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USE AND ABUSE OF THE STRATEGIC FUNCTION OF *IN FACT* AND *FRANKLY* WHEN QUALIFYING A STANDPOINT

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Abstract

This paper seeks to specify the strategic function of adverbs like *in fact* and *frankly* when used to qualify the utterance that functions as a standpoint in an argumentative discussion. The aim is to provide a description of their strategic function that takes into consideration the role that the move of advancing a standpoint plays in argumentative discourse. To this direction, the choice of qualifying is explained as a choice that the arguer makes in his attempt to manage the burden of proof that is incurred when advancing a standpoint. By combining the insights from the pragma-linguistic treatment of these adverbs with the theoretical premises of a systematic approach to the analysis of argumentative discourse it becomes possible to specify their strategic function and to evaluate those cases in which this strategic function has been abused to the detriment of the quality of argumentative discourse.

Keywords: Argumentation; Strategic manoeuvring; Management of the burden of proof; Standpoint qualification; Stance adverbs; Illocutionary adverbs; Expectation markers; Pragma-dialectics.

1. Introduction

An utterance can be identified as a standpoint when it serves to express a positive or negative position on a disputed issue that is explicitly stated or remains implicit in spoken or written discourse. It is not the words chosen or the meaning of the utterance that make it function as a standpoint but the relation that can be established between this utterance and the preceding or following utterances in the discourse. Accounting for the choices made in the formulation of an utterance provides a necessary though not sufficient support for the reconstruction of the particular utterance as a standpoint. Various approaches to argumentation theory have paid greater or less attention to the linguistic means by which argumentative moves can be realised in discourse and thereby to the linguistic means on the basis of which argumentation scholars can seek to identify these moves in discourse. Within the pragma-dialectical approach to the analysis of argumentative discourse (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992, 2004), attention has been paid to linguistic items, in search for clues that the analyst can use when reconstructing the standpoint (Houtlosser 2002), the argumentation structures (Snoeck Henkemans 2003b), and the argument schemes (Snoeck Henkemans 2002, 2003a).[1]

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[1] Van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Snoeck Henkemans (2007) provide a first systematic presentation of various indicators that can help an analyst identify the argumentatively relevant moves

Up until now, however, there has not been a systematic attempt to consider the strategic effect that the choice of one word instead of another has on the interpretation of argumentative discourse, and eventually on its reconstruction and evaluation. In the strategic manoeuvring approach developed within Pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2000, 2002a; van Eemeren 2010) the rhetorical goals of the parties who engage in an argumentative discussion are also acknowledged and thereby attention can be paid to the various choices at the arguers' disposal regarding the design of their respective moves. In this paper, I propose a systematic way to account for qualification as a presentational device at the protagonist's disposal for the formulation of the standpoint. To this direction, I make use of the concept of the burden of proof, which describes the probative obligation that is essential to the felicitous performance of the act of advancing a standpoint. By assuming that qualification has an effect on the burden of proof that is incurred when advancing a standpoint, the pragmatic information that stance adverbs such as *actually, apparently, clearly, probably, perhaps, technically, frankly, honestly, in fact, unfortunately, luckily* add to the utterance that functions as the standpoint can be systematically exploited for the purposes of analysis and evaluation of argumentative discourse. To illustrate this, I focus on cases of standpoints qualified by adverbs such as *in fact* and *frankly*, in particular, and illustrate how their strategic function can also end up being abused to the detriment of dialectical standards.

2. What is a qualified standpoint?

A standpoint, according to the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, is defined as the externalised position that a party in a real or implicit discussion assumes in a difference of opinion, and it is analysed as an assertive speech act (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; Houtlosser 2001). In this sense, a standpoint refers to the conceptual category that an analyst uses to describe what a language user engaged in an argumentative activity does. It can be reconstructed from the piece of argumentative discourse under study either directly from an utterance or utterances that have been produced in that discourse or indirectly from what the analyst can plausibly assume to have been the arguer's point of view given the discourse at hand.

In the first case, the analyst identifies the standpoint of an argumentative discussion in the utterance that is prefaced by an expression that marks its function as a standpoint or is followed by another utterance that is marked as the argument, thus making the previous utterance function as a standpoint. See the examples below, taken from van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Snoeck Henkemans (2007):

> *In my view*, there is no sense in pressing the point.
> It's quite challenging to produce quality poems. *After all*, *because of* it's brevity, every poem's word holds that much more weight, and must be chosen with great care.

In the second case, there is no single utterance identified directly in the discourse which may function as the standpoint of an argumentative discussion. Such is the case, for example, of implicit standpoints in the discourse of advertisements. More often than not the text of advertisements provides arguments in support of a standpoint that remains

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that are preformed in discourse as well as other aspects of argumentation that are pertinent to the pragma-dialectical analysis of argumentative discourse.

implicit, and can be reconstructed as inciting the public to buy the product or service advertised.[2] Qualified standpoints are standpoints reconstructed directly from an utterance that is qualified by means of a stance adverb or some other adverbial expression.[3]

It is important, however, to make it clear that not all qualified utterances that can be reconstructed as standpoints always count as qualified standpoints. Compare the following two examples:[4]

(1) Unfortunately, previous surveys of people's animal preferences - conducted primarily in the United States - are difficult to compare because, generally, different methods were employed. [BNC]
(2) Unfortunately, euthanasia has become a popular topic because people are led to believe that death by suicide or homicide is more dignified than dying naturally. [COBUILD]

