8	100%

American suspects withdraw their standpoints 5 times (63%). Suspects maintain their standpoints 3 times (37%). These results show that American police resolve the interrogation to their advantage.

## **Conclusion**

1- Not all argumentative indicators found in police interrogation. This type of discourse requires a specific set of indicators in each stage as follows:

- The confrontation stage includes request for justification, request for clarification, strong assertive, weak assertive, semi-assertive and doubt indicators.
- The opening stage is marked by challenge to defend standpoint, acceptance of the challenge, and agreement and disagreement with the other arguer's proposition.
- The argumentation stage comprises coordinative and subordinative arguments.
- The concluding stage encompasses withdrawal of standpoint and maintenance of an opinion.

Accordingly, hypothesis **No.1** is validated

2- The findings show that, in relation to the four stages, confrontation, opening, argumentation, and concluding, the indicators can be listed as follows:

- Requests for clarification, agreement with the opposing arguer's proposition, coordinative arguments, and indicators of maintenance are the most frequent argumentative indicators utilized by American police. The functions of the aforementioned indicators are to seek information, demonstrate agreement, provide an extra motive for the suspects to confess, and set the result of the discussion, respectively.
- The least frequent argumentative indicators utilized by American police are strong assertives, challenges to defend a position, subordinative argument, and elimination of suspicion. Their functions are to express an opinion, challenge the suspect, provide a reason for the suspect to reveal the truth, and to remove a suspicion, in that order.
- Strong assertives, denying the other arguer's proposition, subordinative argument, and acceptance of the other arguer's proposition are the most prominent argumentative indicators used by American suspects. Their functions are to express an opinion, deny a proposition, present a rationale to sustain a position, and withdraw an opinion, in that succession.
- Semi-assertives, acceptance of the burden of proof, coordinative indicators, and non-acceptance of a proposition are the least frequent argumentative indicators employed by American suspects. They are used to express opinions, accept the burden of defending a viewpoint, present an extra cause for being innocent, and withdraw a previous position, in that sequence.

Hence, hypothesis **No.2** is validated.

## References

- Cohen, T. (1973). Illocutions and perlocutions. *Foundations of language*, 9(4), 492-503. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25000695>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research designs: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. *California: Sage*. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Daliborka-Luketic/publication/320521456>
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. London: Sage Publications.
- Drid, T. (2016). A Pragma-Dialectical Approach to Argumentative Discourse. 19(4), 20-35. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12323/3465>
- Frans, V. E., & Grootendorst, R. (1992). Argumentation, communication and fallacies. In: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
- Houtlosser, P. (2002). Indicators of a point of view. <https://dare.uva.nl/search?identifier=b7d14ae9-c4ca-463d-9938-b6419bb731cb>
- Kassin, S. M. (2005). On the psychology of confessions: Does innocence put innocents at risk? *American psychologist*, 60(3), 215. <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2005-03019-002>
- Kassin, S. M., & Sukel, H. (1997). Coerced confessions and the jury: An experimental test of the “harmless error” rule. *Law and Human Behavior*, 21(1), 27-46. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024814009769>
- Love, M. o. Y. (2022). (January 20). In Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder\\_of\\_Yeardley\\_Love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Yeardley_Love).
- Mason, M. (2016). The ‘preparatory’ and ‘argumentation’ stages of police interrogation: A linguistic analysis of a criminal investigation. *Language & Communication*, 48, 79-87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2016.03.001>
- Medalie, R. J., Zeitz, L., & Alexander, P. (1968). Custodial police interrogation in our nation's capital: the attempt to implement Miranda. *Michigan Law Review*, 66(7), 1347-1422. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1287105>
- Royal, R. F., & Schutt, S. R. (1976). *The gentle art of interviewing and interrogation: A professional manual and guide*. Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, NJ. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/gentle-art-interviewing-and-interrogation-professional-manual->
- Searle, J. R., & Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language* (Vol. 626). Cambridge university press.
- Tiersma, P., & Solan, L. M. (2005). Speaking of crime: The language of criminal justice. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=721625>
- Tindale, C. W. (1999). *Acts of arguing: A rhetorical model of argument*. SUNY Press.
- Van Eemeren, F. H., & Grootendorst, R. (2010). *Speech acts in argumentative discussions: A theoretical model for the analysis of discussions directed towards solving conflicts of opinion* (Vol. 1). Walter de Gruyter.
- van Eemeren, F. H., Houtlosser, P., & Henkemans, A. F. S. (2007). *Argumentative indicators in discourse: A pragma-dialectical study*. Springer.

## Appendices:

- **Appendix A: George Huguely police interrogation**  
<https://criminalwords.net/2019/09/09/george-huguely-police-interrogation/>
- **Appendix B: Bryan Greenwell police interrogation**  
<https://criminalwords.net/2019/09/11/bryan-greenwell-interrogation-transcript/>