

Argumentation Library

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Argumentation and Language- Linguistic, Cognitive and Discursive Explorations

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Argumentation Library

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Argumentation and Language-Linguistic, Cognitive and Discursive Explorations

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Steve Oswald, Thierry Herman and Jérôme Jacquin

Abstract This collective volume is devoted to the exploration of the intricate relationships between argumentative practices and the linguistic, discursive and cognitive underpinnings of their verbal realisation. The volume gathers a selection of 11 contributions that were presented during the inaugural edition of the *Argumentation and Language* conference series (ARGAGE), which took place at the University of Lausanne in September 2015. The thematic unity of this volume therefore stems from a common commitment, from all contributors, to the adoption of a linguistically-informed perspective applied to the study of argumentative practices.

1.1 Linguistics and Argumentation

This collective volume is devoted to the exploration of the intricate relationships between argumentative practices and the linguistic, discursive and cognitive underpinnings of their verbal realisation. The volume gathers a selection of 11 contributions that were presented during the inaugural edition of the *Argumentation and Language* conference series (ARGAGE),¹ which took place at the University

¹ARGAGE 2015, www.unil.ch/argage2015.

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of Lausanne in September 2015. The thematic unity of this volume therefore stems from a common commitment, from all contributors, to the adoption of a linguistically-informed perspective applied to the study of argumentative practices.

While much has been said on the argumentative dimension of natural language (see (iii) below), there is to our knowledge no book-length study exclusively devoted to the various relationships between argumentation and language at a discursive level concerned with argumentative articulations between propositions (with perhaps the notable exception of Doury's most recent textbook (2016), which is strongly linguistically-oriented).

Available research dealing with the relationship between argumentation and linguistics typically falls in one of the three following categories:

- (i) a **descriptive** perspective, which tackles the question of the kinds of linguistic resources speakers use in argumentation, and which has a strong and clear typological import. Studies adopting this perspective usually consist in an investigation of the linguistic means, in terms of verbal (i.e., syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) material that speakers draw on to perform argumentation in communicative settings. Research in this area typically strives to work out functional classifications of the types of linguistic resources that may be used to perform a range of argumentative moves (see, e.g., the pragma-dialectical study of argumentative indicators in critical discussions, Van Eemeren et al. (2007), the special issue of *Verbum* edited by Marianne Doury (2010), and/or the work by Micheli (2012), for an overview of the issues involved in the discussion). These approaches accordingly aim to pair linguistic formulations with argumentative functions as they elaborate linguistically-informed functional inventories.
- (ii) an **explanatory** perspective, which has to do with how language can be used to fulfil the perlocutionary goals of argumentation, among which persuasive goals. Research in the fields of social psychology (see O'Keefe (2002) for an overview), rhetoric and argumentation (see e.g., the classical study of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958); Doury (2016) for the rhetorical role of linguistic markers of argumentation, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1996, 2002) for links between rhetoric and pragmatics, and Herman and Oswald (2014) for explorations at the rhetoric-cognition interface) has to some extent been concerned with the instrumental relationship between language and the effects of argumentation, and yet, a truly linguistically-grounded account remains to be elaborated, even if it should be recognised that the field is starting to grow, notably through the impulse of an interdisciplinary turn taken in argumentation studies over the past 15–20 years.
- (iii) a **semantic** perspective, which is perhaps more clearly rooted in a linguistic approach than the others. This perspective, initiated by French linguist Oswald Ducrot [see e.g. Ducrot et al. (1980), Anscombre and Ducrot (1983)], construes the relationship between argumentation and language as a necessary one: under this approach, the linguistic system is semantically taken to incorporate an argumentative direction, in the sense that linguistic

units are deemed to carry intrinsic argumentative orientations (see below, Sect. 1.2 on language markers of argumentation). Nevertheless, although directly concerned with the relationship between argumentation and language, the object of study of this approach is far too *micro* to cover the range of argumentative phenomena that extend over to the propositional and discursive level, let alone at the speech act level, which are the characteristic levels on which the analysis of argumentative practices is carried out.

From this brief overview of the different types of relationships holding between argumentation and language, as they have been discussed in the literature, it appears that while the linguistic dimension of argumentation is often recognised and described as playing a crucial role in the nature, shaping and outcome of argumentative practices, little work has been specifically and systematically devoted to precisely identifying the exact nature and variety of these relationships. As a consequence, a systematic study of those aspects of argumentation that crucially rely on specific linguistic patterns remains to be conducted. In particular, we believe that a focused and systematic investigation of the extent to which language (including mechanisms of linguistic comprehension) may contribute to a thorough investigation of the three perspectives detailed above is still lacking.

This volume is therefore meant to provide an original and dedicated contribution on these relationships through a collection of chapters that have been selected on the basis of their ability to approach one or more of the perspectives detailed above on the relationship between argumentation and language. In particular, we have gathered contributions which focus on either of (or combine two of) the three following dimensions: (i) properly linguistic aspects of argumentation, (ii) discursive aspects of argumentation or, (iii) cognitive underpinnings of argumentation.

It is furthermore important to state in preamble that the collection of contributions offered here is not meant to be exhaustive, as the topics and phenomena tackled by our authors do not exhaust the range of research questions that are relevant to an investigation of the relationships between argumentation and language. Argumentative practices are typically verbal practices,² and as such they rely on linguistic systems as their medium. This, in principle, legitimates reliance on linguistic approaches and this collective volume is meant to illustrate how such investigations might be fruitfully conducted, with no pretension to covering the complete range of relevant linguistic issues to be dealt with in argumentation studies.

We now turn to a more detailed summary of the state of research within these dimensions, relatively to the study of argumentative practices, in order to present the background against which the contributions of this volume operate in their investigation of linguistic aspects of argumentation.

²Of course, this does not downplay the importance of multimodal argumentation.

1.2 Linguistic Markers of Argumentation

One of the clearest attempts to systematically examine the link between argumentation and language is probably the French-speaking approach to argumentation (*L'argumentation dans la langue*—Argumentation-within-language theory). This approach can be distinguished from mainstream contemporary approaches to argumentation, such as the informal logic tradition or pragma-dialectics, on at least two levels. First, at the epistemological level, argumentation is mainly and nearly exclusively grasped through the description of empirical texts or dialogs. Second, and precisely at this descriptive level, linguistic markers constitute the main entry point to the study of argumentation.

In terms of linguistic material of interest, this approach has mainly studied on the one hand enunciative and utterer-centred phenomena (which we will not elaborate on here) and, on the other hand, indicators of argument. The latter, marked by “words of discourse” (*mots de discours*, i.e. discourse markers), such as “but”, “nevertheless” or “even if”, are accounted for through a fine-grained observation of the behaviour of their semantics within different contexts. Such an attention to argumentative indicators is probably due to the considerable influence of the following two publications: “*Car, parce que et puisque*” (1975, groupe lambda-I) and Jean-Claude Anscombre and Oswald Ducrot’s work on the connective “but” (1977).

Work on linguistic markers overall falls into two general categories: language markers producing actual or potential forms of argumentation—the so-called “Argumentation-within-language” theory and its successors—and language markers indicating or revealing argumentative movements. In other words, in the first case, the linguistic markers semantically express an argumentative relationship between words, while they help shaping an argumentation process in the second case.

1.2.1 Argumentative Orientations and Argumentation-Within-Language

In the first category, argumentation must be related to the orientation given by the lexicon. “John hasn’t worked much” (“*peu*” in French) and “John has worked a little bit” (“*un peu*” in French) both contain an argumentative orientation that restricts the choice of sequences or conclusions that can be drawn from such a statement: whereas “John hasn’t worked much” points towards “John will fail”, “John has worked a little bit” is oriented towards a statement that predicts success. The connection to reality is indifferent here: the quantity of work can be perfectly identical for both utterances. In this approach, it is therefore the linguistic form of utterances that determines the argument, hence the idea expressed by Anscombre and Ducrot that the signification of an utterance lies in its orientation (“*signifier, pour un énoncé, c’est orienter*” (1983: foreword)).

This theory has paved the way for many works on argumentative connectors, notably on their instructional dimensions, which have been examined in detail: see for example Anscombe and Ducrot (1983), Ducrot (1984), Ducrot et al. (1980). The case of “*mais*” (“but”) illustrates the core of this theory: the two statements “this restaurant is good *but* expensive” and “this restaurant is expensive *but* good” lead to opposite conclusions (the latter conveys an incentive to go, the former an incentive *not* to go), even if the linguistic material used is identical in both cases: two adjectives to qualify the same eating place. There is still an important tradition of research on discursive operators (Anscombe 2013) such as “at least”, “especially” or “since”, etc.

It is important to underline that, contrary to classical approaches to argumentation, such works consider neither the question of reasoning and its validity nor the question of the relation of argumentation to truth. This is a strictly semantic (and not pragmatic), ascriptivist (and not descriptivist) and structuralist theory. In such a theoretical approach, it is impossible to involve contextual, situational, or encyclopaedic knowledge outside of what the language tells us about itself.

Several theories emerged from this line of thought: Carel and Ducrot’s theory of semantic blocks (Carel 1994; Carel and Ducrot 1999a, b; Carel 2011), Anscombe’s stereotype theory (2001a, b), Galatanu’s theory of argumentative possibilities (1999, 2007, 2009) and Raccah’s viewpoint semantics (2001, 2005a, b). Beyond their differences, even their divergences, the fundamental common point is a form of generalised radical argumentativism, i.e., the idea that argumentation is intrinsic to language. In order to illustrate this idea, let us take one of Ducrot and Carel’s examples: “You are driving too fast: we are going to have an accident”. For them, there is no link or premise that adds something between the datum and its claim, contrary to intuition. The mere fact of articulating “too + adjective” already leads us to consider a harmful or negative conclusion. In short, the conclusion is already included in the argument—“the very meaning of A is determined by that of C, and vice versa” (Ducrot 1993: 242, our translation). It is therefore an illusion or a deception, according to this theory, to declare that the first part of this utterance justifies the second. It follows that every utterance, even every word, can be described semantically by argumentative blocks.³

This theory, beyond its obvious linguistic interest, highlights the logical illusion according to which in any argumentative process there would first be data collection, that would be transparently translated into language, followed, with the help of a warrant or a major premise, by a mechanic percolation to a conclusion which we were supposed to ignore at the beginning of the process. In fact, for them the words selected to express the data already orient the conclusion; on this account, to say

³For example, the word “danger” is described by two semantic blocks: a “normative” block which is articulated with THEREFORE: “danger THEREFORE careful”, but also a “transgressive” block which is articulated with NEVERTHELESS “danger NEVERTHELESS not careful”.

“Peter is courageous” or “Peter is bold” is not a description of reality, but a way to argue about Peter.

Jean-Claude Anscombe uses another way to illustrate how language carries already-shared standpoints, or ideologies. He incorporates in a theory of language the stereotypes of a linguistic community (following Putnam 1975). Anscombe notices that the sentence “Cheetah is a monkey, but it dislikes bananas” is unproblematic whereas “Cheetah is a monkey; therefore it dislikes bananas” seems quite strange. Yet, no dictionary defines monkeys with the help of any “banana-liking” criterion. Therefore, language has associated, through its evolution and use, a set of stereotypes to words: these stereotypes are not written in a dictionary but remain an important part of the meaning of these words, namely the word “monkey” is associated to the fact (or belief) that they generally like bananas (Anscombe 2001a). The stabilization of stereotypes within a linguistic community involves the incorporation of some beliefs into a language, independently of contextual parameters. As such, this theory reveals some implicit beliefs supported by a linguistic community. The test of developing an utterance with “but” and with “therefore” is often quite indicative of such stereotypes. For example, “James is a populist, but I like him” is quite standard while “James is a populist; therefore, I like him” or “James is a populist, but I don’t like him” seem strange to us, in our present linguistic community. As a consequence, what we have here is a stereotype, namely “populists are not liked”, which is now associated to the lexical meaning of *populist*. That explains why “James is a populist” may be sometimes rather considered as an insult than as a fact.

Theoretical accounts of argumentation-within-language bring our attention to the actual or potential articulations of linguistic chains. They urge us to be vigilant towards the potential orientations of language used in an utterance and they highlight how the implicit, collective and manifestly obvious beliefs of a linguistic community are embedded in words and in utterance chains.

1.2.2 *Markers of Argumentative Relationships*

The works mentioned in Sect. 1.2.1, which are underlain by a specifically linguistic approach, seem to somewhat alter traditional definitions of argumentation. If we consider that argumentation is a “specific and verbal mode of treatment of a disagreement, which consists in the construction of solid standpoints that are supported by textual justificatory work and situated by an interactional and dialogical work of positioning” (Jacquin and Micheli 2012, our translation), we realise that Argumentation-within-language theory is not concerned with disagreements, standpoints or interaction, simply because the context of communication is external to its epistemological and strictly linguistic frame. In this respect, Ducrot has even proposed a distinction between linguistic argumentation and rhetorical argumentation (2004) to avoid the confusion between these two radically different views on argumentation.

In the French-speaking community of scholars, the tendency to consider that nearly any utterance can be considered as argumentative is rather strong: like previous theories, the work of Vignaux (1988) and that of Jean-Blaise Grize on natural logic (1996), as well as a part of Ruth Amossy's work on "the argumentative dimension" of discourse (2005) all broaden the spectrum of argumentation beyond classical linguistic markers. For these authors, the discursive choices of speakers as well as the "ways of seeing the world" that are conveyed by the latter are likely to influence the addressee, by making him/her change his/her point of view on depicted realities. In this respect, discourse *is* argumentation as far as discourse is intended to produce some effects on other people's minds or beliefs. Grize's natural logic, in particular, uses the notion of schematization to account for the idea that realities are subjectively shaped by a speaker for an addressee. Under this view, each utterance can be considered as argumentation, since it invites the addressee to accept such a schematization or to adopt the expressed points of view. In sum, the non-neutral use of language (a) in a certain context (b) using discourse entities, which are considered as signs or images of cognitive representations (c) invites an addressee to never consider data as given fact: in this sense, language can be thought to be argumentative by default. The three thematic dimensions explored in Lausanne during the first edition of the ARGAGE conference series in 2015, namely linguistic markers (a), discursive strategies (b) and cognitive processes (c), can accordingly be seen as both a follow-up and a reflection of Grize's influence in French argumentation studies.

Considering that argumentation is a specific mode of treatment of discourse that is different from other language activities such as description or storytelling, many scholars, while relying on results of Argumentation-within-language theory, endorse such a broadened vision of argumentation. Within this field, we can mention Marianne Doury's work, on, for example, the meta-discursive linguistic markers which are used to comment on argumentative moves, such as the accusation of *amalgam* (2005). Doury adopts a descriptive approach to argumentative norms and, like Christian Plantin, is interested in linguistic markers that reveal argumentative schemes. For example, "precisely" ("*justement*") can be described as a marker that reverses the proposed premise and in fact turns it into an argument for an opposite claim: "Mary does not want to go out: she is a bit depressed" can be followed by "Precisely! Going out will change her ideas" (see Plantin 2016, 420). Yet, for these scholars, connectives are not considered as the focal point of the study of argumentation. Plantin incidentally insists on the fact that connectives are multifunctional: "there are non-argumentative uses of 'because' or 'therefore' and there are arguments without 'because' and 'therefore'" (2016: 376, see also Moeschler's contribution to this volume).

Such a stance on argumentative indicators can equally be found in the work of pragma-dialecticians, especially after the standard dialectical model was extended to include a rhetorical component with the notion of "strategic maneuvering" (see Van Eemeren 2010 for a complete account). Under this view, research at the linguistics-argumentation interface pushes a fundamentally descriptive agenda which calls for a systematic investigation of the correspondences between

argumentative moves and the linguistic resources speakers draw on to realise them. Strategic maneuvering can be seen as essentially concerned with the linguistic choices that allow speakers to maneuver in their quest for rhetorically effective argumentative moves:

In the view we developed, strategic maneuvering can take place in making an expedient choice from the options constituting the ‘topical potential’ associated with a particular discussion stage, in selecting a responsive adaptation to ‘audience demand,’ and *in exploiting the appropriate ‘presentational devices*. (Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002: 139, emphasis added)

In this framework, the role of argumentative indicators in discourse (see Van Eemeren et al. 2007) constitutes a privileged entry point for linguistic insights in the study of argumentation. In this endeavour, pragma-dialectical investigations have constituted a driving force in the Anglophone community: exemplary works are Snoeck Henkemans’ research on rhetorical questions (2009a) and on *praeteritio* (2009b) (see also Lewiński’s and Mohammed’s contributions to this volume).

Summing up, there are two main ways of approaching the properly linguistic dimension of argumentation in the literature: either language is to be seen as intrinsically argumentative (cf. Ducrot’s perspective) or as facilitating argumentative articulations between discourse components—and this includes a meta- level where speakers talk about and comment on their verbal argumentative performance. This level could be qualified as more discursive than linguistic, since it is chiefly concerned with the argumentative relationships that hold between discourse segments—or speech acts. It is thus precisely to the discursive dimension of argumentative practices that we now turn to.

1.3 Discursive Processes

Although it is anchored by linguistic markers and underlain by cognitive operations, argumentation can also more generally be tackled as a specific human activity. By the word *actio*, Classical Rhetoric highlights the fact that argumentation is a *performance* accomplished in *context* (i.e., it is *indexical*). Context here can have various meanings, each of them being relevant for the study of argumentation as a discourse process.

1.3.1 Context as Verbal Context

In context, words are not only selected but also *temporally* combined together to form an oral or written text, whether it is monological or dialogal. Words contribute to meaning through their respective *cotextual* relationships (e.g. Adam 2011; Halliday and Hasan 1976). From that perspective, argumentative moves can be

analysed as textual sequences, i.e. as “a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint” (Van Eemeren et al. 1996, p. 5). Argumentation, as a specific cotextual relationship between propositions, can be analysed at two different levels, echoing what classical Rhetoric calls *inventio* and *dispositio* respectively: *argumentation schemes* and *argumentation structures*. While argumentation schemes are typical inferential patterns which allow us to draw the conclusion from the argument (e.g. argumentation from example, from consequences; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958; Walton et al. 2008), argumentation structures refer to the ways argumentative moves are tied together to form an argumentative text supporting a standpoint (i.e. linked, convergent, or serial argumentation; e.g. Freeman 1991; Henkemans 2000).

Verbal context also encompasses the relationships among the different positions sequentially defended in the argumentative situation by co-present and respectively addressed arguers as well as among a position and intertextual allusions to positions and ideologies that are not defended in situ but pointed at by specific dialogic or polyphonic markers such as reported speech, negations, or concessions (Doury 2012; Hirsch 1989; Jacobs and Jackson 1982; Jacquin 2014).

1.3.2 Context as Semiotic Context

In context, words are not only selected and temporally combined to form (constellations of) propositions but they can also be *simultaneously* associated with other semiotic resources. The last decades have seen the emergence of a *multimodal* perspective on argumentation, i.e. a perspective that looks at the many situations where argumentative communication is performed by combining at least two “modes”.⁴ For instance, *visual argumentation* calls for the study of the combination of linguistic markers and choices of colour, layout, font, fixed or moving picture (Birdsell and Groarke 1996; Kjeldsen 2015), while *argumentative talk-in-interaction* questions the role of embodied conducts, such as gestures, postures, and gaze direction (Jacquin 2014; Poggi et al. 2013; Vincze 2010).

1.3.3 Context as Speech Context

In context, words make sense in the speech situation where they are used. As discussed by Bitzer (1968), the “*rhetorical situation*” consists of (i) an “exigence”, which is the topic, question, or issue framed and addressed by the arguer; (ii) an

⁴“Mode is a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of modes used in representation and communication” (Kress 2009, p. 54).

“audience”, which highlights the importance of what sociolinguistics and communication theorists call “audience-design” (Bell 1984; Clark and Carlson 1982) or, more generally, “recipient-design” (Sacks et al. 1974)⁵; and (iii) some “constraints”, which are the different elements that have (or can have) an influence on the way the “exigence” is tackled. Those constraints can be the types of resources that are available (e.g. the “modes” described above), but also some more diffuse, socio-cultural norms (e.g. the “rules for a critical discussion” identified and discussed by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, Chap. 6). Constraints also concern more specific discursive and interactional features, whose importance justifies the creation of a separate and last subsection, defined as follows.

1.3.4 Context as Type of Activity or Discourse Genre

In context, words are produced and interpreted in “activity types” (Levinson 1992) or discourse “genres” (Bhatia 1993; Swales 1990), that specify the three, fundamental or prototypical genres identified by classical Rhetoric (i.e. deliberative, judicial, epideictic). It is now well admitted that argumentation is not performed the same way in public, on TV, in parliamentary debates, in dispute mediations, in news rooms or in published editorials, in financial or medical communication (e.g. Van Eemeren and Garssen 2012; Van Eemeren 2009), etc. This variety of usage questions the roles of the participants (i.e. Proponent, Opponent, Third Party), the organization of speakership (“participation framework” in Goffman’s (1981) terms), and the goals of the argumentative moves: while some genres are oriented towards persuasion (i.e. to persuade the addressee), others are only structured by the two fundamental operations of justification and positioning (Angenot 2008).

To summarise, tackling argumentation as a *discursive process* calls for an analysis of argumentative moves in context, taken at the same time as the *local or global verbal context* coming before and after the moves, the *semiotic context* surrounding the moves, the *speech context* anchoring the moves and the *generic context* constraining or influencing the production and interpretation of moves. The present volume gives examples of such a *holistic* perspective on argumentation as a human activity (see in particular Mohammed’s, Macagno and Bigi’s and Mundwiler and Kreuz’s contributions to this volume for accounts which emphasise the influence of macro-contexts on argumentative performance).

⁵A typical relevant phenomenon to be considered is tension and differences between argumentation as being addressed to a specific audience vs. to a universal audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958).

1.4 Cognitive Operations

1.4.1 *Argumentation and Cognition*

Argumentation has, over the years, traditionally been defined and studied as a social and discursive activity (see e.g. Van Eemeren et al. 2014; Lewiński and Mohammed 2016). More recently, however, a growing body of research has started to focus on the fact that at least part of the argumentative process takes place in the arguers' minds and is accordingly attempting to elucidate the cognitive underpinnings of this particular communicative practice (see e.g. Mercier and Sperber 2009, 2011, 2017; Hahn and Hornikx 2016; Corner et al. 2011; Lillo-Unglaube et al. 2014; Oswald 2016a among others). Under this perspective, arguments can be seen as the verbal formulation of (cognitive) inferences which articulate various kinds of justificatory relationships.

This relatively recent cognitive trend in argumentation studies has emerged on the back of the growing influence of neighbouring disciplines such as the psychology of reasoning (Wason 1960, 1966; Evans and Frankish 2009) and the study of cognitive heuristics (Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Gigerenzer 2004, 2008). Some argumentation theorists have nowadays begun to integrate these insights in a number of ways (see Walton 2010; Jackson 1996; Oswald and Lewiński 2014; Herman and Oswald 2014), according to their ability to shed light on some fundamental questions at the core of the study of argumentation, among which argument quality, norms of argumentative acceptability, argumentative effectiveness and persuasiveness. An overarching concern in this line of inquiry thus relates to argument processing, the idea being that knowing more about the cognitive underpinnings of argument production and evaluation is likely to further our knowledge of human argumentative practices.

1.4.2 *Cognitive Operations Involved in Argumentation*

What, in our view, cognitive science specifically has to offer to the study of argumentation is to be found in the key concepts of representation and inference. As mentioned above, behind every actual argumentation there is at least one argumentative inference, which can be broadly be identified as a set of representations articulated in such a way that one subset of these serves as evidence for another: in this sense, the premises and the conclusions of natural argumentations may be construed as representations taking part in a justificatory cognitive operation. The specificity of each argumentative inference is then to be found in the type of support offered in this operation, which is likely to vary along the specificity of the argumentative scheme under scrutiny (see Walton et al. 2008).

Focusing on its cognitive dimension, it therefore becomes possible to construe argumentation, even if only atomically from a reductionist standpoint, as a type of

justificatory articulation between representations. Crucially, argumentative inference so construed builds on other cognitive mechanisms, notably those which are responsible for generating interpretations of communicative stimuli and in particular verbal stimuli: in order to evaluate whether some conclusion follows from the premises presented to support it, one first needs to understand—that is, to have a representation taken to be contextually accurate—of the content of both premises and conclusion (see also Mercier and Sperber 2009, 2011). Quite straightforwardly, then, what one *understands* from someone's argumentation is in principle likely to play a constraining role in its evaluation: for instance, lexical operations as basic as simple reference assignment may orient argumentative evaluation by playing on positive or negative connotations, themselves likely to generate biased representations (see Oswald 2011 for a discussion).

With this in mind, cognitive mechanisms of utterance interpretation become a relevant phenomenon to look at when we push forward a cognitive agenda in argumentation studies. In particular, given the linguistic richness on which argumentative processes might draw to verbalise their constitutive inferences, it becomes relevant to try to assess from a cognitive perspective the constraining role specific linguistic structures or expressions may play when used argumentatively. This in turn expresses the need to enrich existing accounts of argumentation with cognitive pragmatic insights on the representation of meaning in natural language.

In this spirit, part of the motivation of this volume rests on an exploration of the role linguistic material may have on the representation of communicated information, which serves as the input for argument processing by the recipients of argumentative discourse. This is why we consider that input from linguistics and in particular from the linguistic disciplines devoted to the study of meaning (i.e. semantics and pragmatics) is crucial for a cognitive approach to argumentation. If specific formulations are likely to yield specific representations which would vary should the formulation vary as well, and since processing an argument requires the representation of the contents of the premises and the conclusion, then in principle specific formulations are likely to influence the outcome of argumentative processing.

This is significant for the study of argumentation from at least two perspectives, namely a methodological and an explanatory perspective. From a methodological perspective, the study of the cognitive mechanisms involved in the interpretation of speaker meaning are of capital importance to the analysis of argumentation in tasks of argumentative reconstruction, particularly when speakers leave parts of their argumentative contribution implicit (see Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004; Oswald 2016b; Gerritsen 2001), as such models will help in the task of identifying (implicit) speaker meaning. From an explanatory perspective devoted to the study of rhetorical effectiveness, a cognitive inquiry may illuminate the conditions under which the information contained in the premises of the argumentation offered by the speaker is likely to constrain its evaluation. In this strand of research, successful argumentation (be it fallacious or not) can be assessed as the result of a specific form of interaction between competing sets of information, namely the conclusion, its premises and the critical information required to assess the link between the latter. Other things being equal, when critical information is more salient (which, in

cognitive terms, can be assessed in terms of ease of processing and epistemic strength), chances are that the argument will not manage to convince; in the alternative scenario, and other things being equal, when premises are more salient (more accessible and epistemically stronger), the conclusion is likely to go through (see Oswald 2016a). As these sets of information are represented on the basis of communicative and verbal stimuli, it therefore makes sense to scrutinise the impact of verbal material on the representations that partake in argumentative processes.

While this volume cannot tackle all three dimensions in detail, its contributions do offer insights on the cognitive machinery which connects the linguistic dimension of argumentation with the discursive nature of argumentation and its typical effects, usually defined in terms of rhetorical effectiveness or persuasiveness (see in particular Saussure's, Ervas et al.'s, Herman's and Moeschler's contributions to the volume).

1.5 Overview of the Contributions to the Volume

The volume is divided in two parts. We have opted for this structure based on a thematic criterion related to the communicative level on which each contribution focuses. The first part, titled *Linguistic Resources of Argumentation*, gathers contributions whose main focus is the exploration of linguistic phenomena and their role in argumentative practices. In other words, part I of the volume is devoted to the specifically linguistic dimension at play in argumentative practices. The second part, as indicated by its title (*Argumentative Processes: Cognition and Discourse*), focuses on the cognitive and the discursive dimensions of argumentation, therefore abstracting away from specific linguistic phenomena.

In Chap. 2, Thierry Herman develops a linguistically-informed revision of Toulmin's famous *layout of argument*. Focusing on the nature and role of the various components of this layout based on their linguistic anchoring and potential formulations, Herman extends Toulmin's original proposal and offers a careful reflexion meant to both ground and expand the inherently dialectical nature of argumentation. Through the development of the model of the argumentative cell, Herman is thus able to account for different possibilities of counter-discourse integration as well as to refine classical notions such as Backing and Data, while considering the fundamental (and often overlooked) role of evidentiality in Toulmin's layout. His work, at the precise interface between language, discourse and cognition, carries obvious descriptive and explanatory advantages, as it covers issues that are at the core of rhetorical inquiry: Herman offers indeed a fine-grained description of argumentative structures and at the same time provides an account of why the latter can be rhetorically appealing in cognitive processing terms.

In Chap. 3, Maarten Van Leeuwen combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a case study of *complementation* in political discourse, devoted to the discourse of Dutch populist Geert Wilders over the years. The goal of his contribution is to show how the use of a very specific grammatical phenomenon, namely complementation (defined as a pair of subordinated subject and object

clauses which usually involves a source of information), can diachronically be traced in political discourse and to describe the implications of documented changes in rhetorical terms. Complementation is a syntactic structure that typically invites alternative perspectives to be voiced, since it explicitly mentions the source X of the propositional content P embedded in the subordinate clause (e.g., ‘X said/considers/believes that P’)—thereby leaving room to wonder about and possibly express other sources of opinion on P. In his analysis, Van Leeuwen observes a drop in the use of complementation in Wilders’ discourse over the years and discusses its implications in terms of *ethos* management and disagreement space (which is *ipso facto* narrowed down, since the absence of complementation leaves less room for opponents to chip in). In doing so, Van Leeuwen convincingly demonstrates how the study of grammatical phenomena can shed light on argumentative practices, here by documenting how argumentatively self-sealing strategies with strong rhetorical implications can be realised through grammatical means.

Chapter 4, by Joanna Miecznikowski, is a vivid illustration of how linguistic insights can be used in the study of argumentative relations. Focusing on Italian appearance verbs (*rivelare*, to reveal and *emergere*, to emerge), Miecznikowski shows how evidential expressions can function as argumentative indicators. Drawing both on the *Argumentum Model of Topics* (for its ability to represent inferential articulations) and on linguistic research on evidentiality, Miecznikowski performs a corpus-based analysis in which she demonstrates how evidential verbs fulfil their argumentative role in the absence of clear argumentative formats. Her claim rests on the following argument: since evidentials have to do with sources of evidence and more generally information, and since sources of evidence can be evaluated as reliable or unreliable (i.e., sources of evidence are controvertible), evidential expressions can be taken to perform justificatory work in what could be considered as implicit argumentation. As such, evidentials such as *rivelare* and *emergere* signal that the speaker is performing inferences to support the propositional content she is putting forward, which is a clear indication that their use is instructional in terms of an argumentative perspective.

Elena Musi, in Chap. 5, adds to this specific discussion on the relationship between evidential expressions and argumentation by focusing on the use of another evidential, Italian *sembrare* (to seem), in a corpus of opinion articles. Drawing as well on the *Argumentum Model of Topics*, Musi considers how the use of *sembrare* relates to (i) types of expressible standpoints and (ii) types of defeasible argument schemes. The whole rationale of her investigation is thus an exploration of the strong relationship between linguistic resources (here evidentiality) and the structure and nature of argumentation these resources license. Her findings suggest that the semantic properties of evidentials impose restrictions on the type of argument schemes that may be used (here argument schemes from whole to parts and causal argumentation are specifically considered). Moreover, the type of investigation presented by Musi allows for a high degree of precision in the description of the argumentative work performed by evidential expressions, as her methodology is able to determine which components of the inference (*endoxon*,

datum, *maxim*, *locus*, etc.) are involved in the argumentative possibilities offered by the evidential expression.

Chapter 6, by Jacques Moeschler, concludes the first part on the linguistic resources of argumentation. In this chapter, Moeschler adopts a genuine linguistic pragmatic perspective to consider the difference between argumentative sequences marked by connectives and those that dispose of them, with the use of French *mais* ('but') as a case in point. This chapter is perhaps closer in scope and spirit to the type of work carried out within French Argumentation-within-language approaches (though Moeschler clearly demarcates his approach from the latter), as it considers the building blocks of argumentation in discourse, namely connectives. Moeschler offers a very fine-grained description of the features of *mais* which also accounts for why certain usages are licensed while some others are not. Couched in a relevance-theoretical cognitive pragmatic framework (Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2012), his analysis submits that the presence of connectives in discourses makes them more efficient (they minimise processing effort and maximise relevance) and stronger, as connectives introduce new focal information which carry more contextual implications than non-focal information.

The second part of the volume (*Argumentative processes: cognition and discourse*) scopes over the discursive and cognitive dimensions of argumentative practices; the contributions gathered therein, however, are also rooted in broadly linguistic perspectives which decisively incorporate issues of *meaning construction*.

In Chap. 7, Francesca Ervas, Elisabetta Gola and Maria Grazia Rossi examine the cognitive aspects involved in the processing of analogical varieties of the fallacy of *quaternio terminorum* (an erroneous syllogism involving four terms instead of three), in cases where the ambiguity of the middle term rests on the use of a metaphor. The authors present an experimental design which shows, contrary to mainstream Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), that the nature of the metaphor (lexicalised vs. novel) and its use in argumentation play a constraining role in both the nature of cognitive processing and the persuasiveness of the argument. Specifically, novel metaphors are more likely to make the fallacy go through unnoticed compared to lexicalised ones. In so doing, Ervas, Gola and Rossi show how argumentation can be thought of as a bridge between reasoning and metaphor: as a discursive process, argumentation is shown to gather the conditions under which metaphorical wordings can influence the quality of reasoning (taken here as the evaluation of a justificatory relationship between premises and conclusions).

Chapter 8, by Louis de Saussure, examines the cognitive and inferential underpinnings of the straw man fallacy, traditionally defined as a refutational fallacy of misattribution. Saussure unpacks the workings of this fallacious move by reflecting on the inferential work it triggers in its addressees and shows that these inferences typically target considerations on the *ethos* of both the victim of the straw man (depicted as a poor inferencer) and the author of the straw man (who, following her alleged exposition of the victim's inferential weakness, arguably sees her prestige enhanced). Successful straw men are thus described as *pragmatic winners* by virtue of the fact that they trigger inferences which are relevant in

face-work processes. From an operational perspective, Saussure provides an account based on considerations of relevance which explains why the defensive meta-discussion typically called for by the straw man fallacy is likely to drown its victim: the burden of proof becomes too heavy to bear because it would require the victim to provide justifications for the intended original interpretation—and this is a meta-discussion which, with regard to conversational purposes, usually turns out to be irrelevant.

In Chap. 9, Fabrizio Macagno and Sarah Bigi consider the role of different presumptions in cases of pragmatic ambiguity and elaborate an account of misunderstanding which draws on general pragmatic principles and argumentative conceptions of inference. Crucially, the theoretical claim of argumentative significance defended in this chapter highlights the usefulness of the tools argumentation theory can offer when dealing with such pragmatic issues: in a nutshell, the idea is that argumentation theory can help when pragmatic ambiguity requires us to decide which interpretation of a given stimulus, among competing interpretations, is more likely. Macagno and Bigi's typologies of ambiguities and presumptions provide a descriptive framework in which the locus of ambiguity can be precisely characterised. In turn, the model they present incorporates contextual constraints (in the form of dialogue types and communicative purposes), the consideration of which contributes to the identification of the reason behind the misunderstanding. The authors apply the model to a corpus of doctor-patient interactions and convincingly show how their framework can contribute to understanding why misunderstandings occur (basically through a mismatch of presumptions made on both parts), and, thus, to making medical practices better.

Chapter 10, by Marcin Lewiński, tackles the issue of practical argumentation in deliberative discourse and examines, in the wake of the pragma-dialectical studies on argumentative indicators (see Sect. 1.2.2 above), the typical linguistic markers that signal this particular type of argumentation scheme. His motivated and very detailed typology of practical argumentation instances, which is based on three different principles for rationally selecting means of reaching the desired goal (i.e., either the best, the necessary or the good enough means), allows him to identify corresponding ranges of expressions which should be mutually exclusive. In the process, Lewiński identifies relevant grammatical categories (superlative and comparative adjectives and adverbs, qualifiers of different psychological valence, and semantic modalities). The relationship between linguistic resources and argumentation is therefore descriptively explored in this contribution and yields novel typological sets which follow from the author's original extension of the argumentative scheme for practical argumentation.

Dima Mohammed, in Chap. 11, contributes to the discussion on the link between linguistic indicators of argumentation and particular argumentative practices by considering the case of European Parliamentary Debates on Statements. After accounting for the specificity of this particular activity type, in which accountability is performed without this being the main point of the activity, Mohammed sets out to examine whether there are typical linguistic indicators that could guide the analysis of such activity type. Her findings indicate that the nature

of the activity type is too complex to result in a systematic catalogue of argumentative indicators of accountability in those discourses: on the one hand, the activity type is highly institutionalised, and on the other, its communicative purpose is too unspecific (here meaning multifarious) to hope to linguistically trace the linguistic occurrence of argumentatively relevant accountability moves. This is thus an example of discourse which points to the inherent difficulties that researchers face when they navigate at the linguistics-argumentation interface, and reminds us that the analysis of argumentative practices should feed on several dimensions of linguistic analysis, the crucial notion of context being one of them (see Sect. 1.3 above).

Chapter 12, by Vera Mundwiler and Judith Kreuz, concludes our volume with a contribution devoted to the types of argumentative practices found in classroom interaction (grades 2, 4 and 6). Drawing on conversational analytic methodologies, the authors analyse recorded data in which argumentative discourse was elicited to observe whether and how primary school children engage in argumentation. Three major findings can be reported here: (i) interestingly, argumentation does not seem to be the only resource children draw on to reach agreement; (ii) moreover, argumentation does not seem to be exclusively used to resolve differences of opinion, but in addition it is also used to explore ideas when agreement has already been reached, thus echoing ideas found elsewhere on the non-necessarily dissenting nature of argumentation (see e.g. Doury 2012); (iii) finally, the range of argumentative strategies at the pupils' disposal seems to increase with age.

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Part I
Linguistic Resources of Argumentation

Chapter 2

A Linguistic Revision of Toulmin's Layout of Arguments

Thierry Herman

Abstract Using the notion of argumentative cell (Plantin in *L'argumentation: histoire, théories et perspectives*. Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 2005), based on Toulmin's layout of argument (1958), we observe how argumentative units are formulated in actual discourses. An argumentative cell is a way of describing how different argumentative moves can occupy different zones of the cell (counter-argument, grounds for it, counter-conclusion, argument, grounds for it, conclusions, exceptions and restrictive frame), either explicitly or not. We discuss four problems Toulmin's layout faces and offer solutions to integrate this layout within a linguistic perspective, in order to better describe pro-and-con arguments. We also claim that Toulmin's backing is tied with linguistic evidentiality and will show with some examples how this argumentative cell can contribute to clarifying the analysis of argumentation structures.

2.1 Introduction¹

Stephen Edelston Toulmin is, to be sure, “one of the founding fathers of the modern theory of argumentation” (van Eemeren et al. 2014, p. 204). It is indeed quite intimidating to come back to his very famous “layout of arguments” model (Toulmin 1993 [1958]) in order to refine it from the linguistic and rhetorical point of view that I defend; but I will explain why I think it must be amended. This layout, presented in the third chapter of his 1958 book (*The Uses of Argument*), had significant influence, maybe less in its original field—philosophy—than in public communication sciences (van Eemeren et al. 2014, p. 228), text linguistics and

¹This paper partially builds on previous work (Herman 2016) which is here extended. The theoretical model is applied here to an actual example. I thank both reviewers for their meticulous and fruitful suggestions, questions and remarks.

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approaches in rhetoric and discourse analysis (de Jonge 2008). Formal logicians have voiced some criticism about this model, and that is not really a surprise since Toulmin thought logic to be inadequate to address the practical reason of human affairs and logical norms to be irrelevant in ordinary practices of argumentation. Some theorists of ordinary argumentation have also considered Toulmin's model as ambiguous or vague (van Eemeren 1996). This model has sparked a number of debates and clarifications about its usefulness and its problems, and some scholars like James Freeman or David Hitchcock remain strong advocates of this layout (Freeman 1991, 2001, 2011; Hitchcock 2003; see also Hitchcock and Verheij 2006). More than fifty years after its publication, it seems that the layout of arguments is still widely used and it still constitutes the touchstone of most French books about argumentation (Amossy 2012; Danblon 2005; Plantin 2005). A recent reconsideration of this model within a linguistic-pragmatic approach to argumentation theory has also been done by Bermejo Luque (2011), whose insights are quite interesting and seem to fit with some propositions that are made here—I will address some of the main differences with her view in this chapter.

