

# ISSA Proceedings 2006 - The Management Of The Burden Of Proof And Its Implications For The Analysis Of Qualified Standpoints: The Case Of Evaluative Adverbials



## *1. Introduction*

In this paper, I seek to answer two interrelated questions:

a) what argumentatively relevant information can we draw from the use of stance adverbials when they qualify the utterance that is to be reconstructed as a standpoint?

b) How can we make use of it in the analysis and evaluation of the argumentative discourse in which the qualified standpoint appears?

I start from the theoretical premises of the pragma-dialectical approach (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 1992, 2004, van Eemeren and Houtlosser 1999, 2000, 2002a), which considers both the normative and the descriptive aspects of argumentative discourse and acknowledges both the dialectical and the rhetorical aims that arguers have when engaging in argumentative discussions. In answer to the first question, I introduce the concept of the management of the burden of proof as a normative assumption about the choices at the protagonist's disposal regarding the qualification of a standpoint. In answer to the second question, I look at evaluative adverbials, in particular, and discuss how considering them as one of the ways in which a standpoint can be qualified contributes to the analysis of the argumentative discourse. Before elaborating on the answers to these two questions, I briefly present the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation and discuss how the qualification of standpoints is to be understood. In the last section of the paper, by way of illustration, I analyse a short fragment of argumentative discourse, in which the standpoint is qualified by an evaluative adverbial.

## *2. The theoretical framework*

Pragma-dialectics (henceforth referred to as PD) proposes a systematic and comprehensive study of argumentative discourse as a verbal, rational and social activity (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004). The aim of the pragma-dialectical approach is to evaluate ordinary language users' argumentation as it occurs in written or spoken communication by appealing to standards of critical reasonableness. To this end, an ideal model of a critical discussion has been developed, which is the theoretical construct that serves as the lens through which argumentative reality is interpreted, analysed and eventually evaluated.

The ideal model of a critical discussion is conceived as a dialogue between two parties, who perform the asymmetrical roles of protagonist and antagonist of the standpoint. The antagonist casts doubt on the standpoint and subsequently on the arguments in support of it, while the protagonist adduces arguments in response to the antagonist's challenges. The path to the resolution of the dispute ideally goes through four stages: confrontation, opening, argumentation and concluding stage. A number of procedural rules, inspired by Popper's critical rationalism and in line with a dialectical approach to argumentation describe which moves may be performed by each party and which not, and at which point throughout the dispute resolution process (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 2004).

The model serves a heuristic function for the analysis of argumentative discourse in the sense that it specifies the argumentatively relevant elements that the analyst should look for in argumentative reality or extract from it for that matter. It also serves a critical function in the evaluation of argumentative discourse. When mapping the reconstructed discussion on the ideal discussion, all those moves that were made while they should not have been made and those that were not made while they should have are considered as an obstruction to the goal of reaching a resolution to the dispute and thereby identified as fallacies (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992).

In order to reconstruct argumentative discourse (whether spoken or written) in terms of the ideal model of a critical discussion, PD treats it as a dialogue (explicit or implicit) and attributes to the parties involved in it the joint goal of coordinating their moves in order to critically test the tenability of a standpoint. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (1999, 2000, 2002a) in a series of articles argue that an integration of rhetorical insights in the pragma-dialectical framework can benefit the analysis by providing a better understanding of argumentative reality. In the light of what is termed strategic manoeuvring, PD acknowledges that the parties, when fulfilling their respective roles and contributing their moves to the

dispute resolution process, do not only observe the dialectical standards set by the procedural rules of the discussion but also try to make the best of what is allowed for each of them at the various stages of the discussion. In this integrated view:

- The antagonist is not only assumed to be interested in *having the standpoint tested by casting doubt* on the arguments in support of it but also in *having the other party retract the standpoint* as a result of the testing procedure.
- The protagonist is not only assumed to be interested in *having the standpoint tested by adducing arguments* in support of it but also in *having the other party retract the doubt* as a result of the testing procedure.