In both cases, the evaluative adverb *unfortunately* appears at sentence initial position qualifying the main clause by adding a comment that is not necessary for understanding the propositional meaning of that sentence. The comment added is an evaluative one, conveying the speaker's emotional attitude towards what is being asserted. In both examples, the adverb can be omitted without altering the truth conditions of the proposition asserted in the main clause. Compare:

(3) Previous surveys of people's animal preferences - conducted primarily in the United States - are difficult to compare.
(4) Euthanasia has become a popular topic.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the interpretation of the relation between the main clause and the subordinate as standpoint and argument, then the presence or absence of the adverb starts playing a role. While the adverb may be omitted from utterance (1) without affecting the relevance of the argumentation adduced, this cannot happen in (2). The standpoint reconstructed from (1) is different from the standpoint reconstructed from (2), in that the phrase *it is unfortunate that* has to appear in the paraphrase in the second case, rendering thus the meaning of the adverb, but not in the first case. See the reconstructed standpoints in (5) and (6) below for (1) and (2), respectively:

(5) My point of view is that previous surveys of people's animal preferences are difficult to compare.
(6) My point of view is that it is unfortunate that euthanasia has become a popular topic.

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[2] See for example, van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2004).
[3] On stance adverbials see Biber et al. (1999).
[4] The examples presented in this study, unless stated otherwise, are taken from search in the British National Corpus [BNC] or the Collins English Corpus [COBUILD], which can be accessed online at http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/ and at http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx, respectively. In both these corpora, I have mainly searched for fragments in which a stance adverb appears qualifying the main clause followed by a subordinate clause introduced by 'because' or 'since'. Of the number of fragments collected, I have selected the ones in which the main clause can be reconstructed as the standpoint of an argumentative discussion and the subordinate clause as the argument in support of that standpoint. The fragments collected were not meant to constitute a homogeneous corpus but to illustrate the use of various stance adverbs as qualifiers of a standpoint. The examples I have chosen to present in this paper illustrate how the proposed theoretical account of the strategic function of qualification of a standpoint can be applied to real data.

Compare the above paraphrases with (7) and (8) respectively, which would not only be judged as unacceptable by language users but would also be considered as odd argumentation to say the least:

(7) ?My point of view is that it is unfortunate that previous surveys of people's animal preferences are difficult to compare, because different methods were employed.

(8) ?My point of view is that euthanasia has become a popular topic, because people are led to believe that death by suicide or homicide is more dignified than dying naturally.[5]

It is only in (1) then that the reconstructed standpoint counts as a qualified standpoint while the standpoint reconstructed in (2) does not. A qualified utterance from which the standpoint is reconstructed counts as a qualified standpoint when the comment that is added by the speaker does not receive support in the argumentation that follows, and it can be omitted without affecting the relevance of the argumentation advanced in support of that standpoint (see Tseronis 2009).

3. How can a standpoint be qualified?

One way to answer this question would be by starting from the semantics of the expressions that may function as qualifiers and identify various groups among them.[6] Such a way, while being useful for grouping the linguistic means available for qualifying utterances, can lead one to expect that there is a one-to-one relation between the various groups that are semantically and linguistically distinguished and the effect that can be achieved when an adverb from one of these groups qualifies the utterance that functions as a standpoint. As the discussion of the two examples in the previous section illustrates, there is a discrepancy between qualification of an utterance at the sentence level and qualification of a standpoint at the illocutionary level. In this section, I propose an identification of ways of qualifying standpoints that starts from the conception of a standpoint in illocutionary terms, as presented in Tseronis (2009).

A standpoint is conceived within Pragma-dialectics as *the speech act of advancing a standpoint* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984). It is analysed as an assertive speech act by means of which the speaker takes a positive (or negative) position with respect to an expressed opinion, addressing another party that does not accept the position assumed at face value. The other party may be present, in the case of dialogical interaction, for example, or implicit as is the case of written monological discourse. Houtlosser (2001, 2002) discusses the differences among the concepts 'opinion', 'belief', 'attitude' and 'standpoint', and defines the conditions that need to be fulfilled for an utterance to count as the felicitous performance of the act of advancing a standpoint. According to this account, an utterance counts as the performance of the

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[5] While this utterance, without the phrase *it is unfortunate that*, could be accepted as an instance of explanation, it cannot count as a case of argumentation. Hence the oddity of it being prefaced by a standpoint indicating expression such as *my point of view is*.

[6] The five ways of qualifying a standpoint presented in an earlier paper (Tseronis 2007) are primarily meant as a classification of the adverbs that can be used in order to qualify an utterance, not as a description of the strategic options at the protagonist's disposal when qualifying the standpoint. They are thus identified on the basis of a generalization from the semantic properties that various stance adverbs have and not on the basis of the kind of doubt that qualification seeks to anticipate.

speech act of advancing a standpoint not because it represents the speaker's subjective assessment of a situation (which is the case for 'opinions') or because it is a report of a mental state that pertains to the relation between an object and a certain feature (which is the case for 'beliefs'). Nor does an utterance count as a standpoint because the opinion expressed in it or the belief reported are regarded as controversial or incompatible with respect to some social, political, ethical or other standards. An utterance counts as a standpoint, because the expression of the speaker's opinion *is met with doubt* that is expressed by the party to whom the utterance is addressed or anticipated by the speaker. Standpoints unlike opinions are not just statements whose content is disputable, and unlike beliefs standpoints are bound to a specific interactional context. The assertion of the same propositional content may in one context count as advancing a standpoint, in another one as adducing argumentation in support of a standpoint, and yet in another one have no argumentative function whatsoever.