Even if a lot has been said (and clarified) about some components of the layout, for example the difficulty to define a Warrant or to distinguish between a Warrant and a Data (see van Eemeren et al. 2014: Chap. 4 for an exhaustive summary of the debates), the fact remains that applying Toulmin's model to real and ordinary examples is quite an uneasy task. A simple example like "Although it's raining, I will go outside because I really need fresh air" is difficult to tackle within a Toulminian frame. More broadly, pro- and con-arguments or balance of considerations arguments (Wellmann 1971; Hansen 2011) are not perfectly suited for the layout of the arguments, even though (!) concessions are quite frequent in discourses. These difficulties have led me to identify four problems in the layout of arguments (cf. Herman 2016). The ambition of this paper is to illustrate these four problems in order to fine-tune the model according to the criteria of the descriptive point of view I defend and use. However, these propositions need to be refined through extensive testing conducted on appropriate corpus. I've chosen to illustrate my approach with one excerpt of an opinion article from the New York Times.² In this article, Gail Collins is quite vividly arguing that the behaviour of Republican candidates to the Senate who dislike Donald Trump but do not vote for Hillary Clinton is "ridiculous". The argument uses the example of Mark Kirk's choice, a Senator of Illinois who is said to be "doomed, doomed, doomed" for his re-election:

- (1) (1.1) Kirk has been running desperately away from Donald Trump, (1.2) who he says is "too bigoted and racist." (1.3) You would think this is one case where a Republican with little to lose would figure (1.4) that it's time to take a stand and admit that (1.5) although he disagrees with Hillary Clinton on tons of issues, (1.6) she's the only presidential candidate who has the capacity to protect the nation's basic security and safety. (1.7) But no. (1.8) At one point

²I use this example as an ordinary argumentative sequence in a text. Three criteria explain this choice: presence of "even though" or "although", brevity, and relative complexity.

Kirk claimed he was going to vote for former C.I.A. director David Petraeus. (Gail Collins, "Republican Candidates, Admit It's Hillary You're Voting For", *NY Times*, Nov. 3, 2016)

I will first explain the theoretical framework I use, before briefly recalling Toulmin's model. Then, I will set out to examine the four issues and discuss them through a slightly modified model of the layout of argumentation. Far from being iconoclastic, my approach is intended to refine a model by a linguistic approach—that was alien to the *Uses of arguments*' perspective—and, ultimately, to pay a tribute to the descriptive power of its layout of arguments.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The approach to rhetorical and argumentative discourse³ I will defend here postulates the interrelatedness of language, cognition and social context. Indeed, the ancient rhetorical frame I use, an Aristotelian frame, typically combines language, social context (the dos and don'ts in the audience's society for example) and reasoning processes of the audience. Unlike philosophy, rhetoric can be broadly considered as related to the art of arguing within a specific and social context and aiming at the most efficient way to achieve a speaker's goal (Aristotle 2014; Kennedy 1994; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958). Even if moral questions may arise about such uses of language, rhetoric seems the best framework to investigate argumentation expressed in *natural language* and *aiming at being accepted* by an audience. To be clearer, the core of rhetoric, viewed as a process (Tindale 1999), is *anticipation*. A speaker must steadily think about the *effects* each of his or her communicative choices, within situational parameters, may produce on the members of the audience's mind, and adapt her speech accordingly.⁴

The consequences of this perspective are at least twofold: (i) analysing persuasive discourse implies analysing a *process* rather than a product which is why we will try to explain how discursive and linguistic features may create cognitive effects that in turn contribute to achieving the persuasive goal; (ii) as each discursive feature (word, syntax, intonation, etc.) is potentially a building block of the rhetor's persuasive strategy, I generally analyse speeches or texts *as they evolve and in the way they are delivered*: even if the reasoning that links an argument and its conclusion is identical whether the speaker says "A, therefore C" or "C, because A",⁵ it may be significant

³In brief, I consider argumentation as a type of verbal process (see the discussion on definitions later) which can be used—with other resources—in a rhetorical way; to simplify, argumentation is more an illocution where rhetoric is more a perlocution (whose aim is to gain the audience's adhesion).

⁴I adopt here the notational convention whereby speakers are referred to as females and addressees are referred to as males.

⁵This structure is both used by argumentation and explanation. Differences between them are discussed in Herman (2015).

to investigate the different cognitive effects of such layouts. For the same reason, I generally do not rephrase what the speaker has said in a formal language.

The idea of giving one's consent is historically central to any account of rhetoric, which is here very minimally defined as "the discipline by which a speaker publicly delivers at least an opinion (thereby constructing a stance within a social territory) in view of gaining (part of) the audience's adhesion" (Herman, Forth.). Rhetorical strategies are the discursive processes by which the speaker attempts to achieve the goal of securing adhesion. These definitions highlight two constitutive features of any argument: the opinion defended by the speaker and the fact that this opinion comes with various rhetorical strategies meant to increase the chances of adhesion. However, these two features are not yet sufficient to trigger an argumentative process; argumentation, for me, is one possible way of making someone adhere to a position. More specifically, according to Jacquin and Micheli,

Argumentation can be thought of as a specific mode of the verbal processing of disagreements, which consists in the construction of solid positions, namely positions that are supported by textual justificatory work and that are situated through dialogical and interactional positioning work. (2012, p. 600, my translation)

This definition moves away from the goal of adhesion that we attributed to rhetoric and, at the same time, adopts the idea of positioning by introducing three fundamental components: the idea of real or potential⁶ disagreement, the idea of support or justification and the idea of resistance to adverse positions ("solid positions"). Such components may be studied with the help of Toulmin's famous model of arguments (2003 [1958]).

But, before doing so, let me state some definitions. My view on argumentation is quite similar to Jacquin and Micheli's and to Bermejo Luque's, i.e. "in order to determine that a given communicative activity is argumentation, we will have to interpret it as an attempt at justifying a claim, independently of the speaker's further intentions" (2011). But it differs on the necessity of an expressed or explicit justification of the speaker's claim. Bermejo Luque's functional definition of argumentation is quite appealing: "[...]to argue is, constitutively, to pursue justification: by trying to justify a claim, we argue for it and whenever we argue for a claim, we can be said to try to justify it" (2011: 56, emphasis added). I agree with that point of view, except that it leaves aside the idea of "disagreement" and it considers only speaker's justification. Let us take an example: "Although it's raining, I will go outside". Bermejo Luque would probably not see argumentation here. I treat it on the contrary as an argumentative move, even though "I will go outside" is not justified. Why? First, I think that there is no problem to admit that an unproblematic reported counter-argumentation is implied here: "It is raining; therefore, I will not go outside", whose expected claim is surprisingly denied. Second, it is difficult to consider that the explicit claim "I will go outside" is a kind of an *addendum* to a finished argumentation, because punctuation and prosody tend to treat this example

⁶While I nearly quite completely agree with Jacquin and Micheli's definition, I would have stressed out that disagreements may only be potential and not already expressed.

as a whole unit. Third, even if “I will go outside” is not justified, this kind of concessive structure implies that the speaker probably draws on at least one stronger unexpressed reason to go outside. While justification is not expressed, it does not mean that it does not exist. Fourth, I consider that the goal of argumentation is to strengthen a target-claim in order to increase its chances of being admitted/accepted by the hearer⁷: the speaker can do such a job in justifying her own claim by one or many reasons; but she can also weaken an opponent's claim by showing that counter-arguments, which may be quite strong in absolute terms, are in fact inefficient in the present case. So providing a justification for a real or putative opponent's claim can in fact strengthen her own position: the “rain” counter-argument appears to be weak. Here, the speaker takes a position where she imposes a claim against the *doxa* (see Oswald and Herman 2016 for a development on imposed claims). In brief, either taking a position against a (counter-)argument or justifying a claim can be designed as textual argumentative moves.⁸

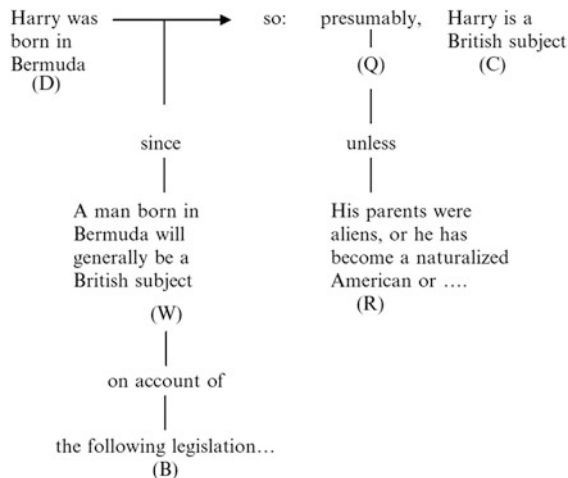
2.3 Toulmin's Layout and the Argumentative Cell

In a dialectical perspective, Toulmin starts the layout of arguments by the Claim, this is to say the standpoint one would like to be adopted or believed by the audience. But this audience might not accept the Claim and may, more often than not, challenge it by asking ‘What have you got to go on?’ (Toulmin 2003, p. 102). That pushes the speaker to give Datum or Data (“Grounds” in Toulmin et al. 1979), i.e. facts, as arguments leading to the Claim. Still, this move can be challenged by a new question: ‘How do you get there?’ (ibid.). Answering this question forces the speaker to offer a Warrant that shows the relationship between Data and Claim. Data, Warrant and Claim are not connected as logical syllogisms are: the Claim is only a probability. This approximate way to argue entails bringing in the “degree of force which our data confer on our claim in virtue of our warrant” (Toulmin 2003, p. 93). The role of this force is represented by the Qualifier—a kind of epistemic modality about the certainty of the argumentation provided—see Bermejo Luque

⁷Therefore, I try to avoid the idea of correctness and evaluation in describing argumentation, whereas it is the cornerstone of Bermejo Luque's vision: “if illocutionarily (i.e., conventionally), an act of arguing counts as an attempt at showing a target-claim to be correct, good acts of arguing will be acts that succeed in this” (2011: 72). Neither do I adopt an instrumentalist vision where the goal of argumentation would be adhesion or persuasion. My definition is completely in line with Marianne Doury's definition: “a mode of construction of discourse whose aim is to make it more resistant to contest” (2016: 22, my translation).

⁸The case of a claim alone or an argument alone is quite complex and I will not tackle it here, because it exceeds the scope of this article. Let us say that I tend to consider an argument alone (which, by inference, leads to an unexpressed claim) as a suggested argumentative move and a claim alone (which appeals for at least one argument) as a presumed argumentative move—although I am aware that this does not solve all the problems of definition.

Fig. 2.1 Toulmin's layout of arguments



(2011) about epistemic and ontological modals. Because of exceptions that may arise, precisely because of the qualifier, Toulmin adds a Rebuttal to his model. This Rebuttal is a kind of unless-statement which leads to negating the Claim: “exceptional conditions which might be capable of defeating or rebutting the warranted conclusion” (2003, p. 94). Finally, Toulmin adds a new challenging question about the Warrant: “we may be asked why in general this warrant should be accepted as having authority” (2003, p. 95), since “warrants are not self-validating” (Toulmin et al. 1979, p. 62). Toulmin’s last component is ‘Backing’. The Backing is field-dependent, according to Toulmin, and it can present known statements in certain fields, legal rules, physical forces, etc. (Fig. 2.1).

I will call this layout an “argumentative cell”, following Christian Plantin’s work on this unit from his reading of Toulmin (Plantin 1990, 1996, 2005):

Most of all, a broad interpretation of Toulmin’s model – maybe an extrapolation – lays the foundations of a unit one could call an “argumentative cell”, articulated to a text’s dimensions. This cell embeds the following elements:

- an argumentation, connecting a position (a thesis, a conclusion) to supporting data (an argument);
- a refutation, *i.e.* an allusion to the position of an adversary who defends a different conclusion, and a negation of this position.

The cell’s organisation does not depend on a form or on a definite textual element; it [...] corresponds to an utterance as well as to a paragraph. (Plantin 1990, p. 33, my translation)

Plantin’s idea is really important: identifying a basic or extended argumentative unit leads to better envision structures or argumentation and helps giving a frame in which we can consider how components of these units interact. Plantin argues that an argumentative cell integrates justification (a Claim requires good reasons to defend it), rhetoric (the cell is built on a relationship with an addressee) and

dialectics, because the argumentative cell is submitted to refutation by the addressee (1990, p. 34). But he does not say whether this integration is always necessary. I will consider that there are only three macro-categories of argumentative cells—whose nucleus is a Claim:

- (i) a Claim and its justification (no refutation): “It’s Saturday; so Jean is probably at home”;
- (ii) a Claim and its counter-argumentation (counter-claim and/or counter-arguments but no justification of the claim): “Even if it’s raining, Mary should not give up her walk” (no arguments why she should not give up)⁹;
- (iii) a Claim, its justification and a counter-argumentation¹⁰: “I know it’s late. But I need to finish this work and this is why I’m asking you for help.”

The presence of counter-argumentation is a property of what is called *conductive argument*, or “balance-of-considerations” (BC) argument (Hansen 2011). But including it in an argumentative cell means that BC arguments are not a subtype or a special type of argument scheme: they simply arise from the (unnecessary) presence of a dialectical tier in an argumentative move, and, in other words, from the idea that a standpoint can be challenged, and that challenges can be anticipated, in a move.¹¹

Such a typology illustrates for now that the necessary component of an argumentative cell—its nucleus—is a Claim: this is the component which gives boundaries to a cell. Note that a Claim is different than a conclusion—despite the fact that Toulmin’s Claim has been translated by “conclusion” in French. I consider it as an assertion for which the speaker marks a personal commitment whereas a conclusion can be, for example, the opponent’s justified standpoint. Both are identical in a way, but a Claim highlights the idea that the speaker is ready to defend it first, whereas a conclusion highlights a role in an argumentative move first.

Now, argumentative cells can combine between them and form a greater complex unit. It is the case, for example, when a justified Claim in an argumentative cell is used to further justify an additional Claim afterwards. It is also the case of our example, which we will deal with later on.

⁹Without entering details here, I will also consider that polyphonic claims, in particular polemic negations (Ducrot 1984) evoke (without stating it) a counter-argumentation. “Don’t fire John; he’s a good man” is an argumentative cell that evokes a counter-claim “(there is someone who says that) you should fire John”.

¹⁰Counter-argumentation can be complete (argument and conclusion) or not; counter-argumentation can also be a concession or a rebuttal.

¹¹This contribution will only take into account monological written texts. It considers that mentioning other’s arguments or alluding to them is a way to include a pseudo-dialogue in a text.

2.4 Four Problems

Toulmin's useful layout nevertheless presents some problems, which have already been tackled by argumentation theorists, about the nature of the Warrant, the difference between Data and Backing or the question of field-dependency. I will not directly here elaborate on these problems; let me simply say, in order to be clearer in the following pages, that I am in line with Hitchcock's view on Warrant. Hitchcock (2003) shows that, for Toulmin, a Warrant always has a *generalised* form which offers an inference-license: "you can infer from data of this kind a corresponding claim of this kind" (2003, p. 73).¹² This bridging statement between Data and Claim is not a major premise that links a case and a result, like in a syllogism, but a *general* inference beyond the particular case.¹³ I also agree with Robert Pinto's account for a Warrant, which develops Hitchcock's idea: "If it is reasonable at [time] *t* for [Speaker] *S* to suppose_{*i*} that *x* is *F* then, in the absence at *t* of undermining or overriding evidence, it is reasonable at *t* for *S* to suppose_{*j*} that *X* is *G* (2006: 299).¹⁴

The success of Toulmin's model is striking, but applying it to real texts in order to analyse natural argumentative texts as processes is quite difficult. I have identified four problems that have not been discussed at length so far, to the best of my knowledge, in the literature about Toulmin's model.

- (i) The first problem is the constant definition of Data or Grounds as facts or factual information in Toulmin's work. We can easily find examples where a Claim is justified by other opinions or interpretative statements. In our example, the datum "Kirk has little to lose" is used as a Datum leading to argue why Kirk should take a stand. And Kirk's statement about Donald Trump being "too bigoted and racist" leads him to explain why he has been running away from Trump. But here, both Data are not facts: they are opinions—which may be otherwise justified or not.
- (ii) The second problem is the nature of the Backing. The Backing is a way of ensuring the solidity of the Warrant. But it does not have a clear-cut definition in Toulmin's works. I think, and I will argue so later, that the field-dependency of the Backing can be often envisioned as a question of evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2006). That is to say, in linguistics, how language encodes the nature of evidence for a given statement (1. existence of the

¹²In a similar way, for Pinto, Warrants have two key features: "(a) warrants must be *general* statements and (b) when stated explicitly they are practical statements about what we may 'safely' do or what we are *entitled to do*" (2011: 313–314).

¹³Note that Toulmin argued in his seminal book that Warrants are implicit and Data explicit, but Hitchcock, and others, put forth that it is not sufficient to distinguish Data and Warrants: the functional difference of the components are better criteria than implicitness or explicitness. Bermejo Luque has a quite different view on warrant, which is criticized by Hitchcock (2011), Pinto (2011) and Freeman (1991, 2001, 2011).

¹⁴Subscripts letters *i* and *j* indicate different form of supposition.

evidence, or not; 2. kind of evidence). In such a way, Backing can be seen as a bridge-like statement between the case that is being argued and *sources of knowledge in certain fields*. It can refer to laws, shared standards, testimonies, etc. Toulmin uses laws in Harry's case and statistics in the Swedish Petersen case¹⁵ as examples. In light of this, we can wonder whether there is only one place for the Backing in the layout of arguments. Now, within this frame of Backing as (mostly) evidential proofs, it is not only Warrants that are supported by evidential credentials, but also Data. I will argue here that the layout of arguments must be completed by two kinds of Backing: Backing_D and Backing_W.

- (iii) The third problem is that Toulmin's dialectical dimension fits with the component of the restriction ("Rebuttal"), but it is not the only way to tackle counter-arguments in natural argumentation processes. According to Freeman (1991, 2001, 2011), undercutters and rebuttals may both be used. We argue that the layout of arguments allocates too little room for concessive moves. I will contend that the unity of an argumentative cell is maximally founded on *two* joint Toulminian layouts in order to resolve this problem.
- (iv) Finally, the last problem I encounter is how to deal with complex structures of argument (linked, convergent or serial argument) (Freeman 1991; Henkemans and Francisca 1997; Walton 1996) in the Toulminian layout. I will discuss this problem alongside the previous one.

2.5 The Problem of Data

Analysing argumentation relies on the possibility of identifying how argumentation is built (the argumentative cell) and the nature of its building blocks. The work of James Freeman on "Acceptable Premises" is useful in this way, since "rhetoricians have an obvious interest in classifying statements" (Freeman 2005, p. 94). Freeman uses a fourfold typology of statements; the first division is "broadly logically determinate versus broadly logically indeterminate statements". The first category uses analytic statements such as "all bachelors are unmarried", or "Either it is raining or it is not raining". The second division is "evaluative versus non-evaluative standpoints". The first category clearly encompasses opinions with value judgements (bad, good, beautiful, preferable, etc.). The second one is again divided. For Freeman, it is problematic to use a division between "interpretations" and "descriptions" (facts) for non-evaluative statements. Thus, he argues that descriptions can be characterised by the way they offer "extensional truth conditions", that is to say: "in specifying the conditions under which these statements

¹⁵"Petersen is a Swede; The proportion of Roman Catholic Swedes is less than 2%; So, almost certainly, Petersen is not a Roman Catholic" (Toulmin 2003, p. 102).

would be true, we would not make any references to other possible worlds” (Freeman 2005, p. 105). Interpretations are then defined as “intensional nonevaluative statements” (Ibid.).

These are not distinctions that are used in the Toulminian layout. Data are defined by Toulmin as a set of facts. Yet, some argumentative examples, as shown earlier, do not use facts, but evaluative statements and interpretations as Data for an (evaluative) statement in the Claim.

Although Freeman’s work is interesting, I use a slightly simplified typology and a linguistic test to separate interpretations and evaluative statements from descriptions or facts.¹⁶ The test, used by Gosselin (2010) on linguistic modalities to distinguish alethic modality and epistemic modality,¹⁷ is the insertion of “I find that” before the target proposition. Descriptions or facts (or statements counted as such) are independent of the speaker. Consequently, the insertion of “I find that” is difficult or impossible: “I find that Mark is 5 ft tall” seems rather odd.¹⁸ Opinions (the general label I use for evaluations, pieces of advice, decisions and interpretations, etc.)¹⁹ involve speaker commitment (except when opinions are reported speech) and put the speaker in a position to defend them if she is challenged to do so.

The second promising criterion has to do with the *position* of an opinion or a fact in an argumentative cell. That means studying whether the clause is used as a starting point of argumentation (without any justification in the argumentative cell), as an imposed clause (neither justification nor argumentation below) or as a clause that has been precisely justified in the argumentative cell. Studying these cases allows me to chart the components of the layout of arguments and to refine the typology according to their nature and their position in an argumentative cell.

Let us analyse example (1), which I recall here:

- (1) (1.1) Kirk has been running desperately away from Donald Trump, (1.2) who he says is “too bigoted and racist.” (1.3) You would think this is one case where a Republican with little to lose would figure (1.4) that it’s time to take a stand and admit that (1.5) although he disagrees with Hillary Clinton on tons of issues, (1.6) she’s the only presidential candidate who has the capacity to protect the nation’s basic security and safety. (1.7) But no. (1.8) At one point Kirk claimed he was going to vote for former C.I.A. director David Petraeus.

¹⁶Analytic statements can be counted as facts too.

¹⁷Alethic modality is the modality of truth whereas epistemic modality expresses a judgement on reality (certainty or uncertainty). It should be noted that Bermejo Luque adds the questions of modalities in Toulmin’s layout: data, warrant and backing are accompanied by ontological modality (which is more or less a question of probability) and the claim is accompanied by both an ontological and an epistemic modality (2011: 115). I do not use ontological modality and I do not see why epistemic modality is only attached to the claim.

¹⁸Note that “Mary is at home” can be an opinion if this fact is only guessed or inferred from arguments. So, the linguistic test needs to be used in context.

¹⁹Strictly speaking, we should make a difference between facts and non-facts, but this terminology feels rather artificial, which is why I prefer to label non-facts as opinions. The category “Interpretation” used by Freeman in his typology is also considered as an opinion here.

(Gail Collins, "Republican Candidates, Admit It's Hillary You're Voting For", *NY Times*, Nov. 3, 2016)

I consider that (1.1) is an Explanandum justified by (1.2), which is an Imposed claim.²⁰ (1.3) is a Claim justified by (1.1) and the preceding co-text ("Kirk is doomed, doomed, doomed"). (1.4) is a Justified Claim (by (1.3)); (1.5) is an Imposed Datum (it is seen as a fact that Kirk disagrees with Clinton); (1.6), like (1.4) is a Claim which appears to be justified by (1.3). (1.7) is a Counter-claim developed by (1.8).

Such an analytical tool highlights something I find more interesting than just Data: it is the way Data can appear to be shared arguments that are external to any discussion about them. Accordingly, it can be a strong strategical move to impose them when they are in fact debatable. In the same way, I consider that facts working as the starting point of argumentation are supposed to be true. It is also a strong move if these facts are unknown or even false. Opinions that appear to be already shared are starting points of argumentation or agreed-upon arguments which are what Aristotle called *endoxa* ("Probabilities however are those which appear to all, or to most men, or to the wise, and to these either to all or to the greater number, or to such as are especially renowned and illustrious", *Topics*, part I). Even if these opinions are not linguistic presuppositions, they can have the same effects: you are not supposed to argue about them—they are considered as agreements in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's words (1958). This table is a tool to consider ideology in discourse, but it is also a tool to spot some manoeuvring when seemingly agreed-upon arguments or imposed Claims can in fact be debatable. Such *endoxa* can also be considered as a sort of authoritarian assertion by the speaker, such as the ones I studied earlier (Herman 2014). What I wanted to highlight here is that facts one can disbelieve or disputable opinions may appear in argumentative moves as "Data", i.e. something known or shared, under these conditions:

- (a) these Data must neither be justified nor explained;
- (b) when these Data are facts, they must appear as true and they must manifest the highest level of certainty (no conditionals, no "according to", etc.);
- (c) when these Data are not facts, but opinions, they must not appear as such: specifically, they do not appear as endorsed personal opinions (*I think that X*, for example), but as already collectively shared opinions, or, in rhetorical terms, as *endoxa*.

Now, these conditions reveal the collective nature of argumentation: as humans, we need to consider some facts as true, even if we are not able to verify them, and we need to share values and opinions that bind a community together. The first point on facts highlights an important question: where do the facts come from? The Backing in Toulmin's layout will provide some leads on this matter.

²⁰Of course, this can be discussed, since (2) is only a relative to (1). The problem arises because both interpretations (comment or explanation) are possible if no strong connective like "because" is provided. The context of this excerpt invites us to see (2) as an explanation of (1).

2.6 The Problem of the Backing

According to Toulmin, the Backing is the element that will confer authority to the Warrant: “For instance, in the field of law, a backing may refer to particular legal stipulations [...] but in other fields the backing may refer to the results of a census [...] or to aesthetic norms, moral judgements, psychological patterns, or mathematical axioms” (van Eemeren et al. 2014, p. 223).

The idea of the Backing is thus to back up or to support the reality or the authority of the Warrant, by assuming the existence of a law, a norm, a field of knowledge whence the Warrant originates. The nature of the Backing is quite different from a statement with a role of Data, Warrant or Claim. One can assume that the Warrant and the Backing are mostly linked by a relation of origin or source of information. Examples commented by Toulmin offer clear cases of Backings as laws or as statistics. Now, in linguistics, this relation between the information and its source is known as evidentiality: “Evidentiality is a grammatical means for marking information source. The correct use of evidentials is linked to categorizing ways in which information is acquired” (Aikhenvald 2006, p. 365). Many languages include in their grammar or in their lexicon marks that indicate information sources. More than the language marks themselves, the very fact that languages felt a need to code origin is interesting from the point of view of argumentation, rhetoric or cognitive and social psychology. Indeed, it tends to attest the importance of being able to trace some information back to an origin or a source—and, if possible, a trustworthy one—to find it reliable.

It is therefore not highly surprising to see that Toulmin felt the urge to add to his model an element that grounds the authority of the warrant enabling the passage from Datum to Claim, given how anthropologically inscribed the call to establish necessary knowledge for decision-making purposes is. These grounds are not necessarily written texts as laws or statistical results, of course. According to Aikhenvald, the evidentiality semantic system is based on the following parameters: visual and sensory inference on visible evidence, assumption based on evidence other than visible results, hearsay and quotations (2006, p. 367). European languages, however, especially English, tend not to overly grammaticalize evidentiality. If evidentiality in European languages is relatively implicit, it may explain why it is necessary to add a Backing-type component in an argumentation layout, language itself being under-equipped in this regard.

And yet, in Toulmin’s layout, even if the conclusion is constructed by means of a Warrant, itself supported by the Backing, the Datum seems to have to resort to no authority to be legitimised.²¹ This may seem surprising. In journalism, for instance, it is asked of all aspiring journalists to base any factual piece of news on at least two different and independent sources (Manning 2001). I think it could be far more

²¹Of course, it is possible to provide a reason that justifies the Datum, but this enters into a macro-structure of argument where one argumentative cell partially merges with another one, creating thus complex structures of argument. It is not the issue in this paragraph.

interesting to consider that a Datum may have a Backing, even if it is necessary to break an utterance into two components. In the utterance: "I saw this man putting on a hood", the Datum could be "the man put on a hood" and its Backing, the eyewitness testimony. In other words, I deem necessary, without altering Toulmin's definition of Backing in any way, to consider that the Data can themselves be supported by the authority of a source. I therefore suggest considering two types of Backing: the Backing_D (supporting the Datum) and the Backing_w, consistent with the Toulminian tradition.

This proposition is not quite new. In a certain way and as mentioned by certain authors, the layout thus designed brings together Toulmin's model and the rhetorical *epicheirema*. Indeed, even if Cicero admits that some propositions do not require proof, the five-part maximal scheme he suggests for *rationatio*²² is close to Toulmin's model:

Are there five parts of that argumentation which is carried on by ratiocination? First of all, proposition, by which that topic is briefly explained from which all the force of the ratiocination ought to proceed. Then the proof of the proposition, by which that which has been briefly set forth being corroborated by reasons, is made more probable and evident. Then assumption, by which that is assumed which, proceeding from the proposition, has its effect on proving the case. Then the proof of the assumption, by which that which has been assumed is confirmed by reasons. Lastly, the summing up, in which that which results from the entire argumentation is briefly explained. So the argumentation which has the greatest number of divisions consists of these five parts. (Cicero, *De inventione*, I 67, C.D. Yonge trans.)

In this perspective, each element mobilised in an argument can be proved, so as to make it more credible. The function is therefore close to the Backing's: to give authority to the propositions that will be brought together in the process of establishing the Claim. In 1968, Jimmie Trent already suggested a support for the Data (Backing_D) and a link to rhetorical *epicheiremas*. But Trent does not use Backing in the limited definition of sources of information. For example, the Datum "Anne is probably one of Jack's sisters" is justified by "because Anne lives with Jack's parents" (1968, p. 258). Hence, supporting a Datum can in fact introduce a new argument—a new Datum—to prove it. And this is a problem for a conception of the argumentative cell seen as a unit: there is no difference between this and a serial argument, where an argument justifies a Claim which is used as an argument for another Claim (see note 20). The recursion may be infinite. Therefore, I consider that a Backing_D or a Backing_w is necessarily of an evidential kind, even if sources of information can be vague or unidentified, and not new facts or arguments.

Let us come back to our example:

- (1) (1.1) Kirk has been running desperately away from Donald Trump, (1.2) who he says is "too bigoted and racist." (1.3) You would think this is one case where

²²Cicero does not use the word "*epicheirema*", but Quintilian (Inst. Ora V, 10) mentions Cicero's *rationatio* when presenting *epicheirema*.

a Republican with little to lose would figure (1.4) that it's time to take a stand and admit that (1.5) although he disagrees with Hillary Clinton on tons of issues, (1.6) she's the only presidential candidate who has the capacity to protect the nation's basic security and safety. (1.7) But no. (1.8) At one point Kirk claimed he was going to vote for former C.I.A. director David Petraeus. (Gail Collins, "Republican Candidates, Admit It's Hillary You're Voting For", *NY Times*, Nov. 3, 2016)

(1.2) has a Backing_D in it: "Kirk says it". Thus, there is no doubt a priori²³ about Kirk's commitment to this opinion. It is difficult to say if (1.5) presents a Backing_D: is it an allusion to a reported speech or a likely statement that Collins attributes to Kirk? In any case, it seems that a Backing_D (Kirk's public statement about Clinton) is somewhat suggested. Finally (1.8) offers a clear Backing_D with "Kirk claimed". I will refrain from talking about Backing_W here, since I have not designed the structures of these argumentative cells yet.

We know that suspicions concerning the truth of the exposed factual data may arise from the context—one usually tends to mistrust statistics given by campaigning political staff for example, but it does not imply that these facts are considered as false. It is true that the mobilised Data, with no Backing_D, are neither explained nor legitimised by any external authority. Nevertheless, Thomas Reid's (1970 [1764]) conception of certain dispositions to trust in communication (and then Millikan's (1995) or Burge's (1993)) highlights that Data without evidentiality are a priori considered as true: "A person is a priori entitled to accept a proposition that is presented as true and that is intelligible to him, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so" (Burge 1993, p. 469). As a result, Backing_D is not mandatory in an argumentative cell and its absence does not perceptibly decrease the power of the argumentation.

Let us go back to Table 2.1 in order to refine it. I tend to classify next to known or shared data those that possess a Backing_D and that can be considered as true or that can be checked should doubt arise. On the contrary, when the Data lacks a Backing, the facts are imposed as true and are not easily verifiable. It is no longer about opinions being presented as obvious or shared, but about facts that are presupposed to be known or that are asserted by the speaker on the assumption that she has sufficient authority for the audience to accept them as true (Table 2.2).

It has appeared, through the last two sections, to what extent the revised Toulminian model may reveal some effects of real (or pseudo) objectivity, provided that one frees her/himself from the idea that the argumentation starting points are factual data which are not attributable to a source. The other amendment to the Toulminian layout I suggest is to adapt its remarkable way of integrating a dialectic

²³Within a rhetorical frame, I do not try to look for other sources which could confirm that Kirk has voiced such an opinion. It is not a historical perspective. For me—and for the audience—it is sufficient to say that it appears to be truthfully said.

Table 2.1 Nature of the components of an argumentative cell

	Known or shared	Imposed	Justified
Facts	Data		Explanandum
Opinions	Agreed-upon arguments	Imposed claim	Conclusions or claims

Table 2.2 A priori true data versus data with a Backing_D

	Known or shared	Imposed	Justified
Facts	Data + evidentiality	A priori true data	Explanandum
Opinions	Agreed-upon arguments	Imposed claim	Conclusions or claims

dimension, through rebuttals, to various constraints. This requires me to define the argumentative cell more thoroughly.

2.7 The Problem of Rebuttal

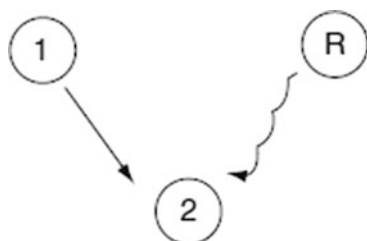
The only dialectic entry proposed by Toulmin in his model solely rests on the “Rebuttals”. These are arguments that will invalidate the Claim and that can be introduced by “except if” or “unless” (exceptions). However, from a linguistic perspective, this is infelicitous, since concessions do not fit into the layout. Indeed, a concession does not invalidate the Claim, in spite of the presence of an opposing argument.

Freeman (1991, 2001, 2011) offers a clever analysis of the argumentative structures within a Toulminian framework, while taking into account different forms of exceptions (or Toulmin’s Rebuttal) as well as concessions. Without going into the minutiae of a detailed analysis of the role of rebuttals or undercutters in complex argumentative structures—which would require the writing of another paper—we would like to expand a little bit on what Freeman says about concessions:

There is yet a third way for a proponent to respond to rebutting defeaters. Instead of countering them, he may simply admit them as negatively relevant to the conclusion, but in effect claim that whatever negative force they have is completely defeated by the original premises. Here “even if,” admitting their possibility, or “even though,” admitting that they actually hold, signals the statement of the rebuttal and the appraisal of its ineffectiveness in defeating the original argument. (1991, 2001, 2011, p. 27)

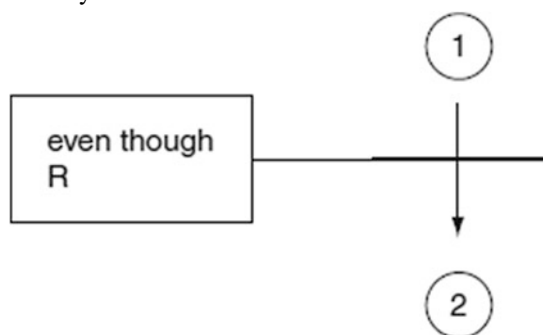
Considering the following example, Freeman first refers to the concession diagram established by Govier (2005 [1985]):

Even if ① Mrs. Wilson and her daughter had a reconciliation, the fact is that ① Mrs. Wilson's will leaves all her estate to charity. Therefore ② her daughter has no share in her estate.



(Freeman 1991, 2001, 2011, p. 28)

Freeman then evaluates—and I support this view—that this scheme considers the conceded opinion as a slightly strange premise and suggests replacing it by a “rebuttal box” marked by concession:



(Freeman 1991, 2001, 2011, p. 29)

Although it is unquestionably more explicit, the marking of the difference between Rebuttals or exceptions and concessions strikes me as insufficient, especially since the validity of the conclusion represented by (2) is maintained, even though the exception is supposed to invalidate the conclusion. And yet, the last scheme would also be used by Freeman in the case of a counter-argument actually invalidating the conclusion.

If we consider that the Claim is the nucleus of an argumentative cell and that an argument can therefore hold no more than one Claim, the full argumentative cell may contain: one or more arguments supporting the Claim, one or more counter-arguments insufficient to invalidate the Claim (arguments pointing to a Counter-Claim) and one or more stronger counter-arguments, that invalidate the Claim if they occur.²⁴ Each argument or counter-argument mobilises a Warrant and

²⁴Ducrot (1972) demonstrated that a proposition which is placed after “but” is always stronger than the one before “but”. For example: “This restaurant is good but expensive” leads to conclude “Don’t go there”, whereas “This restaurant is expensive but good” leads to the opposite conclusion (“Go there”). Hansen agrees that “Counter-considerations are claimed to be outweighed in an on-balance premise” (2011, p. 38)

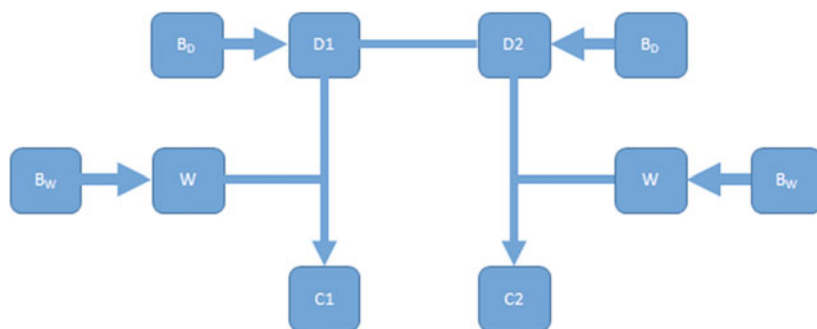


Fig. 2.2 The maximal expansion of an argumentative cell

a Backing that support either the Claim or the opposite of the Claim. In its maximal expansion, the argumentative cell may, in my opinion, be described as the merging of *two* anti-oriented (the first against the second) Toulminian layouts (without Rebuttals—see below why), as in the following example (where the Toulminian model is adapted vertically) (Fig. 2.2).

To be more concrete, here is an illustrative example: “Even if it will be warm and sunny tomorrow, according to the Weather Channel, I won’t take a day off, because I’ve been told that my report must be finished tomorrow evening”. This example is constructed like this (where bold letters mean explicit components):

D1: **It will be warm and sunny tomorrow**

B_{D1}: **According to the Weather Channel**

C1: I will take a day off

W1: Warm and sunny days are generally more enjoyable during a day off

B_{W1}: *Endoxon*: wasting a lovely day indoors is frustrating

D2: **My report must be finished tomorrow evening**

B_{D2}: **Reported speech (“I’ve been said”)**

C2: **I will not take a day off**

W2: During a time off, no work is normally done

B_{W2}: By definition of “a day off”

I am aware of the poor readability of this scheme, which can be represented in a simpler way as the argumentative square (see below). What should be retained is that the Claim (C) may occupy interchangeably the C1 position (with a Rebuttal in D2) or the C2 position (with a Concession in D1—this is the case of the above example). A concession (D1 in the left part of the model) should lead to a non-C implicit conclusion (=C1). But a stronger argument (D2 in the right part) may then lead to the speaker’s Claim. As for the Rebuttal, the data occupies D1 and leads to the C1 Claim, but a Rebuttal may invalidate the argumentation should it occur.²⁵

²⁵What happens when an argumentative cell contains both a concession and a Rebuttal? Let us consider this example: “Even if the sun is shining, I will stay at home, unless there is an

If the Rebuttal (D2) is itself countered by a Rebuttal, a new argumentative cell is created. Thus, each restriction may incorporate a new argumentative cell, provided that the restrictive argument is invalidated; similarly, each Datum may be backed up by other arguments (in this case, the Datum becomes the Claim of another argumentative cell); finally, the Claim may also serve as an argument for another Claim (thus becoming the Datum for another Claim): the expansion potential of the argumentative cell, creating a complex argumentation, is therefore multiple—it is the principle of recursivity in argumentation (see also Bermejo Luque 2011: 127 sqq.). Before turning to the extensions, let us focus more closely on the basic model, called the *argumentative square*.

When an argumentative cell includes some counter-argumentation, it could be useful, as shown by Moeschler (1989) who introduces this as an “argumentative square”, to put forward a diagram with four different poles or positions (D1, C1, D2, C2) where D1 and D2 are anti-oriented arguments that may lead respectively to the conclusions C1 and C2. This case is illustrated by the following example:

Even if Peter is smart (D1), he is so untidy (D2) that he will probably fail the exam (C2) (implicit C1: he will probably pass the exam).

But this argumentative square needs to overcome two challenges. The first is that counter-argumentation does not necessarily require the four positions to be filled. Many concessions only fill three (Moeschler 1989 and other studies on concessions agree on this) and offer then an argumentative triangle,²⁶ which must not be seen as an incomplete square. The second is that a pole is tied in this vision with a function (argument, conclusion). And this can be quite confusing. Oswald and Herman (2016) argued that the function of each pole is determined by (a) the place of the pole in the triangle or square; (b) the nature of the utterance that occupies each position; (c) the instructions delivered by linguistic markers, when present, or default semantic and pragmatic instructions.

I will not tackle here the complex theoretical underpinnings of these claims, but will instead limit myself to analysing our example in this light:

- (1) (1.1) Kirk has been running desperately away from Donald Trump, (1.2) who he says is “too bigoted and racist.” (1.3) You would think this is one case where a Republican with little to lose would figure (1.4) that it’s time to take a stand and admit that (1.5) although he disagrees with Hillary Clinton on tons of issues, (1.6) she’s the only presidential candidate who has the capacity to protect the nation’s basic security and safety. (1.7) But no. (1.8) At one point Kirk claimed he was going to vote for former C.I.A. director David Petraeus.

emergency”. There are two options: either we consider that as a new expansion of the argumentative cell or as two argumentative cells that share the same Claim (“I will stay at home”). Following Ockham’s razor, I am in favour of the last option.

²⁶Moeschler (1989) advocates a distinction between concessive triangles and the argumentative square that we will not use here. Moreover, he uses a relation of causality between conceded argument and conclusion, but we will show that the nature of the relationship is looser than strictly causal.