The moves that each party makes in the course of an argumentative discussion are thus considered to originate in his attempt to strike a balance between the goals of having the standpoint tested and having it tested in his own favour. It is with this normative view of how moves in an argumentative discussion are ideally produced that the concept of strategic manoeuvring complements the pragma-dialectical analysis. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (1999, 2000, 2002a) suggest that a way to understand what the design of the moves consists of is by referring to the three aspects of topical potential, audience and presentation, which roughly correspond to 'what is said', 'to whom' and 'how'.

While in ideal terms none of these aspects should override the other two in the definition of a move that should be both dialectically sound and rhetorically effective, in practice things may be different. A party, for example, may allow the consideration of a particular audience to determine the choice of the topic or what the presentation should be, or allow the topic to shape the way the audience is being addressed. In doing so, that party prioritizes effectiveness over reasonableness to the detriment of the main goal of dispute-resolution, which requires both reasonableness and effectiveness to shape his argumentative conduct on equal terms. Such a move obstructs the dispute-resolution procedure from progressing according to the dialectical standards set in the ideal model of a critical discussion and is thereby identified as a fallacy. The perpetration of a fallacy, defined already as a violation of one of the procedural rules of a critical discussion, can now also be explained within PD as a derailment from the ideal balance that the strategic manoeuvring describes.

The analysis of argumentative discourse in the light of the strategic manoeuvring invites the analyst to pay closer attention to the pragmatics of communication in order to present a better-justified reconstruction of argumentative reality and a

more refined evaluation of it. The concept of strategic manoeuvring, therefore, opens up the possibility within PD of a more systematic exploration of the strategic effect of choices in the use of language.

### 3. Qualification of standpoints

One such phenomenon of language usage is the qualification of an utterance by stance adverbials like: *probably, clearly, certainly, perhaps, apparently, presumably, technically, ideally, frankly, honestly, fortunately, unfortunately, ironically, surprisingly*. Stance adverbials are single word adverbs or adverbial expressions that “have the primary function of commenting on the content of a clause or particular part of a clause” (Biber et al. 1999, p. 853). In argumentative discourse, they occur either in the utterance that expresses the speaker’s point of view, as in (1) and (2) below, or in the utterance that provides the speaker’s arguments for his opinion, as in (3) and (4) below: **[i]**

(1)

*Certainly* it was unusual to refuse another golfer a practice with a new putter because professionals are notorious for trying each other’s equipment, and for swapping clubs.

(2)

*Unfortunately*, because the Earth’s climate mechanisms are so extremely complex, predictions of what could happen are very uncertain.

(3)

It’s a completely different world in there! No doubt about it, Gents’ toilets aren’t nearly as nice as the Ladies almost *certainly* because one sex looks after their toilets and the other sex gets drunk and tries to smash it up.

(4)

Now *fortunately*, during the whole semester, you guys have gone through, all the different parts of, writing a paper so this shouldn’t be too difficult.

In this paper, I refer exclusively to cases illustrated in examples (1) and (2) above, where the adverbial qualifies the utterance that can be reconstructed as the standpoint of an argumentative discussion.

A standpoint, within PD, is analysed in illocutionary terms as an assertive speech act (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984). The act of advancing a standpoint counts as an assertion of a positive (or negative) position in respect of an expressed opinion (O), by which one party addresses a present or implicit other

party, who has expressed or is anticipated to express doubt regarding the tenability of that position (Houtlosser 1995, 2001, 2002). The standard paraphrase, which can be used in order to make fully explicit the communicative force of an utterance as a standpoint, is the following:

(I) *My point of view is that* (II) *it is (not) the case that* (III) *O*

To qualify a standpoint counts as adding a comment either on the assertion of the positive (or negative) position as a whole, position (I), or on the expressed opinion over which the positive or negative position is assumed, position (III). In the above standard paraphrase, to place the qualifier in position (II) would not count as qualifying the standpoint, since it would require that the arguments which follow support the choice of the qualifier and not the expressed opinion.