Adding a comment to the standpoint that qualifies it and does not become the bone of contention in the ensuing discussion requires that such a comment does not change the propositional content of what is asserted and does not alter the illocutionary force of the assertive speech act either. Such a comment can thus be either *about* the propositional content or *about* the performance of the assertive speech act. In the first case, the speaker may be explicit about his commitment to the propositional content of the assertive speech act or about the evaluation of that propositional content. In the second case, the speaker may convey information about the performance of the assertive speech act as a whole. Three ways of qualifying a standpoint can thus be distinguished, namely the epistemic way, the evaluative way, and the 'illocutionary' way. Various linguistic means can be used for the realisation of the above ways of qualifying a standpoint, such as parenthetical expressions, single word adverbs, and paralinguistic devices. I am here focusing on the group of single word stance adverbs, being the most varied and representative (Biber et al. 1999). Specifically, modal adverbs (*certainly, clearly, perhaps, probably*), evidential adverbs (*apparently, obviously, supposedly*), and domain adverbs (*financially, officially, technically, theoretically*) constitute the linguistic realisation of the epistemic way of qualifying. Event-oriented evaluative adverbs (*fortunately, funnily, happily, interestingly*), which are a sub-set of evaluative adverbs, constitute the linguistic realisation of the evaluative way of qualifying. Illocutionary adverbs (*frankly, honestly, personally*) and expectation markers (*actually, in fact, of course*) constitute the linguistic realisation of the 'illocutionary' way of qualifying.

When considering the context of doubt in which a standpoint is advanced, the comment that each of the three ways of qualifying adds can be interpreted in a specific way. In such a context the speaker expects that the other party is not ready to accept the tenability of the position that he advances at face value. At the same time, the other party expects that the speaker believes that the position he assumes is tenable and that the arguments he is ready to adduce in support of it constitute an acceptable and sufficient support for it. In this light, the comment of the stance adverbs of the epistemic way of qualifying can be understood as emphasising the quality of the evidence that the protagonist of the standpoint is ready to forward in support of it. The comment that the stance adverbs of the evaluative way of qualifying add to the standpoint can be understood as emphasising the evaluation of the expressed opinion that, according to the speaker who advances the standpoint, the two parties share. The comment that the

stance adverbs of the 'illocutionary' way of qualifying add to the standpoint can be understood as emphasising the protagonist's cooperativeness.

In the remainder, I focus on cases of standpoints qualified by adverbs like *in fact* and *frankly*, which I take to convey the protagonist's comment regarding the conditions that apply in the interactional situation in which he is advancing the standpoint.

4. Why qualify a standpoint?

The answer to this question depends on the definition of a standpoint and on the theoretical interests that lie behind it. In the pragmatics and discourse analysis literature, qualification can be understood as a means to mitigate the imposition that expressing a viewpoint brings on the face of the addressee (Brown and Levinson 1987; Caffi 1999), as a way to exploit the intersubjective nature of language for various communicative goals such as persuading the reader of academic discourse, for example (Hunston and Thompson 2000; Hyland 1998), or as a means allowed by the language system to facilitate the inference process involved in utterance interpretation and understanding (Ifantidou 2001). Assuming a technical definition of standpoint as an illocutionary act (see above) and following the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, the interest in asking this question lies not in gaining insight into the cognitive or social processes that lie behind the choice of language users to qualify their utterances or in describing the effects this choice has on information structure and the cohesion of texts. An answer to this question in argumentative terms will help specify what the effect of qualification is for the purposes of a dialectical analysis of argumentative discourse as advocated by Pragma-dialectics.

In order to study in a systematic way the linguistic means by which a standpoint can be qualified and to provide a comprehensive account for their strategic function, I propose explaining qualification of a standpoint as a strategic choice regarding the presentation of this argumentative move. Moreover, I seek to specify the effect of such a choice with reference to the concept of the burden of proof, which is essential to the move of advancing a standpoint. The strategic manoeuvring approach developed within Pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2000, 2002a; van Eemeren 2010) allows the space for conceiving of the arguers' moves as resulting not only from an adherence to the dialectical rules that define critical rational conduct but also from the rhetorical goals that each party is expected to pursue in the course of an argumentative discussion. In this view, the party that assumes the role of the protagonist in an argumentative discussion is not only interested in having the standpoint tested, by forwarding argumentation in response to the other party's criticisms, but also in having the other party retract the doubt about it as a result of the testing procedure. The concept that underlies the procedure for the testing of the tenability of a standpoint is the concept of the burden of proof.