(Gail Collins, "Republican Candidates, Admit It's Hillary You're Voting For", *NY Times*, Nov. 3, 2016)

In order to simplify the demonstration, I will leave aside the relative clause in (1) which justifies the first part of the utterance. The first argumentative cell is quite simple:

Data₁: Kirk has been running desperately away from Donald Trump (1.1)
 Backing_D: (1.2) and preceding text
 Warrant: The more someone is running away from someone else, the less one has to lose
 Backing_W: General *endoxon*, empirical experience of politics
 Claim₁: Kirk has very little to lose (1.3)

Now Claim₁ leads to very complex argumentative cells. We can already say that we recognise a serial argument structure where a provisory Claim (Claim₁) is used as a Datum of one (in fact two) new argumentative cell(s). Despite the complexity of these cells, let us try to analyse the whole argument in three phases: after the previous cell, there is the main argument with a concessive move (cell 2), and then, the main argument and the rebuttal move (cell 3).

Claim₁ functions as Datum₂ for a new Claim ("so X that Y" implies a kind of cause-consequence relationship):

Data₂: Kirk has very little to lose (1.3)
 Backing_D: Collins' opinion
 Warrant: People with little to lose may be straightforward and take courageous stands
 Backing_W: General *endoxon*, empirical experience
 Claim₂: It is time to take a stand and admit that Hillary Clinton is the only presidential candidate who has the capacity to protect the nation's basic security and safety (1.4) and (1.6)

One can see the problem here. Where does the idea that "Clinton is the only presidential candidate who has the capacity to protect the nation's basic security and safety" come from? In fact, this could be an instance of a straw man fallacy, because Kirk may, of course, vote Clinton because he dislikes Trump, and yet he will probably reject the utterance (1.6). We may see this structure as a divergent structure (Walton 1996) where (1.3) should lead to both Claims (1.4) and (1.6). This is rather debatable. I have chosen to consider that (1.6) expands the stand mentioned in (1.4). The polysemy of "and" is the source of my hesitation: either "and" may add another Claim ("take a stand" + "admit that...") or—and it is my point of view—it may elaborate the content of the "stand" ("take a stand and that means to admit..."). In any case, it seems that (1.6) comes from nowhere as an agreed-upon opinion that appears to be wrongly attributed to Kirk's point of view. Now (1.5) offers a concession in this move; that is to say a weak counter-consideration. We should therefore open a space at the left of the structure for putting the concession in the right place (Fig. 2.3).

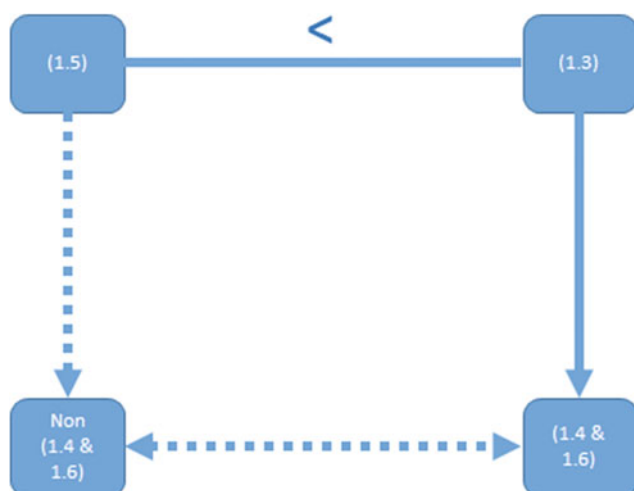


Fig. 2.3 Representation of the 2nd argumentative cell

In this simplified representation of the second argumentative cell—where Backings and Warrant are erased—dashed arrows are used where the relationships are implicit. The symbol “<” shows the strength of the argumentative moves in these on-balance considerations. Now, the Counter-claim that is symbolised by “non-(1.4 and 1.6)” must be read carefully as a hypothetical clause: “Kirk *should not* take a stand in favour of Clinton”, because of (1.5). The implicit clause expresses what should have been expected (a norm or an ideology); the counter-argument (1.3 to 1.4 and 1.6) fails to fulfil this expectation.

The third cell is also affixed to the preceding ones. “But no”, indeed, offers an unexpected move from the one between (1.3) and (1.4 and 1.6). Clearly (1.7) and (1.8) contradict Claim (1.4) and (1.6). Thus, there is a new concessive move that we can rephrase as such: “Even though (1.3 and 1.5), (1.7 and 1.8)” or “(1.4 and 1.6), and yet (1.7 and 1.8)”. This takes the shape of a triangle between concession and its counter-consideration (Fig. 2.4).

Finally, this complex graph highlights a strong contrast between what Kirk’s should have done and what he has actually done. The repetition of the same end point (non-1.4 and 1.6—the second time not as a “should”-clause but as an actual fact) can be interpreted as a deliberate move by Gail Collins to illustrate Kirks’ stubbornness (he has not considered (1.5) as a concession, but as an actual argument to write in Petraeus’ name) and as highlighting Collins’ amazement about this choice. The whole excerpt implicitly leads to an aforementioned standpoint: such a behaviour by Republicans is ridiculous. Gail Collins can therefore conclude with a nice sense of analogy: “Swing state Republican voters, if you’ve got a hot Senate race involving two unsatisfactory candidates, consider just writing in Thomas Jefferson. He’s not alive, but nobody’s perfect” (NY Times, Nov. 3, 2016).

We can now recap the whole argumentative structure. I’ve chosen to highlight here three vertical zones where counter-considerations are represented: the speaker

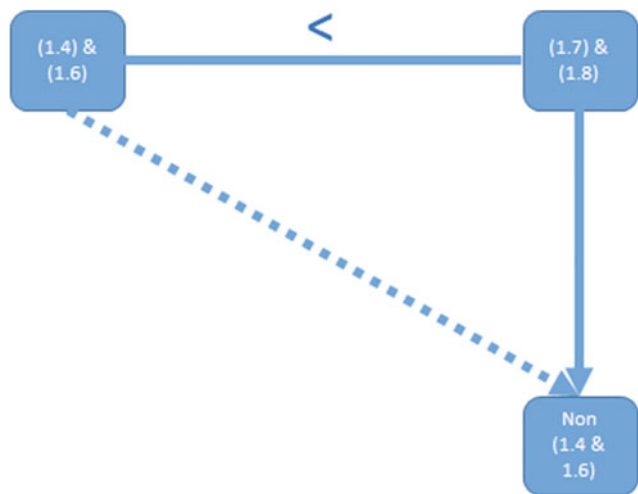


Fig. 2.4 Triangle between concession and counter-consideration

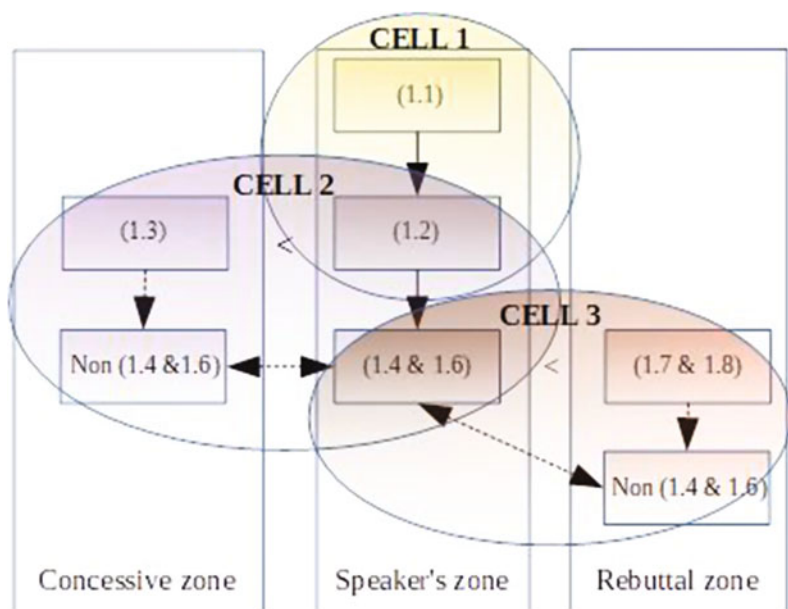


Fig. 2.5 Full argumentative structure in argumentative cells

zone, the concessive zone and the rebuttal zone. In principle, a zone to the left is always weaker than a zone to the right. Now, the rebuttal zone is more complex. It can indeed offer an actual counter-consideration (like in the example) or a hypothetical one—an “unless-clause” where the rebuttal is stronger than a speaker’s argument if and only if the rebuttal’s Datum occurs. In the example: “I’ll go out, unless it’s raining”, the Claim “I’ll go out” is stronger than “I will not go out”, until

raindrops start falling... I have also highlighted the three argumentative cells which underlie this complex argument structure (Fig. 2.5).

2.8 Conclusion

Many elements mentioned here should be refined and examined more thoroughly, but the ambition of this contribution was to give an overview of an argumentative theory revised through the eyes of a linguist analysing natural language argumentation. As noted in the introduction, this “modified double Toulminian layout” model should be empirically tested on broader corpora. However, in my opinion, the proposal outlined here is likely to:

- cover every possibility of counter-discourse integration
- circumscribe a maximal argumentative cell as a strong unit which captures cases of complex argumentative combinations, through four zones of cell development:
 1. when the Rebuttal is refuted (right development of the square)
 2. when a subordinate argumentation that is upstream-oriented is developed (i.e. supporting a Datum that already supports a Claim)
 3. when an argument is developed downstream (i.e. using a Claim as an argument for a new argumentation)
 4. when a counter-argument that could be used as a concession is invalidated rather than leading to a concession (left development of the square)
- refine the definition of a Backing as an evidential component of argumentation
- refine the definition of Data as not only facts but starting points of argumentation
- anchor Data with an evidential Backing, which is optional
- provide a tool to use graphs for pro-and-con arguments (others’ points of view and arguments conceived in the same left column, speaker’s argument on the centre and potential rebuttals on the right)

To sum up, I argue that this refinement of Toulmin’s layout helps to identify starting points of argumentation, to study their nature and their potential evidential support, in order to understand the strategic effects of the speaker’s choices in this matter. This model enables us indeed to observe the way in which these starting points constrain the audience’s processing of the argumentation to admit facts as being true or opinions as being shared. To me, the original dialectical part of Toulmin’s layout also becomes better integrated and flexible enough to consider many naturally occurring arguments. Finally, it helps to understand structures of arguments.

These are the reasons why this adapted version of the Toulminian tool is promising in my humble opinion, both to account for argumentation in a descriptive

way and to draw attention to some enlightening aspects that persuasive mechanisms reveal when studied in a cognitive, linguistic and social perspective.

Now, there are many points that need to be refined: the relationship between abstract reasoning structures and actual argumentative and linguistic moves in the text must be investigated; the textual order of arguments and the structures of graphs also needs to be worked out more in depth because they are not always overlapping; the descriptive account of how an argumentative discourse appears in a text needs perhaps a meta-analytical level: for example, a whole argument can serve as a kind of Datum for a more general Claim. In the example that I used, I think that both paragraphs can be used as one “giant” Datum to justify that the behaviour of some Republicans is “ridiculous”. These are many points I would like to tackle in the future in order to fortify a bridge between text linguistics, rhetoric and informal logic.

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Chapter 3

Style and Grammar in Political Discourse: Complementation and Its Argumentative-Rhetorical Potential

Maarten van Leeuwen

Abstract This contribution is a plea to pay more systematic attention to the infrequently studied, fine-grained grammatical phenomenon of complementation in the analysis of political discourse. The way the Dutch radical populist Geert Wilders uses complementation serves as a case study to that end. In the first half of the contribution, an in-depth description of the phenomenon of complementation is given; it is argued that the use of complementation affects the degree of certainty by which a speaker presents his ideas. The second half of the contribution reports on a diachronic analysis of Geert Wilders' use of complementation in 47 parliamentary speeches held between 2004 and 2009. It is argued that Wilders' use of complementation significantly decreases between 2004 and 2009. The decrease is not a gradual transition: a break seems to occur between 2006 and 2007. This is an indication that Wilders offers less room for discussion from this period onwards. Strikingly, Wilders' changed use of complementation coincides with the moment that political scientists indicate as the moment that Wilders' political views radicalized. The case study not only shows that studying complementation can add to the inventory of linguistic phenomena relevant to the analysis of political discourse; it also stresses the significance of combining quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis for the quantification of stylistic phenomena.

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3.1 Introduction

In the analysis of political discourse, substantial attention has been paid to the way politicians formulate their message: there is a vast body of literature on rhetorical consequences of stylistic choices made by politicians.¹ Striking in this domain is the relative sparse attention for grammatical phenomena (cf. Fausey and Matlock 2010; Van Leeuwen 2012): the primary focus is mostly on other linguistic means (e.g. significant word choice, pronoun use, metaphor, etc.). As far as grammatical phenomena are studied, the focus is generally on linguistic means that can be used to hide agency, like nominalization and the passive voice (cf. Dirven et al. 2007, 1230), or on transitivity analysis and process types (Hart 2014; Jeffries 2010; Simpson 1993).

In a previous study (Van Leeuwen 2012), I have argued that the infrequently studied grammatical phenomenon of complementation can add to the inventory of linguistic phenomena relevant to the analysis of political discourse. However, in that study both the description of the phenomenon of complementation and the case study illustrating the relevance of complementation for political discourse analysis were rather rudimentary and brief. The aim of this contribution is, therefore, twofold. Firstly, I will substantiate that using complementation or not has argumentative-rhetorical consequences, by giving an in-depth description of the phenomenon (Sect. 3.2). Secondly, Van Leeuwen's (2012) claim that complementation can add to the inventory of linguistic phenomena relevant to the analysis of political discourse will be substantiated with a much more comprehensive case study, namely the way in which the Dutch radical populist Geert Wilders over the years made use of complementation in his speeches. I will substantiate that Wilders' use of complementation changed over time, and that this has argumentative-rhetorical consequences (Sects. 3.3 and 3.4). In the conclusion (Sect. 3.5), the main findings will be summarized and discussed.

3.2 Complementation and Its Meaning

Language users almost always have a choice when it comes to describing objects and states of affairs in reality. For instance, a glass filled for fifty per cent can be 'half full' or 'half empty', people who oppose a political leader can be characterized as 'freedom fighters' or as 'rebels', and while some politicians metaphorically describe the European Union as 'one big family', other politicians choose to

¹This contribution is a revised version of an article that appeared in Dutch in *Tijdschrift voor Taalbeheersing* 34(1) 2012, 54–73, and of a part of my dissertation (Van Leeuwen 2015). I would like to thank Ton van Haften, Jaap de Jong, Ninke Stukker, Arie Verhagen, two anonymous reviewers of *Tijdschrift voor Taalbeheersing* and two anonymous reviewers of this edited volume for their valuable comments on draft versions.

characterize this association of countries as ‘a bottomless pit’. This kind of alternative wording is a matter of *style*, i.e. “the making of conscious and unconscious choices of certain linguistic forms and structures in preference to others that could have been chosen but were not” (Verdonk 2006, 202).

Numerous experiments have shown that stylistic variants produce different effects. For instance, it has often been studied what the actual effect is of describing a phenomenon from either a positive or a negative perspective (Holleman and Pander Maat 2009; Levin et al. 1998). Time and again, what emerges is that the image that language users have of the phenomenon concerned is affected by the phrasing that is adopted (Holleman et al. 2013, 31). Thus, a driving school that has a ‘pass rate of 75%’ is viewed as more attractive than a driving school with a ‘fail rate of 25%’; similarly, an operation with a ‘success rate of 50%’ is taken into consideration sooner than an operation with a ‘failure rate of 50%’, etc.² Such experimental evidence illustrates that stylistic variants are not interchangeable semantically: they differ in the kind of *inferences* they invite (Verhagen 2015, 235), i.e., they steer the hearer in the direction of drawing different conclusions.

Verhagen (2005, 2008), building on insights from the French linguists Anscombre and Ducrot (Ducrot 1996), argues that language users also can vary the ‘argumentative strength’ with which a hearer is steered in a certain direction. Consider examples (1) and (2). Utterances (1a) and (1b) have the same ‘argumentative orientation’: they both steer towards the inference ‘let’s not take the risk’. However, (1a) and (1b) differ in ‘argumentative strength’: (1a) is more powerful than (1b). Similarly, utterances (2a) and (2b) both direct the hearer in the same direction (‘let’s give it a try’), but differ in ‘strength’ with which this inference is enforced (Verhagen 2005, 43–45; 2008, 317–318):

- (1) a. There is no chance that the operation will be successful.
b. There is little chance that the operation will be successful.
- (2) a. There is a chance that the operation will be successful.
b. There is a small chance that the operation will be successful.

The notions of ‘argumentative orientation’ and ‘argumentative strength’ are also applicable to the phenomenon of *complementation*, i.e. subordinated subject and object clauses such as (3)–(6):

- (3) I think they want to go home.
- (4) It is generally known that the capacity of computer chips doubles each year.
- (5) She wondered whether he would arrive on time.
- (6) It is unclear how long this will continue.

Verhagen (2005) argues sentences like (3)–(6) can be seen as instances of a grammatical *construction*: they can be seen as concrete instantiations of a more

²The examples are derived from Holleman et al. (2013) and Levin et al. (1988).

abstract, underlying pattern with a conventionalized form and meaning.³ More specifically, according to Verhagen (2005) complementation constructions consist of a ‘matrix-’ and ‘complement-’ clause, each having their own meaning. Consider the following example (cf. Verhagen 2005, 96):

(7)	Matrix clauses	Complement clauses
	a. I have reported before that	there has already been success in breeding.
	b. From the above it may now be concluded that	clones of mammalian embryos will become possible in the near future (...).
	c. The director of GenTech even expects that	this will happen as soon as next year
	d. Others believe that	it may take somewhat longer
	e. but nobody doubts that	the cloning of a full-grown sheep or horse will be a reality within ten years.
	f. The question is whether	society is mentally and morally ready for this (...).

Complementation constructions have in common that the complement clause of the construction gives a description of reality, while the matrix clause rather gives a description of someone’s *perspective* or *stance* towards that description of reality. In other words, the complement clauses give a description of the propositional content; the matrix clauses invite the hearer to consider this content from a certain point of view (cf. (7)). The matrix clause often gives an explicit indication whose stance is represented (e.g. (7a): *I*; (7c): *the director of Gen Tech*; (7d): *others*). In some cases however, such as (7b) and (7f), the matrix clause denotes a cognitive stance which is *not* explicitly related to someone. In these cases it is not immediately clear whose point of view is represented. In these so-called “impersonal complementation constructions” (Verhagen 2005, 133), the context may give a decisive indication of whose stance is adopted (Verhagen 2005, 131–137). In (7b) and (7f), for instance, it appears from the context that the matrix clauses express the writer’s viewpoint.

Using a complementation construction or not can be seen as a stylistic choice which does not affect the argumentative orientation of an utterance, but its argumentative *strength*. This can be illustrated with another example (cf. Verhagen 2005, 105):

- (8) Shall we drive to the fitness centre via the railway station?
 a. There is a diversion.
 b. I am sure that there is a diversion.

In (8), the argumentative orientation of answers (a) and (b) is the same. Both responses guide the addressee to draw the same conclusion: in both answers, the most likely inference is that it would be better to choose a different route. However,

³See Goldberg (2003, 2006) for the notion ‘construction’ and the underlying theoretical framework of construction grammar.

the two answers vary in argumentative strength: answer (a) presents the relevant information directly, ‘as a matter of fact’. In sentence (b), this information is explicitly related to the subjective perspective of the speaker. As a result, in (b) the possibility is implied that there is a difference between the point of view taken and reality. This offers room for the listener to call into question the implied inference of the utterance (‘take another route’). In (8a) such room is not offered: here the speaker simply *states* that something is the case.⁴ Of course, this does not mean that a ‘factual’ description of reality such as (8a) cannot lead to discussion. The point is that the chosen formulation does not explicitly offer room for such discussion, due to the fact that the information is presented as a fact, and not as an opinion (as is the case in (8b)).

In other words, the alleged effect of using a complementation construction is that this grammatical construction offers room for the listener to call into question the inference to which the hearer is steered. This is due to the presence of a matrix clause, in which someone’s perspective is introduced: the presence of a matrix clause evokes the possibility of other opinions on the matter. It is important to stress that this alleged effect of a complementation construction is independent of the lexical content of the matrix clause. The lexical content can be very diverse, and influences the degree of room for discussion as well. For instance, the formulation in (9) clearly is weaker than the ones in (10) and (11):

- (9) *I think that* there will be a heat wave this summer.
- (10) *I am absolutely sure that* there will be a heat wave this summer.
- (11) *It’s a fact that* there will be a heat wave this summer.

In this chapter, differences in argumentative strength among complementation constructions will not be considered. This is not prompted by a denial of differences in argumentative strength among complementation constructions, but by the fact that such differences are not the focus of this contribution. This study focuses on the difference between formulations *with* complementation and alternative formulations *without* this construction. In other words, instances like (9)–(11) are studied in comparison to an alternative formulation in which *no* complementation construction is used, i.e. (12):

- (12) There will be a heat wave this summer.

As I have argued, there is a crucial difference between using a complementation construction or not: when a speaker uses such a construction, he presents his standpoint as an opinion, and not as a fact. Indeed, if the speaker has chosen to use a complementation construction, he *subsequently* can increase or decrease the room for discussion further with lexical choices, as (9)–(11) illustrate. However, even in

⁴Formulated in terms of Mental Space Theory (Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996): the crucial difference between (8a) and (8b) is that in (8b) a mental space is opened—which is not the case in (8a). Opening a new mental space suggests that the same description of reality can also be viewed from another point of view/another mental space. In an alternative formulation without complementation (i.e., (8a)), this suggestion is lacking (see also Verhagen 2005).

(11), in which the speaker says he is presenting a fact, the standpoint is actually presented as an opinion, due to the use of a complementation construction. A real factual presentation would have been (12): here, the coming of a heat wave is simply announced, without embedding this announcement in the perspective of the speaker (as is the case in (9)–(11)).⁵

In the analysis of political discourse, the presence versus absence of complementation has barely been studied so far (cf. Sect. 3.1). In the rest of complementation in political discourse can yield interesting results by means of a comprehensive case study, namely the way in which the Dutch radical populist Geert Wilders over the years made use of complementation in his speeches.

3.3 Geert Wilders and His Use of Complementation

3.3.1 Background

During the parliamentary elections that were held in the Netherlands in March 2017, the radical populist party ‘*Partij voor de Vrijheid*’ (PVV, Party for Freedom) became the second largest political party of the country. The founder and leader of this political party is Geert Wilders. He presents himself as a politician who voices the ideas and interests of the common man (cf. Vossen 2011), and is well-known for his strong anti-Islam discourse (De Ruiter 2012, 42). Wilders’ standpoints about the assumed threat and barbarism of Islam have caused a lot of controversy, both nationally and internationally. For instance, his anti-Islam movie *Fitna* (2008) led to commotion all over the world. In the Netherlands, Wilders had to defend himself in court against charges of inciting hatred and discrimination against Muslims. In 2011, the court discharged him from all accusations, considering that from a formal judicial point of view he was criticizing Islam and not Muslims themselves (De Ruiter 2012, 42). In 2014, legal proceedings were instituted against Wilders again, after he had stated that he would try to reduce the number of Moroccans in the Netherlands. The court found him guilty of collective insult and inciting discrimination against Dutch Moroccans. Wilders has taken the case to a higher court; this lawsuit will (probably) be later this year.

⁵An interesting point for future research would be to test this theoretically founded assumption in an experimental setting: is it also possible to assess experimentally that using a complementation construction offers more room for discussion than an alternative formulation without this construction? Such an experiment should focus primarily on the effect of the use of complementation constructions with relatively much argumentative force. Complementation constructions with relatively much argumentative force are for instance constructions in which certainty about the claim is stressed (*I am sure that X; it is a fact that X*), in which evidentials are presented (*I saw that X; I heard him say that X*), or an authority can be found (*The letter confirms that I was accepted in their school*). In an experiment, such constructions should be compared to alternative formulations lacking complementation.

Wilders is, however, not only controversial because of his political ideas. He also attracts a lot of attention with the way in which he formulates his standpoints. For instance, Wilders has often and fiercely been criticized for using strong pejorative language in Dutch parliament—which violates existing norms of Dutch parliamentary debate (Van Haaften 2011).

Looking at the judgments about Wilders' language use, it is striking that it has been suggested several times that Wilders' usage changed over time. For instance, Van Roessel (2009) writes:

When one looks at his first contribution to a General Debate, in September 2005, one sees a Member of Parliament who sticks to the mores of The Hague.⁶ His usage is like that of his fellow MP's. (...) During the last General Debate (i.e. September 2008) things are totally different. By then, Wilders' use of words has changed completely, and his argument focuses on one thing only: Islam. He calls the Budget 'a rubbish piece of work' (...).

Van Roessel's observation does not stand alone. For instance, Kuitenbrouwer (2010, 38) observes that Wilders was "still looking for his own timbre" in 2005: Wilders' parliamentary contributions were still quite abstract and full of political jargon by that time. According to Kuitenbrouwer (2010, 38) "it's a long-winded work to find such language in his contributions" in 2009. Also in 2009, the Amsterdam Court of Appeal (2009) judged that Wilders should be prosecuted for instigating hatred and discrimination (which led to the lawsuit mentioned above). The court motivated this by stating that Wilders' views 'in content and style are characterized by biased, strongly generalizing phrasings with a radical meaning, ongoing reiteration, and an increasing intensity, as a result of which hate is created'. Similarly, De Groot (2010) points out that Wilders' policy plans related to Muslims became more and more radical over the years, and states that 'his usage radicalized too'.

Apparently, Wilders' vocabulary changed over time. However, did his use of a subtle grammatical device like complementation change as well? More specifically, given the above-mentioned media judgements suggesting that Wilders' usage 'radicalized', did Wilders' use of complementation constructions with matrix clauses yielding his point of view decrease over time? If this is the case, it would be an indication that Wilders has over the years been offering less room for discussion.

3.3.2 *Corpus*

To investigate whether Wilders' use of complementation changed over time, a corpus of 47 speeches held by Geert Wilders in the Dutch House of Representatives was compiled. The corpus covers a period of six years: from the moment that Wilders

⁶The Hague' is used metonymically here for 'Dutch parliament' (the Dutch parliament is situated in the city of The Hague).

Table 3.1 Corpus overview speeches Wilders

Year	Number of words	Number of speeches
2004	8417	6
2005	9100	10
2006	8430	10
2007	8846	6
2008	8037	7
2009	8113	8

started his own political movement⁷ in 2004 until the annual General Debate in September 2009. The speeches⁸ deal with a variety of topics, such as the budgets of the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, meetings of the European Council, the murder of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh, safety measures for politicians, the global financial crisis, etc.⁹ The speeches were taken from the official Proceedings of the House of Representatives; the number of words per year was held constant as much as possible. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the number of speeches analyzed and the number of words per year. For a more comprehensive overview of the corpus, I refer to my dissertation (Van Leeuwen 2015, 240–243).

3.3.3 Method of Analysis

The speeches were analyzed in two rounds, by using *Atlas.ti* (a computer program for qualitative data analysis).¹⁰ First, all instances of complementation in the corpus were coded, i.e. all subject and object clauses.¹¹

⁷Wilders started his political movement in 2004 under the name *Groep Wilders* ('Group Wilders'). In 2006 he changed the name into *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV; 'Party for Freedom').

⁸Meetings of the Dutch House of Representatives consist of speeches on the one hand, and debates (i.e. interruptions and responses) on the other hand (see Wolthuis 2007). The current analysis focusses on the addresses that Wilders delivered.

⁹In all speeches Wilders had a similar political role: he was a member of the opposition.

¹⁰*Atlas.ti* is a computer program for qualitative data analysis. The program enables systematic coding of stylistic features in corpora. More information about the program can be found on www.atlasti.com.

¹¹An exception was made for complementation constructions which are part of restrictive relative clauses (cf. (i)), and complementation constructions that are part of free relative clauses (cf. (ii)).

- (i) At the end of December, Parliament adopted a resolution (...) in which it is expressed that a complete burka ban should be implemented. (W06_26)
- (ii) *Whoever was still so naïve to think that* the Palestinian government would condemn this attack, will be deceived. (W04_03)

These two types of subordinate clauses do not function as independent text segments: instead, they present necessary information for identifying the referent to which they refer (cf. Verhagen 2001).

Complementation constructions which are part of elliptical sentences were coded manually per instance. The same holds for double embedded instances of complementation. Thus, two instances of complementation were counted in cases like (13) and (14):

- (13) (...) *we previously have seen that* there was political haggling with the criteria, *and that* the common man in the Netherlands is the victim of the expensive euro (...). (W04_03)¹²
- (14) *It is clear that in the documents it is stated that* there still is an increase in the number of victims of violent crimes. (W04_02)

The first round of analysis yielded 561 complementation constructions. However, not all these constructions are necessarily relevant. The question whether a decrease can be observed in Wilders' use of complementation constructions yielding his perspective in the matrix clause focuses on a *subset* of these 561 instances of complementation. This can be illustrated with a fragment like (15). In (15), the matrix clause of the complementation construction introduces someone's perspective, but from the context it is clear that this is not Wilders' point of view:

- (15) For the man in the street, such measures make it for instance more expensive to go on holiday, only because *other-worldly ecology freaks are convinced that* the earth will warm up when you are flying to Crete with your family. (W08_87)

To exclude such instances of complementation, all 561 complementation constructions in the corpus were analyzed from a functional perspective in a second round of analysis. For each of the constructions it was determined whether Wilders' perspective is presented in the matrix clause, or not. During this analysis, it turned out that in the matrix clauses of complementation constructions, Wilders' perspective emerged in various ways. More specifically, 7 subtypes were detected. These subtypes differ in the degree and way in which Wilders' perspective comes to the fore. On one side of the spectrum, complementation constructions can be found in which only Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clause, in an explicit way (cf. (16) and (17)). The other side of the spectrum consists of 'impersonal' complementation constructions (cf. Sect. 3.2), i.e. instances of complementation in which the point of view in the matrix clause is not explicitly linked to someone (cf. (18), (19)).

- (16) *I think that* a minister should defend himself more strongly against this. (W07_120)
- (17) *I know that* only bringing money to the problem does not work, (...). (W05_11)

¹²The abbreviations in brackets indicate the year the excerpt is taken from (i.e. 'W06' indicates a speech by Wilders in 2006), and are followed by a number that refers to the specific speech as it was uploaded to Atlas.ti. All examples are translated from Dutch by the author; the Dutch equivalents can be found in Van Leeuwen (2015).

- (18) *It is clear that Iraq still has a long road to go (...).* (W04_03)
 (19) *It is a fact that we especially have a problem with Moroccans.* (W06_01)

In between 4 other categories can be distinguished, in which Wilders' perspective is combined with the perspective of someone else. In two of these categories, this is *explicitly* the case—see (20)–(21) and (22)–(23), respectively:

- (20) *We too think that this was inevitable.* (W08_1020)
 (21) *At the same time, we see that The Netherlands has to deal with big problems concerning the integration of these non-western immigrants.* (W04_02)
 (22) *No one understands that it does not happen.* (W04_04)
 (23) *One would think that Christians are allies (...).* (W08_1002)

With an 'inclusive *we*' a speaker can indicate that his viewpoint is shared by others. For the analysis this category was split up further into two subcategories. On the one hand, a category was distinguished in which '*we*' refers to Wilders' political party (the Party for Freedom, cf. (20)). Complementation constructions of the type '*The PVV takes the view that...*' were classified in this category as well. On the other hand, a category of 'other instances of inclusive '*we*'' was used (i.e. *we* Dutch citizens, *we* Dutch politicians, etc.)—cf. (21). This category was not further split up into subcategories: this could have been a study in itself (cf. Dieltjens 2007). Examples (22)–(23) are examples of matrix predicates with a generic subject. In this category, the speaker's perspective is part of a 'generic perspective'.

The other two categories with matrix predicates expressing a shared perspective are illustrated in (24)–(25) and (26)–(27) respectively. In these cases, there is no explicit indication that the matrix clause contains a shared perspective. At first sight, they do not express Wilders' point of view, but the opinion of someone else:

- (24) *Approximately 1.5 years ago, the minister communicated that 15 to 20 mosques in our country are radical (...).* (W04_05)27
 (25) *The people want that we occupy ourselves primarily with solving their problems (...).* (W06_23)
 (26) *The SCP-report 2004 shows that the number of suspects (...) has increased significantly.* (W04_04)
 (27) *The Integration Card 2005 made by Statistics Netherlands shows that no less than one out of five young Moroccans (...) is registered (...).* (W056_26)

In (24) and (25), the minister's point of view is presented; (25) presents the perspective of 'the people'. However, (24) and (25) implicitly express Wilders' point of view too. The contexts in which these sentences are presented indicate that the perspectives that are attributed to 'the minister' and 'the people' respectively are the same as Wilders' viewpoint on the matter. In other words, Wilders' viewpoint can be inferentially linked to the perspectives presented in the matrix clauses here. As a consequence, these matrix clauses express Wilders' perspective as well, in a slightly hidden way. The same holds for instances like (26) and (27): the points of view in these matrix clauses must be inferentially linked to Wilders as well, since Wilders is in agreement with the opinions of the 'SCP-report' and the 'Integration Card'.

Whether instances like (24)–(27) must or must not be included in the category of complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause is very much dependent on the context. This is illustrated by sentences (28)–(29), in which Wilders distances himself from the perspective that is introduced in the matrix clause. In these sentences, the propositional content of the complement clause is presented only as the opinion of the source mentioned in the matrix clause, and not as Wilders' opinion too: Wilders is strongly opposed to a potential accession of Turkey to the European Union (cf. (28)), and to Islamic influences on Dutch society (cf. (29)). This means that the viewpoints in the matrix clauses of (28) and (29) cannot be inferentially linked to Wilders. As a result, different from the examples discussed before (i.e., (16)–(27)), cases like (28)–(29) have not been categorized as instances of complementation with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause:

- (28) *Last Sunday he said that* it would be an unpleasant thought and even unfair towards the Turks if referenda would keep them out from a full membership. (W04_06)
- (29) *Minister Donner earlier said that* he could imagine the introduction of Sharia Law in the Netherlands, if the majority would be in favor of that. (W07_93)

The types of complementation discussed above are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Overview of types of complementation distinguished in the second round of analysis

I. Complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause (split up in 7 subtypes that differ in the way and degree in which Wilders' perspective comes to the fore)	Subtype	Examples
	1. 1st person singular <i>I think that...</i>	(16), (17)
	2. 1st person plural <i>We (the PVV) think that...</i>	(20)
	3. 1st person plural <i>We [rest] think that...</i>	(21)
	4. Generic subject <i>Everyone thinks that...</i>	(22), (23)
	5. Person <i>Person X/he thinks that...</i>	(24), (25)
	6. Impersonal agency <i>The report states that...</i>	(26), (27)
	7. 'Impersonal' construction <i>It is clear that...</i>	(18), (19)
II. Complementation constructions without Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause	e.g. ^a : <i>Person X/The report states that...</i>	(28), (29), (15)

^aDue to a lack of space, the category of 'Complementation constructions without Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause' cannot be fully discussed here. A more elaborate discussion can be found in Van Leeuwen (2015, 161–163)

The types of complementation in which Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clause (Table 3.2, I, subtypes 1–7), differ in the degree in which Wilders' perspective comes to the fore (cf. for instance (16)–(17) with (18)–(19) or (24)–(27)), and in the degree in which Wilders' perspective is part of a broader perspective (cf. (16)–(17) with (20)–(27)). With this categorization a generalization is made, for instance, about the type of verb that is used in the matrix clause, in spite of the fact that the verb chosen seems to be quite influential with regard to the offered amount of room for discussion. As discussed in Sect. 3.2, the fact that in this study a generalization is made about lexical differences in the matrix clause, is not prompted by a denial of differences in argumentative strength among complementation constructions, but by the fact that such differences are not the focus of this contribution. This study focuses on the difference between formulations *with* complementation and alternative formulations without this construction. As I have argued, there is a crucial difference between using a complementation construction or not (see Sect. 3.2): when a speaker uses such a construction, he presents his standpoint as an opinion, and not as a fact.

In order to investigate whether complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause reliably can be demarcated from instances of complementation *without* his point of view in the matrix clause, two coders analyzed a sample of 60 complementation constructions from the corpus (the first 10 constructions from each year) independently of each other. The interrater reliability was good (Cohen's Kappa K = 0.816). Subsequently, one coder (the author) analyzed all 561 complementation constructions in the corpus. For each instance of complementation in the corpus it was determined whether Wilders' perspective is presented in the matrix clause, and if so, how—by using the 7 subcategories of complementation summarized in Table 3.2 under 'I'. In this second round of analysis, double embedded complementation constructions were counted only once, and categorized under the first matrix clause. In other words, an instance like (14), for convenience repeated as below as (30), was counted 1, and included in subcategory I.7 ('impersonal complementation construction'). Similarly, an instance like (31) was included in subtype 3 ('*we*-rest')

- (30) *It is clear that in the documents it is stated that* there still is an increase in the number of victims of violent crimes. (W04_02)
- (31) Last week we could see that a study by Statistics Netherlands indicated that almost one million [of these non-western immigrants] is a Muslim. (W02_02)

The second round of analysis yielded 399 complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause. In Sect. 3.4, I will report on the distribution of these instances of complementation. Is there a development in Wilders' use of complementation constructions with matrix clauses yielding his point of view? Did this type of constructions decrease between 2004 and 2009? If this is the case, it would be an indication that Wilders has over the years been offering less room for discussion.

Table 3.3 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause between 2004 and 2009: absolute numbers (N = 399) and per 1000 words

Year	Complementation constructions	Per 1000 words
2004	86	10.22
2005	85	9.34
2006	74	8.78
2007	38	4.30
2008	55	6.84
2009	61	7.52

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Results of Quantitative Analysis

Table 3.3 gives an overview of the total number of complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause per year, abstracted from its various subtypes. In other words, Table 3.3 shows the joint frequency of all 7 subtypes of complementation that in Table 3.2 have been distinguished under I.

Although Table 3.3 indicates that there is a decrease in the absolute number of complementation constructions over the years (with strikingly few instances in 2007), statistical analysis¹³ yields that the decrease between 2004 and 2009 is not significant.¹⁴

However, when the results from Table 3.3 are broken down in its 7 subcategories, a more refined picture of Wilders' use of complementation emerges. This more detailed overview indicates that there actually *is* a certain development in Wilders' of complementation. Table 3.4 gives the absolute numbers per subcategory; in Table 3.5 the numbers are normalized per 1000 words.

Subdividing the instances of complementation into its subcategories, brings to light that the two most frequently used subcategories (category 1: '*I think that...*' and category 7: '*It is clear that...*') are more than halved between 2004 and 2009 (cf. Table 3.4/3.5). In both cases this decrease is statistically significant.¹⁵ Moreover, the decrease seems not to be a gradual transition: within subcategory 1 (*I think that...*) a strong break occurs after 2006, and within subcategory 7 (*It is clear that...*) the largest decrease can be found between 2006 and 2007 as well. The fact that the *total* number of complementation constructions has not decreased

¹³For the statistical analyses log likelihood was used. More specifically, the statistical analyses were conducted by using the 'log-likelihood calculator' (see <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>). A log likelihood test allows for comparisons of frequencies in corpora even when the studied phenomena are relatively rare (Vis et al. 2012, 98).

¹⁴2004: 86/8417 versus 2009: 61/8113 = 3.40, $p > 0.05$.

¹⁵Subcategory 1 (*I think that...*): 38/8417 versus 16/8113, LL = 8.44, $p < 0.05$; subcategory 7 (*It is clear that...*): 21/8417 versus 9/8113, LL = 4.51, $p < 0.05$.

Table 3.4 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: absolute numbers

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. <i>I think that...</i>	2. <i>We [the PVV] think that...</i>	3. <i>We [rest] think that...</i>	4. <i>Everyone thinks that...</i>	5. <i>Person X states that...</i>	6. <i>The report states that...</i>	7. <i>It is clear that...</i>	Total
2004	38	0	12	1	8	6	21	86
2005	33	2	5	2	16	6	21	85
2006	32	4	5	4	8	6	15	74
2007	16	2	4	0	5	2	9	38
2008	17	7	2	4	10	4	11	55
2009	16	3	8	15	8	2	9	61

Table 3.5 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: normalized per 1000 words

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. <i>I think that...</i>	2. <i>We [the PVV] think that...</i>	3. <i>We [rest] think that...</i>	4. <i>Everyone thinks that...</i>	5. <i>Person X states that...</i>	6. <i>The report states that...</i>	7. <i>It is clear that...</i>	Total
2004	4.51	0	1.43	0.12	0.95	0.71	2.49	10.22
2005	3.63	0.22	0.55	0.22	1.76	0.66	2.31	9.34
2006	3.80	0.47	0.59	0.47	0.95	0.71	1.78	8.78
2007	1.81	0.23	0.45	0	0.57	0.23	1.02	4.30
2008	2.11	0.87	0.25	0.50	1.24	0.50	1.37	6.84
2009	1.98	0.37	0.99	1.86	0.99	0.25	1.12	7.52

significantly over the years is caused by the fact that Wilders' use of another subcategory has increased. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show a substantial, sudden increase in subcategory 4 (*Everyone thinks that...*) in 2009. It seems that this increase of complementation constructions with an indefinite pronoun causes the total number of complementation constructions not to be decreased significantly between 2004 and 2009.