In examples (1) and (2) above, the adverbial does not alter the content of what is asserted and does not change what is advanced as a standpoint either. The utterances would be acceptable even if the adverbials were omitted. In addition, the argument adduced in support of the standpoint would still stand and be relevant even if the adverbial was omitted.**[ii]** What the adverbial does is convey the speaker's comment over the expressed opinion or over the position he assumes over that expressed opinion. In (1) it conveys the speaker's certainty about the proposition asserted in the standpoint, while in (2) it conveys the speaker's evaluation toward the position assumed in the standpoint.

The reason why I propose allowing two positions in the standard paraphrase where the qualifier of the standpoint may appear is an analytic one. In this way, the difference between adverbials like 'unfortunately, ironically, frankly, honestly,' and adverbials like 'certainly, perhaps, presumably, apparently, technically' is taken into account. The former convey the speaker's comment on the act he performs not on what he asserts to be the case, while the latter convey the speaker's degree of conviction in what he asserts not in the act he performs.**[iii]** Both, however, comment on the whole utterance, by means of which the act of advancing a standpoint is performed, and not on parts of that utterance.

Stance adverbials may also convey a comment on a part of the utterance that functions as a standpoint, as in examples (5) and (6) below:

(5)

Business has *clearly* been good over the last few years because the Ewington recently completed a £ 100,000 refit.

(6)

Both questions are *surprisingly* easy to answer, simply because Le Pin[iv] has such a brief history.

In these cases, however, the adverbial is part of the expressed opinion (O) and does not qualify that expressed opinion or the position assumed over it, so these cases are not studied as instances of qualification of the standpoint.

Within PD so far, the choice of the language user to qualify an utterance like the one in (1) or (2) above, and to qualify it by using 'certainly' instead of 'frankly' or 'unfortunately' instead of 'clearly' would either be explained by reference to relevant literature from pragmatics and discourse analysis on modality and discourse markers or go unnoticed.[v] Despite the number of studies available on the use of stance adverbials and their effect in communication and interaction, there is no clear focus on their use in argumentative discourse in particular.[vi] In addition, the classifications of stance adverbials already proposed in syntactic, semantic or pragmatic terms cannot be readily of use for the purposes of a pragma-dialectical analysis that considers argumentation in its own right, neither as a genre of communication nor as underlying all instances of language use.[vii] In the light of the assumption about the arguers' strategic manoeuvring discussed in the previous section, the qualification of standpoints can be understood as one of the presentational means at the protagonist's disposal in his attempt to keep the balance between his dialectical and rhetorical goal regarding the testing of that standpoint. That is, in ideal terms to have the standpoint both tested and accepted.

#### 4. *The management of the burden of proof*

In order to suggest a systematic way to interpret the protagonist's choice to qualify the standpoint that is relevant to the argumentative analysis of discourse, an understanding of what is involved in the act of advancing a standpoint and of the process of testing it is required.

As far as the protagonist of a standpoint is concerned, to engage in the process of testing a standpoint consists in the adducing of arguments in response to the antagonist's explicit or anticipated challenge to the tenability of that standpoint. Within argumentation studies, the obligation to bring forward arguments that support a standpoint is described by the concept of the burden of proof, which is

borrowed from the field of law (Rescher 1977, Walton 1988, Kauffeld 1998, van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002b). The testing of a standpoint then, from the protagonist's viewpoint, amounts to assuming and discharging a burden of proof for that standpoint.

A burden of proof is incurred upon the one who advanced a standpoint because of the commitment that he has undertaken in public when advancing it. Namely, that he considers the position he assumes as tenable and the expressed opinion, over which he assumes that position, as acceptable. **[viii]** One would not assume a positive (or negative) position over a certain proposition unless one considers that proposition to be true, correct, etc. for all that he knows, believes, etc. at the moment of the discussion and for the duration of it.