The burden of proof, a concept borrowed from law literature into argumentation studies, is used to describe the obligation that falls on the one who advances a standpoint. It constitutes an essential condition for the act of advancing a standpoint as defined in Pragma-dialectics (Houtlosser 2001, 2002), and it can be understood as being the means as well as the motivation for the development and progress of an

argumentative discussion.[7] It is the (anticipated or expressed) doubt of the other party and his subsequent request for justification that obliges the speaker to bring forward argumentation in support of the standpoint to which he has committed himself. In order to meet this obligation, the speaker adduces arguments that make use of what has explicitly been agreed to count as common starting points or of what he can plausibly expect to count as such. Ideally, a standpoint will be conclusively defended and the burden of proof discharged at the end of the discussion after the protagonist has adduced arguments that are accepted by the antagonist both in terms of their propositional content and in terms of their potential in justifying (or refuting) that standpoint (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004; van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002b).[8]

As far as the protagonist is concerned, an end of the discussion, where the burden of proof is discharged after the antagonist has retracted the doubt over the standpoint, would coincide with a successful discharge of the burden of proof. It is such an end of the discussion that a protagonist who qualifies the standpoint would ideally aim at, being rhetorically effective and observing the standards of reasonableness all along. By qualifying the standpoint, the protagonist seeks to anticipate the doubt that the (implicit or real) antagonist may raise over the standpoint and/or the argumentation advanced in support of it, preparing thus the ground for the way the defence of the standpoint will proceed. The strategic goal of the protagonist who chooses to qualify his standpoint is what I refer to as the management of the burden of proof (Tseronis 2009).

The management of the burden of proof postulates that the protagonist makes choices when designing the standpoint in order to be able to go on to defend it and to eventually reach the end of the discussion by having the standpoint accepted instead of having to retract it, while observing the dialectical norms throughout. Postulating the management of the burden of proof as the protagonist's strategic goal when designing the standpoint provides a frame within which the strategic function of the choices made regarding the design of this move (and in particular, the choices made when qualifying it) can be assessed. 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.

In order to illustrate how the strategic function of a certain way of qualifying a standpoint can be specified with reference to the management of the burden of proof, I present, in the following two sections, the 'illocutionary' way of qualifying, in which adverbs like *frankly* and *in fact* are used, and discuss cases where their strategic function can be used as well as abused.

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[7] Accepting the obligation to defend is not only an important step forward in the testing procedure but also a precondition for the success of the protagonist's attempt to convince the other party that the standpoint is indeed tenable. This means-ends treatment of the concept of burden of proof is proposed by Kauffeld (1998).

[8] The discussion may also end with a conclusive attack of the standpoint, namely when the antagonist has attacked successfully either the potential or the content of the argument adduced and the protagonist has no other arguments to adduce in order to repair such an attack. But this is an outcome of the critical testing procedure that I do not take into consideration here, since I am interested in specifying how standpoint qualification can help the protagonist reach an end of the discussion that is to his own favour, namely acceptance of the standpoint after conclusive defence of it. For a detailed account of this procedural view of the burden of proof, see chapter 3 in Tseronis (2009).

5. Using *in fact* and *frankly* adverbs to qualify standpoints

In fact belongs to the same group of adverbs as *actually, admittedly, indeed, in effect, in reality, of course*.[9] Aijmer in a number of studies analyses such adverbs under the generic label of 'expectation markers' (Aijmer 2002; Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2004; Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2002-2003). While *of course, admittedly,* and *indeed* signal that something is in line with expectations, *actually, in fact,* and *in reality* signal that what is asserted is surprising or unexpected. Aijmer (2002) distinguishes two main functions for *actually*, namely a contrastive and an emphatic one. In its contrastive function, *actually* expresses an opposition between different points of view. As Aijmer remarks (2002: 266):

> It could be used to deny an implicit belief, signal a counter-claim or objection, facilitate for the speaker to take up a new position, to switch to another aspect of the topic or to reformulate an utterance.

In its emphatic function, *actually* introduces an utterance that gives an explanation or justification, one that endorses or elaborates on a point of view expressed earlier in discourse and which may be unexpected at the given moment.

In a similar way, two main functions can be identified for the adverb *in fact*. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen (2004) say that *in fact* may signal a contrast with a previous claim (adversative) or strengthen what has been said (additive). Smith and Jucker (2000: 222) suggest that *in fact* reinforces the opposition to the preceding proposition by implying that a stronger claim needs to be made, while *actually* seems to signal that some slight reinterpretation or adjustment of perspective needs to take place, which may be seen as a shift in common ground. Oh (2000: 266) who sets out to compare the two adverbs also observes that:

> *actually* is frequently found in the context of contradiction and disagreement, whereas *in fact* tends to mark an increase in the strength of a previous assertion.

Abstracting from the nuances and detailed accounts of the various adverbs in the group of expectation markers, the core meaning that can be attributed to them is that they indicate a discrepancy between reality and what appears to be the case. Oh (2000) who conducts a corpus study with the aim of describing the differences and similarities of the adverbs *actually* and *in fact* concludes that the common core meaning of both is 'unexpectedness'.

Nevertheless, when these adverbs qualify an utterance that functions as a standpoint, the meaning they have should be interpreted *in addition* to the fact that the utterance in which they occur functions as a standpoint and not as the reason why it has such a function. Consider the following fragment from a text giving advice to recovering alcoholics:

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[9] Strictly speaking, *in fact* is a prepositional phrase that according to Biber et al. (1999: 862) cannot be considered as a single word adverb, such as *of course*, because it shows a certain variability, cf. the expression *in actual fact*.