3.4.2 Results of Qualitative Analysis

The sudden rise of complementation constructions with an indefinite pronoun in 2009 raises the question whether there is a specific explanation for this increase. A closer look at the corpus brings to light that this is the case, indeed. The increase is caused by 13 instances of complementation in 1 speech:

- (32) *One would expect that* fire is opened on Somali pirates who attack our ships, but we bring them to the Netherlands and give them free computer courses instead. *One would expect that* a Leftist politician stands up for woman's rights, but Mrs. Arib, colleague of the Labour Party, advises Moroccan women who have to deal with dominant men: Do not enter into the fray, you will lose anyway. (...). *One would expect that* the progressive city of Utrecht stands up for equality of man and woman, but it subsidizes separated office windows instead. *One would expect that* in the Labour bastion of Rotterdam there is no going back on the results of the emancipation. But still there are plans for apartheid performances in theatres, with special seats for Muslim women. (...) Madam Speaker, one would expect that (...). But (...). *One would expect that* (...). But (...). *One would expect that* (...).

The complementation constructions in (32) present Wilders' perspective in the matrix clauses. However, they burden disproportionately on the total number of complementation constructions in 2009. The construction seems to be repeated so often due to the fact that it is part of an elaborate figure of repetition ('One would expect that.... But....'), which functions as a unity and has its own rhetorical function: the figure of speech structures Wilders' argument. That is reason to count the 13 instances of complementation in (32) not as 13 separate tokens, but in total as 1.

However, such a qualitative analysis raises the question whether there are no other instances of complementation that are weighing disproportionately heavily on the total number of complementation constructions. A closer look at the rest of the corpus brings to light that the answer to this question is positive, indeed: a further qualitative analysis reveals that other speeches instances of complementation should also be treated differently in the analysis. More specifically, two more types of complementation need reconsideration. First, the following fragment occurs in the corpus—again in 2009. In Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, this fragment has been counted as containing 5 instances of complementation (subtype 7—'*It is clear that...*')

- (33) (...) that the cabinet is not carrying this motion, is not only inappropriate, is not only unheard-of, is not only impossible, is not only unacceptable, but also inadmissible. (W09_103)

In (33), the order of matrix clause(s) and complement clause is reversed: the complement clause is presented first. Of course, this does not take away the fact that Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clauses. However, similarly to (32), it is highly doubtful whether these matrix clauses should be counted as separate tokens. The 5 matrix clauses cannot occur independently of each other. They function as a unity, due to the use of the construction 'not only... but also...'. Therefore, the matrix clauses in (33) should not be counted as 5 separate tokens, but together as 1.

The other type of complementation that needs reconsideration occurs in the corpus 14 times. Examples are given in (34)–(36):

- (34) *I ask the minister-president when we can await the implementation of the resolution.* (W06_26)
- (35) *Therefore, I ask the cabinet whether it will consider this idea (...).* (W07_103)
- (36) *I ask the minister whether it is true that one of the participating police officers overstepped the mark prior to this interrogation.* (W05_15)

The complementation constructions in (34)–(36) must be considered in the institutional context of Dutch parliament. They illustrate a standardized way in which in the Dutch House of Representatives a question is asked; the prototypical function of complementation constructions seems to be lost. Therefore, it seems legitimate to leave this construction type out of the analysis. Wilders uses this construction type mainly in the period 2004–2005 (2004: 3x; 2005: 6x; 2006: 2x; 2007: 1x; 2008: 2x). The fact that this construction mainly occurs in the first years of the corpus is in line with Kuitenbrouwer's (2010) observations mentioned in Sect. 3.3.1: a decrease of this institutionalized way of formulating a question fits in the image that Wilders' usage has become less jargonized over the years.

All in all, the qualitative analysis gives rise to slight adjustments of the numbers in Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. The strong increase of subcategory 4 (*Everyone thinks that...*) in 2009 appears to be a distortion: there is good reason to count the complementation constructions in fragment (32) as 1 token, and the same holds for the 5 instances of complementation in (33). A distortion in the data occurs in the first years of the corpus as well: the construction type which is illustrated by (34)–(36) and is mainly present in the first years of the corpus, should be left out of the analysis.¹⁶

These findings lead to Tables 3.6 and 3.7. The numbers in bold indicate adjustments compared to Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

The revised Tables 3.6 and 3.7 show that there *is* a development in Wilders' use of complementation, indeed: the use of complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause decreases significantly between 2004 and 2009.¹⁷ This decrease does not seem to be a gradual transition, however: a 'break' occurs between 2006 and 2007. This is an indication that Wilders has been offering less room for discussion from 2007 onwards.

How can this break in Wilders' use of complementation between 2006 and 2007 be explained? A possible answer could be that Wilders switched speechwriters, but this explanation is not very likely. Although Wilders indeed switched speechwriters over the years, this switch does not coincide in time with the moment that Wilders'

¹⁶It should be noted that leaving this construction out of the analysis is not prompted by opportunism. If the construction had not been excluded from the analysis, the described development in Wilders' language use would have been bigger.

¹⁷83/8417 versus 45/8113, LL = 10.10, $p < 0.01$.

Table 3.6 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders’ perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: absolute numbers

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders’ perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. <i>I think</i> that...	2. <i>We</i> [the PVV] think that...	3. <i>We</i> [rest] think that...	4. <i>Everyone</i> thinks that...	5. <i>Person</i> <i>X</i> states that...	6. <i>The</i> <i>report</i> states that...	7. <i>It is</i> clear that...	Total
2004	35	0	12	1	8	6	21	83
2005	27	2	5	2	16	6	21	79
2006	30	4	5	4	8	6	15	72
2007	15	2	4	0	5	2	9	37
2008	15	7	2	4	10	4	11	53
2009	16	3	8	3	8	2	5	45

Numbers in bold indicate adjustments compared to Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5

Table 3.7 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders’ perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: normalized per 1000 words

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders’ perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. <i>I think</i> that...	2. <i>We</i> [the PVV] think that...	3. <i>We</i> [rest] think that...	4. <i>Everyone</i> thinks that...	5. <i>Person</i> <i>X</i> states that...	6. <i>The</i> <i>report</i> states that...	7. <i>It is</i> clear that...	Total
2004	4.16	0	1.43	0.12	0.95	0.71	2.49	9.86
2005	2.97	0.22	0.55	0.22	1.76	0.66	2.31	8.68
2006	3.56	0.47	0.59	0.47	0.95	0.71	1.78	8.54
2007	1.70	0.23	0.45	0	0.57	0.23	1.02	4.18
2008	1.87	0.87	0.25	0.50	1.24	0.50	1.37	6.59
2009	1.98	0.37	0.99	0.37	0.99	0.25	0.62	5.55

Numbers in bold indicate adjustments compared to Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5

use of complementation changed. When Wilders started his political party in 2004, he initially wrote his speeches together with colleague Bart Jan Spruyt. However, Spruyt left the PVV in 2005 already; from that moment on, Wilders has written his speeches in close collaboration with the party ideologue, Martin Bosma (Vossen 2013).

Another possible explanation could be that the break in Wilders’ use of complementation constructions is connected to a change in political standpoints. Not only journalists have stated that Wilders’ political views radicalized over time (cf. Sect. 3.1): studies by political scientists suggest the same. Strikingly, these studies situate the radicalization of Wilders’ standpoints from 2007 onwards. For instance, Vossen (2011), who investigates the ideology of the PVV, concludes that Wilders’ political views undergo important shifts after 2006: he states that from that moment on, one could notice “stronger nationalism” in Wilders’ views, “increasing populism”, and “a more radical form of Islamophobia” (Vossen 2011, 185–186).

Similarly, Fennema (2010), investigating Wilders' political career, argues that Wilders became "more and more radical each day" in the first half of 2007 (Fennema 2010, 123–124, 149). According to Fennema it was in 2007 that Wilders started to cause consternation regularly with taking up controversial standpoints, as proposing a burka ban, and warning against what Wilders calls "the islamization of the Netherlands" (Fennema 2010, 129; see also Vossen 2013, 125–128). According to Fennema (2010, 129), Wilders' standpoints about 'the islamization' are the culmination of Wilders' "linkage of social problems to the presence of immigrants, who are connected directly to Islam". In the 47 speeches that were analyzed for the present study, the first time that the word 'islamization' turns up in the corpus is in 2007, indeed.¹⁸ Fennema also mentions an opinion article in the Dutch national newspaper *de Volkskrant* (in which Wilders likened the Koran to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and denied the existence of a tolerant Islam) as "a crucial step (...) in Wilders' radicalization" (2010, 132). This opinion article appeared in August 2007; 5 out of 6 of the speeches analyzed in the present study were held after the opinion article was published. Although the corpus analysis presented in this article cannot answer the question whether there is a *causal* link between the two developments, it is intriguing to see that the two developments *coincided*. The decrease in complementation constructions from 2007 onwards indicates that Wilders has been offering less room for discussion for his (apparently radicalized) standpoints.

3.5 Conclusion and Discussion

This contribution is a plea to pay more systematic attention to the infrequently studied, fine-grained grammatical phenomenon of complementation in the analysis of political discourse. A diachronic analysis of Geert Wilders' use of complementation in 47 parliamentary speeches held between 2004 and 2009 served as a case study to that end. In Dutch media it has been observed that Wilders' usage changed over the years. The diachronic corpus analysis reveals that this is also the case for Wilders' use of complementation constructions: Wilders' use of complementation constructions yielding his perspective in the matrix clause decreased significantly between 2004 and 2009. This decrease does not seem to be a gradual transition, there seems to be a 'break' between 2006 and 2007. Intriguingly, this break coincides with the moment that political scientists indicate as the moment that Wilders' political views became more radical.

As I have argued, using complementation or not is a stylistic choice which affects the amount of room for discussion offered by the speaker. As such, the observed decrease in complementation constructions in Wilders' speeches is an indication that Wilders has been offering less room for discussion since 2007.

¹⁸The first time the word occurs in the corpus is during the Debate about the Policy Programme 2007–2011, held 19 June 2007.

I deliberately use the word ‘indication’ here: using complementation or not is of course just one of *many* stylistic features influencing the argumentative strength of an utterance (cf., for instance, Fraser 2010). In order to be able to draw firmer conclusions, other stylistic features influencing the argumentative strength of an utterance should be analyzed in Wilders’ speeches as well. This is a point for further research.

Methodologically speaking, the case study illustrates that quantifying stylistic devices also has a qualitative analytic component. Categories relevant to linguistic-stylistic analysis often are of a semantic nature (cf. Leech and Short 2007, 37); when mapping out such categories, qualitative analysis is indispensable. The analysis presented in this chapter is a case in point. In a first round of analysis, *all* complementation constructions in the corpus were counted. This is not very complex: it can be done on the basis of formal criteria, and could probably also be done computationally, by using a linguistic parser.¹⁹ However, for the analysis, not *all* complementation constructions were relevant: the analysis focused on the more specific, semantic category of ‘complementation constructions containing Wilders’ perspective in the matrix clause’. Therefore, in a second round of analysis all complementation constructions in the corpus had to be analyzed from a functional perspective. For each of the constructions it was determined whether Wilders’ perspective is presented in the matrix clause, or not. This second round of analysis involved *interpretation*: the question whether Wilders’ perspective is present in the matrix clause, partly could only be answered by interpreting complementation constructions in the context in which they occur (cf. the discussion of examples (24)–(29) in Sect. 3.3.3. Moreover, *additional* qualitative analysis was needed to avoid misrepresentations in the data: further contextual analysis yielded that a few complementation constructions should be dealt with differently in the analysis (see for details the discussion of (32)–(36) in Sect. 3.3.3). In other words, the development in Wilders’ use of complementation constructions has come to the fore by combining quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Finally, the analysis of Wilders’ use of complementation constructions offers also new insights into the phenomenon of complementation. Thanks to the corpus analysis a more refined picture has emerged of the ways in which complementation can express the speaker’s or writer’s perspective. A new insight is that complementation constructions like (24) and (25), dependent on the content of the complement clause, can contain the speaker’s or writer’s perspective too (cf. Verhagen 2005, 104–110). As such, this contribution also illustrates how linguistic knowledge and (political) discourse analysis can enhance each other. Applying linguistic knowledge about grammatical phenomena can yield interesting results for the analysis of political discourse; at the same time, analysis of political discourse is a means for refining our insights into the nature of grammatical phenomena.

¹⁹For the analysis of Dutch, parsers like Frog (Van den Bosch et al. 2007) or Alpino (Van Noord 2006) are available online. See, respectively, <http://ilk.uvt.nl/frog/> and <http://www.let.rug.nl/vannoord/alp/Alpino/>.

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Chapter 4

Evidential and Argumentative Functions of Dynamic Appearance Verbs in Italian: The Example of *Rivelare* and *Emergere*

Johanna Miecznikowski

Abstract This contribution examines the way dynamic appearance verbs in Italian function as lexical evidential strategies and signal inferential relations in argumentative discourse. In argumentative discourse, evidential markers and strategies can be hypothesized to function as “argumentative indicators” (van Eemeren et al. in *Argumentative indicators in discourse. A pragma-dialectical study*. Springer, Dordrecht, 2007) by contributing to signal argumentative relations (see Rocci in *Argumentation* 22:165–189, 2008; J Pragmatics 44(15):2129–2149, 2012 on modal verbs in Italian and English and Miecznikowski in *Parole, gesti, interpretazioni. Studi linguistici per Carla Bazzanella*. Aracne, Roma, pp. 57–78, 2015; Nouveaux Cahiers de Linguistique Française 32:103–118, 2015a; Miecznikowski and Musi in *Reflections on theoretical issues in argumentation theory*. Springer, Amsterdam, pp. 259–278, 2015; Musi in *Dalle apparenze alle inferenze: i verbi sembrare e apparire come indicatori argomentativi*, 2015 on perception and appearance verbs in Italian). The present analysis focuses on two Italian appearance verbs, *rivelare* and *emergere*. Differently from the more studied appearance verb *to seem* and corresponding verbs in Romance languages (cf. Cornillie, in *Ital J Linguist* 19:109–128, 2007; Aijmer in *Funct Lang* 16(1):63–88, 2009; Almeida in *Discourse Studies* 17(2):121–140, 2015), these verbs denote dynamic eventualities rather than states. The analysis focuses on uses that denote an eventuality of knowledge acquisition and on performative contexts in which these acquire an evidential function. In the discussion, it is shown how the study of dynamic appearance verb constructions makes not only a lexicological contribution in the domain of perception and mental verbs, but aims, above all, at underlining the role of verb-based lexical constructions in the expression of the basic pragmatic categories of information source and argumentative relations. On the theoretical level, it also sheds some light on the relation between the two mentioned categories, which overlap as to the type of relevant conceptual relations (especially as far as argumentation and indirect sources of the inferential type are concerned), but differ as to their communicative functions and as to their contribution to text organization.

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4.1 Introduction

The contribution examines the way dynamic appearance verbs in Italian function as lexical evidential strategies and signal inferential relations in argumentative discourse.

In languages that lack a grammatical system of obligatory evidential markers, lexical strategies (cf. Squartini 2007, 2008) are important means to signal types of information source—in particular the fundamental evidential distinction between direct experience, inference and hearsay (Willett 1988; Squartini 2001). The distinction of different information sources has various functions in discourse (cf. Fox 2001; Mushin 2013; Sidnell 2012; Miecznikowski 2016). In argumentative discourse, evidential markers and strategies can be hypothesized to function as argumentative indicators (van Eemeren et al. 2007) by contributing to signal argumentative relations (see Rocci 2008, 2012 on modal verbs in Italian and English and Musi 2015; Miecznikowski 2015a; Miecznikowski and Musi 2015 on perception and appearance verbs in Italian).

The present paper focuses on two Italian appearance verbs, *rivelare* ('to reveal', 'to communicate', and, in its reflexive use, 'to turn out') and *emergere* ('to emerge', 'to become clear'). Differently from the more studied appearance verb *to seem* and corresponding verbs in Romance languages (cf. Cornillie 2007; Aijmer 2009; Almeida 2015), these verbs denote dynamic eventualities rather than states. Based on a corpus study, the analysis focuses on those uses of the two verbs that refer to an event of acquiring knowledge and on contexts in which these uses fulfil an evidential function.

4.2 Perception Predicates, Evidentiality and Argumentation

4.2.1 *Rivelare and Emergere as Perceptual and Mental Predicates*

Like its English counterpart *to reveal*, which Late Middle English borrowed from Old French *reveler* or directly from Latin (cf. ODE, s.v.) Italian *rivelare* goes back to Latin *revelare*. The Latin verb literally meant 'to uncurtain', 'to withdraw a cloth/curtain' (*velum*) and was used metaphorically, in post-classical Latin already, in the sense of 'to disclose', 'to make something known to others' that has been maintained by the three mentioned languages until today.

Emergere seems to have had a more discontinuous history in the European languages. The Italian verb is signaled by DELI and GDLI (s.v.) to be a scholarly borrowing from Latin *emergere*, composed by *e-* (*ex*) ('out of') and *mergere* 'to dip'; early records date back to Dante. The verb entered French and English as a scholarly borrowing as well, but only, respectively, around 1500 (cf. TLFi, s.v.) and

in the late 16th century (cf. ODE, s.v.). In Classical Latin *emergere* meant ‘to come out of a liquid’, ‘to surface’, ‘to move upwards’, but also, among other extensions, ‘to appear’ (by metonymy: what comes to the surface becomes visible to an observer). These various meanings and further extensions and contaminations thereof (e.g. ‘to emerge from a dark area to light’; ‘to resound’, especially of voices; ‘to take shape’; ‘to come into being’; ‘to stick out’) are attested in Italian, French and English in the course of the centuries.¹

If *rivelare* originally primarily denoted a physical action and *emergere* a movement, the high relevance of an experiencer in the particular type of states of affairs referred to becomes a central semantic feature in certain derived meanings and suggests an affinity with perception predicates. Perception predicates denote sensory perception by some experiencer. They can be differentiated with regard to at least the following criteria related to the cognitive frame of perception and to its linguistic perspectivation²: the senses referred to (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste); the position of the experiencer, the sensory stimulus and the resulting mental representation in the predicate’s argument structure; the presence of eventual further causes or agents; the semantic relation between the various components; the degree of control exerted by the experiencer (cf. the contrast between *to hear* and *to listen*); dynamic or static event structure (cf. the contrast between non dynamic *to sound* and dynamic *to fade away*). When *emergere* means ‘to become perceivable/to appear’, it is a dynamic appearance verb, i.e. a dynamic stimulus-centered perception verb; the verb seems compatible with sight, sound and smell; the (defocused) experiencer does not exert any control. As to *rivelare*, the dynamic change from invisible to visible must have been relevant in earlier stages of language history, given the reference to a concrete act of un-covering encoded by the verb’s morphological components. In contemporary Italian, that concrete meaning has become marginal (in fact, it is not attested in the corpus examined here); however, some reflexive uses (*rivelarsi*, ‘to turn out’, lit. ‘to reveal itself’/‘to become revealed’) still function as dynamic appearance verbs.

The literature on perception verbs (cf. Viberg 1983; Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999; Usoniene 2001) shows that these verbs, cross-linguistically, often participate in processes of metaphorical transfer and metonymical extension into the mental domain. An example of metaphorical transfer is the equivalence ‘understanding is seeing’ (cf. the English discourse markers ‘I see’ and ‘you see?’). Metonymy-driven semantic change is illustrated e.g. by Gothic *witan* (‘to know’), which derives from an older perfect form of a verb meaning ‘to see’ and thus literally meant ‘to have

¹According to the DHLF, as far as French is concerned, the first records have *emergere* in its figurative meanings, whereas the reference to water, associated with a literal interpretation of the stem *-merg-*, was regained only later on.

²The notion of frame (see Bazzanella 2014: 69 ff. for a short introduction) is intended here as a conceptual structure that organizes experience and is, at the same time, relatable to linguistically coded meaning (cf. Fillmore and Atkins 1992; Konerding 1993). It is particularly useful to describe perception predicates, which linguistically encode many different perspectives on a limited set of process types rooted in bodily experience.

seen', with a shift of focus from the perceptual event to what speakers considered its epistemic consequence. As we will see, the mental component is central in most uses of contemporary Italian *rivelare* and in some uses of *emergere*.

In discourse, the (fuzzy) distinction between perceptual and mental processes corresponds to differences as to the semantic type of a predicate's central argument, in particular of the first argument in the case of intransitive *emergere* and reflexive *rivelarsi* and the second argument in the case of transitive *rivelare*. At this regard, the basic ontology proposed by Lyons (1977: 438–452) and further developed by Functional Grammar (e.g. Dik 1989: 247–262) provides a useful point of reference. Lyons distinguishes first-order entities (persons, animals and various other kinds of entities that can be located in space), second-order entities (eventualities that are located in space and time) and third-order entities (mental representations outside place and time, such as concepts, ideas, or propositions in the sense of world descriptions that can be said to be true or false). The distinction between second and third order corresponds to the distinction between states of affairs and propositions in Functional Grammar and in recent studies on epistemic and evidential meaning (cf. the next section and Footnote 10). Genuine perception frames—whose mental dimension may be more or less foregrounded—require second-order entities as arguments, whereas mental verbs and verbs of speech combine with third-order entities.³

Consider the following occurrence of *emergere* cited by GDLI:

- (1) *Più bella intanto la Virtude emerse, / qual astro che splendor nell'ombre acquista.*

More beautiful, meanwhile, Virtue appeared, like a star that gains splendor in darkness.⁴ (Vincenzo Monti, *La bellezza dell'universo*, 1781)

Monti's neoplatonic poem narrates the creation of the universe and praises its beauty. In the lines preceding example (1), the poet alludes to the fall of mankind. The cited lines mean that (unidentified) observers perceived Virtue in that moment to be even more beautiful than she appeared before the fall of mankind; a perceptual change due to the new contrast between Virtue and its opposite, as suggested by the comparison with a star shining brighter when surrounded by darkness. Syntactically, “*emerse*”, a *passato remoto* (aorist) form, is combined with the subject “*Virtude*” and a comparative adjective phrase, “*più bella*” (‘more beautiful’), positioned at the sentence beginning. Independently of the details of syntactic analysis, at the semantic level “*emerse*” appears to take scope over a predication [più bella (Virtude_{t1}, Virtude_{t-1})]p corresponding to a perceivable second-order entity, or state of affairs, in Functional Grammar terms. In this example, *emergere* is therefore used as a perception verb; however, it has to be noted that the perceived entity is complex—it is not a first, but a second-order entity, and implies the

³See Dik and Hengeveld (1991) and Boye (2010), who discuss the semantic type and syntactic manifestation of perception verb complements.

⁴Where not otherwise indicated, the examples have been translated by myself.

comparison of two perceived situations—and that the frame of comparative judgment itself has important mental components.

In example (2), on the other hand, likewise cited by GDLI, the mental aspects of *emergere* are more relevant than the perceptual ones, as a closer inspection of the verb's immediate context will show:

- (2) *Nessun nuovo indizio era emerso; e i primi erano che due donne avevan visto il Piazza toccar qualche muro; e, ciò ch'era indizio insieme e corpo del delitto, i magistrati avevan visto "alcuni segni di materia untuosa" su que' muri abbruciacchiati e affumicati [...].*

No fresh evidence had been brought forward; and the former evidence was merely that two women had seen Piazza touch a wall, and – which was both evidence and *corpus delicti* – that certain magistrates had seen “some signs of unctuous matter” upon blackened and smoked walls [...]. (Alessandro Manzoni, *Storia di una colonna infame*, 1840; English translation: Alessandro Manzoni, *The betrothed lovers, A Milanese Story of the Seventeenth Century, With The Column of Infamy*. London, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845)⁵

Emergere is predicated of the referent “*nuovo indizio*” (‘fresh evidence’). Within the story's context of a criminal investigation, *indizio* (‘clue’, ‘evidence’) is essentially defined by its function to make the investigation advance as a process of reasoning. This interpretation is confirmed by the following coordinated sentence, which names preceding evidence. The evidence referred to are two statements given to the investigators by eye witnesses, whose verbal nature is underlined by the quotation marks rendering the bureaucratic language used by the testifying *magistrati* in the second statement. Indeed, what is categorized as *indizi* ‘evidence’ are not the states of affairs seen by the witnesses, which are second-order entities, but the content of the witnesses’ statements reporting those perceptions, which are propositions and thus third-order entities. A narrator's comment made about the second statement, “*ciò ch'era indizio insieme e corpo del delitto*” (‘which was both evidence and *corpus delicti*’), further underlines the abstract nature of *indizio* by distinguishing it from the concrete term *corpus delicti*. This technical legal distinction is indeed relevant in the particular context of the cited passage: if both testimonies can be considered *indizi* in the sense of ‘clues’ pointing towards certain conclusions, only in the second case is there a material *corpus delicti*, i.e. the “signs of unctuous matter”, still visible to observers.

In the entire compound sentence cited, the mental dimension of *indizio* can hence be considered prominent. Accordingly, the perceptual aspects of *emergere* are defocused in this example: Manzoni does not refer to a process of finding concrete objects or perceiving states of affairs, but to a process of finding useful

⁵The subordinate clause “which was both evidence and *corpus delicti*” has been added by myself. It is omitted in the 1845 English translation, probably because of the quasi-synonymy of evidence and *corpus delicti* in English.

arguments to reach a conclusion and solve the case. This may, by the way, explain the choice of the English translator, who does not refer to perception at all, but renders “*era emerso*” by “had been brought forward”, thus underlining the importance of discourses and argumentation in the process of gathering evidence.

Besides noun phrases that generically refer to some propositional entity without identifying its content (such as “*indizio*” ‘clue’ in the preceding example), a strong indicator of reference to mental processes is scope over complete propositions expressed by clauses. In the case of *emergere* and *rivelare*, what should be looked at is the combination with complement clauses introduced by *che*. The consulted dictionaries mention several examples of *che*-clauses combined as object clauses with *rivelare* (X *rivela che*... ‘X reveals that...’), whereas neither GDLI nor GRADIT cite a single example to illustrate the use of *che*-clauses as subject clauses with *emergere*.⁶ In contemporary Italian, the construction *emergere che*... is well established, however: this results from an analysis of the Present Indicative forms of *emergere* in the Italian economic press presented in Miecznikowski (2009) and is confirmed by the present corpus study, as the examples discussed in the Sects. 4.4–4.6 will show. The following example illustrates the use of *emergere* in the economic press:

- (3) *Scorrendo l'elenco aggiornato e ripulito dai doppioni, emerge che la platea degli enti che si contendono i 270 milioni è davvero articolata.*

When browsing the updated list after having eliminated double entries, it emerges that the range of institutes that compete for these 270 million is really variegated. (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, April 19th, 2006)

The subject clause introduced by *che* is placed after the verb, resulting in a sequence—common in Italian modalized sentences—of the form ‘propositional operator + proposition’. Even if the implicit experiencer is involved in a process of reading that has a clear perceptual dimension (*scorrendo l'elenco* ‘browsing the list’), the proposition introduced by *emerge che* is not a state of affairs that visibly appears in the written list, but a third-order entity: a conclusion the experiencer infers while processing the verbal information transmitted by the list. Accordingly, in example (3) the verb’s meanings ‘coming out’, ‘becoming visible/clear’ can only be interpreted as being transferred from the domains of movement and perception to the mental domain.

The lexicographical data and the literature considered up to now suggest that *rivelare* and *emergere* cover conceptual areas ranging from action and motion to perception and mental processes, showing patterns of polysemy that are common cross-linguistically. In the following sections, I will go two steps further and hypothesize that *rivelare* and *emergere*, as perception and mental verbs, are good candidates to function as lexical evidential markers and that, hence, they are good candidates to contribute to argumentative structures in discourse.

⁶TLFi does not signal the combination with *que*-clauses for French either, while ODE signals the construction *it emerges that* in English.

4.2.2 *The Category of Information Source*

The conceptual and pragmatic category of information source concerns the felicity conditions of speech acts whose basic illocutionary point is assertive (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, Chap. 3; Green 2015, Sects. 3.3, 8), i.e., that have the overall goal to make true statements about the world. This family of speech acts includes acts with very weak assertive force, in which the speaker *S* signals to be far away from reaching the goal or asserts only a tiny proportion of the overall formulated information, but differs in principle from those acts in which claiming the truth about the world is not at stake, in particular, using Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) terms, from directives (orders, requests etc.), commissives (promises etc.), expressives (sharing feelings with the interlocutor)⁷ and declaratives (such as baptizing, acquitting from a charge, opening a meeting etc.). More precisely, information source regards the preparatory condition according to which *S* must possess knowledge that makes him or her competent⁸ to state the truth or, at the weaker end of the scale, make a hypothesis or just "raise a possibility" (Swanson 2006; Rocci 2017, Chap. 3).⁹ Evidential information regards the complete or incomplete fulfillment of this condition, in relation to the proposition *p* (a third-order entity) that is asserted or hypothesized, and certain properties of *S*'s knowledge, especially its source.¹⁰ By specifying these aspects of the preparatory condition, it modulates (Caffi 2007) the illocutionary force of the act. It differs from epistemic modality, which regards *S*'s evaluation of the degree of certainty of *p*; but evidential information may influence *S*'s overall epistemic evaluation and, as far as lexical and grammatical markers are concerned, epistemic-evidential polyfunctionality is quite common in languages.¹¹

Information sources correspond to experiences of knowledge acquisition by the speaker. With regard to source type, a useful distinction to make is that between

⁷In the context of the present article, *expressive* is attributed to speech acts in order to single out those acts in which the speaker's expression of him-/herself is the main illocutionary point. This does not imply that other kinds of speech acts lack expressive elements. See Hübler (1987) for a discussion of the more general question of expressivity in language.

⁸See Sbisà (1989: 103–130) on the notion of competence in speech act theory. Related concepts have been developed in the research tradition of conversation analysis, especially the notion of entitlement (Fox 2001) and of epistemic authority (Sidnell 2012; Mondada 2013).

⁹Like Sbisà (2014: 480) ("I have considered as evidential devices those lexical items and textual strategies that encode or implicate information about whether and how the preparatory conditions of an assertive speech act are satisfied"), I consider the requirement to possess knowledge, or evidence, to be a preparatory condition and not, as proposed by Faller (2002, 2007), a sincerity condition of assertive speech acts.

¹⁰The propositional scope of both epistemic and evidential operators is discussed in depth in Pietrandrea (2005: 24–25, 34, 37–38) and Boye (2012: 183–198, 277–291).

¹¹The relation between evidentiality and epistemic modality is a much debated issue, which cannot be addressed in the present paper. Useful discussions of the relevant typological literature on this topic can be found for instance in Pietrandrea (2005), Boye (2012) and Musi (2015). A different perspective is adopted by Rocci (2017), who focusses on semantic and argumentative aspects of modality.

direct sources (the speaker has participated in the state of affairs denoted by the asserted proposition *p* or has perceived the state of affairs through his/her senses) and indirect sources (the speaker has heard or read a discourse containing *p* or has inferred *p*) (cf. Willett 1988; Squartini 2001). Conceptually, when a proposition asserted or hypothesized by a speaker *S* is presented as, or is implicated to be, information that *S* acquired from a source, the link between *p* and its source can be considered an *evidential configuration*. In discourse, evidential configurations result from coherence relations (e.g., in written texts, between *p* and a footnote indicating *S*'s source for *p*), are marked by lexical, constructional or grammatical evidential framing (e.g. English *allegedly*, Italian *pare che* 'it seems that', evidential suffixes like those of the North-American Wintun language discussed in Willett 1988: 65),¹² or might be inferred based on a proposition's content (e.g. when a narrative of *S*'s deeds in the past implies, by default, that *S* knows about them directly).¹³

Evidential configurations are similar to reporting configurations, i.e. to reported speech, thought or perception, which refer to similar eventualities and occur in acts of the assertive family as well. In reports, however, *S*'s illocutionary point is not to assert or hypothesize the content of the embedded proposition (in the case of speech or thought) or perception, but to weakly or strongly assert that some experiencer and/or agent *E*—a different person or *S* in some situation that does not coincide with the speech situation—said, thought or perceived something. The focus on a speech event or experience of thought/perception by *E* implies that *S* is not necessarily involved as an experiencer acquiring knowledge and is not necessarily committed to the embedded content: *S* may endorse it, but may also have a neutral stance or even suggest that *E*'s discourses, thoughts and perceptions do not correspond to reality. In the case of perception reports, another difference between reporting and evidential configurations is, as discussed in the preceding section, that in the former case what is perceived is typically presented as a first or second-order entity, whereas an evidential configuration implies that what is linked to the information source is a proposition (third-order entity).

To sum up, according to the view exposed above, information source as a conceptual and pragmatic category is metapositional and deictic (in an evidential configuration, *S* is involved as an experiencer acquiring knowledge and that knowledge corresponds to the proposition proffered in the moment of speech); it presupposes an act with an assertive illocutionary point, whose force the evidential information modulates by specifying certain aspects of the act's preparatory conditions.

This definition contrasts with other proposals that tend to separate the category of information source from *S*'s assertive commitment to *p*. Since the various definitions have different implications for the analysis of perception predicates and mental verbs, I will briefly discuss a few recent proposals, starting from Faller's (2002)

¹²See Aikhenvald (2004) on grammaticalized evidential systems in a typological perspective and Boye and Harder (2009) on the relation between lexical and grammatical evidential marking in a grammaticalization perspective.

¹³The various mentioned strategies of conveying information about information source are discussed in more detail in Miecznikowski (2016).

study on grammatical evidential markers in Cuzco Quechua. Faller (2002) suggests that in Cuzco Quechua the *reportative* suffix *-si* modulates *presentations*, which she opposes to assertions, arguing that by choosing *-si* the speaker refrains from taking any commitment to the truth of *p*. S's lack of commitment appears from the fact that S, after uttering *p-si*, may deny *p* without being incoherent. Faller (2007) abandons the term *presentation* and claims, instead, that reportative *-si* signals S's commitment to the existence of (hearsay) evidence for *p*, rather than implying any commitment to *p* itself. Regardless of Faller's own reanalysis, which aims at developing an SDRT approach to Cuzco Quechua evidentials¹⁴ and acknowledges a sort of argumentative speaker commitment to *p*,¹⁵ the postulation of a new speech act type has, in the last years, had a certain success in the literature on evidentiality. Chung (2006) claims that in Korean not only reportatives, but also markers of direct sources (perception) signal presentative speech acts. Also Blain and Déchaine (2007) postulate two different speech act types, presentations, which present a proposition *p*, and assertions, which present *p* as true. Presentations are considered a basic speech act: according to Blain and Déchaine's analysis of Cree, in that language unmarked speech acts are presentations and evidential markers add source information to such acts (cf. Louie 2008: 139 ff. for a similar analysis of Blackfoot evidential markers). Adopting a more theoretical approach, Tantucci (2016) proposes a typology of constative speech acts that includes presentations besides assertions and evaluations.

The definition of information source proposed in this article differs from the presentational view in two main respects. On one hand, it avoids postulating a new basic type of speech act and treats evidentially marked acts as belonging to the assertive family. This choice has the advantage of theoretical parsimony and provides—via the notion of preparatory condition—a powerful functional explanation for the existence of evidential configurations in discourse and grammar. In this approach, cases of very low speaker commitment to *p* can be treated as weak assertions, i.e. utterances in which S merely raises a possibility, but maintains the basic illocutionary point of making some truth claim about *p*. On the other hand, the approach defended here clearly distinguishes between evidential and reporting configurations. In this approach, the cases of complete lack of speaker commitment to *p*, which mainly motivate the postulation of presentational acts, can be treated as reporting rather than evidential configurations. Undoubtedly, as anticipated earlier, reporting and

¹⁴In a similar perspective, Portner (2006) suggests to reanalyze presentation as a sentence modality (called PUT) that updates discourse by placing propositions in one of several subsets of the presented set (ps), defined as “the set of propositions of which the participants are mutually aware” (p. 8). If the speaker asserts *p*, *p* will be added to the common ground subset, a “privileged subset” containing “the propositions which the participants in the conversation mutually agree to count as true for the purposes of the exchange” (p. 9). Other, possibly overlapping, subsets could be, according to Portner, propositions stored in ps as based on different kinds of evidence. Evidential markers “correspond to varieties of PUT” (p. 10) that select one particular subset.

¹⁵Faller (2007), even when describing cases of low or absent speaker commitment to *p*, consistently uses the expression “evidence for *p*” (rather than information source) to refer to evidential configurations marked by *-si*, thus underlining the argumentative orientation (in Ducrot's 1983 terms) of *-si*-utterances towards an implicit standpoint *p*.

evidential configurations are conceptually and functionally close. Both occur in assertions; reports, especially of speech and thought presented in propositional form, happen to acquire additional evidential functions in context; in some languages, evidential markers proper and quotative markers form a coherent grammatical system; finally, intermediate forms exist, for instance between reported speech and hearsay evidentiality (cf. Calaresu 2004; Chojnicka 2012). But a theoretical distinction between the two configurations is useful to delimit the category of information source and to account for those linguistic markers that are clearly specialized in one of the two domains, e.g. the German conjunctive I verb forms and certain *wollen* constructions, which signal reported speech, as opposed to the parenthetical construction *scheint*'s, which in some varieties of German signals hearsay information. Also the close relationship between evidential and epistemic meaning both in grammaticalized systems and (as we will see) in lexical markers can be understood much better if it is assumed that the primary pragmatic function of evidential expressions is not to evoke some experiencer's thoughts and words, but to qualify what the speaker knows.

4.2.3 *Perception Predicates as Lexical Markers of Information Source*

The conceptual-pragmatic definition of information source given above, which insists on the meta-propositional, deictic and assertion-modifying properties of evidential configurations makes it possible to formulate clear criteria of analysis when investigating semantic change and grammaticalization in verbs such as *emergere* and *rivelare*. Perception predicates, mental verbs and verbs of speech are common lexical resources not only to express reporting configurations, but also to express information about the speaker's information source.¹⁶ It is plausible to hypothesize that the verbs examined here, whose various meanings touch all three mentioned domains, fulfill evidential functions in certain contexts. On the basis of the meanings reviewed in the previous section, such functions could concern both the domain of direct and of indirect evidentiality. A qualitative and quantitative investigation of the verbs' evidential functions in a text corpus promises interesting insights about their degree of pragmatization in contemporary Italian: can *emergere* and *rivelare*, or certain of their constructions, be considered conventionalized markers of evidentiality in contemporary Italian? In the context of the present paper, the main goal of retrieving evidential tokens is, however, to exclude non-evidential tokens and be able to conduct a proper analysis of the relation between evidential and argumentative functions.

Considering the definition of information source discussed above, necessary conditions for the attribution of an evidential function to a verb of perception, speech or thought in discourse are the following:

¹⁶On perception verbs as evidential expressions see Whitt (2010) and Miecznikowski (2015a, 2017).

- (a) Propositional scope: the verb has a complete proposition *p* (third order entity) in its scope;
- (b) Assertion of *p*: the overall illocutionary configuration is such that *S* asserts *p* or at least the possibility that *p*.
- (c) Deictic aspects: the verb indicates a process in which the speaker is a central participant, some phases of which coincide with the moment of speech and which is relevant for the ongoing communication.

When the necessary conditions (a)–(c) are met, it is probable that a token should be attributed an evidential function. Analytical issues may arise because of the overlap between the category of information source and further functional domains, in particular with epistemic modality. In the case of the two verbs analyzed here, which almost always refer fairly clearly to a source—often linguistically expressed as a complement—the three necessary conditions (a)–(c) practically amount to necessary and sufficient conditions for evidential meaning. Their verification in specific tokens is complicated by a series of problems, though, which I will briefly discuss in view of the corpus analysis that will be presented in Sect. 4.5.

A difficulty specifically related to lexical verbs is that the syntactic structures in the verb's scope often are not main clauses. In Romance languages, as in English, *p* is expressed by a main clause when the candidate evidential verb is used parenthetically or as a raising verb; in all other cases, the constituents that correspond to *p* have a different syntactic status, from complement clauses (subject or object) to indirect interrogative clauses to infinitive constructions and, finally, noun phrases and predicative nouns/adjectives (cf. example (1) above). Depending on the syntactic category of such constituents, both their status as third-order entities (criterion a) and the question if they are at least weakly asserted (criterion b) may raise doubts.

A second problem is that finite verbs situate processes and embedded propositions in various types of possible worlds. If a speaker chooses to use a potentially evidential verb in an *irrealis* or *potentialis* conditional construction, in a remote future tense or in a past tense with a primarily narrative function and reference point in the past, the deictic condition will not be met. This is the case for example in the passages from Manzoni and Monti cited in the preceding section. Both the *Trapassato prossimo* (Past perfect) in example (2) and the *Passato remoto* (Aorist) in example (1) place the temporal reference point in the past, indicating that the denoted perceptual and inferential processes are those of a subject of consciousness in the past, without direct implications for the speaker's own mode of knowing in the moment of speech. Verbs used with present reference and resultative past reference (events in the past that have currently relevant consequences) are more likely to correspond to the deictic criterion. However, due to the polyfunctionality of tenses, additional contextual factors may have to be taken into account to determine whether or not the speaker employs a given token to evoke a process that is ongoing or has currently relevant consequences.

Further difficulties arise that are not specifically related to lexical verbs, but mirror those discussed in typological research about grammaticalized evidential markers. In particular, the question if the speaker actually expresses his or her own point of view—

eventually within a broader intersubjective perspective—or if, on the contrary, the experiencer role is entirely attributed to someone else is not always straightforward to answer. The experiencer role is often left implicit, leaving room for interpretation.