To discharge the burden of proof, the protagonist of a standpoint engages in a dialogue with the antagonist, over the tenability of that standpoint. In this dialogue, both the content of the arguments in support of the standpoint and their potential in justifying / refuting the particular standpoint are tested on the grounds of commonly accepted starting points. This is what van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004, pp. 145, 149) call the 'intersubjective identification procedure' and the 'intersubjective testing procedure', respectively. In a fully externalised turn-taking system, the tenability of the standpoint is jointly tested by an antagonist and a protagonist in the following way:

- Every time the antagonist expresses doubt, the protagonist is invited to check whether what he has previously asserted is in accordance with commonly agreed starting points. If it is, the protagonist needs to spell that out for the antagonist by providing a further argument for the content or the potential of the previous argument. If it is not, then the protagonist should retract the argument (or eventually the standpoint).
- Every time the protagonist adduces an argument, the antagonist is invited to check whether what is asserted is in accordance with commonly agreed starting points. If it is, the antagonist should retract the doubt (over the argument or eventually over the standpoint). If it is not, then he is entitled to go on asking either about the content or about the potential of the argument adduced.

The obligation to defend is discharged either when the protagonist retracts the standpoint after conclusive attack of the standpoint or when the antagonist retracts the doubt over the standpoint after conclusive defence of the standpoint. A conclusive attack is achieved when at the end of the testing process doubt over

the content or the potential of at least one of the arguments adduced remains, and the protagonist has no further arguments to bring forward. A conclusive defence is accomplished when at the end of the testing process there remains no doubt about the content and the potential of the arguments adduced, and the antagonist has no further questions to ask. When taking into account the protagonist's interest in having the standpoint both tested and accepted (see strategic manoeuvring above), it is only as a result of a conclusive defence that the obligation to defend can be considered as *successfully* discharged.

Since advancing a standpoint incurs an obligation to defend it, to qualify it can be seen as a means to alleviate that burden, that is a means to manage the burden of proof. The effect of qualifying the standpoint on the burden of proof is to be understood ideally as keeping a balance between the rhetorical goal of having the standpoint accepted and the dialectical goal of having it tested. To qualify the standpoint is a strategic means by which the protagonist seeks to reach a successful discharge of the burden of proof, being rhetorically effective and remaining dialectically reasonable all along.

In order to provide a systematic interpretation of the protagonist's argumentative behaviour that takes into account the linguistic and other choices that he makes and one that is relevant to the analysis and evaluation of discourse, I introduce the concept of the management of the burden of proof. The management of the burden of proof is a normative assumption, which postulates that the protagonist of a standpoint makes those choices regarding the design of his moves in the course of an argumentative discussion that help him reach a successful discharge of the burden of proof. To qualify the standpoint is one of the choices available as far as the presentation of this move is concerned at the confrontation stage of an argumentative discussion. By qualifying the standpoint, the protagonist proposes a certain representation of the starting points from where he is ready to defend it that helps him pave the way for a successful discharge of the burden of proof, given the topic and the audience addressed each time.

Below, I distinguish five ways in which the protagonist can qualify the standpoint, that take into account the different kinds of comment that he can make either on the expressed opinion over which he assumes a position (a-c) or on the position he assumes over the expressed opinion (d-e):

a) Convey the degree of certainty in the correctness of the expressed opinion, by using such adverbials as: *surely, certainly, clearly, perhaps, maybe, possibly, probably, presumably*. The protagonist indicates to the antagonist that he



considers the evidence he is ready to bring forward as a strong or weak support for the standpoint.

b) Convey the source of evidence that warrants the correctness of the expressed opinion, by using such adverbials as: *apparently, obviously, evidently, reportedly, reputedly, supposedly*. The protagonist indicates to the antagonist where he draws the evidence from that he is ready to adduce in support of the standpoint.

c) Convey the domain within which the expressed opinion is taken to be correct, by using such adverbials as: *technically, theoretically, philosophically, morally, ideally, practically, politically, generally, basically, typically*. The protagonist indicates to the antagonist the domain within which the arguments he is ready to adduce constitute an acceptable support for the standpoint.

d) Convey his own reliability when assuming the positive/negative position he does, by using such adverbials as: *frankly, honestly, seriously, truly, actually, really, admittedly*. The protagonist indicates to the antagonist that he is aware that the position he assumes will not to be accepted at face value.

e) Convey his own evaluation over the act of assuming the positive/negative position, by using such adverbials as: *fortunately, unfortunately, luckily, strangely, curiously, paradoxically, ironically, oddly enough, interestingly, surprisingly*. The protagonist indicates to the antagonist that he is aware that his assessment over the position he assumes may not be in accordance with the antagonist's own judgement over the issue under discussion.