(9)
Take it slow. You don't have to feel everything you've stuffed for the past thirty years - right now. *In fact*, in early recovery, it's best to avoid situations guaranteed to elicit intense feelings, since enough will come up on their own. [COBUILD]

Even if the adverb were omitted, the discourse would still be interpreted as argumentative. Compare the following fragment where the same adverb qualifies the sentence that is explained in a discourse that is not argumentative:

(10)
Another interest I've been able to pursue at Stanford is the cello. I've been playing since the 5th grade, and now I play with the Stanford Symphony Orchestra. *In fact*, I'm very excited because we're leaving next week to go to China for a two and a half-week tour. [COBUILD]

The proposition 'I am very excited' cannot be reconstructed as the expression of the author's point of view in respect of an expressed opinion, since no difference of opinion could be said to exist between the author and another party over the author's own feelings or emotional state. The author is reporting his feelings about the event he has just described and *explains* what the cause for feeling this way is. On the contrary, the author of (9) assumes a positive position over the issue whether it is best to avoid situations that elicit intense feelings when entering into treatment against alcoholism. The argument in support of this position is that there are a lot of intense moments awaiting one during the treatment period so one should not expose oneself to more, especially at the beginning. Had the author chosen to qualify the utterance by using *clearly*, he would have directly conveyed the information to the reader that he is sure that the argument is a good (sufficient, relevant and acceptable) support for the standpoint. Had he chosen to qualify the utterance by using *perhaps*, he would have conveyed the information that he is not absolutely sure that the argument advanced is the best and only support for the standpoint. Now that the author chose to qualify the utterance using *in fact*, all he indicates to the reader is that he acknowledges or anticipates that another opinion over the matter may exist but still goes on to assume the position he does. In doing so, he indirectly suggests that the argument that follows is a good argument in support of his standpoint; otherwise he would not have gone through the trouble of assuming that position, anticipating that it will not be accepted at face value, in the first place.

The core meaning of unexpectedness and discrepancy that an adverb such as *in fact* conveys in discourse can thus be interpreted as having a double effect in the context of doubt and of a critical discussion where a standpoint is advanced and is tested: As explicit acknowledgment that opposing views exist and thereby as indirect reinforcement of the strength of the arguments in support of the standpoint.

Frankly belongs to the same group of adverbs as *honestly, seriously, truly*, and of expressions such as to *be honest* and *in all honesty*. In the discourse analysis literature, *frankly* adverbs have received less attention in comparison to adverbs signalling unexpectedness. While there is a large number of studies on adverbs such as *actually, really, of course* and *in fact* (see references cited above), to my knowledge, there is no study devoted to such adverbs as *frankly, honestly,* or *seriously*. An exception to this is an article by Edwards and Fasulo (2006) that studies these expressions from a conversational analytic perspective. *Frankly* adverbs have received

some attention in the pragmatics and semantics literature together with other expressions such as *briefly, to cut a long story short, metaphorically speaking,* and *literally speaking*. Unlike epistemic and evaluative adverbs, these adverbs express the speaker's attitude towards the speech act that is performed by means of asserting the proposition of the sentence in which they appear, and not a comment on the proposition that is asserted. Hence they have been labelled 'illocutionary adverbs' (Bach and Harnish 1979), 'pragmatic adverbs' (Bellert 1977) or 'speech-act related adverbs' (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

Edwards and Fasulo (2006) observe the same paucity of studies on 'honesty phrases', as they call them, and consider such items as *actually, really, certainly*, and *in fact* to have a related function, without however elaborating any further on it. They report that a feature of the use of honesty-phrases that is common in both question-answer sequential environments and in assessments is that "they convey a kind of reluctance on the speaker's part to be saying what they are saying" (idem: 344). Their attested use in prefacing non-answers to expectably answerable questions and in generally negative assessments of persons or situations indicates that the speaker is aware that his utterance goes against the interlocutor's expectations but chooses to foreground his preference for sincerity. In Gricean terms the speaker's sincerity is a prerequisite for achieving communication (Grice 1975). However, being explicit about adherence to the quality maxim would count as saying more than is required (violation of manner maxim) and thus create an implicature about the speaker appearing defensive or even untrustworthy. A language user would feel the need to emphasise his cooperativeness and sincerity in a context where he expects or knows that there is doubt about him cooperating and/or in a context where he expects or knows that what he says will not be well received. In either case, the language user would be acknowledging that there is a discrepancy between what he says and what would be expected of him to say.

In a context of an argumentative discussion, however, to suggest that the choice of a speaker to qualify the utterance, by which he expresses his point of view, using an adverb such as *frankly* implies untrustworthiness would be counter-intuitive. One would expect the speaker who advances a standpoint and chooses to qualify it to have done so aiming at a favourable outcome for his viewpoint at the end of that discussion. Consider the following example:

(11)
No other Palace player ever attained one season's maximum appearances in our first three Division 1 seasons --; 'Jacko' did, all three times. And, with all due respect to the other players, it was, *frankly*, as well that he did, because time and again it was his superb displays that salvaged precious points for Palace against the odds; points which, at the end of the season, made all the difference between survival and relegation. [BNC]

The author of this text argues in support of the standpoint: 'It was a good thing that the rugby player with the nickname Jacko attained the maximum appearances for one season'. The choice of the adverb *frankly* to qualify that standpoint conveys the author's awareness that some of the readers he is addressing may not agree with this position, namely the other players in the team and those of the fans who have a preference for these other players. The fact that 'Jacko' attained one season's maximum appearances three times means that some of his co-players did not appear in the games as much as they would have wished and maybe that others did not appear at all. At the same time,

the author conveys his awareness that by advancing this standpoint he is indirectly criticising the performance of the other players. Nevertheless, he assumes a positive standpoint and forwards argumentation in support of it which can be reconstructed[10] as follows:

> (1.1 The points that Jacko secured with his superb displays kept the Palace team in Division 1)
> 1.1.1a Jacko's superb displays salvaged precious points for the Palace team
> 1.1.1b The points that Jacko salvaged made all the difference between survival and relegation at the end of the season

By qualifying the standpoint with *frankly*, the author does not only succeed in avoiding a direct clash between his opinion and the opposite opinion that may exist over the matter, but also in indirectly strengthening the force of the argumentation he forwards in support of his standpoint. He suggests that even those who would argue against his point of view would ultimately agree about the content of the argumentation that he has advanced. Despite the resentment that some other players, or the fans of these players, may feel for the fact that Jacko has appeared most times in the team's games and for the negative connotations this may have for the evaluation of their own performance, no one could deny the fact that the Palace team has earned points in that season that guaranteed its ranking in top division. Moreover, none could refuse that these points were earned thanks to Jacko's performance, even if one had wished that some other player had earned them, or even if this meant accepting that the other players' performance was not as good.

At the same time, the author suggests that the justificatory potential of the argumentation that he is forwarding can be convincingly supported, too. He bases this confidence on the fact that even if the other party would be of the opinion that it was not a good thing that Jacko attained a maximum number of appearances, they would still be interested in the team's ranking, something which was secured by the points that Jacko won, after all. Had the protagonist chosen to qualify the standpoint using an adverb like *clearly*, he would have openly confronted some of the readers with a view that he knows they would not be happy to hear, and thus he would have had less chances for his argumentation having any effect in supporting his viewpoint.

The interpretation of the choice of an adverb like *frankly* in the context of an argumentative discussion does not differ much from the effect that the choice of an adverb like *in fact* has. The protagonist who qualifies the standpoint using *frankly* acknowledges that other views may exist with which the particular standpoint clashes and thereby seeks to reinforce the justificatory force of the arguments adduced in support of it. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen (2004: 1783) note that words such as *of*

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[10] Within Pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992), three main types of the structure of argumentation advanced in support of a standpoint can be reconstructed, namely multiple argumentation, coordinatively compound argumentation and subordinatively compound argumentation. In the first type of argumentation structure, each asserted proposition counts, in principle, as alternative defence for the same standpoint. In the second type of argumentation structure, the propositions asserted need to be taken together in order to defend conclusively the standpoint. In the third type of argumentation structure, the proposition that is asserted in support of the standpoint is in turn supported by another proposition. For a detailed study on argumentation structures, see Snoeck Henkemans (1992). In the argumentation structure reconstructed here, the two expressed arguments, 1.1.1a and 1.1.1b, are structured coordinatively in order to support subordinatively the implicit main argument (1.1).

course, *actually*, and *in fact* "explicitly indicate the speakers' awareness of the communication process as taking place in a context and thereby help to shape that process in a particular way". Given the discussion of the examples above, I would take this remark to apply equally to such adverbs as *frankly, honestly*, and *seriously*. This is what adverbs like *frankly* and *in fact* have in common, which distinguishes them from epistemic adverbs such as *perhaps, probably, clearly,* and *obviously*, and evaluative adverbs such as *fortunately, strangely,* and *ironically*. The comment that the speaker adds by using adverbs from the last two groups does not concern his own act of asserting a proposition but is a comment about the proposition itself. In the case of epistemic adverbs it concerns the knowledge he has for asserting the proposition he does, while in the case of evaluative adverbs it concerns the evaluation he has over the proposition he asserts. The comment that the speaker adds when using adverbs such as *frankly* and *in fact* concerns the illocutionary act as a whole and pertains to the interactional dimension of the act of advancing a standpoint and of testing its tenability.

Both *in fact* and *frankly*, when qualifying the utterance that functions as a standpoint, have a concessive and a reinforcing effect at the illocutionary level where the standpoint and the arguments in support of it are interpreted. The protagonist acknowledges that there exists not just doubt but another opinion in opposition to which he advances the standpoint. At the same time, he frames the arguments adduced in support of the standpoint as strong by alluding to the common ground and solidarity that the use of such adverbs evokes. The two kinds of adverbs do not differ in their strategic effect at the illocutionary level of a critical discussion where the standpoint is being tested, but only in their semantics at the discourse level: The use of *frankly* emphasises the speaker's sincerity and cooperativeness, while the use of *in fact* emphasises the actuality and newsworthiness of his contribution in the discussion.

6. Abusing the strategic function of *in fact* and *frankly* adverbs

There is nothing intrinsically wrong about the protagonist's choice to explicitly acknowledge that the standpoint he is advancing goes against what the other party may be expecting. And there is nothing intrinsically fallacious or condemnable in his choice to do that either by emphasising his own sincerity or the actuality of what he is asserting, using adverbs such as *frankly* or *in fact*. The problem starts when the comment that this way of qualifying a standpoint adds is exploited by the protagonist in order to prejudge the conclusiveness of his argumentation or the inconclusiveness of the argumentation for the opposite standpoint. In this last section, I discuss two examples of argumentative discourse where the choice to qualify the standpoint using the adverb *frankly* and *in fact* respectively has contributed to the obstruction of the critical testing of that standpoint.