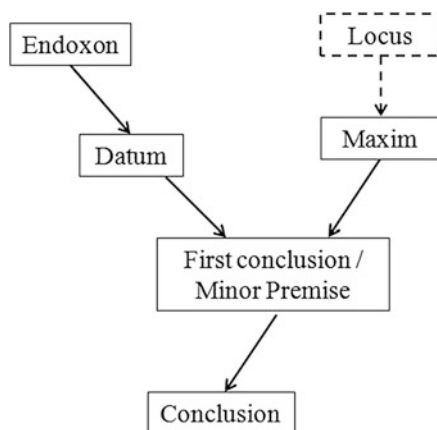
4.2.4 Information Source and Argumentation

Following van Eemeren et al. (1996: 5), I consider argumentation to be “a verbal and social activity aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge”.

In the present paper, I assume that the “constellation[s] of propositions” justifying standpoints (or conclusions) conform to the inferential configurations postulated by the Argumentum Model of Topics (AMT, cf. Rigotti and Morasso 2010; Rocci 2017). In preceding research, this model proved to be a useful heuristic tool, allowing to reconstruct implicit premises in texts and to categorize argument-conclusion relations in terms of underlying argument schemes. The model assumes that inferential configurations consist of procedural and material premises combined in a double syllogism or Y-structure (Fig. 4.1).

Procedural premises, or maxims, define the argument scheme chosen by the speaker. According to AMT, they are based on *loci* (*topoi*) which are subdomains of ontologies shared by the discourse community such as, to name a few, causality, human action, the relation between a whole and its parts or logical operations. Material premises, on the other hand, concern at least one *datum*—a specific manifest fact—and one or more *endoxa*; the latter correspond to knowledge and values that are shared by the addressed discourse community and are relevant to categorize

Fig. 4.1 Y-structure of arguments according to the AMT model



aspects of the *datum* in more general terms. The material premises are used to derive a first conclusion that is interpretable in terms of the chosen *locus* and maxim. In the procedural part of the reasoning, this first conclusion functions as a minor premise, to which the maxim is applied to derive the final conclusion, or standpoint. At the cognitive level, the Y-structure should be considered a frame (cf. Footnote 2) that organizes the argumentative experience of speakers, shapes the production of arguments and can be expected to be activated, in discourse comprehension, when a sufficient number of corresponding elements—a premise-conclusion set or various types of argumentative indicators—are made explicit in the discourse.

Argumentation establishes relations between propositions and between discourse moves, whereas evidentiality is essentially deictic, meaning that it links propositions to aspects of extralinguistic context, more precisely to processes of acquiring knowledge that precede the moment of speech and/or temporally coincide with it. Even if evidentials legitimize assertive speech acts (by signaling the fulfillment of a preparatory condition) or may even “justify” them (by signaling that the speaker possesses reliable evidence), they not necessarily do so by making specific premises available to addressees. Often, evidential marking hints at the existence of evidence without displaying paths of inference at the surface of the text in the form of arguments; it therefore constitutes a possible alternative to argumentation. However, when combined with argumentative text structures, evidential markers as well as polyfunctional markers that have (among others) evidential functions contribute to these structures in specific ways. As far as evidential tokens of *rivelare* and *emergere* are concerned, I will illustrate their contribution to argumentative discourse at the level of epistemic stance, as a local rhetorical alternative to argumentation, and as semantic frames with scope over propositions that influence the interpretation of intra- and intersentential argumentative relations.

4.3 Data and Methods

The present analysis draws on an Italian corpus of written texts belonging to different argumentative genres: newspaper opinion articles (print and online), reviews (print and online), and posts published in comment spaces of articles and reviews (cf. Table 4.1).^{17,18}

All tokens of *emergere* and *rivelare* have been retrieved in the corpus and annotated manually by the author as to type of reading, syntactic features and

¹⁷The texts have been collected within the Swiss National Foundation project n. 141350 “From perception to inference. Evidential, argumentative and textual aspects of perception predicates in Italian”, USI Università della Svizzera italiana, 2012–2015 (direction: Johanna Miecznikowski and Andrea Rocci). I would like to thank Elena Musi, Martina Cameroni, Mariachiara Pasinetti and Francesca Saltamacchia for having contributed to data gathering.

¹⁸Online reviews and contributions to comment spaces of online reviews have been analyzed as discourse genres in a series of papers, especially under evidential aspects (Miecznikowski 2016; Miecznikowski and Musi 2017) and under the aspect of argumentation (Miecznikowski 2015a).

Table 4.1 Composition of the corpus

Genres and sources	Texts	Words
Reviews of books, movies, music, theater, consumer electronics and restaurants from <i>La Stampa</i> (1995–2011), <i>Italia</i> (1920–2010), www.digital.it (2011–2012), www.fullsong.it (2011–2012), www.mymovies.it (2011–2012), www.mostrainmostra.it (2011–2012), www.passione-gourmet.it (2011–2012)	3274	1,027,822
Opinion articles from <i>La Stampa</i> (2011–2012) and <i>La Repubblica</i> online (2012)	1053	582,246
Posts to online comment spaces of reviews included in the corpus reviews	975	67,404
Posts to online comment spaces of opinion articles included in the corpus	49,043	605,496
Total	54,345	2,282,968

deictic features. Among the tokens that on these grounds can be attributed a possible evidential function, typical instances have been subject to more detailed qualitative analysis to determine their contribution to argumentative discourse.

4.4 Basic Meanings of *Rivelare* and *Emergere* in the Corpus

4.4.1 *Meanings of Rivelare in the Corpus*

Rivelare occurs in three semantically and, in part, syntactically distinct constructions in the corpus, which all involve a proposition or partly determined proposition Y that the speaker (S) believes to be true, with rare exceptions. They differ with regard to the presence and roles of further participants in the event:

- Verb of speech. An agent X intentionally communicates a proposition Y to a beneficiary Z.
- Transitive non agentive. A discourse or fact X causes an experiencer Z to know a proposition Y.
- Reflexive. An experiencer Z gets to know a proposition Y thanks to some X.

Examples (4) and (5) illustrate the use of *rivelare* as a verb of speech. This meaning is underlined, respectively, by the combination with the verb *sentire* ‘to hear’ (example (4): “la gente s’è sentita rivelare”, lit. ‘people heard tell’) and by a stretch of direct reported discourse in quotation marks (example (5)). The propositional argument governed by the verb is encoded by a complement clause introduced by *che* ‘that’ in example (4), whereas in example (5) it takes the form of an infinitive clause introduced by *di*, a control construction that is preferred to *che*-clauses in Italian when the subject of an embedded clause is coreferent with that of its matrix clause.

- (4) *Prima [la gente]_Z s'è sentita rivelare [che la moglie di Milosevic, Mirjana Markovic, era una sociologa]_Y, poi ha saputo che è fondatrice del partito della Sinistra jugoslava unita e che tiene una fortunatissima rubrica di corrispondenza con i lettori d'un settimanale.*

First, [people]_Z were informed [that Milosevic's wife, Mirjana Markovic, was a sociologist]_Y, then it came out that she is a founder of the United Yugoslavian Left party and conducts a successful column of correspondence with the readers of a weekly magazine. (Opinion article, *La Stampa*, 8.4.1999)

- (5) *Quanto al neo segretario della Cgil, Susanna Camusso, [Marchionne]_X rivela [di averle fatto "i complimenti per la nomina"]_Y.*

As to the new secretary of CGIL [a trade union], Susanna Camusso, [Marchionne]_X communicates [that he has "congratulated her on her nomination"]_Y. (Untagged article, *La Stampa*, 6.11.2010)

The following two examples show the transitive non agentive use of *rivelare*. The verb's first argument X, in subject position, corresponds to a discourse in example (6) and to a fact in example (7). The propositional argument is expressed by a *che*-clause in example (6). In example (7), it is encoded by a subordinate clause introduced by the quantifier *quanto* 'how much'. Like in exclamative contexts, *quanto* in this example indicates a large quantity, which results in a full semantic proposition ('people are still very much interested in and ignorant about the Gospel'). In both examples, the experiencer Z is not made explicit.

- (6) *Venticinque anni di ricerca dimostrano, secondo Shapiro, un profondo mutamento nell'opinione pubblica americana, sempre più orientata verso una polarizzazione politica e quindi verso posizioni più estreme. I repubblicani non hanno il monopolio della follia: [un sondaggio del 2006]_X ha rivelato [che circa metà dei democratici era convinta che il presidente George Bush aveva pianificato gli attacchi del 11 Settembre o sapeva degli attacchi in anticipo e nulla fece per impedirli]_Y.*

25 years of research show, according to Shapiro, a profound change in the opinion of the American public, which is politically more and more polarized and oriented towards extreme positions. The republicans don't have the monopoly of madness: [a 2006 survey]_X revealed [that about half of democrats are convinced that president George Bush planned the 9/11 attacks or knew about the attacks in advance and did not take action to impede them]_Y. (Opinion article, *La Repubblica*, 29.8.2010)

- (7) *[Lo straordinario successo del "Codice da Vinci" di Dan Brown]_X rivela [quanto interesse e quanta ignoranza circondino ancora il messaggio evangelico]_Y.*

[The extraordinary success of "The da Vinci Code" by Dan Brown]_X reveals [how much people are still interested in and ignorant about the gospel]_Y. (Opinion article, *La Stampa*, 9.4.2005)

Table 4.2 The three main meanings of *rivelare* in the corpus

	Agentive	Transitive non agentive	Reflexive	Total
Reviews	41	181	175	397
Opinion articles	24	30	34	88
Readers' posts	23	5	16	44
Total	88	216	225	529

The last example of this series shows the reflexive use of *rivelare*. The verb is combined with a subject noun phrase (“le società aperte” ‘the open societies’) and a predicative adjective phrase (“al lungo andare molto più forti” ‘much stronger in the long run’). Semantically, the two phrases are best interpreted as forming a proposition in the verb’s scope, analogously to certain constructions of Italian *sembrare* ‘to seem’ with an adjectival or nominal predicate (cf. Musi 2015). Neither the experiencer Z nor the elements X that reveal Y to Z are made explicit:

- (8) [*Le società aperte*]_{Y-subject} *si sono rivelate* [*al lungo andare molto più forti*]_{Y-predicate} [...].
 [The open societies]_{Y-subject} turned out [much stronger in the long run]_{Y-predicate} [...]. (Opinion article, La Repubblica, 17.9.2010)

Rivelare occurs 529 times in the examined corpus and, as shown in Table 4.2, its three uses are unevenly distributed across text genres. The proportion of agentive uses as a verb of speech is higher in opinion articles and readers’ posts than in reviews, probably due to subject matter: in news and opinion articles the reference to specific individuals and their discourses, either as protagonists of news stories or as witnesses and experts, is more central than in reviews.

4.4.2 Meanings of *Emergere* in the Corpus

The meanings of *emergere* attested in the corpus can be assigned to three types, depending on the process denoted and on the ontological category of participants involved in the process:

- Motion. Y moves out of X; both Y and X are first order entities, X is typically some sort of mass and the movement is typically directed upward.
- To come into being. A first order entity Y comes into being.
- To occur to a perceiver and/or conceptualizer Z. A representation or proposition Y takes shape in the perceptual field or in the mind of Z thanks to some interaction between Z and a context X.

The perception/conception meaning is the only meaning in which *emergere* can take a proposition in its scope. As anticipated in Sect. 4.2.1, it is metonymically related to the motion meaning (what “comes out” becomes available to the senses);

additionally, it appears to be metaphorically related to the second meaning, since a representation or idea comes into being in the experiencer's mind analogously to the formation of some new entity in the outside world.

Example (9) illustrates the (upwards) motion meaning, activated in particular by the combination with *palude* 'swamp', the mass out of which Y might move. Both the verb and its source complement "*dalla palude italiana*" ('out of the Italian swamp') are however, in this example, metaphorically transferred to the domain of socio-political advancement.

- (9) *Ma allora cerchiamo almeno di riformare la Costituzione, nella speranza che un sistema francamente e coerentemente maggioritario faccia emergere [dalla palude italiana]_X [uomini migliori]_Y.*

But let's at least reform the Constitution, hoping that a frankly and coherently majoritarian system will make [better men]_Y emerge [from the Italian swamp]_X. (Opinion article, *La Stampa*, 9.4.1995)

In example (10) we find the 'to come into being' meaning. It is typical, in this example, that no complement X is present.

- (10) *Quello che vediamo con l'emergere di [una certa stampa super-partigiana]_Y (quella berlusconiana in Italia e quella di Fox News negli USA) è una stampa totalmente al servizio di una causa politica [...].*

We see [a certain super-partisan press]_Y emerge (Berlusconi's in Italy, Fox News in the USA), which is entirely at the service of a political cause [...]. (Opinion article, *La Repubblica*, 17.8.2010)

The examples (11) to (13) show the perception/conception meaning; also examples (2) and (1) discussed in Sect. 4.2.1 could be ranged in this category.

- (11) *[Nei mesi che hanno preceduto questo cinquantenario]_{X2}, [nel dibattito storiografico, culturale e pubblico]_{X1}, è emersa [un'immagine della Resistenza carica di contraddizioni]_Y [...].*

[In the months preceding this 50th anniversary]_{X2}, [an image of the Resistance full of contradictions]_Y emerged [in the historical, cultural and public debate]_{X1} [...]. (Opinion article, *La Stampa*, 26.4.1995)

In example (11), Y is, at first glance, a visual representation (*immagine* 'image') that takes shape within a spatio-temporal context X₁ and X₂, referred to by PPs introduced by *in* ('in'). Yet, since X₁ is a discourse (*dibattito* 'debate') and the journalist attributes a property to the "image" that is typical of discourses (the presence of contradictions), it should be concluded that the emerging Y is rather, metaphorically, a set of propositions than, literally, an image. The subject noun phrase Y could be rephrased roughly as follows: "what we know about the Resistance is full of contradictions".

Example (12) shows *emergere* within a scenario of criminal investigation, like the Manzoni example discussed earlier. In this case, it is the abstract nature of “international relations” (p1) and “contacts with other organizations” (p2) that force an interpretation of the two subject noun phrases as propositions (third order entities) and not states of affairs (second order entities). It is difficult, indeed, to think of the two denoted entities as appearing before the eyes of an observer. It seems more plausible to infer a proposition of existence, or rather, of non-existence, in this case, which could be rephrased as follows: it has emerged that [there were no international relations]_{p1}/[there were no contacts with other organizations]_{p2}.

- (12) *Ma a tuttora, per chi sta conducendo le indagini [non]_{neg-p1} sono emerse [relazioni internazionali]_{p1}: “[Non]_{neg-p2} sono emersi [contatti con altre organizzazioni]_{p2}. Game e i suoi due complici, le cui posizioni vanno meglio interpretate, non facevano parte di una cellula eterodiretta”.*

But until now, in the view of the chief of investigation, no international relations have emerged: “No contacts with other organizations have emerged. Game and his two accomplices, whose positions remains to be understood better, were not part of a cell controlled from the outside. (Background article, *La Stampa*, 7.11.2009)

Even more clear cases of propositional scope are those in which Y is encoded by a *che*-clause, such as example (13):

- (13) *[title:] [Dall’inchiesta britannica sui pacchi-bomba]X emerge [che la soffiata è venuta da un pentito di Al Qaeda]Y.*

[title:] [From the British investigation into the parcel bombs]_X it emerges [that the hint came from an Ex-Al Qaeda witness]_Y. (News article, *La Stampa*, 2.11.2010)

Emergere occurs 391 times in the corpus. The perception/conception meaning clearly prevails over the other meanings in all subparts of the corpus (cf. Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 The main meanings of *emergere* in the corpus

	To move out/up	To come into being	To occur to a perceiver/ conceptualizer	Total
Reviews	22	37	233	292
Opinion articles	7	6	35	48
Readers’ posts	7	8	36	51
Total	36	51	304	391

4.5 Evidential Uses

4.5.1 Evidential Uses of Rivelare

Since all three meanings of *rivelare* that occur in the corpus have propositional scope, all of them can be expected to encode evidential configurations. In order to get an idea of the frequency of evidential uses and of possible preferences depending on the verb’s meaning, *rivelare* tokens have been categorized as either evidential or non evidential, according to the criteria explained in Sect. 4.2.3, in the subcorpus of opinion articles. As shown in Table 4.4, in all three meanings evidential uses prevail over, most clearly so in the transitive non agentive meaning.

All evidential uses are characterized by a clear tendency towards intersubjectivity. The experiencer Z is mostly left implicit and sometimes encoded by a first person plural pronoun; first person singular pronouns, which exclude the speaker’s sharing the experience with the interlocutor or a wider community, appear to be extremely rare. A second recurrent feature, which is epistemic rather than evidential, is the speaker’s high degree of certainty about p. Finally, *rivelare* strongly presupposes an event of knowledge acquisition involving specific pieces of evidence, often with a mirative effect of surprise. The verb is, in contrast, per se vague as to the type of evidence: depending on its meaning and complements, the specific piece of evidence can be a speech event, a text, a fact from which to infer p, or a perceptual experience.

Evidential uses of *rivelare* as a verb of speech (agentive meaning) signal hearsay information. Present relevance is expressed by the Present tense (see example (5)) or by the *Passato prossimo*, as illustrated by the following example:

- (14) *La soffiata che ha messo in allarme i servizi di sicurezza degli aeroporti, ha rivelato l’intelligence britannica, è arrivata da un pentito di Al Qaeda, Jaber al-Faifi [...].*

As the British intelligence has revealed, the hint that alarmed the airport security services was given by a former Al Qaeda member, Jaber al-Faifi [...]. (Background article, *La Stampa*, 2.11.2010)

Evidential uses of *rivelare*’s transitive non agentive meaning tend to signal hearsay information when the verb’s X argument names a discourse (see example (6)). Inference is not completely excluded, however, and the decision about which type of indirect evidence prevails ultimately depends on context, especially on how probable it is that p figures textually in the discourse in question and/or faithfully represents the

Table 4.4 Evidential and non evidential uses of *rivelare* in the subcorpus of newspaper articles

	Evidential	Non evidential	Total
Agentive	14	11	25
Transitive non agentive	20	9	29
Reflexive	21	13	34
Total	55	33	88

intended content of that discourse (cf. also the discussion of example (6) in Sect. 4.6.3 below). When the X argument is a fact rather than a discourse, the type of information source is always inference. The X argument corresponds to a (non intentional) cause that stimulates a process of reasoning in the speaker (see example (7)).

Reflexive uses, finally, mostly refer to inference, but are compatible also with hearsay or direct perception. The latter case is illustrated by the following example taken from a Theater review. The proposition that the tangles of Jugendstil branches are really petrified corpses is based on the speaker's direct experience of the reviewed play. That experience is presented as timeless and repeatable by any spectator, favoring an intersubjective interpretation:

- (15) *La scenografia di Enrico Job è infatti lussuosa ancorché grondante simboli: una Selva Nera con grovigli di stilizzati rami Jugendstil che si rivelano in realtà composti da cadaveri pietrificati, e in mezzo una bianca piattaforma basculante, col seggio della Madre sopra un piatto-quadrante di orologio dominato da un altro grande orologio a pendolo in perenne oscillazione ma senza lancetta delle ore.*

Enrico Job's stage setting is indeed luxurious and at the same time imbued with symbols: a Black Forest with tangles of stylized Jugendstil branches that turn out to really be petrified corpses, and in the middle a white swinging platform, with the Mother's chair placed above a clock face and beneath another large clock, equipped with a constantly oscillating pendulum while lacking an hour hand. (Theater review, *La Stampa*, 1.3.2004)

4.5.2 Evidential Uses of *Emergere*

Emergere can have propositional scope only in its perception/conception meaning. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of evidential and non evidential tokens of this reading of *emergere* in the corpus, all subcorpora included. Evidential uses prevail in reviews and opinion articles, but not in readers' posts.

Evidential configurations with *emergere* (meaning 'to occur to a perceiver/conceiver') are intersubjective: the speaker's perspective dissolves in that of a non specified impersonal experiencer. The speaker's certainty about p is generally high.

Table 4.5 Evidential and non evidential tokens of *emergere* in the entire corpus (meaning: 'to occur to a perceiver/conceptualizer')

	Evidential	Non evidential	Total
Reviews	148	85	233
Opinion articles	21	14	35
Readers' posts	12	24	36
Total	181	123	304

The information source is inference, even in the frequent cases in which the verb's contextual argument X corresponds to a discourse. In example (11), for example, the author presents the synthesis of a debate, which obviously cannot be assumed to have been formulated in this form by any of the participants in the debate, but results from an interpretation, in this case an interpretation by an impersonal observer that includes the speaker. In examples (12) and (13), the author draws conclusions from police investigations, presumably taking into consideration sets of facts collected by the investigators.

Besides its clearly inferential function in evidential uses, a characteristic feature that distinguishes *emergere* from *rivelare* is that the experience of acquiring knowledge necessarily includes the speaker's confrontation with sets of facts or propositions rather than with a single specific fact or communicative act. A possible explanation for this preference is to interpret it as a reminiscence of the typical mass argument X in the verb's motion meaning, which is expressed by syntactically analogous PP complements introduced by the prepositions in ('in') and da ('from').

4.6 Argumentative Functions

4.6.1 Positive Epistemic Stance and Protagonist's Moves

As mentioned in the previous section, evidential configurations encoded by *rivelare* and *emergere* are usually characterized by positive epistemic stance, i.e. the speaker's firm belief that p is true. In the corpus, this is confirmed by their combination with other markers of positive epistemic stance:

- When p is expressed by a finite clause [embedded in a *rivelare/emergere* matrix clause, see example (6), or syntactically independent from the *rivelare/emergere* clause, see example (14)], the indicative is the mood of choice. In finite p-clauses, we find neither the conditional nor the subjunctive mood, which both, for different reasons, would have attenuating effects on the epistemic level.¹⁹

¹⁹The Italian conditional mood can (as in other Romance languages) be used in main clauses and subordinate clauses as a marker of hearsay information and reported speech and, as an explicit marker of speaker distancing, licenses the implicature of epistemic uncertainty. It does not occur in p-clauses in any of the numerous cases in which *emergere* and *rivelare* are combined with reference to Other's discourse, not even when *rivelare* is employed as an agentive verb of speech. A plausible explanation is that its distancing and attenuating effect clashes with the strong degree of speaker endorsement that characterizes the verbs' evidential uses. As to the subjunctive mood, in Italian it can indicate non assertiveness, dependence from the point of view of a specific conceptualizer/subject of consciousness and *irrealis*. Its use in subordinate clauses introduced by *che* is required when the clause depends on certain conjunctions or verbs of thinking or feeling, among which the modal-evidential verb *sembrare* 'to seem'. *Emergere* and *rivelare*, instead, do not seem to pattern with verbs of thinking, but rather with perception verbs and verbs of saying, two classes of verbs that do not require the subjunctive mood.

- The propositions expressing *p* usually do not contain adverbs or other expressions of epistemic uncertainty. It may be significant that *rivelare*, at the contrary, is combined four times with the booster *in realtà*, which underlines the truth of the proposition in question in contrast with an alternative view of the facts emerging from the preceding context. Example (15), discussed in Sect. 4.5.1, illustrates this case.
- When *p* is encoded by a noun phrase, authors often underline certainty by choosing the definite article. The definite article triggers the existential presupposition that the state of affairs that is the object of the inferred proposition corresponds to a segment of reality independently of its being recognized or not by an observer.

Consider, at this regard, the following example, in which *rivelare* introduces two ideas, namely that Alessandro Manzoni, when he wrote his tragedy *Il conte di Carmagnola*, had read a great number and range of dramatic texts (*p*₁) and that certain sources exist that have not been noticed in the literature so far (*p*₂):

- (16) *In calce al testo critico [...] il lettore trova l'ausilio di un commento ricchissimo sul piano della "spiegazione" e dell'interpretazione [...] e prezioso, soprattutto, nel segnalare e comporre la fitta trama di echi puntuali che, da Shakespeare alla tragedia europea contemporanea, specialmente francese, rivelano sia [l'ampiezza delle letture drammaturgiche manzoniane [...]]_{p1} sia [la presenza di "fonti" non ancora evidenziate nella tormentata gestazione del Carmagnola]_{p2}.*

At the end of the text [...] the reader finds further support in a comment that is very rich on the level of "explanation" and interpretation [...] and is precious, above all, because it signals and composes the tight net of inter-textual references which, from Shakespeare to the contemporary European (especially French) tragedy, reveal both [the broadness of Manzoni's drama readings [...]]_{p1} and [the presence of "sources" in the complicated genesis of the Carmagnola that have not been signaled up to now]_{p2}. (Book review, *Italica*, spring 2006)

Propositions *p*₁ and *p*₂, inferred from the observation of precise correspondences between Manzoni's tragedy and preceding texts, are expressed by definite noun phrases. This choice creates an effect of realism that reinforces the author's certainty about the results of his inference. Similar examples of definite noun phrases can be found in examples (18) and (19) (cf. Sect. 4.6.4 below).

In argumentative discourse, the modal properties of evidential constructions with *emergere* and *rivelare* make the two verbs suitable to express the protagonist's line of argumentation. Indeed, a screening of the retrieved utterances confirms that when the verbs are placed in argumentative moves, these support the protagonist's claims or deny the antagonist's claims [cf. negated *emergere* in example (12)], whereas they are not found in concessive moves or presentations of the antagonist's claims.

Within this general frame, the two verbs contribute to argumentative discourse structures also in virtue of their properly evidential functions. In some cases, evidential marking locally substitutes argumentation (Sect. 4.6.2). More often, the

lexical categorization of an information source for a proposition *p* adds up to arguments or fragments of arguments that are displayed in the immediate co-text, such as to complete and specify the set of premises from which *p* can be inferred. I will first discuss micro-argumentation within sentences, in which central complements of the evidential verb—mostly noun phrases and prepositional phrases—encode a minor premise or fragment of a minor premise (Sect. 4.6.3); I will then move on to intersentential argument-conclusion relations (Sect. 4.6.4).

4.6.2 *Source Categorization Without Any Explicitation of Premises*

Evidentiality offers speakers the possibility to vaguely allude to the existence of supporting evidence without giving any premise the status of a supporting argument. Such a use is possible in the case of reflexive *rivelarsi* and of *emergere* if the verb is not combined with any complement specifying the circumstances of the experience of knowledge acquisition. The rare occurrences of *rivelarsi* and *emergere* in the corpus that are of this type suggest that this use, which amounts to avoid argumentation, occurs in two cases:

- accessibility of premises: (potential) premises can easily be inferred from the common ground;
- deliberate vagueness, in cases in which the precise form of the inferential path is irrelevant or cannot be communicated for some other reason.

A good example of highly accessible premises is direct evidence. If a speaker claims *p* and signals direct evidence as a source, the hearer must infer that the speaker participated in some way—actively and/or as an observer—in the event denoted by *p*. The speaker could refer explicitly to his or her participation in the event, thus constructing an argument from testimony, but explicit argumentation risks to be little informative and might be rhetorically ineffective. In reviews of concerts, spectacles, exhibitions, restaurants or consumer goods, which make up part of the corpus examined here, reviewers often rely on markers of direct evidentiality, rhetorical devices such as vivid description and text genre norms to indirectly portray themselves as credible witnesses (cf. Mieznikowski 2016; Mieznikowski and Musi 2017). In example (15), for example, *rivelarsi* signals direct evidence and is combined with a detailed description of the reviewed play's stage design. No explicit reference is made to the fact that the reviewer has actually seen the play, neither in the immediate co-text nor in the remaining text; the author's status as a direct witness appears to be a matter of ethos,²⁰ not of logos.

²⁰In a speech act theoretical perspective, the possession of direct knowledge about the reviewed object can in fact be considered a speaker-related felicity condition of reviewing (cf. Mieznikowski 2016; Mieznikowski and Musi 2017).

This does not mean that the reviewer does not argue at all: simply, argumentation is reserved to back up more central, and possibly more controversial, claims. The cited description, for example, supports a claim made before the colon, namely that the play's stage design is both luxurious and imbued with symbols, which in turn supports ("infatti" 'indeed') a more general claim made in the preceding context about the responsible director's stylistic choices.

As to vagueness, an example in point is the direct speech contained in example (12). The cited officer concludes from a set of facts that Game and his accomplices did not entertain any relations with international terrorist groups. Even if, depending on his or her knowledge about British Intelligence investigations, the reader can make guesses about the class of facts that could have been taken into consideration, the officer's path of inference remains a black box and is not shared with the reader. Reasons of secrecy (from the officer's point of view) or brevity (from the journalist's point of view) seem to have higher weight than the burden to prove *p* to the reader.

4.6.3 *Verb Complementation*

4.6.3.1 **Complements Referring to Discourses and Arguments of Authority**

Evidential constructions with *emergere* and *rivelare* differ from more grammaticalized markers (such as evidential suffixes) or more pragmaticalized markers (such as evidential sentence adverbs or parenthetical verbs) among other things by the fact that the verb behaves like a full verb, i.e. it governs complements and adverbials and constrains the interpretation of the semantic relations between them. Constituents that do not encode *p*, especially the subject NP of transitive *rivelare* and prepositional phrases in the case of *emergere*, contribute to the overall evidential meaning of these constructions by specifying certain parts of the experience of knowledge acquisition from which *p* results. When *p* is interpreted as a claim, these constituents become a first step towards argumentation: within the semantic frame set by the verb, their referents are easily interpretable as key elements of minor premises and of the corresponding argument schemes.²¹

As we have seen earlier (in Sects. 4.4 and 4.5), one very frequent type of complements co-occurring with *rivelare* and *emergere* are complements referring to Other's discourse. In accordance with the high degree of speaker endorsement conveyed by the verbs (cf. Sect. 4.6.1), reference to Other's discourse usually is part of an argument based on the locus of authority.

²¹Cf. also Miecznikowski (2011), where the subject NPs of inferential constructions with the possibility modal *potrebbe* 'could' + causal verb (e.g. *determinare* 'to determine'), are analyzed as fragments of minor premises in causal arguments.

Relevant tokens of *rivelare* are example (14) (“[p], ha rivelato l’intelligence britannica” ‘[p], as the British intelligence revealed’) and example (6) (“un sondaggio del 2006 ha rivelato [che p]” ‘a 2006 survey revealed [that p]’). Agentive *rivelare* in example (14) entails that p has been intentionally communicated by the British intelligence. Also the transitive use in example (6), considering the content and rather detailed formulation of p, suggests that p is a standpoint presented in the survey. Within the AMT model adopted here (cf. Sect. 4.2.4), the attribution of p to the British Intelligence and to the authors of the survey, respectively, constitute the *data* of the reasoning process. On the basis of common shared knowledge (*endoxa*), then, the mentioned discourses can be categorized as credible sources for the type of content expressed in p; in particular, the British intelligence services are in a better position than others to possess knowledge about parcel bombs and the reader will consider surveys reliable sources about people’s opinions in virtue of their methodological design. These categorizations transform the textually given *data* in minor premises of an argument from expert opinion, a specific type of argument from authority.

Complements of *emergere* referring to discourses are mainly introduced by the prepositions *in* (‘in’) and *da* (‘from’) and specify the circumstances X in which p takes shape in the mind of the experiencer Z (cf. 4.4.1). Consider example (11) (“nel dibattito storiografico [...] è emersa [p]” ‘[p] emerged in the historical, cultural and public debate’). *Emergere* evokes the inner complexity of discourses as contexts of p and foregrounds the speaker’s inferencing process more than *rivelare* does. The discourses speakers refer to are therefore often intended not just to communicate p, but also—and in some cases first and foremost—to be data sources from which to infer p. When the discourses in question can be categorized as reliable data sources on the basis of shared endoxical knowledge, this results in arguments from authority backing up the premises from which the speaker infers p. Rather than “arguments from expert opinion”, we could call these “arguments from expert data”. The investigation mentioned in example (13) and the debate between experts mentioned in example (11) qualify as such expert data sources with regard to p’s content. The resulting arguments from authority partly compensate the fact that the inferencing process itself is (like in example (12) discussed above) a black box, at least locally (vagueness may be reduced in the preceding or following co-text, cf. Sect. 4.4.1).

This kind of argument is made quite explicit by the rhetorical question in the following example:

- (17) *Non ci sarà qualcosa che non va? Prima di tutto, a parte la mancanza di ammortizzatori sociali adeguati [...], non saranno da tener in conto i dati presentati per esempio da Luciano Gallino in un recente libretto su I costi umani della flessibilità, dai quali emerge che il nesso tra licenziamenti più facili e creazione di nuovi posti di lavoro non è affatto provato?*

Mightn’t something be wrong? First of all, besides the lack of adequate social measures, shouldn’t we take into account the data presented for example by Luciano Gallino in a recent book about The human costs of

flexibility, from which it emerges that the link between the facilitation of layoffs and the creation of new jobs is not proven at all? (Opinion article, La Stampa, 20.4.2002)

Even if the sociologist Luciano Gallino probably reached the same conclusion from his data as the journalist does, Gallino is not cited primarily for having expressed this opinion, but for having provided useful reliable data from which to derive it.

4.6.3.2 Complements Referring to Single Facts and Causal Arguments (*Rivelare*)

A second class of arguments that is worth mentioning appears with transitive tokens of *rivelare* when combined with a subject NP referring to a specific fact. The subject NP in these cases directly provides the *datum* of the speaker's reasoning process and, since it does not refer either to a discourse or a speaker, excludes the *locus* of authority as a conceptual frame. Provided that the *datum* is specific enough and a conceptual link can easily be established between the *datum* and the content of *p*, the reader may be able to infer a different *locus* and the major premises needed to warrant the connection between the *datum* and the conclusion *p*.

A particularly frequent *locus* with *rivelare* is causality, often as an argument from observable effects to possible causes. In example (16), for example, the standpoint that Manzoni read a great number and range of dramatic texts can be inferred from the presence of precise textual correspondences between his own tragedy and preceding texts (a *datum* encoded by the subject NP) by reasoning from the effect to the cause (maxim) and taking into account what we know about reading, memory and citation in literary discourse (*endoxa*).

Quite often, causal reasoning is used in the corpus to conclude from actions to inner states and characteristics of the agent (feelings, intentions, character traits, abilities). A causal argument of this kind can be reconstructed in example (7). The eventive NP “lo straordinario successo del Codice da Vinci di Dan Brown” provides the *datum*, if rephrased as a proposition: [Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code has had/is having extraordinary success]_{datum}. The conclusion that “people are still very much interested in and ignorant about the Gospel” can be derived by causal reasoning if one of the *datum*'s entailments is taken into account, namely that “extraordinary success” means, in context, that the book has been bought by many people. Once the implicit agents have been recognized, a frame of human action becomes relevant that links the people's buying the book to the states of mind that might have determined their decision to do so. Adding certain *endoxa*, in particular about the reasons why people generally decide to buy books and about the topics of *The Da Vinci Code* (among others, the Gospel), a conclusion about the people's interests and state of knowledge can then be derived from what is known about their buying behavior.

4.6.3.3 Complements Referring to Sets of Facts (*Emergere*)

When complements of *emergere* denote facts rather than discourses, this semantic choice indicates, like in the examples discussed in the previous section, that no argument from authority is intended. However, differently from *rivelare* complements, *emergere* complements do not primarily indicate causal reasoning. In coherence with the basic semantic properties of the verb, they refer to sets of facts rather than to single specific facts; propositions that “emerge” from such sets of facts can often be derived by arguments from implications, abstractions, generalizations, or argumentation from the parts to the whole.

Consider example (18), taken from an opinion article:

- (18) *Se si solleva lo sguardo dalla congiuntura delle cronache giornalistiche quotidiane, e si guarda al quadro d'insieme, [lo spettacolo sovrastante gli avvenimenti degli ultimi mesi – crisi della maggioranza di governo, eventualità di elezioni anticipate, prospettive di evoluzione della situazione]_X – è desolante. Solo l'insipienza della classe politica, la programmatica malafede di certi media, un'opinione pubblica frastornata, e ormai incapace di discernere, potevano ridurre a una questione fra berlusconismo e antiberlusconismo [l'inattualità delle istituzioni]_{p1}, [l'inconsistenza della cultura politica nazionale]_{p2}, [la fragilità del sistema politico]_{p3} che [ne]_X sono emersi.*

If one raises one's gaze from the daily news and turns it to the overall picture, [the spectacle represented by the events of the last few months – crisis of the government majority, possibility of early elections, future perspectives –]_X is daunting. It is the ignorance of the political establishment, the programmatic malevolence of certain media and a confused public opinion deprived of its discerning capacity that have led to reduce [the outdatedness of institutions]_{p1}, [the inconsistency of our national political culture]_{p2}, [the unsoundness of the political system]_{p3} that have emerged [from it]_X to a mere question of berlusconism and antiberlusconism. (Opinion article, *La Repubblica*, 2.10.2010)

The journalist communicates three propositions through a series of abstract nouns: that in Italy institutions are outdated (p1), the national political culture is inconsistent (p2) and the political system is unsound (p3). A relative clause containing the *passato prossimo* form of *emergere* indicates that p1–p3 have been inferred and continue to be inferable from premises named before, referred to by the anaphoric pronoun *ne*. The pronoun occupies the place of a [da/in NP]_{PP}-complement and, in the cited example, is co-referent with an antecedent X consisting in an enumeration of recent facts that together constitute a “daunting spectacle”. In the sentence they are part of, p1–p3 occupy the subordinate syntactic position of a direct object, but this direct object gains informative prominence thanks to its length, inner complexity, newness and sentence final position (not rendered in the English translation). Within the utterance's argumentative hierarchy, it constitutes an important substandpoint; the premises denoting the facts categorized as “daunting spectacle” acquire therefore the status of arguments backing up this substandpoint.

As to the underlying argument schemes, one of the three conjoined propositions, p1, seems to be based on an argument from the effect (the recent political crisis) to a possible cause (the institutions that frame and shape political action are not adequate, and this in turn is due to a lack of adaptation to a changing surrounding). P2 and p3, on the other hand, should be rather derived by implications (repeated changes and uncertainty imply the absence of stability, i.e. inconsistency) and by argumentation from the parts to the whole: since the government and the to-be-elected parliament are central subparts of the political system, cracks and fractions in these parts suggest the fragility of the entire system.

4.6.4 Intersentential Relations

As example (18) shows, arguments backing up a conclusion p marked by an evidential verb can be placed in the preceding context at a certain distance from p and be referred back to by means of nominal anaphora. The argument-conclusion link is then jointly signaled by an intrasentential syntactic relation (between the verb's complements) and by an intersentential anaphoric link (between complement and antecedent). More implicit types of intersentential linking rely more heavily on semantic information, establishing relations of specification (the evidentially marked conclusion precedes its arguments and vaguely announces certain of their properties) or of summary (the evidentially marked conclusion follows a series of arguments and retrospectively confirms certain of their properties).

The following concluding sentences of a film review illustrate a summarizing use of *emergere*:

- (19) *Scritto da un vero ventenne, "Che ne sarà di noi" è uno di quei film che invitano ad aprire inutili dibattiti: farà tendenza, o no? Rispecchiano la realtà questi ragazzi che si ostinano a rinviare l'appuntamento con la vita adulta e intanto si sfiniscono ballando, fumando spinelli, impasticcandosi e intrecciando rapporti per lo più effimeri? Sono domande plausibili, ma l'attrattiva del fresco romanzo di formazione, convincente nonostante le imperfezioni e le fragilità, è quello di sfuggire alle griglie sociologiche. Nell'intonata regia di Giovanni Veronesi, e grazie a un indovinato cast in cui spiccano il dirompente Muccino e l'ambigua Violante, ad emergere è [l'impetuosa sensibilità di un'età che è dolce attraversare immersi in uno speciale stato di malinconica esaltazione.]p Senza il quale la giovinezza, almeno da Werther in poi, non è degna di chiamarsi tale.*

"What will happen to us", written by a real twenty-year-old, is one of those films that stimulate useless debates: will it set a trend or not? Do these young people, who obstinately delay their appointment with adult life while exhausting themselves by dancing, smoking joints, taking pills and build more or less ephemeral relationships, reflect reality? These are plausible questions, but the appeal of this fresh coming-of-age story, which is

convincing despite some imperfections and weaknesses, consists precisely in its evasion of sociological grids.

In Giovanni Veronesi's well-tuned production, and thanks to a well-chosen cast in which an explosive Muccino and an ambiguous Violante stand out particularly, what emerges is [the boisterous sensibility of an age which it is sweet to experience in a special state of melancholic exaltation.]_p Without which youth, at least from Werther onwards, doesn't deserve that name. (Film review, *La Stampa*, 6.3.2004)

Emergere governs a complex definite NP that can be rephrased as a conjunction of two full propositions: "The age of youth is characterized by boisterous sensibility and it is sweet to experience youth in a special state of melancholic exaltation." Two PP complements of the verb are available within the clause context, the first one introduced by *in* ('in') and referring to the film's direction and the second one introduced by *grazie a* ('thanks to') and referring to the cast. The second one identifies central emotional characteristics of the young protagonists of the film and may suggest a generalizing argument, i.e. that the young have strong emotions, in general ("impetuosa sensibilità" 'boisterous sensibility').