All five ways have the same effect, namely help the protagonist manage the burden by paving the way for a successful discharge of it. The way this effect is achieved, however, differs depending on the different comment that each of these ways adds to the standpoint. In the next section, I focus on the case of evaluative adverbials (group e, above).

### 5. *Evaluative adverbials and the management of the burden of proof*

I now turn to the question "how can we make use of the assumption about the management of the burden of proof in the analysis and evaluation of argumentative discourse". More specifically, I will discuss how the way that evaluative adverbials manage the burden of proof can inform the analysis of argumentative discourse in which such a qualified standpoint appears.

To answer this question, a distinction should be made between assuming a positive (or negative) position over an expressed opinion and expressing a positive or negative evaluation of an object, person, institution, idea, etc. While the former

constitutes a standpoint, the latter constitutes an attitude (see Houtlosser 2001). The act of advancing a standpoint should not be exclusively identified with the expression of an evaluative judgement over an issue. An utterance does not function as a standpoint just because a certain evaluation is expressed in it. The expression of a positive or negative evaluation may become the bone of contention in the ensuing discussion or may not, depending on what the reaction of the interlocutor to it is and what the follow up of the first speaker is. Compare the two constructed dialogic exchanges below:

(7)

A: *Fortunately*, John is not coming with us tonight

B: Why do you say that?

A: Because the trains are not running

(8)

A: *Fortunately*, John is not coming with us tonight

B: Why do you say that?

A: Because he always makes fun of me whenever he is around

While speaker A in (7) assumes a positive position over the expressed opinion that 'John is not coming with us tonight', in (8) the speaker assumes a positive position over the expressed opinion that 'it is a fortunate fact that John is not coming with us tonight'. In both dialogues the presence of the adverbial 'fortunately' conveys a certain evaluation by speaker A but it is only in the second case that the evaluation expressed becomes the bone of contention and thereby functions as the standpoint that A has to defend. **[ix]** The adverbial qualifies the standpoint only in the first case (7), since it adds a comment to the expression of the positive position over the proposition 'John is not coming with us tonight'.

That the adverbial is part of the standpoint that needs to be defended and not an additional comment on it, in the second case (8), can be further illustrated by the unacceptability of the constructed utterances below:

(9)

\* *Unfortunately*, John is not coming because he makes fun of me

(10)

\* *Clearly*, John is not coming because he makes fun of me

Compare the above examples with an utterance like:

(11)

*Fortunately/Unfortunately*, John is not coming because the trains are not running

In (11), the presence or absence of the adverbial does not affect the interpretation of the main clause's communicative force as a standpoint. Here, the adverbial is not part of the standpoint since the choice of 'fortunately' or 'unfortunately' does not make the because-clause irrelevant in any sense with respect to what is asserted in the main clause. It is in such cases, where I argue that the evaluative adverbial qualifies the standpoint and that its argumentative function is to manage the burden of proof.

But what would choosing 'fortunately' instead of 'unfortunately' imply in those cases and when could such a choice make the move derail to a fallacy? As I already said in the previous section, to use evaluative adverbials to qualify the standpoint indicates the protagonist's awareness that the position he assumes may be judged positively (or negatively) in addition to it being received with doubt by the antagonist. That speaker A in the dialogic exchange at (7) assumes a positive position over the expressed opinion 'John is not coming with us tonight' may be something that speaker B judges positively or negatively, in addition to the fact that B is of the opinion that John is coming tonight or simply has doubt over it.