The first example, found on the Internet, comes from the section of frequently asked questions of a site called: Indie911. It is an entertainment network that allows emerging artists to have their own web space where they can upload their music and share it with other members and visitors of the site.

(12)
Can   any   musician   or   artist   upload   their   music   to   indie911?
YES. But *frankly* since the focus of the site is on actually USING quality music, we
would appreciate you using your judgment: Indie911 is mostly for artists and artists'
representatives wishing to feature FINISHED, QUALITY RECORDINGS.

In answer to the question enquiring information whether anyone who wishes to upload
their music is allowed to do so, the authors of the website are affirmative. Immediately
after 'Yes', however, an utterance prefaced with 'But frankly' follows, inciting the
visitors to use their judgment: 'We would appreciate you using your judgement'. In the
light of the question that precedes it, this utterance could be understood as inciting
visitors to 'Use their judgment before uploading their music'. The subordinate clause
'Since the focus of the site is on actually using quality music'[11] appears as supporting
the inciting standpoint 'Use your judgment'. The last sentence of the text specifies the
kind of audience that Indie911 mostly addresses and wishes to attract, namely 'Artists
and artists' representatives wishing to feature finished, quality recordings'. Both the
subordinate clause and the last sentence can be reconstructed as argumentation in
support of the inciting standpoint: 'Use your judgment before uploading your music to
Indie911'. The argumentation can be reconstructed[12] as follows:

1.1 The focus of Indie911 is on using quality music
1.1.1 Indie911 is mostly for artists and artists' representatives who wish to feature
finished, quality recordings

The use of the adverb *frankly* implies that the authors of the text do not expect that
everyone would use their judgment before uploading their music on the website. The
emphasis that the website gives on the idea of an open network for artists that provides
a forum for exposure and feedback may give the impression that anyone can upload
their music, an idea that the authors of the text want to repair by introducing *frankly*.
Moreover, the choice of *frankly* indicates that the authors are aware that they are
advancing an inciting standpoint that addresses, among others, people who (may) hold a
different view, namely the view that every upcoming musician or artist should be able
to upload their music to Indie911, even if it is unfinished or of poor quality.
     As discussed in the previous section, the choice of *frankly* or of similar adverbs
to qualify a standpoint constitutes a presentational means for managing the burden of
proof because it helps to frame the argumentation as strong support for the standpoint
while acknowledging that the other party is ready to cast doubt on it. In the
argumentative discussion that can be reconstructed from the above fragment, the
protagonist expects the argumentation in support of the inciting standpoint to be
accepted, assuming that there is mutual agreement on the definition of 'quality music'.
The authors of the text, however, do not provide any explicit definition and leave it up

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[11] The adverb *actually* in this utterance has the function of putting emphasis on the prepositional
phrase 'on using quality music' and does not qualify the whole clause 'the focus of the site is on using
quality music'. Even if it would have been used to qualify the clause, its meaning, suggesting that it may
not be expected by everyone that the main focus of the site is on using quality music, cannot be said to
have an effect on the burden of proof, since it does not qualify the clause that functions as the standpoint,
but the clause that functions as an argument.
[12] For the different types of argumentation structures see note 10. The argumentation is
reconstructed here as subordinatively compound argumentation.

to the readers to decide what constitutes 'finished quality recordings'. In this way, they avoid taking responsibility for being the ones who set certain standards on the basis of which music can be uploaded on the website. Instead, they ask those who wish to upload their music to decide for themselves what these standards are and to judge whether they satisfy those standards or not before uploading their music.

In doing so, the authors of the text do not allow space for any critical reaction regarding the definition of 'quality music' or the potential that the premise concerning quality music has for supporting the inciting standpoint. By appealing to the standards of quality and finished recordings that everyone should be expected to endorse, they suggest that the other party could not possibly wish to defend the opposite standpoint, namely that music of bad quality should also be uploaded on the website. In this way, they have made their inciting standpoint tenable by having fallaciously shifted the burden of proof to the other party.[13]

The second example comes from an advertisement for golf balls to be used by non-professionals playing golf for recreation:

> (13)
> If you want to give your golf partners an unexpected surprise, drive off with one of these new American super balls. *In fact*, you'll probably surprise yourself too, because the Condor Extra-Distance Ball offers phenomenal performance - a long ball hitting champion in Texas drove one 400 yards! Thanks to its revolutionary dimple design and top-secret core, it gains altitude quickly and then seems to sail along like a glider! Comes in pack of 12 balls. Not approved for competition use. [COBUILD]

The standpoint of advertisements can be generally reconstructed as an inciting one, namely: 'Buy product X'. In this text, the standpoint can be reconstructed directly from the main clause 'drive off with one of these new American super balls' appearing after the conditional 'if you want to give your golf partners an unexpected surprise' in the first sentence of the text. The second sentence prefaced by the adverb *in fact* functions as an argument in support of the general standpoint of the text, but also as a sub-standpoint because it receives further support by the subordinate clause 'because the Condor Extra-Distance Ball offers phenomenal performance'. For the analysis that follows, I refer to the sub-standpoint and not to the standpoint of this text.