However, the entire content of the two conjoined conclusions can hardly be derived from the information given within the sentence. Especially the idea that it is sweet to experience youth in a state of melancholic exaltation is more plausibly linked to the list of the film characters' behaviors that the reviewer gives in the preceding paragraph. "Malinconica esaltazione" ('melancholic exaltation') is a fairly adequate common denominator of these various behaviors. It could therefore indicate a combined argument from implications (abstraction of a property implicitly present in several actions), combined with a generalization from the film's characters to young people in general. Both argument schemes are compatible with *emergere*'s preferences as an inferential verb, and likewise the fact that what backs up the conclusion marked by the verb is not a single fact, but a set of facts considered as a whole.

When the examined verbs announce or summarize argumentations, what contributes to the organization of argumentative discourse is not a configuration of complements governed by the verb, but primarily the verb's meaning and function as an inferential marker. It presupposes that the speaker has engaged in or is currently engaging in a process of inference leading to conclude *p*. If a similar process is displayed in the near co-text in the form of arguments, this invites the reader to identify these with the verb's source and, as a consequence, to infer a discourse relation between the conclusion *p* in the verb's scope and the textually given arguments.

4.7 Conclusion

The study of dynamic appearance verb constructions not only makes a lexicological contribution within the domain of perception and mental verbs, but aims, above all, at underlining the role of verb-based lexical constructions in the expression of the basic pragmatic categories of information source and argumentative relations.

The annotation of a corpus of Italian written texts shows that motion verb uses of *emergere* (mostly metaphorical) and uses of *rivelare* and *emergere* as verbs of speech, thought and perception in reporting configurations are well represented, but make up less than half of the tokens; the two verbs encode evidential configurations in about 60% of the cases. The detailed discussion of several examples also suggests that each verb imposes specific restrictions upon the speaker's stance and the type of information source. The quantitative results warrant the conclusion that evidential uses of *emergere* and *rivelare* are fairly conventionalized. Their degree of grammaticalization as propositional operators appears to be rather low, on the other hand. They quite regularly govern not only the proposition in their scope, but also further complements, and thus show, in many occurrences, the valence of a full lexical verb. No parenthetical uses are present in the corpus, i.e. they don't fit into the existing paradigm of meta-propositional "reduced parenthetical clauses" in Italian (cf. Schneider 2007). More detailed and systematic syntactic analysis is needed to better assess the status of *emergere* and *rivelare* constructions between lexicon and grammar. Diachronic corpus based research could clarify, moreover, how the frequency of various syntactic constructions, meanings, and functions evolved over time.

As to the verbs' functions in argumentative discourse, the AMT model was applied to reconstruct and categorize the schemes that conceptually link arguments to conclusions in relevant text passages; subsequently, the verbs' meaning and function were related to the reconstructed argumentative structures. Some results confirm recent research about modal and evidential markers in general as argumentative indicators (e.g. Rocci 2008, 2012, 2017). In particular, we observed that the evidential information conveyed by the verbs (presupposition of intersubjectively available evidence, preference for certain argument schemes and pieces of evidence) strengthens the coherence relations between the evidentially marked proposition and other parts of the text. Other considerations, especially about verb complementation and propositional scope, specifically regard lexical verbs. Among other questions, they raise the issue of arguments and conclusions that do not have the form of clauses, but consist in fragments of arguments, nominalizations, nominal predicative structures and the like. These are not easy to analyze, but turn out to be important components of argumentative discourse, at least in the written discourse genres considered here.

On the theoretical level, the analysis sheds light on the relation between the categories of information source and argumentation, which partly overlap conceptually, but differ as to their deictic aspects and as to their communicative and text structuring functions.

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Chapter 5

Tracing the Roots of Defeasible Reasoning Through Argumentative Indicators: A Study of the Italian Verb *Sembra* in Opinion Articles

Elena Musi

Abstract This study addresses appearance verbs as argumentative indicators of defeasible reasoning in opinion articles, taking as a case study the Italian verb *sembrare* ('seem'). Appearance verbs, due to their epistemic-modal and evidential-inferential features point to the presence of premises-conclusion relations. Moreover, their lexical semantics further constrain the types of inferences (argument schemes) which link premises to claims and can be more or less defeasible. The linguistic literature has investigated the relation between inferential evidentiality and epistemic modality, but it has devoted little attention to the links between the structure of the underlying inferences and degrees of defeasibility. Argumentation Theory has widely explored defeasible reasoning without making reference to the linguistic cues expressing the presence and the type of defeasibility at issue. Based on a multilevel analysis of *sembrare*'s occurrences in a corpus of opinion articles, this study (i) shows that appearance verbs work as indicators of defeasible reasoning, and (ii) provides a systematic methodology to trace back the roots of defeasibility in the inferential configuration of arguments. As a theoretical outcome, the analysis reveals that there are no argument schemes logically more defeasible than others. The roots of defeasibility can be traced back only if the whole inferential configuration, strictly tied to the context, is reconstructed.

5.1 Introduction

This study addresses the role of the Italian appearance verb *sembrare* ('seem') as an indicator of defeasible reasoning in a corpus of opinion articles.

Defeasibility constitutes a key concept in the Informal Logic tradition, based on a non-deductive account of reasoning. A prototypical example is that of color judgment (Pollock 1987). The situation in which I utter the proposition "that ball is red"

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because it looks red to me constitutes an instance of defeasible reasoning “in the sense that the premises taken by themselves may justify us in accepting the conclusion, but when additional information is added, that conclusion may no longer be justified” (Pollock 1987: 481).¹ We would not, in fact, commit to the truth of the uttered proposition anymore if we knew that the object is illuminated by red lights. In other words, a piece of reasoning is defeasible if it is subject to defeaters. Defeaters can be of two types: rebutters directly attack the truth of the conclusion; undercutters undermine the inference linking the premises to the conclusion. Premises that fail to support a conclusion when additional information is added, such as perceptual states, are generally called *prima facie* reasons. As remarked by Pollock (1987: 486), in order to mark the defeasibility inherent to perceptual judgments, philosophers have adopted the formula “being appeared to as if” (e.g. “I am appeared to as if there is something red before me”). In doing so, they have implicitly recognized the construction “to be appeared as if” as an indicator of defeasible reasoning.

Verbs of appearance (e.g. *sembrare*, ‘seem’; *apparire*, ‘appear’), which express the existence of an “*écart entre ce qui est le cas et ce qui est apparemment le cas*”² (Col 2006: 6), are lexical means to express the Aristotelian *eikós*, the defeasible, (past participle of *éōika* ‘seem/appear’) defined as “that which generally happens, not however unreservedly, as some define it, but that which is concerned with things that may be other than they are, being so related to that in regard to which it is probable as the universal to the particular” (*Rhetoric* 1357b). Therefore, they constitute good candidates to work as indicators of defeasibility. However, till now argumentation studies have not made explicit reference to the linguistic clues expressing the presence and the type of defeasibility at issue.

Knowledge about argumentative indicators, “words and expressions that refer to any of the moves that are significant to the argumentative process” (Van Eemeren et al. 2007) has proved to be useful for the analyst in the reconstruction of argumentation structure as well as schemes. Epistemic modal verbs have, for instance, been considered in Pragma-Dialectics as indicators of standpoints for their pragmatic function as mitigators. When uttering them “the speaker anticipates the listener’s doubt about the acceptability of his assertive, which means the assertive must be considered a standpoint” (Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 29), taking as a premise the fact that “an assertive may be considered a standpoint if it is clear that the speaker supposes [...] that the assertive is not immediately acceptable to the listener” (Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 29).

¹As stated by the same Pollock (1987: 482), this philosophical definition of defeasible reasoning corresponds to that of non-monotonic reasoning developed in AI (artificial intelligence). In monotonic logic whatever is concluded before adding an information can still be concluded once the information is added. In other words, adding information does not cause the reduction of the set of propositions that can be derived. Otherwise, a reasoning is non-monotonic. Non-monotonic logic turned out to be especially relevant for artificial intelligence to represent the so-called ‘defaults’, rules that can be used provided that they are not invalidated by an exception.

²“A gap between what is the case and what is apparently the case” (our translation).

Recent studies at the semantic-argumentative interface (Rocchi 2012, 2013) have shown that evidentials, linguistic constructions which “show the kind of justification for a factual claim which is available to the person making that claim” (Anderson 1986: 274) instruct the interlocutor about the type of reasons in support of a certain standpoint, fostering the reconstruction of argumentative moves.

Appearance verbs function both as evidential strategies and as modals. Their modal-evidential function is bound to the constructions “which express the speaker’s current attitude towards the state of affairs” (Nuyts 2000: 40), called *m-performative*.³ More specifically, they express indirect evidence of the inferential type (Musi 2017; Musi and Miecznikowski 2015). According to the classical taxonomy proposed by Willett (1988: 55), types of evidence can be direct, when the speaker has direct access to it through his senses, or indirect, when he knows them from hearsay/report or through reasoning (inferential type). As remarked by Bybee et al. (1994: 180) “an indirect evidential, which indicates that the speaker has only indirect knowledge concerning the proposition being asserted, implies that the speaker is not totally committed to the truth of that proposition and thus implies an epistemic value”. In a sentence such as “*Guarda come è pallido. Sembra che Marco non abbia dormito molto stanotte*” (‘Look how pale he is. It seems that Marco did not sleep much last night’), for instance, the speaker was not a witness of the event “Marco did not sleep much”, but he infers it was the case from the fact that Marco is pale. Therefore, he signals through the use of the verb *sembrare* that he is not certain about the truth of his explanation.

In the linguistic literature, the links between inferential evidentiality and epistemic modality have been widely investigated (Van der Auwera and Plungian 1998; Faller 2002; Cornillie 2009) but little attention has been devoted to the links between the structure of the underlying inferences and degrees of defeasibility. In this regard, verbs of appearance constitute a privileged vantage point. On the one hand, due to their modal epistemic value, they introduce a presumption, namely “a proposition that, in suitably favorable circumstances, is accepted as true in the absence of any counter-indications” (Rescher 2006: 26). On the other hand, pointing to a set of premises in support of the truth of the proposition they scope over, they allow to check what premise is responsible for the defeasibility of the reasoning.

In previous corpus-based studies it has been shown that the Italian appearance verbs *sembrare* (‘seem’) and *apparire* (‘appear’) (Musi 2014, 2017), when functioning as evidential modal strategies, play the role of indicators of argumentation schemes since they are compatible only with symptomatic or causal reasoning. On these grounds, the present study aims (i) at showing that appearance verbs work as indicators of premises–standpoints relations linked by defeasible symptomatic and

³As specified by Nuyts (2000: 40–41) his notion of performativity is well-distinguished from that proposed in speech act theory. Both definitions make reference to a phenomenon where something is executed at the moment of utterance. However there is a significant difference in what is performed: in *m-performative* constructions what is performed is not a verbal act, but a mental act of proposition evaluation.

causal reasoning, and (ii) at providing a methodology to trace back the roots of defeasibility underlying these argument schemes. In order to achieve aim (i) a preliminary analysis of the types of standpoints introduced by the verb is carried out.

The study will be structured as follows: Sect. 5.2 will present the sample of analysis (Sect. 5.2.1), the layers of analysis (Sect. 5.2.2), and the framework used for the reconstruction of the inferential configuration of arguments (Sect. 5.2.3), the *Argumentum Model of Topics* (AMT). Section 5.3 reports the results of the corpus study. First, the types of standpoints introduced by *sembrare* in the corpus will be discussed. Second, the analytical advantages offered by the AMT to investigate defeasibility will be exemplified through the reconstruction respectively of a symptomatic and a causal argument scheme.

5.2 Data and Methods of Analysis

5.2.1 Sample of Analysis

The argumentative functions of the verb *sembrare* are investigated in a corpus of editorials and opinion articles taken from the Italian daily newspapers *La Stampa* (203.713 words) and *La Repubblica* (376.639 words).⁴ Editorials and newspaper articles are generally considered the prototypical argumentative journalistic genre since they are aimed at conveying the journalist's reasoned *prise de position* on a certain matter of public interest (Gauthier 2002). Moreover, they offer writers the greatest freedom to express different types of standpoints. They, thus, constitute a privileged viewpoint to unravel the role played by evidential strategies as argumentative devices.

The verb *sembrare* is quite frequent in the corpus data for an overall number of 161 occurrences in the *La Repubblica* opinion articles and of 260 occurrences in *La Stampa*. In Table 5.1 the mode, the tense and the person of the verb in the attested occurrences are summarized.

The far most frequent verb form is *sembra* ('seems'), the third person of the present indicative. As a first step, to obtain a comparable sample of occurrences from both sources, I have randomly selected 80 occurrences of *sembra* respectively from *La Stampa* and from *La Repubblica*. As a second step, I have identified the m-performative constructions to single out the occurrences in which the verb assumes a modal-evidential value. In operational terms the constructions in which *sembra* is m-performative are those in which (i) the scope is on a proposition,

⁴The corpus has been collected by team of the Swiss National Foundation project "From perception to inference. Evidential, argumentative and textual aspects of perception predicates in Italian" (grant n.141350, see <http://www.perc-inferenza.ch>) and directed by Johanna Miecznikowski and Andrea Rocci at USI (Università della Svizzera Italiana).

Table 5.1 *Sembrare's* distribution of occurrences in the corpus of opinion articles

<i>sembrare</i>	<i>La Repubblica</i>	<i>La Stampa</i>	Total
Indicative present			
<i>sembro</i>	4	0	4
<i>sembri</i>	0	1	1
<i>sembra</i>	105	169	274
<i>sembriamo</i>	0	1	1
<i>sembrate</i>	2	0	2
<i>sembrano</i>	19	43	62
Indicative imperfect			
<i>sembrava</i>	16	33	49
<i>sembravano</i>	3	4	7
Present conditional			
<i>sembrerebbe</i>	5	5	10
Indicative future			
<i>sembrerà</i>	2	0	2
<i>sembreranno</i>	1	0	1
Past participle			
<i>sembrato</i>	4	4	8
Total	161	260	421

(ii) the experiencer coincides with or includes the speaker, (iii) the speaker commits himself to the embedded proposition at the moment of utterance (e.g. “*Se si confrontano le posizioni espresse dai partiti politici nelle recenti scadenze elettorali, mi sembra che emerga un dato costante*”, ‘If you compare the positions expressed by political parties in the recent electoral deadlines, it seems to me that a constant trend emerges’). The occurrences which happened to be non m-performative were 16/80 in the *La Stampa* subcorpus and 8/80 in the *La Repubblica* subcorpus. In the constructions in which criterion (i) is not met, *sembra* is used to assert similarity between two referents, on the basis of direct perception of objects or events, as in example (1):

- (1) “*Più che un capitano d’industria, Marchionne sembra Sordi ne I vitelloni di Fellini: uno strafottente che, quando passa vicino agli operai, fa loro il gesto dell’ombrello e urla “Lavoratori, tiè”!*” (opinion article, *La Repubblica*, December 2010).

“More than a captain of industry, Marchionne *looks like* Sordi in Fellini’s *Vitelloni*: one arrogant that, when he passes close to the workers, gives them the finger and shouts ‘workers, fuck you.’”

Cases in which the experiencer does not coincide or include the speaker were not attested in the sample. As to criterion (iii), the constructions which do not comply with them are those in which *sembra* assumes a counterfactual meaning, signaling that the proposition in its scope does not correspond to the reality of facts:

- (2) “*Camminando per le stradine della città vecchia i ‘riad’ sono nascosti, sembra di passeggiare nell’acquerello di un pittore orientalista*” (opinion article, *La Stampa*, April 2011)

“Walking through the narrow streets of the old town the ‘riads’ are hidden, it seems to walk in the water-colour work of art of an orientalist painter.”

In (2), the event during which a person walks inside a painting is ontologically impossible and thus imaginary. The speaker is, therefore, not committed to the truth of the proposition expressing the event, which is used as a metaphorical means to describe the sensations one has while walking through Marrakesh’s riads. The space-time coordinates of the appearance event do not have as a deictic origin the speaker understood in Ducrotian terms as “*locuteur en tant que tel*”⁵ (Ducrot 1984: 199). The experiencer coincides, in fact, with the “*locuteur en tant qu’être du monde*”⁶ (Ducrot 1984: 200): he sort of projects himself into another possible world and observes himself as an external referent. Thus, the role of the speaker as an experiencer is communicatively not relevant.

The counterfactual uses of the verb have a rhetorical function: forcing the readers to mentally create a world in which the imagined events correspond to reality, the journalists makes them associating the feelings arising in the imaginary situations to the described real situation.

The remaining 136 occurrences (64 from *La Stampa* and 72 from *La Repubblica*) constitute the analysed sample used to investigate the argumentative functions of *sembra*. In these occurrences *sembra* works, in fact, as an inferential evidential and usually as an epistemic modal, signaling that speaker is committed (to a certain extent) to the embedded proposition, on the basis of evidence at his disposal:

- (3) “*Ma sembra improbabile che un Giappone risorto, tra un decennio o due, possa diventare un competitore globale da un punto di vista economico o militare, come era stato previsto due decenni fa. [Circa delle dimensioni della California, il Giappone non avrà mai la scala geografica o demografica di Cina o Usa. E il suo potere seduttivo viene vanificato da atteggiamenti e politiche etnocentrici]*_{premises/evidence}”

“But it seems unlikely that a risen Japan, in a decade or two, will become a global competitor from a financial or military point of view, as was predicted two decades ago. [About the size of California, Japan will never have the geographical or demographic scale of China or the USA. And its seductive power is undercut by ethnocentric attitudes and policies]_{sources of information}” (opinion article, *La Stampa*, November 2010)

In example (3) the modal adjective *unlikely* contributes to epistemically qualifying the proposition “that a risen Japan, in a decade or two, will become a global competitor from a financial or military point of view” as uncertain, and thus,

⁵“The speaker as such” (our translation).

⁶“The speaker as a world being” (our translation).

defeasibile. The premises indicated by *sembrare* represent good candidates as roots of this defeasibility. In the next sections we will provide an analytical method to figure out where the asserted defeasibility comes from.

5.2.2 Layers of Analysis

The analysis is based on the observation of the 136 modal-evidential *sembra*’s occurrences in the sample at two different levels. Assuming that the acceptability of standpoints depends on the acceptability of premises, the first level concerns the types of statements introduced by *sembra* following Freeman’s typology (2000), represented in a nutshell in Fig. 5.1.

Freeman’s hierarchical taxonomy is based on the dichotomy between broadly logically determinate statements and broadly logically contingent statements. The former are statements that can be conceived as truths of reason, such as “No physical object can be in two places at the same time” (Freeman 2000: 144). The truth conditions of the latter are not, instead, a priori determined.

Contingent statements are further divided into evaluations as opposed to natural non evaluative statements. Evaluations

characterize something as either good or bad, better or worse, preferable or avoidable; an act as either right or wrong, obligatory, permissible, or forbidden; a person or character as praiseworthy or blameworthy; an action as morally good or morally bad. (Freeman 2000: 146)

In semantic terms, evaluations are propositions which contain a axiological predicate (e.g. “I think this is a good idea”). In turn, natural statements include both interpretations and descriptions. The main underlying distinction between these two types of statements is that interpretations are intensional, since specifying the conditions under which they are true one would make reference to other possible worlds, while descriptions are extensional because framed only on the states of

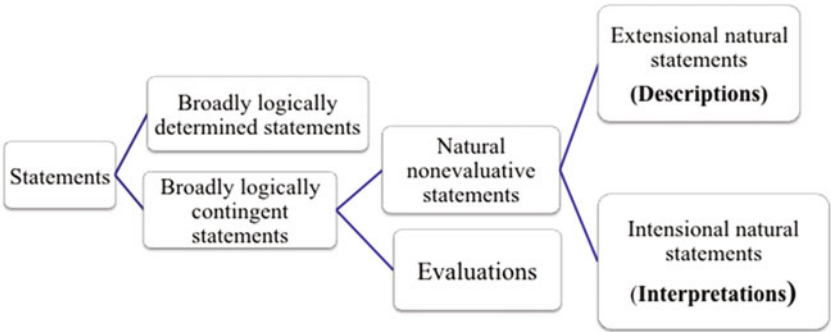


Fig. 5.1 Taxonomy of statements according to Freeman (2000)

affairs constituting the actual world (Freeman 2000: 153). More specifically, interpretations imply the establishment of a non-contingent connection between states of affairs in the actual world, which can be causal or, more generally, explanatory, while descriptions encode facts observable through perception (e.g. “That dress is blue”) or internal states accessible to introspection (e.g. “I feel completely upside down”).

As a second level of analysis, I have reconstructed the argument schemes linking the sources of information presupposed by *sembrare* to the standpoint in its scope following the ATM. The methodology followed in the reconstruction is that proposed in Musi et al. (2016).

5.2.3 *The Argumentum Model of Topics: A Tool for Reconstructing the Inferential Configuration of Arguments*

The *Argumentum Model of Topics* (Rigotti and Greco Morasso 2009, 2010; Rigotti 2006, 2009) is an approach for the analysis of argument schemes that aims at representing the inferential configuration of arguments, the structure of the reasoning underlying the connection between a standpoint and the arguments supporting it. Differently from other contemporary approaches, in the *AMT* the transfer between the acceptability of premises and the acceptability of the standpoint is guaranteed by the combination of two dimensions, inherent to every argument scheme: the procedural dimension, which coincides with the activated inferential connection, and the material dimension, which guarantees the applicability of the inference to the current situation considered in the argument.⁷

The procedural component is formed by a semantic ontological relation (*locus*) which generates the inferential connection (*maxim*) between standpoints and arguments (e.g. genus-species; part-whole; cause-effect). The first component necessary to implement the relation expressed by the *locus* to a given situation is the argumentative *endoxon*, defined by Aristotle as follows: “Generally accepted opinions [*endoxa*] are those which commend themselves to all or to the majority or to the wise—that is, to all the wise or to the majority or to the most famous or distinguished of them” (*Topics* 100b, 22–24). The *endoxa* are, therefore, opinions and values shared by the addressees or the audience in the critical discussion. They correspond to the common ground between protagonist and antagonist sought in the opening stage of the critical discussion. Since they belong to the communicative background of the participants, they are often left implicit.

⁷The distinction ‘procedural versus material’ a reinterpretation of the types of conditions characterizing the opening stage in the Pragma-Dialectic critical discussion (Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002). In the *AMT* the binomial ‘procedural/material’ becomes relevant also for the analysis of the argumentation stage since it is applied to the study of argument schemes.

The second component consists of a series of statements expressing the facts that have emerged in the argumentative situation, that are grouped under the name of *datum*. These factual premises play the communicative role of rheme, usually coinciding with the explicit part of the argument. From a logical point of view, *endoxon* and *datum* implement respectively the major premise and the minor premise of the hypothetical syllogism activated by the procedural premise (the *maxim*). The conclusion of the material syllogism represents the first conclusion, which is exploited as a minor premise of the procedural syllogism, leading to the final conclusion.

The definition of argument proposed in the AMT is based on the complex interaction of these components: “We consider an argument as the actual application of a maxim to one or more proper *endoxa*, deducing the standpoint from the maxim for a certain public who shares the above-mentioned *endoxa*” (Rigotti 2009: 163) The point of intersection between the material and procedural dimension is crucial in the AMT perspective, since it allows to show the way in which different types of premises are combined in a real instance of argumentation. The graphical representation of the AMT, called the “Y” structure, precisely aims at representing the convergence of procedural and material premises.

Looking at the Y structure in Fig. 5.2, it comes natural to ask where the differences between deductive, inductive and abductive reasoning are placed: the *endoxon*, which embodies general knowledge, appears in first position as in deductive reasoning. However, the order of material premises does not have to be considered iconic to the order of premises in the activated reasoning, but it is an abstract representation of that combination of specific cases and general knowledge shared by every type of reasoning.

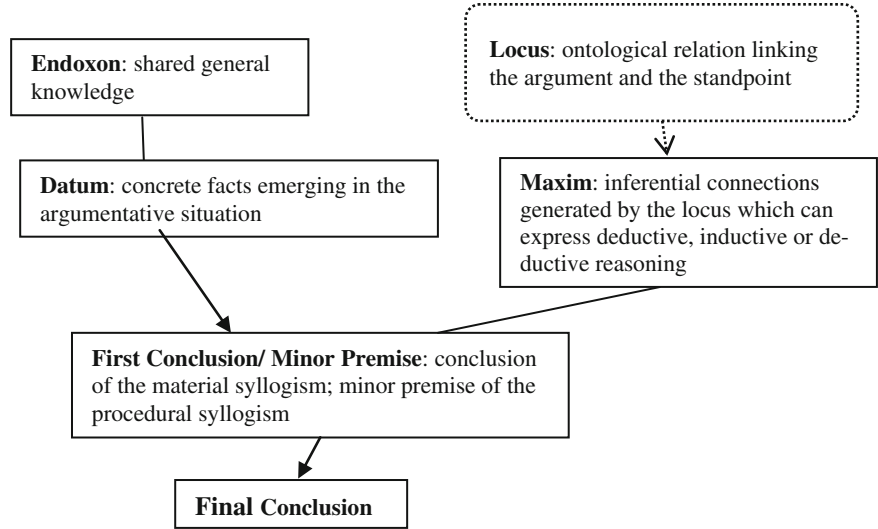


Fig. 5.2 The Argumentum Model of Topics in a nutshell

The difference among types of reasoning is accounted for by the activated maxim which can express a deductive (e.g. “if the cause is the case, the effect is the case”), inductive (e.g. “if a part of y has a property, every part of y has the same property”) and abductive inference (e.g. “if an event x takes place and an event similar to x caused by y take, then also x is caused by y”).

5.3 Results of the Analysis

5.3.1 *Sembra as an Indicator of Standpoints*

5.3.1.1 Types of Statements Incompatible with *Sembra*

As a premise, it has to be remarked that broadly logically determinate statements have to be excluded a priori from the analysis since they do not meet the required felicity conditions to express a standpoint. In order for a statement to work as a standpoint two requirements have to be respected. The first is that the speaker commits to the truth of the uttered proposition. This criterion makes assertive speech acts privileged candidates to work as standpoints.

As to the second, to put it as Van Eemeren et al. (2007: 29), “an assertive may be considered a standpoint if it is clear that the speaker supposes (or may be expected to suppose on the basis of the listener’s response) that the assertive is not immediately acceptable to the listener”. In absence of any reasonable doubt there is not, in fact, any space for controversy. Broadly logically determinate statements, being necessarily true, do not leave space for disagreement and cannot, therefore, work as standpoints.

The lexical semantics of the verb, making reference to the *eikós*, prevents the occurrence of the verb on top of propositions that are unquestionably true. It moreover explains its function as a marker of weak assertives. For the Gricean maxim of quantity, the use of a weak assertive marker indicates “that the speaker anticipates the listener’s doubt about the acceptability of his assertive, which means the assertive must be considered a standpoint” (Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 29). Therefore, *sembrare* can be included, as other propositional attitude indicators, among the indicators of standpoints.

Sembrare’s modal and evidential properties make the verb incompatible with descriptive statements. First of all, due to its modal epistemic value, *sembrare* qualifies the proposition it scopes over as intensional and, hence, not descriptive. Furthermore, *sembrare* works as a strictly inferential evidential since it is not suitable to express direct evidentiality. Even in contexts in which it conveys the impression of an experiencer who observes an object, the verb never expresses a direct relationship with perceptual data, as in the following example:

- (4) [Guardando una sagoma da lontano]
 ‘Looking at a silhouette from far away’
 a. “*Sembra muoversi!*”

- lit. “It seems moving!” ~ “It seems that it is moving”
 “It looks like it is moving”
 b. “*lo vedo muoversi*”
 “I see it moving”

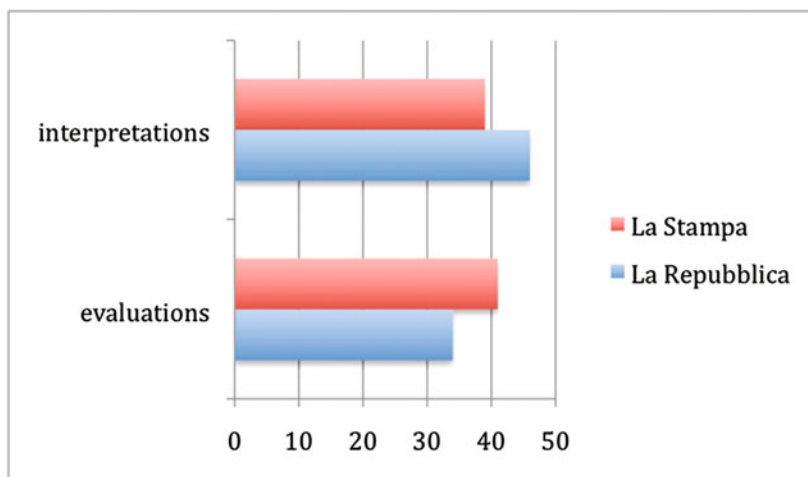
In example (4) *sembrare* indicates that the process of perception is hampered by distance and hence, it is not direct, but somehow filtered. Not surprisingly, the infinitive construction ‘It seems moving!’ in (4) is semantically equivalent to the impersonal construction “it seems that it is moving”, in which a proposition is in subject position. As underlined by Lyons (1977: 438–452), propositions are abstract entities which can be evaluated as true or false, but cannot be located in space and time. They are, therefore, inaccessible to direct experience. Replacing the verb *seem* with *see* (cf. (4b)) the process of perception would be direct (“I see it moving”). The infinitive could be felicitously transformed in Italian into a completive proposition in object position only in cleft sentences (“*Lo vedo, che si muove*”, “I see it, that it is moving”). Such a construction would be attested in contexts where the speaker is requested to answer questions pointing to the truth of the proposition “the object is moving” (i.e. “*non lo vedi che si muove?*” “don’t you see that it is moving?”). In this context the verb to *see* works as a cognition rather than a perception predicate, indicating that the speaker knows that the embedded proposition is true. In other words, while direct evidentials scope over factual propositions of the descriptive type, inferential evidentials such as *sembrare* cannot be associated with them.

5.3.1.2 *Sembra* as an Indicator of Evaluative and Interpretative Standpoints

As to the remaining contingent statements, the analysis has shown that evidential-modal *sembra* is compatible both with interpretations and evaluations which are more or less equally distributed in the sample (Table 5.2).

Due to the modest size of the annotated sample, it is not plausible to draw generalizations about the co-occurrence of *sembra* with a specific type of proposition. However, one remark about interpretations under *sembra*’s scope can be made. In particular, interpretations are frequently attributions: what is inferred are intentions of a third person. It is the case in the following example where the journalist is making a hypothesis about the final goal that the Italian politician Cosentino has in mind when he persists in wanting to propose his candidature as undersecretary of the economy:

- (5) “[...] Cosentino ha confidato ai suoi amici che non intende buttare la spugna. “È tutta una manovra per impedire la mia candidatura”, è stata la sua difesa. E l’avvocato-deputato Niccolò Ghedini parla di “accuse grossolane”. Ma ieri il presidente della Camera è stato chiaro anche con Berlusconi: Cosentino non può assolutamente essere candidato. Per la verità la resistenza di Cosentino

Table 5.2 Distribution of proposition types in *sembra*'s scope

sembra una mossa per vendere cara la pelle e “barricarsi” all’Economia come sottosegretario”.

“[...] Cosentino revealed to his friends that he does not intend to throw in the towel. “It’s all a ploy to prevent my candidacy,” was his defense. And the lawyer-deputy Niccolò Ghedini speaks of “gross charges”. But yesterday the chairman of the House was also clear with Berlusconi: Cosentino cannot be a candidate. In truth Cosentino’s resistance seems a move to sell his life dearly and “barricade” himself as the undersecretary of economy.” (opinion article, *La Stampa*, December 2010)

Intentions belong to people’s internal spheres, to which other parties cannot have access. Therefore, when the journalist interprets someone’s intentions, the truth of the inferred proposition can never be certain. Its degree of defeasibility can, however, vary, and be evaluated by a potential antagonist depending on the quality and quantity of information available to the speaker about the person’s behavior. The reasoning which underlies the speaker’s inference is with attributions of the causal type, regardless of the type of evidence at disposal: intentions can be represented as the efficient causes of behaviors, or instantiate the final goal towards which actions are oriented.

As noticed by Gauthier (2002: 63) evaluations are, together with attributions, typical standpoints in opinion articles. Similarly to attributions, the majority of evaluations in the sample express judgments over people’s behaviors or discourses:

- (6) *“La lezione negazionista del professor Claudio Moffa all’Università di Teramo ha sollevato feroci polemiche. Il commento più adeguato mi sembra un’osservazione di Borges nel suo saggio su Nathaniel Hawthorne:*

“Il proposito di abolire il passato fu già formulato nel passato, e paradossalmente, è una delle prove che il passato non può essere abolito” [...]

“The lesson of the Holocaust denier Claudio Moffa at the University of Teramo has raised fierce controversies. The most appropriate comment *seems to me* an observation by Borges in his essay on Nathaniel Hawthorne: “The purpose of abolishing the past was already made in the past, and paradoxically, it is one of the proofs that the past can not be abolished [...]” (opinion article, *La Repubblica*, October 2010)

As signalled in (6) by the presence of the first person pronoun *mi* (‘to me’), the evaluation in *sembra*’s scope is inherently subjective since it is based on the speaker’s notion of what is appropriate/inappropriate. The same applies to every evaluation: our definitional criteria of what is good/bad are hardly generalizable and to some extent controversial across communities. At the inferential level these criteria are *endoxa*. However, even though they are presented as common ground knowledge, they can potentially give rise to disagreement: it could be the case that another speaker would consider Borges’ comment not meeting his definition of what is appropriate.

Therefore, definitional criteria work as privileged roots for defeasibility. In interpretations, common ground knowledge can make reference to a wide variety of information (e.g. Knowledge about natural laws, cultural habits and so on). With interpretations it would, thus, be more difficult to a priori identify in which premises defeasibility resides.

5.3.2 Mapping Defeasibility Through the Argumentum Model of Topics

According to the Pragma-Dialectic taxonomy (Van Eemeren et al. 2007) argument schemes are classified into three major classes: symptomatic, causal and analogical argument schemes. Their potential defeasibility is bounded to the critical questions that may arise for each type of scheme. In the present paper only symptomatic and causal argument schemes are taken into account since those drawn from analogy are not compatible with *sembrare* (Musi 2017).⁸

In symptomatic argumentation a feature characterizing an entity referred to in the argument also applies to the entity referred to in the standpoint:

⁸The verb *sembrare* could not for instance appear in a typical case of analogical reasoning such as the following: “*Ti ricordi quanto traffico c’era a Capodanno? E oggi è festa nazionale!? (Mi) Sembra che ci sarà molto traffico*”, “Do you remember how much traffic was there for New Year’s Eve? And today is national holiday! It seems (to me) that there will be a lot of traffic” (Musi 2017: 362).

Y is true of X
 because Z is true of X
 and Z goes characteristically together with Y
 (Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 154)

Critical questions:

- (a) How typical is characteristic Z of the category Y (is it a central definitional trait or a peripheral trait)?
 - (b) Is (characteristic) Y not also typical of something else (Z)?
 - (c) Is it certain that Z is true of x?
- (Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 155)

Garssen (1997) notices that argumentation from example is a subtype of symptomatic argumentation: “In argumentation from example separate facts are represented as special cases of something general: on the basis of specific perceptions a generalization is made” (Garssen 1997: 11, translated by Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 155). As a correspondent critical question he has proposed the following: “Are there any specific cases typical for the state of affairs?” Such a critical question allows to evaluate the defeasibility of arguments from example based on rhetorical induction where the generalization is justified by the relevance and the degree of exemplariness of a *παράδειγμα*, ‘example’ (Aristotle, *APr.* 68b 15). However, it does not account for statistical induction where, starting from the observation that predicate x holds for various elements of a set, it is stated that x holds for all the elements of the set. For those cases a relevant critical question would be: “Is the number of elements for which x holds enough to draw a generalization?”.

According to the *Argumentum Model of Topics*, two major *loci* are associated to symptomatic argument schemes, namely definitional and mereological *loci*.

Definitional *loci* “refer to constitutive traits of the concerned entity [in the standpoint]” (Rigotti 2006: 539). More specifically, the *datum* expresses more or less typical traits of the predicate which is attributed to the entity playing the role of subject in the standpoint. In turn, the standpoint constitutes an act of categorization.

Mereological *loci* are at place whenever there is a part-whole relation between an entity/some entities featuring in the *datum* and an entity appearing in the standpoint. Thus, they do not only include the ontological relation at work in arguments from example, but they also justify the transferability of a property from an object to its constituent parts (e.g. table/legs) or vice versa.

According to Pragma-Dialectics, in causal argumentation the states of affairs pointed to in the argument are presented as causes/means/instruments of/for the state of affairs referred to in the standpoint or vice versa. The proposed scheme is the following:

Y is true of X
 Because Z is true of X
 And Z leads to Y

Critical questions:

- (a) Does the established cause lead to the mentioned result?
 - (b) Are there any other factor that must be presented together with the proposed cause to create the mentioned result?
 - (c) Could the proposed result be caused by something else as well?
- (Van Eemeren et al. 2007: 163–165)

According to the AMT the possible causal chains forming causal *loci* mirror Aristotelian causes, including (i) material cause, (ii) efficient cause, (iii) formal cause and (iv) final cause.

At an operational level, distinguishing the *locus* from the *maxim*, the AMT clearly shows the directionality of the ontological relation (e.g. cause/effect vs. effect/cause). Moreover, it allows to identify whether critical questions and hence defeasibility point to the inferential level or not: the critical question in (a) for symptomatic argument schemes and in (c) for causal argument schemes respectively challenge the soundness of the inferential rules “If X shows the typical trait of a class of entities Y, then it is an instance of Y”; “if the cause is the case, the effect is the case”. They, therefore, signal that the defeasibility of the standpoints depends on the procedural premises. In traditional syllogistic approaches to argument schemes, where procedural premises are generally neglected, such critical questions cannot be anchored to a specific premise featuring in the reconstruction.

5.3.2.1 *Sembra* as an Indicator of Symptomatic Defeasible Argument Schemes

The following occurrence of *sembra* is extracted from an opinion article written in the frame of the imminent Italian political elections:

- (7) “*L’interrogativo che ci si può porre alla vigilia della poco esaltante scadenza elettorale di casa nostra è questo: esiste, tra tanti e quasi contemporanei processi elettorali, qualcosa che sia loro comune? [...] Se si confrontano le posizioni espresse dai partiti politici nelle recenti scadenze elettorali, mi sembra che emerga un dato costante: ovunque le differenze tra la destra e la sinistra si attenuano sin quasi a scomparire e sopravvivono solo in porzioni marginali dell’elettorato. I programmi diventano intercambiabili e sotto il nome di progetti - o sotto dei termini ancor più astratti come “avvenire” o “futuro” - vi sono in realtà ipotesi vaghe che non si differenziano sostanzialmente tra loro. Così è stato in Spagna, così è in America, così in Italia, così*

nella maggior parte dei paesi citati e così, in fondo, è stato anche recentemente in Germania e in minor misura nella stessa Francia. Persino in Inghilterra i due storici rivali, laburisti e conservatori, fanno fatica a dire oggi in che cosa si distinguono.”

“The question that we can ask ourselves at the eve of the not very exciting election date in our country is this: is there something common among so many almost simultaneous electoral processes? [...] If you compare the positions expressed by the political parties in the recent elections, a constant *seems* to emerge: everywhere the differences between the right and the left are reduced to almost disappearing and survive only in marginal portions of the electorate. The programs become interchangeable and under the name of projects - or under the names of even more abstract terms such as “what is to come” or “the future” - there are actually vague hypotheses which do not differ substantially from one another. So it was in Spain, so it is in America, so in Italy, so in most of the countries mentioned, and so, after all, was also recently the case in Germany and to a lesser extent in France. Even in England the two historical rivals, Labour and Conservatives, struggle to say why they are different from each other.” (opinion article, *La Stampa*, April 2008)

The *quaestio* that the journalist aims at answering, clarified through a direct question, is whether there are common aspects in the electoral processes going on in democratic European countries. *Sembrare*’s occurrences appears in a hypothetical construction where the *protasis* constitutes the premises from which the standpoint, the *apodosis*, is drawn. As stated in the *protasis*, the condition that allows us to identify a common pattern is the comparison among the positions expressed by various political parties. The role played by the process of comparison is furthermore specified through the use of the predicate *emerge*, which presupposes that an entity comes out of another constitutively more complex entity, becoming visible to the experiencer’s eyes and, through conceptual metaphor, to his mind. In this specific case the force that allows the emergence of a constant coincides with the common aspects belonging to elections in different countries, namely the fact that right and left political programs in different European countries do not substantially differ (*datum*). For general encyclopedic knowledge, it is known that something is constant in a set if it is present in all components of the set. Although Spain, America, Italy, Germany, France and England are part of Europe, they do not exhaust the list of European countries. The fact that the data available to the speaker does not cover all the elements of the set is indicated by the expression “the greater part of the countries mentioned” which implies that the journalist has no information about the electoral programs of at least one of the European countries with a democratic regime.

The maxim exploited is an instance of statistical induction: from the fact that a predicate is applied to a large number of items belonging to the set X, it is inferred that it applies, with a certain degree of certainty, to the whole set X. Therefore, the inferential configuration of the underlying argument can be visualized as follows.