Suppose that in the above situation, A who is of the opinion that John is not coming addresses B who is not sure about it, but who admittedly *enjoys* John's company. A who is aware of B's positive evaluation of John's company could choose either 'unfortunately' or 'fortunately' to qualify the standpoint. By choosing to qualify it with 'unfortunately', A would confront his interlocutor with the opinion that 'John is not coming' and would additionally indicate his own evaluation, which happens to be in agreement with that of his interlocutor: both A and B will not be happy in case A's opinion turns out to be tenable because they both enjoy John's company. B would then reasonably react to it by asking A for reasons in support of the standpoint, rather than in support of the choice of the particular adverbial, since he is in agreement with A's evaluation over it but doubts the tenability of A's opinion.

By choosing to qualify the standpoint with 'fortunately', A would confront his interlocutor not only with the opinion that 'John is not coming' but also convey his own evaluation about this, which happens to clash with what B would wish to be

the case. According to the procedural rules for the testing of a standpoint, B should also in this case ask A for reasons in support of the standpoint. In this case, however, B may reasonably do that before or after asking A for an explanation of the choice of the adverbial 'fortunately' as well, since he does not only doubt the tenability of A's opinion but he also does not agree with A's evaluation.

In a different scenario, in which B, to whom A expresses the opinion that John is not coming, admittedly *does not enjoy* John's company, the effect of the choice between the adverbials 'unfortunately' and 'fortunately' would be the exact opposite. Of the group of evaluative adverbials, 'fortunately' and 'unfortunately' are the only ones that allow each for two different interpretations under the two possible scenarios. This is because the two adverbials form an antonymic couple unlike the rest of the adverbials of this group. For the rest of the adverbials such as 'strangely, ironically, oddly enough, surprisingly', the protagonist's choice would be between selecting the adverbial when the evaluation would agree with that of his interlocutor and not selecting such an adverbial when it would be different.

Given the above presentation, to qualify a standpoint by using an evaluative adverbial such as 'fortunately' or 'ironically' would obstruct the testing of the standpoint when it would lead the other party to ask for an explanation of the choice of the particular qualifier instead of asking for the reasons for asserting the particular standpoint. A standpoint qualified by an evaluative adverbial does not immediately and unmistakably indicate that a fallacy has been committed by the protagonist. It only suggests that such a choice could lead to the perpetration of a fallacy in case the protagonist would leave it at a mere explanation of the use of the adverbial instead of arguing for the standpoint itself. Considering evaluative adverbials as one of the ways in which standpoints can be qualified with the effect of managing the burden of proof helps provide a normative understanding of their argumentative use, which does not require reference to the specific context in which they occur each time. However reference to the specific situational context in which the stance adverbials occurred is required for the assessment of their use as fallacious or non-fallacious.

## 6. An example

The text below comes from the section 'frequently asked admissions questions' on the web page of an American college in answer to the first year students' question 'What do I do about parking?':

(12)

*Because campus is situated in the middle of an urban area, it is difficult and expensive to park. Fortunately, because of the location, it is not necessary to have a car. Freshmen who have less than 30 semester hours of college work are not eligible for campus parking. The Auxiliary Services Office (843) 953-7834 does provide listings of off-campus parking spaces available to students.*

Instead of answering that question, the text starts with two sentences that each contains a because-clause – one of them right at the beginning of the text. This gives the impression that the authors feel the need to give reasons in a passage that should initially provide information in response to the students' question regarding parking facilities. In fact, the original question receives an answer only in the second half of the text. The answer given there, however, suggests that the solution to the question regarding available parking space is to be found outside the campus, and that not everyone is eligible for parking space. If the two last sentences are the answer, though partial, to the question, why aren't they given right at the start of the text and why is there any need for argumentation in the first place? All this suggests that the text allows for an argumentative interpretation as well. Of the three propositions asserted in the first two sentences of the text: 'the campus is situated in the middle of an urban area', 'it is difficult and expensive to park', and 'it is not necessary to have a car', the standpoint can be reconstructed from the last one, namely:

*The college's point of view is that it is not the case that it is necessary to have a car***[x]**

The other two propositions can then be reconstructed as coordinatively compound argumentation in support of the above standpoint:

1a because the campus is situated in the middle of an urban area

1b because it is difficult and expensive to park in such a centrally located area

Note that the two propositions need to be coordinatively structured because none could stand alone as sufficient support for the standpoint (Snoeck Henkemans 1992). 1a alone assumes that students do not have cars or that all students live in the middle of the urban area. It could thus be rebutted as insufficient by those future students who have cars and/or use them to drive to the college from outside the centre. 1b anticipates such a challenge by pointing that even if students would use their car it would cost them a lot of money and trouble to park

it close to the campus.

The evaluative adverbial 'fortunately' which occurs at the beginning of the second sentence functions as a qualifier for the standpoint in the sense described in section 3 above. The presence of the adverbial does not affect the identification of the standpoint in the text and the arguments that support the content of that standpoint would still stand and be relevant even if the adverbial was omitted. What can then be said about the argumentative function of 'fortunately' in this text?

Following the analysis of the use of evaluative adverbials that I have presented in the previous section, the choice of the adverbial 'fortunately' can help understand what the protagonist of the standpoint takes the starting point of the discussion to be.

As far as college students are concerned, to have a car and to have the possibility to drive it in town and park it easily is a fact positively evaluated. That is something that the college authorities are assumed to know when addressing first year students on the issue of on-campus parking facilities. By selecting the adverbial 'fortunately' instead of 'unfortunately' to qualify their claim that it is not necessary to have a car, however, they chose to ignore it. Had they chosen to qualify their claim by 'unfortunately' they would be appearing sympathetic to the feelings of freshmen but they would make it harder for the college to argue for the lack of parking space on campus.

By choosing to qualify the standpoint with the evaluative adverbial 'fortunately', the college authorities could have also opted for providing a mere explanation why they consider it 'a fortunate fact that it is not necessary for freshmen to have a car', by asserting only a proposition like the one in 1b above: 'because it is difficult and expensive to park in such a centrally located area'. Instead, the authors of the text chose to provide coordinatively compound argumentation that supports the unqualified claim 'it is not necessary to have a car'. Had they chosen to explain or argue directly why 'it is a fortunate fact not to have a car', the authors of the text would have risked an open clash with what they know the students' feelings over the issue are and thereby would have lost any chance of convincing them over the issue.

By qualifying the standpoint over an issue that is positively assessed by their audience using 'fortunately' instead of 'unfortunately' and by choosing to argue in support of the standpoint instead of explaining the choice of the qualifier, the

authors of the text falsely attribute to their audience the assessment that having a car is a problem. The lack of parking space, which could be a negative point for the college's image is turned into a problem that potential students may have (namely paying a lot in order to park) and one that the college *fortunately* solves by being centrally located!

In the light of the above analysis it also becomes clear now why the argumentative part precedes the informative part in this text. In doing so, the authors anticipate criticisms about the fact that the college offers only restricted parking before going on to answer the question 'what do I do about parking' by informing the students that specific conditions apply under which they may be considered eligible for on-campus parking.

### 7. Concluding remarks

As van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, p. 105) put it: "Only given a certain interpretation of the discourse, is it justified to maintain the allegation that a fallacy has occurred". The assumption about the management of the burden of proof that I have formulated along the lines of the concept of the strategic manoeuvring provides such a background for the interpretation of the argumentative use of stance adverbials when qualifying a standpoint. In the light of this assumption there is nothing intrinsic in the use of words like 'fortunately', 'frankly', 'in fact', 'allegedly' or 'perhaps' that indicates unmistakably to the analyst that a fallacy has been committed. It is by derailing from the attempt to ideally exploit the strategic use of such words in paving the way towards a successful discharge of the burden of proof that space for the perpetration of a fallacy is allowed.