By using the adverb *in fact* to qualify the standpoint, the author of the text acknowledges that the reader is not one who is easily surprised. Nevertheless, the author is of the opinion that in the case of the 'new American super balls' the reader will be surprised. The argumentation that he puts forward in support of this view can be reconstructed[14] as follows:

> 1.1 The Condor Extra-Distance balls have phenomenal performance
> 1.1.1a The Condor Extra-Distance balls have a revolutionary dimple design and a top-secret core which allow them to gain altitude quickly
> 1.1.1b A long ball-hitting champion in Texas drove one such ball 400 yards

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[13] On the fallacy of shifting the burden of proof, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 120-122).

[14] For the different types of argumentation structures see note 10. The argumentation is reconstructed here as consisting of two coordinatively compound arguments, 1.1.1a and 1.1.1b, that support subordinatively the main argument 1.1.

The presence of the adverb *in fact* strengthens the author's opinion by contrasting it with the reader's expectation about the opposite, and backgrounds the weak degree of certainty whether this will turn out to be the case or not. In this representation of the context of doubt that the choice of the adverb *in fact* suggests, the argumentation forwarded appears as strong support for the standpoint. Were the adverb omitted from the formulation of the utterance that functions as a standpoint, the argumentation that follows in support of it would appear less conclusive.[15]

The protagonist in the argumentative discussion that can be reconstructed from this advertisement acts as if the conclusiveness of the argumentation in support of the specific standpoint is warranted by the reluctance of the other party to assume the opposite position, namely that he is someone who is not easily surprised. To assume such a position would require that the reader prove false the content of the propositions asserted in the argumentation; namely, to prove that there is no such top-secret core, which allows the ball to glide in the air, or that a long ball hitting champion did not actually drive the ball 400 yards. Since it is hard to disprove either of these facts or to prove that one is not surprised by them, if one accepts them, the protagonist can be sure to have the tenability of the above standpoint accepted.

But in this way, the strength of the arguments adduced in support of the standpoint is not warranted by starting points that are commonly agreed upon, but by the author's assumption that the advertised product will bring unexpected surprise to the potential customer. The protagonist evades the burden[16] of supporting the standpoint that the use of the American super balls will surprise the amateur golf player because the argument that he adduces in support of it is circular: The justificatory potential of the protagonist's argument can only be accepted on the grounds that one accepts that the effect of using these new golf balls is surprise, but this is something that needs to be defended in the first place.

Both examples analysed in this section illustrate cases where adverbs like *frankly* and *in fact* are used to qualify the standpoint in an argumentative discussion in which the protagonist does not observe the dialectical exigencies for a critical discussion. In those cases, the strategic effect of qualification can be said to have been abused in the sense that it allowed the protagonist the space for misguiding his opponent to accept the conclusiveness of the argumentation adduced in support of the qualified standpoint. While it cannot be said that the presence of these qualifiers indicates *per se* that a fallacy has been committed, it can be maintained that their absence in the two examples above would have made the perpetration of a fallacy more blatant for the critical reader. In both cases, the authors have abused the framing of the context of doubt that the illocutionary way of qualifying a standpoint provides, because they have treated the acknowledgement of opposing views as sufficient reason for concluding that their standpoint is acceptable.

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[15] Consider the effect that the following formulation would have had without the qualifier *in fact*: 'You'll probably surprise yourself too, because the Condor Extra-Distance Ball offers phenomenal performance - a long ball hitting champion in Texas drove one 400 yards'.

[16] On the fallacy of evading the burden of proof, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992: 117-120).

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored the potential that exists in combining insights from the pragma-linguistic and discourse analysis literature with an interest in the analysis of argumentative discourse within a systematic framework like the one proposed by Pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004; van Eemeren 2010). So far, argumentation scholars have paid attention to the linguistic realisation of various argumentative moves with an interest in the identification of these moves in actual discourse, but have not so much been interested in describing the strategic function of the various choices that can be made in their formulation. Qualification is one such choice that a language user can make when formulating the utterance by means of which he is expressing his point of view in an argumentative discussion. By combining pragmatic and semantic criteria with the illocutionary analysis of the move of advancing a standpoint, three ways of qualifying this specific argumentative move have been identified, namely the epistemic, the evaluative and the 'illocutionary'. Moreover, with reference to the concept of the burden of proof, which is essential to the felicitous performance of the move of advancing a standpoint, it has been possible to specify the strategic goal that an arguer who qualifies the standpoint has, namely to manage the burden of proof.

As a case in point, I have considered the use of adverbs such as *in fact* and *frankly* as the linguistic realisation of the 'illocutionary' way to qualify standpoints, in which the comment added to the standpoint concerns the context of interaction. While *in fact* emphasises the actuality of what is being asserted and *frankly* emphasises the sincerity of the one asserting it, both types of adverbs indicate the protagonist's acknowledgement that the standpoint comes in opposition to some other expressed or anticipated opinion and thereby suggest that the arguments adduced in support of it are strong. In a context of an argumentative discussion the protagonist of a standpoint can exploit the comment that these adverbs add in order to pave the way for a successful discharge of the burden of proof, i.e. to manage the burden of proof. Nevertheless, their strategic function of assuming solidarity and shared common ground between the two parties can also be exploited to the detriment of the dialectical goal of dispute resolution, when the protagonist takes the established common ground to provide a guarantee for the conclusiveness of his argumentation or for the inconclusiveness of that of his opponent without providing any further support.

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