When inductive reasoning is at stake the proposition introduced by *sembrare* is a supposition, “a proposition that, in suitably favorable circumstances, is accepted as

true in the absence of any counter-indications” (Rescher 2006: 26). In such cases, the uncertainty about the truth of the conclusion lies in the maxim since the information supplied by the *endoxon* belongs to common ground knowledge. The cases working as *datum* are presented as uncontroversial: the presence of similar right and left wing programs is situated by the speaker in the past with respect to the moment of utterance as an observable fact.

More specifically, the degree of defeasibility depends on the known components of the set: the higher the number of elements considered, the greater is the degree of certainty that the predicate is transferable from the parts to the whole since the probability of finding counterexamples decreases.

In the sample of occurrence there are various symptomatic argument schemes from the parts to the whole, but none from the whole to the parts. In order to verify if this behavior is due to the restricted sample of analysis or to the semantics of the verb, a possible methodology is to apply compatibility tests. In the following example built ad hoc, which is an instance of symptomatic argumentation from the whole to the parts, the use of the epistemic *sembrare*, differently from *must*, is unsuitable:

- (8) “B: *non mi piacciono le sedie con le gambe scure.*
 A: *Sul catalogo c’è scritto che questo modello di sedia è bianco.*
Quindi anche le gambe della sedia sono/devono essere bianche.”
 ?? *Quindi anche le gambe della sedia sembrano essere bianche.*
 “B: I do not like chairs with dark legs.
 A: On the catalogue it is written that this chair model is white.
 Therefore, the legs of the chair are/must be white too.”
 ?? Therefore, the legs of the chair seem to be white too.

The proposition “the legs of the chair are white” is inferred starting from our general knowledge about the presuppositions imposed by the expression “white chair”: in order to attribute the adjective “white” to a chair, it is necessary that all its parts (or at least those with a relevant extension) are white. This indexical premise constitutes the major premise of a deductive syllogism:

If a chair is white, all its parts are white
 The legs are parts of a chair

 The legs (of the chair) are/must be white
 ? The legs (of the chair) seem to be white

Differently from the epistemic modal *dovere* (‘must’), the verb *sembrare* cannot introduce, when having an inferential value, the conclusion of a deductive

syllogism where the premises are presented by the speaker as certain.⁹ This incompatibility is motivated by the modal value of the verb that indicates epistemic incertitude about the truth of the proposition in its scope, while deductive reasoning presupposes that, given certain premises as true, the conclusion is also true. The use of *sembrare* would be unsuitable even in a fallacious inference from the whole to the parts:

- (9) “*Questa macchina è pesante. Le ruote della macchina sono pesanti*”
 “*Questa macchina è pesante. *Sembra che le ruote della macchina siano pesanti*”
 ‘This car is heavy. The wheels of the car are heavy’.
 ‘This car is heavy.? The wheels of the car seem to be heavy’.

The deductive instance of reasoning in (9) is fallacious since it is based on a false major premise: the fact that a car is heavy does not entail that all his parts are heavy since that of ‘being heavy’ is not a transferrable property, but a relative property which depend on the structure of the whole (Van Eemeren and Garssen 2009).¹⁰ Therefore, the truth of proposition “The wheels of the car are heavy” is uncertain. However, it cannot be embedded under the verb *sembrare*. This incompatibility shows that what matters is the way in which an inference is presented by the speaker (Kratschmer 1998: 187), regardless of its epistemological soundness. In (9), even if the conclusion is not true, it is presented as such by the speaker since it is drawn from a deductive syllogism. Therefore, it is incompatible with markers of uncertainty which would cast doubt on its truth.

5.3.2.2 *Sembra* as an Indicator of Defeasible Causal Argument Schemes

As an example of causal argument scheme I have chosen the beginning of an opinion article from *La Stampa* in which the journalist comments on the interview that the writer Giorgio Bocca has given to the editor of the rubric *Tuttolibri*:

- (10) “*Mentre esce una nuova edizione del Provinciale, che vuole essere ben più di una autobiografia, anzi il suo libro con maggiori ambizioni di scrittura, Giorgio Bocca sembra volersi misurare con gli scrittori suoi conterranei, quelli di cui si onora il romanzo italiano del secondo Novecento. Esprime questo suo azzardo nell’intervista rilasciata per Tuttolibri a Bruno*

⁹The sentence “*Le gambe della sedia sembrerebbero essere bianche*” (‘the legs of the chair would seem to be white’) could sound like a counterexample. However, in this case the verb does not have an inferential evidential function, but a reportative one signaled by the use of the conditional mode: the reported voice is that of the catalogue.

¹⁰According to the two scholars transferable properties are absolute: differently from relative properties, they are not determined through a comparison and are independent from the formal structure of the whole (e.g. colors).

Quaranta. Arpino è così così, ha dato qualche buon romanzo. Pavese è un noioso scrittore di Canelli che si atteggiava a intellettuale. Più pesante, e frutto quanto meno di smemoratezza, il giudizio su Beppe Fenoglio, e proprio in quanto cantore della Resistenza.”

‘While a new edition of the Provincial comes out, that wants to be more than just an autobiography, or rather his book with highest writing ambitions, Giorgio Bocca *seems* to want to measure with his fellow writers, even those that honor the Italian novel of the late twentieth century. He expresses this hazard in his interview with Bruno Quaranta released for [the rubric] Tuttolibri. Arpino is so-so, gave some good novel. Pavese is a boring writer from Canelli who posed as intellectual. Worse, and the result at least of forgetfulness, the judgment about Beppe Fenoglio, as cantor of the Resistance.’ (opinion article, *La Stampa*, April 2007)

In (10) the verb *sembrare* occurs in a raising construction¹¹ with scope on the proposition “Giorgio Bocca wants to compete with his fellow writers”. The verb *want* presupposes the ontology of human action, at the core of the *locus* of the final cause, “according to which an agent, on the basis of his knowledge of the actual and possible worlds, is motivated by a desire and decides to pursue the goal of realizing such a desire by activating a causal chain whose outcome is expected to coincide with the desired possible world” (Palmieri 2014: 34).

Besides the verb *want*, another linguistic clue that evokes actionality is the reference to Bocca’s most ambitious book release. However, the release of the new book is not presented by the journalist as an argument in support of the proposition in the scope of *sembra*, but it is left in the background to describe the circumstances in which the interview has taken place. To be explicitly presented as a *datum* in support of the proposition inferred (“Giorgio Bocca wants to measure with his fellow writers”), through the proposition “[he] expresses this hazard in the interview [...]”, are the negative assessments made by the journalist against his fellow writers. The role played by this *datum* as a material premise does not support by itself the proposition “Giorgio Bocca wants to measure himself with his fellow writers”: to “compete with someone” implies, in fact, the establishment of a comparison between our personal value and that of others, but does not necessarily entail a negative judgment about the person one is comparing to. People are generally willing to compete with people that they judge positively in order not to downgrade themselves (Fig. 5.3).

The relevance of this *datum* can be explained if we consider that the journalist qualifies the supposed will of the writer to compete with his fellows writers as a risky decision. The act of ‘competing’ implies as felicity conditions (i) that the people involved are comparable on some grounds and (ii) that their value is not too distant from each other. The first felicity condition is satisfied since Giorgio Bocca,

¹¹Raising constructions are constructions where an argument of a subordinate clause (i.e. the pronoun “he” in the sentence “It seems that he is right”) has raised to the matrix clause (i.e. “He seems to be right”).

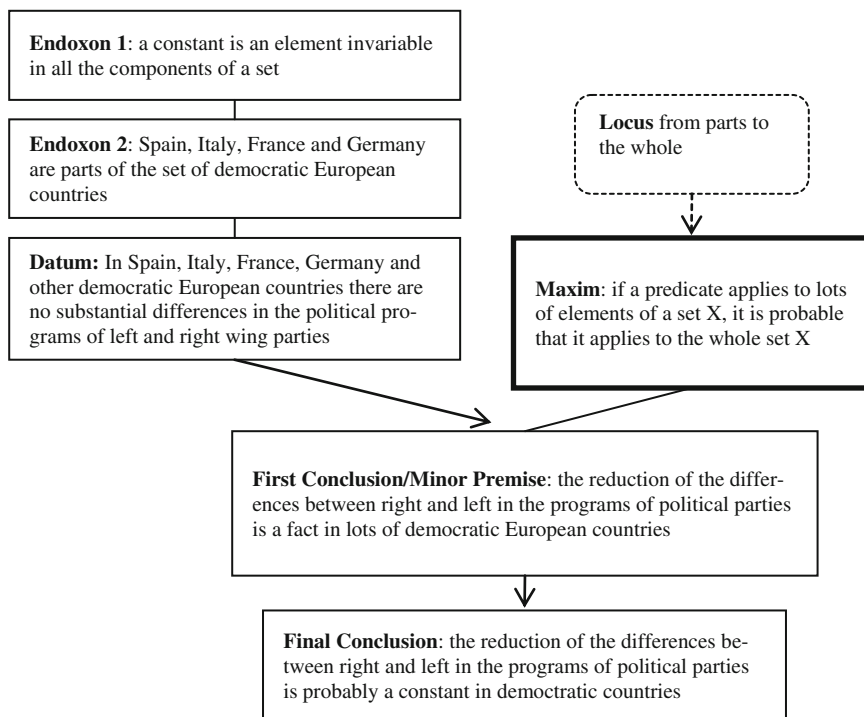


Fig. 5.3 Exemplary reconstruction of a symptomatic argument scheme through the AMT

Pavese and Fenoglio come from the same region (“fellow writers”). On the other hand, the second condition is not fully fulfilled: even though the journalist does not directly comment about the literary value of Giorgio Bocca, he qualifies the value of his fellow writers as hard to achieve (“those which honor the novel of the late twentieth century”). As a conventional implicature we can infer from the noun “hazard” that the journalist considers Giorgio Bocca a writer of lower value compared to his fellow writers. This evaluation constitutes together with Giorgio’s Bocca evaluations of his fellow writers the datum, as an instance of coordinate argumentation.

To sum up, according to the reconstruction visualized in Fig. 5.4, Giorgio Bocca is aware of his inferiority and strategically stresses his critiques against his fellow writers to forcefully allow a comparison with them. Even if it is highly improbable that Giorgio Bocca truly considers himself superior to such famous writers, the journalist mitigates his interpretation of Bocca’s intention through the use of the verb *sembra*, marking the causal argument scheme it is drawn from as defeasible. The defeasible character of the reasoning resides both in the nature of the maxim and of the datum. First of all, as signaled by the modalized proposition in the maxim, it is not possible to guess with certainty third parties’ intentions if not explicitly stated. Second, the information reported in the datum does not tell us anything about the writer’s goal: from the content of the interview, reported in the

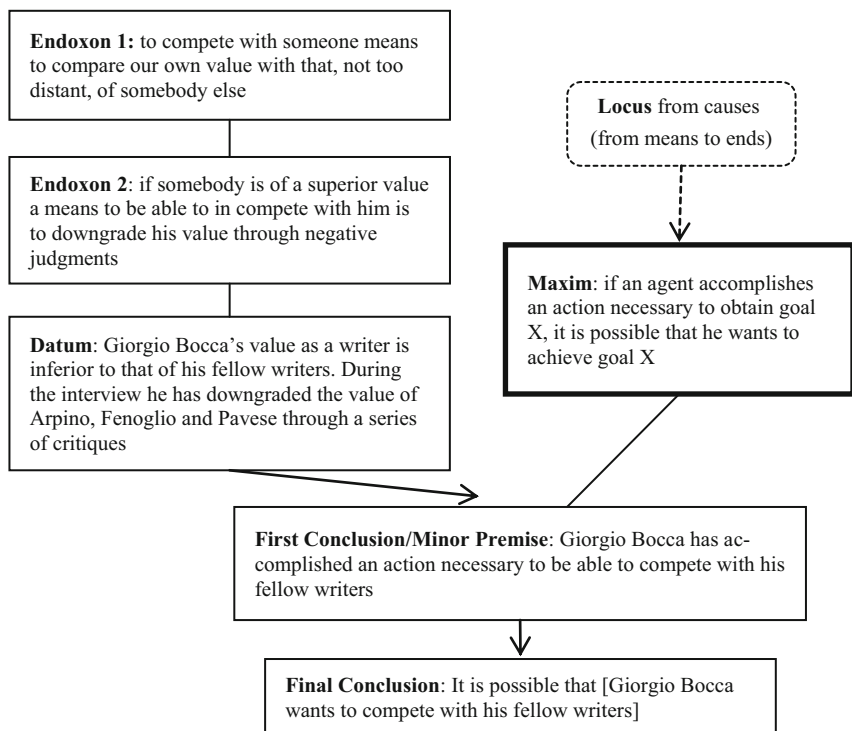


Fig. 5.4 Exemplary reconstruction of a causal argument scheme according to the AMT

opinion article in the form of free indirect speech, it emerges that Bocca has uttered critiques towards other writers, but he has not mentioned his work as a term of comparison. On these grounds, the most likely interpretation is that the journalist's intention is to express a sarcastic judgment about Bocca's behavior.

In the sample of analysis *sembrare* is never attested in pieces of reasoning which proceed from the cause to the effect, although it quite frequently indicates *loci* from the effect to the cause. This type of reasoning, differently from that from the effect to the cause, is not retrospective (Hastings 1963), but proceeds from the past to the future, giving rise to interpretations of the predictive type. The scarcity of predictions in *sembrare*'s scope in our sample could explain the absence of argument schemes from the cause to the effect. In order to test the (in)compatibility of *sembrare* I have looked for occurrences where the verb has scope over a prediction in the *itWac* corpus (Baroni et al. 2009). It has emerged that the verb can occur in ontological relations from the cause to the effect:

- (11) *Beh, sembra che [l'Xbox perderà il suo posto come console più venduta]_{standpoint}. [La nuova console della Infinium ha un asso nella manica, riesce a far girare i giochi e programmi per PC, oltre ai suoi giochi]_{datum}* (<http://www.anvi.it/forum/index.php?showtopic=602>)

“Well, it *seems* that [the Xbox will lose its place as the top-selling]_{standpoint} console. [The new console of Infinium has an ace in the hole as it is able to run PC games and programs, in addition to his games]_{datum}”

The major premise allowing to infer the standpoint from the premise could be formulated as follows: “In general, if a product ceases to present the most innovative features compared to products of the same kind, it will be sold less.” This endoxical premise constitutes a generalization drawn by the speaker from the comparison with other similar cases where he knew that a product has been surpassed by another in terms of efficiency. Therefore, the activated inferential configuration from cause to effect is defeasible and presented as such by the speaker through the use of *sembrare*. On the other hand, the verb is not compatible with instances of reasoning from cause to the effect in which the major premise (the *endoxon*) is a proposition necessarily true since it is based on natural laws, such as in “It is raining.? It seems that my bike will get wet”. We can conclude that *sembrare* indicates that the causal argument scheme he is associated to, even though from the cause to the effect, is potentially defeasible.

5.4 Conclusions

In this study I have investigated the role played by the Italian appearance verb *sembrare* as an indicator of defeasible reasoning in a corpus of opinion articles. As shown by previous studies (Musi 2014, 2017), when assuming a modal-evidential value, the verb works as an argumentative indicator pointing to the presence of premises-conclusion relations as well as specific types of reasoning. Moreover, its lexical semantics, which recalls the Aristotelian *εἰκός*, makes it a good candidate to indicate defeasible reasoning. To verify this hypothesis and provide a methodology to reconstruct the roots of defeasibility at the level of the inferential configuration of arguments, I have conducted an analysis of the semantic type of standpoints in *sembrare*’s scope and of the argument schemes it is drawn from in a sample of 160 occurrences. The annotation of the semantic types of propositions reveals that *sembrare* is compatible with contingent propositions of the interpretative and evaluative type, but not with descriptions that, encoding facts, block the rise of disagreement space. As far as the analysis of argument schemes is concerned, the *Argumentum Model of Topics* has proved to be an advantageous tool for tracing back the roots of defeasibility thanks to the distinction made between material and procedural premises.

More specifically, it has emerged that with argument schemes from the parts to the whole defeasibility is mainly attributable to the maxim and, more specifically, to the transferability of the properties from parts to the whole. The verb is not attested in our sample with argument schemes from the whole to the parts. Compatibility tests show that *sembrare* cannot occur in those contexts: argument schemes from whole to parts are instances of deductive reasoning characterized by factual premises which necessarily lead to the truth of the standpoint.

With causal argument schemes the origins of defeasibility can, instead, be placed both in material premises—generally the *datum*—and/or at the procedural level of maxims. *Sembrare* is not attested in the sample with causal argument schemes from the cause to the effect. However, complementary corpus search has shown that it is compatible with such a maxim provided that (i) the standpoint constitutes a prediction and that (ii) the *endoxon* is not a factual proposition, but a defeasible generalization drawn from the observation of specific cases (induction).

At a theoretical level, it seems that defeasibility does not pattern in a clear-cut way with the categories of abduction/deduction/induction: maxims such as that from the cause to the effect which present a deductive structure may also encode defeasible reasoning. The proposed method to analyze the defeasibility of an argument is to (i) single out material and procedural premises, (ii) identify to which type of premises the scheme's critical questions refer to and (iii) evaluate how the premises are realized in a specific context.

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Chapter 6

What Is the Contribution of Connectives to Discourse Meaning? The With or Without Issue (WWI)

Jacques Moeschler

Abstract For more than thirty years, semantics and pragmatics have benefitted from descriptive studies on discourse connectives, the argumentative function of which has been recognized in different theoretical frameworks: theory of linguistic argumentation (Ducrot et al. in *Les mots du discours*. Minuit, Paris, 1980), Relevance Theory (Blakemore in *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1987; Carston in *Thoughts and utterances: the pragmatics of explicit communication*. Blackwell, Oxford, 2002), cognitive semantics (Sanders and Nordmann in *Discourse Processes* 29(1):37–60, 2000), Rhetorical Structure Theory (Taboada in *Journal of Pragmatics* 38(4):567–592, 2006). However, an issue has not been deeply investigated: What is the difference between discourses with and without connectives? In this chapter, I raise the issue of the function of connectives in discourse, the different ways of defining connectives, the paradox that cognitive approaches to connectives give rise to, the role of *mais* in argumentation, and the issue of the contribution of connectives to argumentation. In the analysis I show how the contrast between sequences with and without connectives can be thought in a more general framework: argumentation sequences with connectives are more efficient because they make argumentation relations explicit, and have as side effects the minimization of processing costs and the maximizing of relevance; moreover, they are stronger because connectives introduce new focal information, which has more contextual implications than a non-focal one.

6.1 Introduction

For more than thirty years, semantics and pragmatics have benefitted from descriptive studies on discourse connectives, the argumentative function of which has been recognized in different theoretical frameworks: theory of linguistic argumentation (Ducrot et al. 1980; Anscombe and Ducrot 1983), Relevance Theory

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(Blakemore 1987; Carston 2002; Iten 2005), cognitive semantics (Sanders and Nordmann 2000), and Rhetorical Structure Theory (Taboada 2006) to name but a few.

However, one issue has not been deeply investigated¹: *What is the contribution of connectives to the interpretation of discourse*,² as illustrated in (1) and (2)?

- (1) a. *Marie a poussé Jean. Il est tombé*
 ‘Mary pushed John. He fell.’
 b. *Jean est tombé. Marie l’a poussé.*
 ‘John fell. Mary pushed him.’
- (2) a. *Marie a poussé Jean et il est tombé.*
 ‘Mary pushed John and he fell.’
 b. *Jean est tombé parce que Marie l’a poussé.*
 ‘John fell because Mary pushed him.’

One possible and classical answer to these phenomena refers to grammatical concepts such as *asyndesis* (absence of link) or *parataxis* (absence of grammatical connection such as coordination or subordination). Another answer refers to the distinction between what is explicitly said and what is implicated. The first answer is unfortunately not explicative, because it leaves to stylistics the explanation of what *asyndesis* implies with respect to communicative meaning. The second answer, which is pragmatic, predicts that *asyndetic* discourses implicate discourse relations and presupposes that explicit connections via connectives should be cases of explicit communication. However, other connectives such as *and* and *but* have been claimed to trigger *implicatures*, respectively *conversational implicatures* triggered by *and* and the maxim of order (‘be orderly’), and a conventional, non-defeasible implicature triggered by *but*, which are not cases of explicit communication, that is, explicatures in post-Gricean Pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson 1995).

What is more surprising is that in one precise theoretical framework (from a descriptive and semantic perspective), the theory of linguistic argumentation, WWI for argumentative connectives has not been addressed. One possible explanation is that argumentative connectives are said to be necessary in yielding the intended argumentative inference, as (3) and (4) shows:

- (3) *Abi est belle, mais intelligente.*
 ‘Abi is beautiful, but smart’.
- (4) # *Abi est belle. Elle est intelligente.*
 ‘Abi is beautiful. She is smart’.

(1) and (2) clearly show that the issue is much more complex, and that any semantic or pragmatic description of connectives must not only be able to explain where the difference in meaning between connectives lies, but also what the

¹Works within different theoretical frameworks have tackled this issue: Blochowiak’s (2014a, b) for a logical-pragmatic approach, Haberlandt (1982), Millis and Just (1994), for experimental ones.

²I will refer to this issue as the ‘with or without issue’ (WWI).

pragmatic and communicative differences between discourses with and without connectives are.

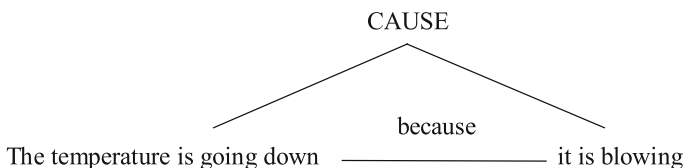
In order to do this, it is necessary to raise the question of the *function* of connectives in discourse. This is especially crucial for discourse semantics and pragmatics, mainly because the temptation is great to explain the meaning of connectives via a theory of discourse relations. This is not the path I will follow in this contribution, mainly because the connective-discourse relation theory raises new issues: a connective can be used with different discourse relations as well as one specific discourse relation can be fulfilled by several connectives. The lack of isomorphism between connectives and discourse relations is therefore a strong invitation to look for another solution. The proposal of this paper is grounded in inferential and formal pragmatics, and attempts to explain discourse phenomena as a result of more basic interpretative and communicative tasks.

In this article, I discuss the issue of the function of connectives in discourse (Sect. 6.2), the different ways of defining connectives (Sect. 6.3), the paradox raised by cognitive approaches to connectives (Sect. 6.4), the relation between *mais* and negation (Sect. 6.5), and the contribution of connectives (like *mais*) to argumentation (Sect. 6.6).

6.2 Connectives and Discourse

Connectives are often defined as (i) operators whose arguments are discourse segments, not sentences nor propositions, (ii) cohesion markers, or (iii) markers introducing rhetorical relations (Taboada 2006). For instance, *because* will be a conventional way to causally connect discourse segments. The idea is that discourse coherence relies on the possibility to construct discourse sequences as graphs. For instance, (5) will be associated to the graph in (6):

- (5) The temperature is going down because it is blowing.
(6)



This way, the discourse structure is made explicit with the connective *because*. As stated before, it is difficult for the discourse relation theory to explain the absence of isomorphism between connectives and discourse relations, and moreover, the issue is whether the same discourse relation is the case without connectives, as in (7):

(7) The temperature is going down: it is blowing.

Argumentation in language theory (*'théorie de l'argumentation dans la langue'*, Anscombe and Ducrot 1983) is not very well-equipped either, because it assumes that utterances are ways of conveying argumentation, because of their intrinsic argumentative orientation. In a more precise way, utterances can have the function of arguments or conclusions, conclusions being generally inferred and not explicitly stated. The *raison d'être* of a connective is thus to guide the hearer in the argumentative inference process. For instance, the connective *mais* (but) has, as a conventional meaning, the following template (Ducrot et al. 1980; Anscombe and Ducrot 1977):

- (8) *p mais q*
 a. *p* is an argument for a conclusion *r*
 b. *q* is an argument for a conclusion *not-r*
 c. *p mais q* is an argument for conclusion *not-r*³

On the other hand, the classical approach of Gricean pragmatics (Grice 1989) assigns logical meanings to connectives, and explains their meanings in use through pragmatics: for instance, through a conventional implicature (Grice 1989; Blakemore 1987). So, the semantics and pragmatics of *mais* is the following:

- (9) a. semantics: *P and Q*
 b. pragmatics: there is a contrast between *P* and *Q*⁴

The test for allocating the status of a pragmatic conventional implicature for a given meaning is based on its non-cancellability (Grice 1989). To illustrate, what is said in (10) is (11), and what is implicated is (12):

- (10) *Jean a trois châteaux mais une seule voiture.*
 'John has three castles but only one car'
 (11) John has three castles and only one car
 (12) There is a contrast between having three castles and only one car.

As (13) shows, it is difficult to cancel the implicature in (12) without contradicting the assertion in (10). Non-cancellability is a hallmark feature of conventional implicature (Grice 1989):

- (13) # *Jean a trois châteaux mais une seule voiture, et il n'y a aucun rapport entre ces deux faits.*
 'John has three castles but only one car, and there is no link between these two facts'

³In other words, *q* is a stronger argument for *not-r* than *p* for *r*. This is explained through diachrony, and the relation between lat. *magis* and fr. *mais*, from a historical derivational point of view.

⁴The Gricean and post-Gricean analysis is very different from Ducrot's analysis. The contrast meaning is broader and looser than the opposition of two argumentative moves as in Anscombe and Ducrot (1977).

Finally, in Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2012; Blakemore 1987), connectives are devices whose main function is the optimization of relevance. Thus, they are functional in two ways:

- (i) They are means of allowing the maximization of relevance.
- (ii) They are ways of minimizing processing costs.

Since relevance is defined as the balance between cognitive effects and cognitive efforts, discourses with connectives are predicted to be optimally relevant in that they allow maximizing relevance while minimizing processing costs. Hence, a relevance-theoretic approach claims that a discourse with a connective is more relevant than a discourse without it. As it stands, we should now have a positive answer to the question addressed in the title of this paper: by guiding the processing path, *connectives are conventional ways to optimize relevance*. However, this picture seems to be a little too simple, for the following reasons.

First, this general definition does not say anything about the *nature of the meaning* encoded by connectives: for instance, is it *conceptual* or *procedural*? As regards causal connectives (*because*), or possible causal uses of connectives (*and*), it has been claimed (Blakemore 1987) that their semantics is conceptual, because it can be represented by logical elimination rules filling the logical entry of their corresponding concepts (Moeschler 2016a):

- (14) *And*-elimination rule
 - a. input P and Q
 - b. outputs (i) P
 - (ii) Q
- (15) *Because*-elimination rule
 - a. input P because Q
 - b. outputs (i) P
 - (ii) Q
 - (iii) Q causes P

If *because* and *and* have logical entries described as elimination rules, then their meanings cannot explain why they contribute to the relevance of discourse and how they can guide the interpretative process, for instance via their procedural meaning (Blakemore 1987; Wilson 2011, 2016). The reason for this is that deductive rules only give the entailments of *because*, but not its contribution to implicit meaning.

Second, it is not clear how we can explain that the interpretation of discourse without connectives does not seem to be more difficult than the interpretation of discourse with connectives. Moreover, the scarcity of connectives in texts gives a sour taste of a theory of optimization of discourse processing with connectives. For instance, if you take the novel *Madame Bovary* by G. Flaubert, which contains 118,272 words, the number of tokens for connectives is low, as Table 6.1 shows.

Table 6.1 Tokens of connectives in *Madame Bovary*

Connectives	<i>parce que</i>	<i>puisque</i>	<i>pourtant</i>	<i>donc</i>	<i>mais</i>	<i>et</i>	Total
	because	since	however	therefore	but	and	
Tokens	8	22	53	151	418	2819	3471
%	0.23	0.63	1.5	4.3	12	81.2	99.86

These data do not say anything about the function of connectives in discourse. They only show that discourse connectives are not as frequent as it could be expected, mainly as opposed to spoken discourses

There seems thus to be a huge difference between the number of connectives in texts and their supposed function in discourse.

As we see, there is no clear conception of connectives when it comes to their discourse functions. What we need, to explain the possible absence of connectives in discourses, and mainly in argumentation, is a straightforward and clear definition of what a connective is.

6.3 A First Definition of Connectives

In Relevance Theory (Blakemore 1987; Carston 2002), connectives are seen as means to maximize relevance and minimize processing costs. The maximization of relevance is directly linked to their *procedural meaning*: connectives are guides for discourse interpretation, and, as such, they indicate which path must be followed to obtain positive cognitive effects. They also minimize processing costs because of their procedural meaning: direct access allows avoiding unjustifiable processing costs and leads to straightforward processing.⁵

Therefore, the predictions of a Relevance-theoretic approach are: (a) discourses with connectives are faster to process; (b) discourses without connectives are costlier to process. In (16) and (17), the predictions are thus that discourses (b) are easier and faster to process than discourses (a), which should be costlier:

- (16) a. The road was icy. She slipped.
b. The road was icy and she slipped
- (17) a. She slipped. The road was icy.
b. She slipped because the road was icy.

However, these two predictions (fast processing, cognitive costs) are not equivalent: whereas some discourse sequences (temporal, causal) can be pragmatically coherent with and without connectives (16-17), some discourse relations cannot be

⁵This has been confirmed by Haberlandt (1982), Millis and Just (1994), Sanders and Noordman (2000) for instance.

accessed without connectives (counter-argumentation, concession), as in (18), and the addition of a connective may not improve the coherence of discourse (19)⁶:

- (18) a. Abi is hard-working, but she is smart.
b. # Abi is hard-working, she is smart.
- (19) a. # Abi is smart. Sainte-Cécile is a nice place to live.
b. # Abi is smart, and/but/because/so Sainte-Cécile is a nice place to live.

The classical definition of connectives in the relevance-theoretic approach therefore does not seem to be helpful as regards our initial issue: what is the difference between discourses with and without connectives? However, we can give a more positive proposal: certainly, connectives contribute to discourse interpretation. If this is true, then the type of meaning they encode should play a role. And since meaning is defined as conceptual and/or procedural in Relevance Theory, we predict that connectives contribute to discourse meaning depending on their conceptual and procedural meaning, as proposed in Moeschler (2016b).

6.4 The Paradox of Connectives

In view of the above, connectives seem to be associated with a paradox: they are means of optimizing relevance by maximizing relevance and minimizing processing costs, but some connectives do not seem to contribute via their semantics to the optimization of relevance. For instance, French *et* (and) does not bring a strong contribution to discourse meaning, not only because it is not mandatory to convey temporal and causal meaning, but also because its semantics is minimal comparing to its pragmatics. If causal meaning can be associated to *and*, it is generally described as a result of a conversational implicature (Grice 1989), an explicature (Carston 2002; Wilson and Sperber 2012) or a pragmatic presupposition triggered by the events (Blochowiak 2014b). The argument for the implicature status is its cancellability (20), while the argument for the explicature status is the contribution of *and* to the truth-conditional meaning of the utterance (21)⁷:

- (20) Abi pushed Axel and he fell, but not in this order.
- (21) It's always the same at parties: either I get drunk and no-one will talk to me or no-one will talk to me and I get drunk.

⁶It must be made explicit here that some connectives, as *mais* (but) in French cannot be described as their meaning is concerned by the contrast between presence versus absence of connective. They seem to be mandatory for expressing contrastive or concessive discourse relations.

⁷The argument for the contribution to presupposition is the nomological rule triggered by the event predicates, that is, a rule based on knowledge about how the world works (basic physical laws) or how reasoning works.

Table 6.2 Strong versus weak connectives

Connectives	<i>et</i>	<i>parce que</i>	
Conceptual meanings	Weak	{FORWARD INFERENCE, CAUSE, INCLUSION} ^a	–
	Strong	–	CAUSE ^b

^aNote that contrastive use of *et* cannot occur in-between events

^bSee also Blochowiak (2014a) and (2017), who argues that the concept behind *because* refers to grounding type of relations such as causality, motivation, justification or definition

In Moeschler (2016b), I have proposed, to explain why the relevant inference can be cancelled, that *et* (and) is a *weak* connective, i.e. its conceptual meaning is a set of relations, not a single concept, as is also the case of *parce que* (because) (cf. Table 6.2).

So, in this perspective, connectives are weak or strong contributions to the discourse interpretation process, contributions that are defined as conceptual meanings. Conceptual meaning is defined by a set of relational meanings implying concepts such as CAUSE, TEMPORAL SUCCESSION or TEMPORAL INCLUSION, which interact with procedural meanings (the instruction part of the meaning of the connectives), restricted to the direction (forward, backward) of the causal or temporal relation (Moeschler 2016b), as illustrated in Table 6.3.

The second face of the paradox is that whereas some connectives are not necessary, others are obligatory. As it stands, the distinction between strong and weak connectives as well as the differences between conceptual and procedural meaning still do not answer the question of why some connectives are mandatory, whereas others are not.

In fact, the contrast given between (16)–(17) on the one hand (*and*, *because*) and (18)–(19) on the other (*but*) is not really valid, because what is at stake is not the mandatory nature of some connectives against the non-mandatory nature of others, but the semantic properties of the discourse segments. For instance, some uses of *but*, *following negation*, are not mandatory, whatever the pragmatic meaning of negation is—*descriptive* in (22b),⁸ or *metalinguistic* in (23b)⁹ (Moeschler 2013a, b):

- (22) a. *Abi n'est pas belle, elle est quelconque*
 'Abi is not beautiful, she is ordinary'
 b. *Abi n'est pas belle, mais quelconque*
 'Abi is not beautiful, but ordinary'
- (23) a. *Abi n'est pas belle, elle est extraordinaire*
 'Abi is not beautiful, she is gorgeous'

⁸Descriptive negation is truth-conditional, in which the corrective clause entails the negative one: ordinary (x) → not-beautiful(x).

⁹In metalinguistic negation, the corrective clause entails the positive counterpart of the negative clause: gorgeous(x) → beautiful(x). It is called metalinguistic because negation is non-truth-conditional and scopes over a metarepresentation (someone has said "Abi is beautiful") and not to the proposition "Abi is beautiful".

Table 6.3 Conceptual and procedural meaning for causal connectives

Connectives	Meanings				
	Conceptual			Procedural	
	Entailment	Explicature	Implicature	Direction of CAUSE	
<i>parce que</i>	P	Q	CAUSE	–	$Q \rightarrow P$
<i>donc</i>	P	–	–	POSSIBLE_CAUSE	$P \rightarrow Q$
<i>et</i>	P	Q	–	POSSIBLE_CAUSE	$P \rightarrow Q$

b. *Abi n'est pas belle, mais extraordinaire*
'Abi is not beautiful, but gorgeous'

Even in the case of CONTRAST relation, which seems to imply a mandatory connective as in (18), a contrastive connective is not mandatory, as shown in (23). So, to give a complete answer to the 'with or without' puzzle, we need to investigate contrastive connectives like *mais* in a deeper way.

6.5 The Example of *Mais*

Let us start with the classical semantic analysis of French *mais*. *Mais* is traditionally described as having two meanings, represented in two different lexical items in German (*sondern* vs. *aber*) and in Spanish (*sino* vs. *pero*) (Anscombe and Ducrot 1977), respectively labelled *SN* and *PA*:

- (i) *SN* (*sondern*) introduces a correction, and needs an explicit negative utterance as a first argument.¹⁰ When negation is morphologically incorporated, *SN* is impossible:
- (24) a. *Marie n'est pas heureuse, SN déprimée.*
'Mary is not happy SN depressed'
- b. **Marie est malheureuse, SN déprimée.*
'Mary is unhappy SN depressed'
- (ii) *PA* (*aber*) is a true pragmatic connective, and induces a counterargument: *p PA q* is an argument for $\neg r$, the conclusion inferable from *q*, which contradicts *r*, the conclusion inferred from *p*.
One issue is linked to the possible use of *PA* and *SN* after a negation, as in (25):

¹⁰For Anscombe and Ducrot (1977, 40), *SN* is not a connective, but a semantic operator: *SN* would be a semantic subordination marker, whereas *PA* a semantic coordination marker (Bally).

- (25) a. *Il n'est pas français, SN allemand.*
 'He is not French, SN German'
 b. *Il n'est pas français, PA il parle très bien français.*
 'He is not French, PA he speaks French very well'

How can we distinguish these two *mais* when a sentential negation precedes the connective? Anscombe and Ducrot (1977) propose a test according to which *SN* is compatible with *au contraire* (on the contrary) and *même que* (even that), whereas *PA* is compatible with *cependant* (though), *pourtant* (however), *néanmoins* (nevertheless) when the conclusion *r* triggered by *not-p* is *not-q*, and *en revanche, par contre* (on the other hand) when $r \neq \text{not-}q$.¹¹

- (26) *Il n'est pas français, SN au contraire il est allemand.*
 'He is not French, SN on the contrary he is German'
 (27) *Il n'est pas français, PA pourtant il parle très bien français.*
 'He is not French, PA however he speaks French very well'

Now, the main point to explain is the relation between two types of *mais* and two types of negation.

In French, *mais* can introduce two types of corrective sentences after a negative sentence. The type and scope of negation in these two structures are not the same: (i) with a descriptive negation, negation is downward entailing; (ii) with a metalinguistic negation, negation is upward oriented:

- (28) *Abi n'est pas belle (NEG), mais quelconque (COR)*¹²
 downward negation
 'Abi is not beautiful, but ordinary'
 (29) *Abi n'est pas belle (NEG), mais extraordinaire (COR)*
 upward negation
 'Abi is not beautiful, but gorgeous'

These two structures have different entailments, introduce two different discourse relations and produce different cognitive effects (Moeschler 2013b). We will use here only the entailment test:

- (30) Downward negation
 COR $\rightarrow$ NEG
 Abi is ordinary $\rightarrow$ Abi is not beautiful¹³

¹¹This is a test of compatibility, which should give clues about the downward vs. upward orientation of the negative sentence.

¹²COR stands for 'correction', NEG for 'negation'.

¹³This analysis is not Anscombe and Ducrot's: they claim that the relation between COR and NEG is not entailment, but justification: "*En disant p SN q, le locuteur présente q [COR] comme la justification de son refus de p' [POS]; ce qui n'exige pas nécessairement que p implique logiquement [entails] la fausseté de p' [NEG]. Tout ce que l'on peut dire, c'est que l'emploi de SN présente q comme réfutant p'. Ainsi on peut bien énoncer: Pierre ne fume pas la cigarette, SN le cigare. Pourtant il n'y a aucune incompatibilité logique entre fumer le cigare et fumer la cigarette.*"

- (31) Upward negation
 COR $\rightarrow$ POS
 Abi is gorgeous $\rightarrow$ Abi is beautiful

How to explain these different entailments? Before answering this question, note that these semantic effects can be achieved with or without *mais*, which is independent of the contrary (*beautiful-ordinary*) or scalar relation between predicates (*beautiful-gorgeous*):

- (32) *Abi n'est pas belle* (NEG), *elle est quelconque* (COR)
 downward negation
 'Abi is not beautiful, she is ordinary'
 (33) *Abi n'est pas belle* (NEG), *elle est extraordinaire* (COR)
 upward negation
 'Abi is not beautiful, she is gorgeous'

So, the scopes and the entailments of negation are not the same. In a semantic scale with positive polarity, like (34), (28) and (32) target a domain below the level of *beautiful*, whereas in (29) and (33), the target is above such a level, as shown explicitly in (35) and (36):

- (34) *extraordinaire > belle > ordinaire*
 'gorgeous > beautiful > ordinary'
 (35) *ordinaire < belle*
 'ordinary < beautiful'
 (36) *extraordinaire > belle*
 'gorgeous > beautiful'

Thus, the scope of negation is not the same in downward and upward negation. How can we explain this fact? In Moeschler (2013b), a general account is given, combining scope, entailment and types of negation.¹⁴ Recall that upward negation is not a descriptive negation, but a metalinguistic one, in Horn's (1985) sense. So (33) means something like (37), whereas (32) simply means (38)¹⁵:

- (37) I cannot affirm that Abi is beautiful, because she is gorgeous.
 (38) Abi is less than beautiful.

Mais le locuteur présente le fait que Pierre fume le cigare comme excluant qu'il puisse fumer la cigarette" (Anscombe and Ducrot 1977, 25). The comment of the example is not disputable. However, as soon as *p* and *q* contain scalar predicates, the entailment from COR to NEG is predictable because of the semantics of antonyms.

¹⁴Two other criteria are given in Moeschler (2013b): discourse relations and connectives.

¹⁵The main issue linked to Horn's analysis is that he uses the SN-PA distinction to give a linguistic criterion for the opposition between the two uses of negation. However, these two types of opposition are orthogonal, mainly because Anscombe and Ducrot's analysis restricts *PA* to *descriptive* negation, and *SN* to *polemic* negation. As we shall see, upward negation is not a case of polemic negation (referring to a positive utterance) but a case of metalinguistic negation.

The explanation works as follows. With descriptive negation, the scope of negation equals its entailments: in the presence or in the absence of COR, NEG scopes over a domain lower than the level described by the predicate in POS. So, (39) entails (40), and the scope of negation includes these propositions¹⁶:

- (39) Anne does not have three children (but two).
 (40) a. Anne has two children
 b. Anne has one child

What is striking—and this makes a crucial difference with presupposition—is that a negative sentence, in its descriptive use, does not target the scalar implicature of its positive counterpart (POS). So, if (41) implicates (42), (42) cannot be in the scope of negation, because it is above NEG entailments:

- (41) Anne has three children.
 (42) Anne has exactly three children.