### NOTES

**[i]** Examples 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are taken from the Collins Wordbanks Online English Corpus, which can be publicly accessed at <http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx>. Example 4 is taken from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), which can be publicly accessed at <http://micase.umdl.umich.edu/m/micase>. Example 12 is taken from Google [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

**[ii]** Compare the following example (from the Collins Online English Corpus):  
Fortunately, a couple came along and picked me up because I was very shocked by then, although, luckily, I was unhurt.  
In this case, the because-clause explains the choice of the adverbial 'fortunately'.

The standpoint can be paraphrased: 'My point of view is that fortunately it is the case that a couple came along and picked me up'. If the adverbial were omitted, the utterance would not function as a standpoint but as an assertion of a fact and the because-clause could not function as an argument in support of it but as an explanation for the asserted fact. The substitution with another adverbial like 'clearly' or 'unfortunately' would render the sentence unacceptable and the argument adduced irrelevant.

**[iii]** Quirk et al. (1985, p. 623) make a similar distinction between 'style disjuncts' (honestly, seriously, frankly) and 'content disjuncts' (certainly, surely, maybe, perhaps): "while both alike express conviction about what is said, style disjuncts assert that the speaker is saying something sincerely, while content disjuncts assert the truth of what is said". Somewhat confusingly, however, they identify evaluative adverbials as 'content disjuncts'. Greenbaum (1969, pp. 202, 206) also distinguishes two semantic sets of adverbials: those expressing an opinion on the truth-value of what is said, and those expressing a judgement about what is being said. Evaluative adverbials are classified under the second set.

**[iv]** Chateau Le Pin is a small vineyard located in the middle of the Pomerol plateau in the Bordeaux region of south-eastern France.

**[v]** Within PD, Snoeck Henkemans (1992) and Houtlosser (1995) have paid attention to only a number of those adverbials. Snoeck Henkemans considers the effect of modal adverbs such as 'probably' occurring in the standpoint as one of the pragmatic clues for reconstructing the structure of the arguments in support of such a qualified standpoint. Houtlosser takes adverbials such as 'probably, certainly, undoubtedly, apparently, surely, clearly', together with other expressions that have a parenthetical position, to indicate the function of an utterance as a standpoint. However, the focus of these studies is not on the strategic effect of choosing one adverbial instead of another but on the indicative potential that particular adverbials have for the purposes of reconstruction.

**[vi]** Brown and Levinson (1987) have studied some of these adverbials together with modal verbs and other hedging expressions as devices used for face saving strategies. Caffi (1999), too, focuses on the mitigating function of some of these adverbials and adverbial expressions, while Holmes (1984) and Sbisà (2001) propose a comprehensive view of both mitigating and boosting linguistic devices as a means to modify illocutionary force with a number of communicative effects each time. Ifantidou (2001) has studied the semantic status of adverbials such as 'certainly, evidently, frankly, unfortunately' and their contribution to the interpretation of utterances within the framework of Relevance Theory. Most



recently, Martin and White (2005) have placed stance adverbials together with other parts of speech that express evaluation in the centre of an 'appraisal framework' for the analysis of discourse that acknowledges its intersubjective and dialogical nature.

**[vii]** Greenbaum (1969), Biber and Finegan (1988, 1989), and Fraser (1996), among others, have specifically focused on adverbials and stance adverbials. Extensive treatment of this class of adverbials can be found in grammars by Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002). The classifications proposed in these studies, however, do not overlap and the adverbials are studied under various labels such as 'disjuncts', 'adjuncts', and 'markers'.

**[viii]** This requirement does not commit the speaker to believing that what he asserts is true and that his position is correct, but to being responsible for the consequences of having asserted a positive (or negative) position in public. Namely, to have reasons in support of this position and to be ready to bring them forward when asked to do so. For such a commitment there is no need to specify the epistemic or cognitive state of the speaker prior to the act of advancing a standpoint.

**[ix]** See note 2, above.

**[x]** The standpoint is paraphrased as a negative standpoint because it is assumed that there is a mixed difference of opinion in which the college authorities refute the potential students' standpoint that it is necessary to have a car on campus.

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