Now, what about the entailment of metalinguistic negation, as in (43)?

- (43) Anne does not have three children, she has four.

Since “having four children” entails “having three, two and one”, the positive proposition (POS) cannot be under the scope of negation. Hence, negation scopes over something else than a proposition, and the classical explanation (Gazdar 1979 for instance) is that negation scopes over POS scalar implicature, that is, “Anne has exactly three children” (42). In other words, POS (having 3 children) implicates “exactly 3 children”, whereas NEG does not implicate the negation of POS scalar implicature (“Anne does not have exactly three children”): only NEG with a metalinguistic reading implicates the negation of POS scalar implicature. This is the main reason why COR is mandatory: without COR, NEG has a descriptive and no metalinguistic reading.

The last question to answer is the relation between *two uses of negation* (descriptive and metalinguistic) and *two types of mais*. Recall that for Anscombe and Ducrot (1977), followed by Horn (1989), when PA follows a negation, negation is always descriptive.¹⁷ Horn gives some arguments for SN following upward negation (Horn 1989, 392–413):

- (i) PA, contrary to SN, can introduce a reduced clause (44);
 (ii) SN, contrary to PA, cannot introduce an entire corrective clause (45):
 (44) a. *Il n'est pas grand PA petit*
 He is not tall PA short

¹⁶In scales expressed by numbers, the limit is a positive natural number. So 0 is not entailed, neither by 1 nor 2.

¹⁷“Nous avons (...) fondé notre description de PA sur l'hypothèse que, lorsqu'il suit une négation, il ne peut s'agir que d'une négation descriptive, et non pas polémique” (Anscombe and Ducrot 1977, 32).

- b. *Il n'est pas grand SN très grand*
 He is not tall SN very tall
- (45) a. *Il n'est pas grand PA il est petit.*
 He is not tall PA he is short
- b. * *Il n'est pas grand SN il est très grand.*
 He is not tall SN he is very tall

However, if we come back to the third criterion on *SN* and *PA*, that is, compatibility with *au contraire/en revanche*, we obtain a different picture:

- (46) a. *Abi n'est pas belle SN au contraire quelconque.*
 'Abi is not beautiful SN on the contrary ordinary'
- b. # *Abi n'est pas belle SN en revanche/pourtant quelconque.*
 'Abi is not beautiful SN on the other hand ordinary'
- (47) a. # *Abi n'est pas belle PA au contraire extraordinaire.*
 'Abi is not beautiful PA on the contrary gorgeous'
- b. *Abi n'est pas belle PA en revanche/pourtant extraordinaire.*
 'Abi is not beautiful PA on the other hand gorgeous'

If we take this test as a semantic one, then it appears that descriptive negation should be associated to *SN*, and metalinguistic negation to *PA*. Does it make any sense? To answer positively, I would like to give the following arguments.

First, as shown in Moeschler (2013b), the relevant discourse relations are not the same with descriptive and metalinguistic negation. With descriptive negation (DN), the relevant discourse relation is CORRECTION, meaning that a speaker who utters (46) evaluates what is depicted as a false statement, and corrects the false statement by a true one. In this case, no argumentative cue is given, and it would be strange to defend the idea that by saying NEG, the speaker is arguing for a conclusion *r*, and by correcting NEG by COR, she is arguing for a conclusion *not-r*. This can be shown by the fact that no conclusion can be drawn from NEG as regards COR: *pas belle* (not beautiful) does not implicate *quelconque* (ordinary).

Second, it appears that, in a discourse with a descriptive negation, NEG and COR are argumentatively co-oriented, and not anti-oriented, which is something that Anscombe and Ducrot's analysis does not predict.¹⁸ So contrary to their claim, DN cannot license *PA*. German provides a confirmation for this claim:

- (48) *Abi is nicht schön, sondern/*aber gewöhnlich.*
 'Abi is not beautiful SN/*PA ordinary'

Third, what about metalinguistic negation (MN) and the alternation *SN/PA*? Can we, as the examples in (47) predict, claim that MN is compatible with *PA*? Does it make any sense? Again, referring to discourse relations, it has been argued that the discourse relation in (47b) is CONTRAST, that is, a discourse relation where two arguments with the same polarity (*belle* and *extraordinaire*) are contrasted

¹⁸In fact, if *PA* were a case of DN, then *p* [NEG] and *q* [COR] in *p PA q* should be anti-oriented.

Table 6.4 2 types of negations, 2 types of *mais*

	SN	PA
Descriptive negation	+	–
Metalinguistic negation	+ (German) – (French)	+

(Moeschler 2013b). In this case, what is at stake is not a truth-conditional correction, but the ranking of the strongest argument. Being beautiful is not sufficient enough, so it is a weaker argument for a conclusion *r* than being gorgeous. Negation just allows the polarity contrast, and in this case, what is pragmatically inferred can be represented as in (49):

- (49) a. Abi is beautiful (p) $\leadsto$ Abi cannot play Juliet’s character (r)¹⁹
b. Abi is gorgeous (q) $\leadsto$ Abi can play Juliet’s character (not-r)

So, MN can only be consistent with *PA*, since *PA* exhibits a strong argumentative contrast. However, two caveats must be briefly discussed. First, we mentioned, following Anscombe and Ducrot (1977) and Horn (1989), that *PA* can be acceptable with and without a clause reduction. The question is thus whether *PA* following MN is compatible with an entire clause. Here are the facts:

- (50) a. *Abi n’est pas belle, mais extraordinaire*
PA + COR reduction: OK
‘Abi is not beautiful, but gorgeous’
b. *Abi n’est pas belle, elle est extraordinaire*
no PA, but entire COR: OK
‘Abi is not beautiful, she is gorgeous’
c. # *Abi n’est pas belle, mais elle est extraordinaire*
PA + entire COR: odd
‘Abi is not beautiful, but she is gorgeous’

The second caveat is what German tells us about MN and the opposition between *SN* and *PA*. French data make a strong correlation between *PA* and concessive connectives such as *pourtant/en revanche* as shown in (47) (cf. Moeschler 1989). Apparently, German prefers *SN* with MN, as in (51):

- (51) *Abi ist nicht schön, sondern wunderbar.*
‘Abi is not beautiful SN gorgeous’

Taking into account these two sets of facts, we can conclude that from an argumentative point of view, DN licenses *SN*, whereas MN licenses *PA* in some languages and *SN* in others.

We can thus summarize the main findings of this section with Table 6.4.

¹⁹Of course, the proposition conveying this conclusion (or implicature) is not ‘Abi is not beautiful’, as negation is metalinguistic.

6.6 With and Without *Mais*

We can now address the main issue of this paper: what makes the difference between discourses with and without *mais*, as the discourses in (52) are semantically (that is, truth-conditionally) identical to the discourses in (53):

- (52) a. *Abi n'est pas belle, ø elle est quelconque.*
 'Abi is not beautiful, ø she is ordinary'
 b. *Abi n'est pas belle, ø elle est extraordinaire.*
 'Abi is not beautiful, ø she is gorgeous'
- (53) a. *Abi n'est pas belle, mais quelconque.*
 'Abi is not beautiful, but ordinary'
 b. *Abi n'est pas belle, mais extraordinaire.*
 'Abi is not beautiful, but gorgeous'

In a more precise way, the issue is the contribution of *mais* to the interpretation of the discourse, and more precisely to the interpretation of negation and to the computation of contextual effects.²⁰

A classical answer is to rely on the procedural meaning attached to connectives, in this case *mais*. The procedural meaning of connectives is generally defined as a set of instructions for insuring inferences, by maximizing relevance and minimizing processing costs. Hence, discourses with *mais* should be easier to process and lead to faster processing. However, as we saw in Sect. 6.3, this general answer does not take into account the *mandatory* vs. *non-mandatory* nature of connectives, or their strong vs. weak conceptual meaning, let alone the nature of their procedural meaning. For instance, if we refer to Moeschler's (2016b) proposal in which conceptual and procedural meanings go hand in hand, *mais* is predicted to have a strong procedural meaning, because it is precise enough when it comes to the general properties of inference, such as anti-orientation and the contradictory relations between derived conclusions. On the other hand, its conceptual meaning is loose in such a way, at least as far as *PA* is concerned, that no precise semantic constraints limit the type of content relation between *p* and *q* in *p mais q*. However, this analysis is not fine-grained enough to answer our initial questions: when *mais* is following a negation, why is *mais* not mandatory and thus does not seem to bring a contribution to the interpretation of the discourse?²¹ Second, how can an addressee engage in processing without having any cue about the nature of negation (DN or MN), impacting the *SN* or *PA* reading of *mais*? As we see, no clear answer has been given in the procedural analysis of connectives.

²⁰As regards contextual effects of DN and MN, Moeschler (2013b) has demonstrated that DN has as a main contextual effect the suppression of POS from the context, whereas MN strengthens POS.

²¹For instance, it can be argued that its semantics is limited to what has been described in (9) as the semantics of *and*.

My answer to the ‘with or without’ issue (WWI) is the following. Connectives are procedural²² in two ways: they constrain the inferential process, and they contribute to the selection of the appropriate contextual assumptions. In other words, *mais* imposes different constraints on corrective and contrastive contexts, determined by the status of negation as downward entailing or upward oriented. So, in a more precise formulation, the prediction of the procedural approach advocated here is that processing costs are minimized, and cognitive effects will be more specific with respect to the interpretation of NEG and *mais* SN/PA meaning.

At this stage, it could be objected that the only way to answer WWI is to use experimental designs, that is, to test the theoretical assumptions experimentally. This claim is true, but only partially, for the following reasons. First, processing costs are easier to test, whereas cognitive effects are more difficult to test for connectives: for instance, self-paced reading tasks can discriminate easier vs. more difficult processing, but say nothing as regards the contextual effects obtained. Second, before engaging in any experimental research, fine-grained predictions to be tested must be carefully stated, which supposes a consistent and if possible complete answer to WWI.

Our proposal can be summarized in the following way:

- (54) WWI (1)
 - a. The difference between *mais* and its absence is a difference in *focus*.
 - b. What follows *mais* is new information, correcting or contrasting old information.
- (55) WWI with DN

With downward negation, *mais* introduces a *corrective focus*, and all contextual implications are consequences of the suppressing effect of POS and the implicatures accessible from COR.
- (56) WWI with MN

With upward negation, *mais* introduces a *contrastive focus*, and further implicatures, following POS strengthening, are linked to the implicatures accessible from COR.

In other words, the general impact of the presence of *mais* is an *informational effect*, which takes different forms depending on the nature of negation. By “information effect”, I refer to the way information structure is presented both with and without a connective.

The general format is the following:

- (57) WWI (2)
 - (a) with *mais*, COR is in a *focal* position;
 - (b) without connective, COR is a *specification* of the entailment domain of NEG (DN) or POS (MN).

²²For the sake of simplicity, I will put aside the conceptual component of the meaning of *mais*. As claimed earlier, even if this claim is strictly stipulative, the conceptual meaning of *mais* being weak, it should not intervene much in what I will call *procedural meaning*.

In other words, WWI is not only a question of fast vs. slow processing, and more specific vs. looser inferences resulting from the interpretation process. It is basically *informational*: *mais* emphasizes a new piece of information, with a precise status of the latter. Either the new information corrects the false information in NEG or reinforces it, by selecting in a set of alternatives sharing polar properties, the best candidate having more contextual effects. Let us briefly apply this hypothesis to our toy examples, with and without *mais*, with DN and MN:

- (58) *Abi n'est pas belle, mais extraordinaire*
 - a. Contrastive focus: *extraordinaire* is selected from a set of alternative {*belle, très belle, extraordinaire, magnifique...*}
 - b. COR implicatures: Abi is eligible for Juliet's character
- (59) *Abi n'est pas belle, mais ordinaire*
 - a. Corrective focus: *ordinaire* makes NEG true and gives the upmost degree of beauty possible
 - b. COR implicature: Abi is not eligible for Juliet's character
- (60) *Abi n'est pas belle, elle est extraordinaire*
 - a. Specification (at the level of explicature): the highest degree of beauty is gorgeous
 - b. Implicature: It is not the case that Abi is only beautiful
- (61) *Abi n'est pas belle, elle est ordinaire*
 - a. Specification (at the level of explicature): the right degree of beauty is below beautiful
 - b. Implicature: It is possible that Abi is at the lowest degree of beauty (ugly)

6.7 Implications and Conclusions

What are the implications of this proposal at a more general level? For instance, what could be the impact of WWI, as regards *mais*, for argumentation? This question is relevant in as much one strong assumption of this paper is valid, that is, *PA* is connected to MN, and *SN* to DN. Recall that *PA* is, in argumentation in language theory (Anscombe and Ducrot 1983, 1977; Ducrot et al. 1980), the argumentative *mais*. So, there should be a strong connection between MN and argumentation.

Here are the two predictions that my analysis leads to:

- (i) Argumentative discourses with connectives are more *efficient* than discourse without connectives, because they make argumentation relations explicit and have as side effects the minimization of processing costs and the maximization of relevance. But, as I stressed several times, this effect is not sufficient to answer WWI, let alone necessary.

- (ii) The second prediction is that argumentation with connectives are *stronger* because connectives introduce new focal information, which has more contextual implications than non-focal information, restricted to specifications (COR) of NEG (DN) or POS (MN) only.

This prediction is not only testable, because implicatures from COR should be more accessible and also more precise, but also substantive. WWI is not only a question of explicitness or specification at the level of explicature: it leads to a wider range of meanings, from entailments to implicatures. In other words, the more complex the meaning, the richer the interpretation, as predicted in Moeschler (2013c).

To conclude, I would like to stress one output of the analysis of corrective and contrastive sequences. Corrective sequences are cases of DN, and introduce a specification of the scope of negation, either in a direct way with *mais* having a corrective focus, or indirectly without *mais*. Contrastive sequences, on the other hand, are cases of MN, and are more complex, because MN is a case of metarepresentation, that is, a representation of a representation (Wilson 2012; Carston 2002; Moeschler 2015, 2018). In this case, contextual access and contextual effects do not have to solve a contradiction (*Abi is not beautiful and Abi is beautiful*), because entailment relations, as well as implicatures of COR and focal information, are strong inferences that lead to the strengthening of POS and other contextual effects.

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Part II
Argumentative Processes: Cognition
and Discourse

Chapter 7

Argumentation as a Bridge Between Metaphor and Reasoning

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Abstract The aim of this chapter is to explore the relationship between metaphor and reasoning, by claiming that argumentation might act as a bridge between metaphor and reasoning. Firstly, the chapter introduces metaphor as a *framing strategy* through which some relevant properties of a (generally more concrete and known) source domain are selected to understand a (generally less concrete and known) target domain. The mapping of properties from the source to the target domain implicitly forces the interpreter to consider the target from a specific perspective. Secondly, the chapter presents metaphor as an implicit argument where some inferences can be drawn from the comparison between the source and the target domain. In particular, this chapter aims to understand whether and to what extent such an argument might be linked to *analogical reasoning*. The chapter argues that, in case of faulty analogy, this kind of argument might have the form of a *quaternio terminorum*, where metaphor is the middle term. Finally, the chapter presents the results of an experimental study, aiming to test the effect of the *linguistic nature of the middle term* on the detection of such faulty analogy. The chapter concludes that a wider context is needed to make sense of an analogical argument with novel metaphors, whilst in a narrow context, a lexicalised metaphor might be extended and the overall argument might be interpreted as metaphoric.

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7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify the link between metaphor and reasoning, by claiming that argumentation might act as a bridge between metaphor and reasoning. Here, the term “argumentation” will be used in an intuitive sense, as covering any conveying of alleged *reasons* in support of conclusions that the speaker/writer wishes the hearer/reader to draw from some premises. In this intuitive sense, argumentation is strictly bound to *reasoning* as the activity of critically evaluating and justifying a standpoint on the basis of its grounds and warrants. From this point of view, the link between argumentation and reasoning might seem quite obvious, but the link between argumentation and metaphor is less so, even though it is fundamental—in our view—to understand why argumentation can be considered a bridge between metaphor and reasoning.

The first part of the chapter will introduce metaphor as a persuasive device. The chapter claims that metaphor is a framing strategy through which a (generally more abstract and less known) target domain is seen in light of a (generally more concrete and better known) source domain. Some relevant properties of the source domain are selected to understand the target domain, but in projecting such properties into the target domain, other properties remain underrated or simply hidden. The mapping of properties from the source to the target implicitly forces the interpreter to consider the target from a specific perspective.

The second part of the chapter will specifically argue that metaphor is argumentative, in that it could be seen as an implicit argument where some inferences can be drawn from the comparison between the source and the target domain. In particular, this chapter aims to understand whether and to what extent such an argument might be by analogy. Indeed, as noted by Epstein and Carolyn (2006: 37), “A comparison becomes reasoning by analogy when it is part of an argument: on one side of the comparison we draw a conclusion, so on the other side we should conclude the same”. The chapter will argue that, in case of metaphor, this kind of argument might have the form of a *quaternio terminorum*. Indeed, a shift in the metaphorical meaning of one term might lead to the fallacy of equivocation.

The third part of the chapter will present the results of an experimental study, carried out to understand when and to what extent metaphors play a persuasive role in argumentation, leading people to consider fallacious arguments as sound. The study aims to test the effect of the *linguistic nature of the middle term* on the detection of the fallacy of the four terms, in particular, in cases of *metaphor* as the middle term. The results show that participants found arguments having lexicalised metaphors as middle terms more persuasive than arguments having literal terms as middle terms, when the conclusion of the argument is plausible. The chapter argues that a wider context is needed to make sense of an analogical argument with novel metaphors, whilst in a narrow context a lexicalised metaphor might be extended and the overall argument might be interpreted as metaphoric.

7.2 Metaphors as Persuasive Strategies

In recent decades, scholars have devoted particular attention to the role of metaphors in everyday communication and have underlined their role as useful persuasive strategies in understanding and reasoning. By reconsidering traditional approaches to this issue (Aristotle 1966; Black 1962; Hesse 1963), most of them have drawn attention to the persuasive function of metaphors (Rossi 2016; Lakoff 1992, 2014; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Sopory and Dillard 2002; Thibodeau and Boroditsky 2011, 2013). Like other persuasive strategies (e.g., emotions and seduction), metaphors can be used to persuade, namely to promote “change in attitudes that results from the exposure in communication” (Petty and Cacioppo 1986, p. 5). Following this general definition of persuasion, it can be argued that any linguistic act of persuasion is a perlocutionary act (Austin 1962) which affects the hearer/reader’s attitudes, modifying her feelings, thoughts and/or actions. As already highlighted by Taillard (2000), understanding and believing can be deemed as the two main functions of communication achieved by means of persuasion.

While the role of metaphors as powerful persuasive devices is well recognised, consensus on which features affect their quality and therefore their persuasive effect is lacking (Sopory and Dillard 2002; Damerall and Kellogg 2016; Giora 2003). What is rather known is that the persuasive effect of metaphors depends on how they frame a given issue, that is how metaphors select and make salient only some characteristics and properties of an issue. Moving from the traditional framing theory, Robert Entman provides a general definition of frame:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman 1993, p. 52)

Persuasion is strongly related to the four framing functions described by Entman: how frames can propose a new definition of a problem, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies to it. In a recent paper, Burgers et al. (2016) use Entman’s definition to outline figurative framing as a specific framing type, with metaphorical framing completely falling within the figurative framing type. More specifically, they stress two distinct elements of a frame by distinguishing between the linguistic packaging and the conceptual content of a frame. They claim that frames work both as a framing device due to how something is said and a reasoning device due to the conceptual content of what is said (see also Rossi 2016). In this regard, previous experimental studies have found that exposure to a metaphor framing can induce substantial differences in opinion and modify people’s everyday reasoning. For example, Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011, 2013) and Thibodeau (2016) have found that people are influenced by metaphorical framing in conceptualising and reasoning about possible solutions to avert crime. The authors

have shown that when crime was presented in metaphorical terms as CRIME AS A VIRUS (namely, as a virus infecting a city and plaguing it), participants in the experiments were increasingly prone to suggest institutional social reforms to deal with the problem. Instead, when crime was presented by using the metaphor CRIME AS A BEAST (namely, as a wild beast preying on a city and increasingly lurking in it), participants were increasingly prone to suggest law enforcement and punishment to deal with it.

Similar findings have also been reported from other fields, such as healthcare communication. Hauser and Schwarz (2015) have produced evidence on the influence of ENEMY and WAR metaphors on the preventive behaviours of patients suffering from cancer: when the ENEMY and WAR framings were used, self-limiting behaviours (e.g., reduction in alcohol and red meat consumption) that reduce the risk of cancer were not favoured. This occurred because such a framing is associated more with active engagement behaviours supporting attacks against an enemy (e.g., be physically active). Interestingly, in all such cases, the persuasive effect due to metaphorical framing affects people in an implicit and often unconscious way. In this chapter we are interested in analysing precisely how and to what extent information conveyed by metaphorical framing (whether or not explicit) and therefore offering a particular perspective on an issue, alters human understanding and reasoning (see also Ervas et al. 2016).

7.3 Metaphors as Argumentative Devices

When considering prototypical persuasive contexts (e.g., advertisements), it is quite obvious to point out the role of metaphorical frames as effective communicative strategies to promote a particular perspective. In this respect, it has been claimed that metaphors are reasoning devices useful also to encourage perspectival changes on an issue (Burgers et al. 2016; Steen 2008), regardless of whether or not their influence operate at the conscious level. In this contribution we use argumentation to explore the role of metaphors in understanding and reasoning.

Although it is known that metaphors are useful to structure and organize arguments of a message (Gentner 1982, 1989; Rossi 2016; Macagno and Zavatta 2014; Oswald and Rihs 2014; Wagemans 2016), a solid theoretical approach on metaphors is still missing within argumentation theory. The prevailing interpretation within argumentation theory is rather related to an interpretation of metaphor in “the context of the argumentative theory of analogy” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958, p. 399; but see also Wagemans (2016) for a critical discussion of this approach; Macagno et al. 2017; Macagno 2017). Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (*ibid.*) argue: “In the context of argumentation, at least,

we cannot better describe a metaphor than by conceiving it as a condensed analogy, resulting from the fusion of an element from the *phoros*¹ with an element from the Theme”.

The similarities between metaphor and analogy have been discussed at both the theoretical and the experimental level. For example, Gentner and collaborators (2001, p. 243) have proposed, *inter alia*, that “metaphor is like analogy—that the basic processes of analogy are at work in metaphor”. From this point of view, like analogies, metaphors also are processed as systems of relations.

When a metaphor is first encountered, both the target and base terms refer to specific concepts from different semantic domains and the metaphor is interpreted by aligning the two representations and importing further predicates from the base to the target. One result of this mapping is that the common relational structure that forms the metaphor interpretation will increase in salience relatively to nonaligned aspects of the representations. If the same base term is repeatedly aligned with different targets so as to yield the same basic interpretation, then the highlighted system may become conventionally associated with the base as an abstract metaphoric category (*ibid.*, pp. 228–229).

Authors also discuss the differences between types of metaphors (e.g. conventional vs. novel metaphors). To address this issue, different interpretative processes should be called into question (see Sect. 7.7).

At the theoretical level, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s idea of metaphor as an implicit and condensed argument has been taken up by Oswald and Rihs (2014). Analysing the extended metaphor “USA is an empire” contained in a political pamphlet written by the Swiss politician Oskar Feysinger, they have highlighted the role of extended metaphors as argumentative devices to build up (1) the message’s convincingness and (2) the speaker’s perceived competence (*ethos*). The multiple and coherent systematic correspondences between the target (USA) and the source domain (EMPIRE) can be remarkably exploited in an argumentative way. So, in a way, novel metaphors and extended metaphors may be placed on an opposite end of a continuum²: in the first instance, the system of relations is less explicit or is entirely implicit, and this is the reason behind the difficulty in reconstructing metaphorical meaning (Macagno and Zavatta 2014); conversely, in the latter case, the repeated instantiations of the same metaphor make for a “complex argumentation” (Oswald and Rihs 2014, p. 146) through which reality can be perceived and interpreted. However, the close relation between analogy and metaphor is not limited to the explicit systems of relations prevailing in extended metaphors. In the next section, we will further analyse the argumentative exploitation of analogy in extended and non-extended metaphors.

¹Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958, 82) offer the following definition of *phoros*: “In the ordinary course, the *phoros* is better known than the theme of which it should clarify the structure or establish the value, either its value as a whole or the respective value of its components”.

²See Sects. 7.4 and 7.6 for more details on the distinction between lexicalised and novel metaphors.

7.4 Metaphor and Analogical Reasoning

The distinction between metaphor and analogy is very clear if we take the classical definition of both phenomena. That is, on one hand the idea of metaphor as a figure of speech, where one thing means another, something which is similar in some respect: metaphors are instances in which words, e.g. *goldmine*, are referred to a concept which belongs to a different domain (e.g. *encyclopedia*). On the other hand analogy is a logical structure in which we can infer an unknown concept through a proportion: $A:B = C:X$. In this case there is a comparison (between B and X), justified from the similarity of the relations holding between A-B and C-X. For example it is the relation “Breathe with” among “Mammals” and “lungs” that authorizes the inference to the existence of something similar to “lungs” in “fishes” (“Fishes”-“Breathe with”-X). If we consider the conceptual theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), the difference between metaphor and analogy is pretty fine: an analogy can be grounded in a conceptual metaphor; a conceptual metaphor can be based on an analogy; each analogical proportion can be viewed as one of the relationships that define the conceptual metaphor mapping.

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, for example, might have the following possible analogies:

- (1) The starting point:journey = X:life
- (2) The ending point:journey = X:life
- (3) The means to move:journey = X:life

Analogical reasoning should allow us to draw reasonably sound conclusions about X, through the proportion. When the mapping is conventional, we already know the words to substitute X with, as for instance in:

- (4) The starting point:journey = birth:life

Moreover the conceptual metaphor can suggest new (uncertain and risky) analogies, as in the following case:

- (5) The means to move:journey = X:life

We do not have a lexicalised concept, but we can reason about it considering the way in which the means of transport might play a role in the target domain. This case is very frequent in scientific discovery and in explanation processes (Hesse 1963; Gentner 1982; Ervas et al. 2017).

Some examples of scientific reasoning related to discovery processes are analysed by Gentner and Jeziorsky (1993). They consider analogies as evolution of metaphors: they compare alchemists, who used many metaphors in an extensive and disordered manner, and authors such as Robert Boyle (1627–1691) and Sadi Carnot (1796–1832) who instead used analogy to infer the structure of local motion and heat respectively. Carnot introduced the parallelism between

the motive power of heat and the motive power of water and establishes a simple, yet important parallel. Just as the amount of power produced by a given fall of water is limited, the power attainable from a certain transfer of heat is limited. (Gentner and Jeziorsky 1993, p. 453)

He then established the correspondence between the amount of substance (water or caloric) that “falls” and the distance of the “drop” between levels. This is actually a systematic relational structure, typical of modern scientific practice. Therefore, scientific analogies are creative because they match two domains conceptually unrelated before, under the condition that relationships between them are systematic and coherent.

A similar process from a possible (nonliteral) similarity between different concepts to analogy is also described by Cameron (2003) in teacher-students interaction. Cameron discusses the example of a teacher explaining the formation process of igneous rocks; the teacher compared volcanic lava with “sticky treacle” and “runny butter”, while a student suggested a third comparison with “wax”. Among these three metaphors only the second one (“runny butter”) preserves the structure of the source domain in the target domain. It is really an analogy, because it keeps the same “relations” within the conceptual domains: heating butter causes a change in the substance similar to what happens to heated rock. In Cameron’s words: “Treacle and wax are not analogies in this sense, since treacle does not need heat to change it to a liquid, and wax, once melted, does not further change its form as it gets hotter” (Cameron 2003, p. 104). During the whole discourse, the teacher increased students’ understanding by adding details that made the analogy precise (e.g. how igneous rocks came to be formed). From this point of view, the interaction around metaphors creates a series of shared ideas in the developing discourse, which gradually bring the teacher’s and students’ understanding closer.

In both these cases, the development of understanding (through analogies) in scientific discovery and in interactive talking-and-thinking teaching discourse, we see a process that aims to understand something that is considered at some level true (Gentner 1982, 1989). Each part of the proportion (or mapping) can be examined to state the degree of truth or plausibility in cases in which a right answer is not known. The analogical reasoning, in any case, is an uncertain reasoning, in which there is always an assumption of truth that is not necessarily correct. The analogy between the atom and the solar system, stated by Niels Bohr and Ernest Rutherford in 1913, for example, had been considered true until quantum mechanics offered a different model of the atom. However, even though the model has been superseded, the idea that an atom is a small, positively charged, nucleus, surrounded by electrons that travel in circular orbits around it still holds. The analogy is still valid in this respect, but it was literally false, from the very beginning, about other aspects that remained unanswered:

The orbits were continuous and could occur at any distance from the nucleus, so why was the energy given off by atoms limited to specific frequencies? What “tuned” the atoms, keeping their electrons in certain paths with certain amounts of energy? How was it that they could jump from one path to another, as from the note A to C, but never performed a *glissando* in between? (Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein 1999, p. 136)

This shows that analogical reasoning is a type of reasoning that we trust, even if the conclusions of this kind of schema are not necessarily true, or even false. In the following sections, we will examine a specific case in which this kind of reasoning becomes fallacious, and how language use has an impact on analogy comprehension.

7.5 Analogical Reasoning and *Quaternio Terminorum*

When is analogical reasoning sound and when is it fallacious? Argumentation theory discusses the conditions under which a conclusion follows from true premises. To this effect, the concepts of *validity* and *soundness* are required (Walton 2005, 2010): an argument is *valid* if its conclusion is true whenever its premises are true, whilst an argument is *sound* if it is valid and all its premises are true. Validity and soundness are crucial in evaluating arguments. Nonetheless, these notions seem too tight for ordinary language in communication. Due to this reason, two weakened versions of these concepts are *strength* and *goodness* (Bonissone 1987; Borwein and Bailey 2008; Epstein and Kernberger 2006, Chap. 3). We call an argument *strong* if its conclusion is very *likely* to be true, whenever its premises are true. In other words, premises provide reasons that support the probable truth of the conclusion. We call an argument *weak* which is not strong: a fallacy is a weak argument. An argument is *good* if it is *strong* and all its premises are *plausible*.

In analogical reasoning featuring a metaphor, it might be argued that a comparison between two terms A and B is established, where A and B share some relevant properties. In metaphors with the form “A is B”, the speaker is neither saying that all the properties of B correspond to the properties of A, nor vice versa. For instance, when we say that “A lawyer is a shark”, we are not saying that a lawyer is identical to a shark, but rather that a lawyer is similar/comparable to a shark in some respect, i.e. in terms of a set of relevant properties X. Based on this comparison, if B has the relevant property C (belonging to the set X), then we are authorised to conclude that A also has the property C. In this perspective, given that “A shark is aggressive”, as per analogy, we should conclude that “A lawyer is aggressive”. The argument would then be:

- P1 A lawyer is a shark
- P2 A shark is aggressive
- C A lawyer is aggressive

In this case, we would probably be prone to accept the argument as strong, as “shark” might have the same reading in P1 and P2. The second premise makes explicit a property which was implicit in the first premise. However, in case the property C is not included in the set X, we would not be much prone to accept the argument as strong and hence would judge it as fallacious:

- P1 A lawyer is a shark
- P2 A shark is a fish
- C A lawyer is a fish

In such a case, as noted by Sergioli and Ternullo (2014), there is a shift in the meaning of the middle term: the term “shark” would not be used with the same meaning in P1 and P2. In P1 it has a metaphoric meaning while in P2 a literal meaning. Therefore, the analogical reasoning could not be guaranteed and the argument would be fallacious because it would contain four terms instead of three terms. In other words, because of the shift in the meaning of the middle term, the argument has the structure of a *quaternio terminorum*. *Quaternio terminorum* (Copi et al. 2014, pp. 230–231; Smiley 1973, pp. 136–154) is a well-known case of a fallacious argument based on the *ambiguity* of its middle term, which has different meanings in the two premises (Dunbar 2001; Fearnside and Holter 1959; Hamblin 1970; Kroeger 2005, Sect. 3.1; Quine 1960, Sects. 27–31). If the middle term assumes a different meaning in each premise, then a syllogism, de facto, contains a fourth, hidden term, that causes the fallacy. However, a *quaternio terminorum* is not just a formal fallacy, in the sense of being simply an invalid syllogism (or a weak argument in case of ordinary language); it is better classified as a fallacy of equivocation, due to the lexical ambiguity of the middle term.

As previously argued, analogical reasoning thrives on comparisons which are quite frequent in everyday language and play an important role in human reasoning. A fallacious analogical argument establishes a faulty analogy as its conclusion. As Fearnside and Holter argued (1959, p. 4):

Faulty analogy consists either in assuming that shared properties will continue indefinitely to be found in new members, or in assuming that it is highly probable there will be some other shared property in a class so wide that there is only a low initial probability of finding any other shared properties relevant to the purpose at hand.

Metaphors—because of their intrinsic ambiguity—are particularly likely to deceive us in the process of assessing the strength of an argument, i.e. the proper attribution of a certain analogy as its conclusion. *Quaternio terminorum* may appear *prima facie* strong and formally valid, but it is actually based upon lexical ambiguity.

7.6 Literal and Metaphorical Middle Terms

Which and how many properties are relevant, i.e. shared by A and B, whenever we assert that they are analogous? Unfortunately, there is no other way to respond to this question but to check, each time a property of A is taken into account, whether also B has it. This process strictly depends on the linguistic nature of the middle term. Indeed, in *quaternio terminorum*, middle terms can have two different literal

meanings, or else a non-literal meaning and a literal meaning, as in the case of metaphors. Just to give an example of each condition:

Quaternio terminorum with a literal middle term:

- [P1] Barclays is a bank;
- [P2] A bank is a riverside;
- [C] Barclays is a riverside.

Quaternio terminorum with a metaphorical middle term:

- [P1] Brad Pitt is a star;
- [P2] A star is a celestial body;
- [C] Brad Pitt is a celestial body.

When the different literal meanings of the middle term have no semantic relation, we run into a case of lexical ambiguity called homonymy (Frath 2001; Lyons 1977; Taylor 2003). For example, the term bank is homonymous because it has two completely different literal meanings: “financial institution” and “riverside”. When the different literal meanings of the middle term have a semantic relation, we run into a case of polysemy: for instance, the term “cut” is polysemous because it has different (but semantically related) literal meanings in “cut the grass” and “cut the hair”.

In the case of a metaphorical middle terms, the meaning in a premise can be literal and the meaning in the other premise can be non-literal. The case of lexicalized metaphors is somewhat similar to polysemy, as their frequent use has brought them to a status similar to literal terms. This is why they are called “dead” metaphors. For instance, the word food has the literal meaning “something to eat”, but it also the non-literal meaning “something to think about”, when it is used in “food for thought”. As in the case of polysemy, the two meanings have a semantic relation represented by the shared properties of the source domain of eating and the target domain of thinking. Novel metaphors instead involve a completely new and creative use of language. The semantic relation between the literal and the non-literal meanings of a novel metaphor is not stereotypically assigned by speakers (and already classified in dictionaries), thus preserving its force and imaginative effectiveness. This is why they are called “live” metaphors.

Disambiguating a homonymous middle term would require suppressing one of its two literal meanings, namely the irrelevant one. For instance, disambiguating the homonymous word “bank” would require selecting one of its two meanings, i.e. “financial institution” or “riverside” (Gernsbacher 1990; Gernsbacher and Faust 1991). Contrary to homonyms, where the different meanings are clearly divergent, polysemous words exhibit a list of possible (related) meanings that can be selected. The meanings of a polysemous word partly overlap (Ervas 2015; Gentner et al. 1993; Gick and Holyoak 1983). However, the literal and the non-literal meanings of a metaphorical term also share some common semantic properties which allow for metaphor understanding.

Appealing to a “unified approach” to literal and non-literal usages of language, a process of modulation (lexical narrowing or broadening) has been proposed to explain the process of selection of the relevant meaning in polysemy and metaphors (Carston 2002; Recanati 2004, 2010). In the case of lexical narrowing, the concept communicated by using a term has a more restricted interpretation than the linguistically-encoded concept. For instance, in the sentence “I cut the grass”, we select a more specific concept “cut” than the conventional concept encoded by the polysemous term “cut”. This “ad hoc” concept is relative to the sentential context and differs from the “ad hoc” concept we pick up in the sentence “I cut my hair” (Ervas 2015). We speak of lexical broadening when the concept expressed by the usage of a term conveys a more general interpretation than the linguistically-encoded concept. For instance, a metaphorical extension is a type of broadening, where some properties of the linguistically-encoded concept are selected to understand the communicated “ad hoc” concept. For instance, to understand the sentence “Brad Pitt is a star”, we select the properties of the linguistically-encoded concept “star” required to grasp the intended ad hoc concept, i.e. to be brilliant, unreachable, or extra-ordinary. Other irrelevant properties of the linguistically-encoded concept “star” (for instance, to be a celestial body) are suppressed (Glucksberg et al. 2001; Rubio Fernández 2007).

A suppression process is involved in both disambiguation and metaphor interpretation (Gernsbacher and Faust 1991). However, in the process of disambiguation of a homonym the irrelevant meaning disappears more quickly, when compared to the process of polysemy and metaphor interpretation, which requires more demanding attentional resources to suppress the corresponding literal meaning (Rubio Fernández 2007). In homonym disambiguation, the irrelevant literal meaning has indeed no semantic relation with the contextually relevant meaning, while in metaphor interpretation the literal meaning of the source domain shares some semantic properties with the intended, non-literal meaning. Novel metaphor comprehension requires an even more demanding effort to find out the shared properties intended by the speaker and a finer knowledge of the context and its features (Glucksberg and Estes 2000; Indurkha 2007). It has been argued that additional semantic information coming from the context may produce an advantage in metaphor interpretation, called “context availability effect” (Schwanenflugel et al. 1988; Glucksberg and Estes 2000). Moreover, in the case of novel metaphors, the literal meaning would not be suppressed straightforwardly; it would endure eliciting a range of communicated affective and imagistic effects (Glucksberg et al. 2001; Gernsbacher et al. 2001; Glucksberg 2003; Giora 2003; Indurkha 2007; Rubio Fernández 2005, 2007).

7.7 Experimenting with *Quaternio Terminorum*

The kind of ambiguity of the middle term might influence the persuasive effect of a *quaternio terminorum*, where a faulty analogy is committed. Indeed, a *quaternio terminorum* requires a process of disambiguation to realize the existence of four terms in the logical structure: one of the meanings of the middle term has to be suppressed in order to identify the fallacy. In an experimental study on the effect of metaphor in *quaternio terminorum* (Ervas et al. 2015), it has been hypothesized that *quaternio terminorum* identification relies mainly on the nature of the middle term, and therefore on the process of disambiguation required to understand the meanings of the middle term. The empirical study tested a group of ($N = 40$) adults by using a series of verbally presented arguments, having the structure of *quaternio terminorum* and containing either a lexical ambiguous (H: homonymous or P: polysemous) or a metaphorical (LM: lexicalised metaphors or NM: novel metaphors) middle term. Three sets of arguments were presented: (1) 6 standard *quaternio terminorum* $\times$ (H, P, LM, NM), with true premises and false conclusion; (2) 6 strong arguments $\times$ (H, P, LM, NM) with true premises and true conclusion, where the middle term had the same meaning in both premises; (3) 6 *quaternio terminorum* $\times$ (H, P, LM, NM) with true premises and plausible conclusion, to avoid the facilitation effect of the false conclusion and to force participants to check the connection between premises. Fillers contained 25 clearly strong arguments and 25 clearly weak arguments, to check whether participants know how to distinguish strong and weak arguments, without explicit instructions. The participants were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to the following question: “Does the conclusion follow from the premises?”.

The results showed that the majority of participants were able to identify both strong arguments and standard *quaternio terminorum*. However, when compared with strong arguments, standard *quaternio terminorum* are much harder to detect. Indeed, strong arguments are easier to detect because they involve no disambiguation process, while a *quaternio terminorum* requires a process of disambiguation to realize the existence of four terms in the logical structure. *Quaternio terminorum* with plausible conclusion were even harder to detect, because the plausible conclusion forced participants to evaluate the whole argument and avoid a separate reading of the single conclusion. A significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between participants missing and recognizing the fallacy was observed just in the LM condition. This seems to suggest that, in the case of arguments with plausible conclusion, lexicalised metaphors do alter participants’ perception of the strength of a fallacious argument, thus making them to consider it strong.

In particular, the norming studies showed that the majority of premises with lexicalised metaphors (83%) were perceived as true, as a direct consequence of their being lexicalized, while the majority of sentences with novel metaphors (79%) were perceived as false (Ervas and Ledda 2014). The case of lexicalized metaphors is indeed very interesting because, as the experimental literature shows, they are processed as fast as literal meanings (Giora 2003) and participants show some

difficulty in rejecting them as literally false (Glucksberg 2003). Determining either truth or falsity of premises with lexical ambiguities represents a major step towards the identification of a fallacy, such as a *quaternio terminorum*. It is common to judge sentences featuring lexicalised metaphors as true, relying on naïve intuitions and this phenomenon affects the global understanding of an argument. This might be the main reason why “common” lexicalised metaphors make fallacious arguments persuasive. Therefore, it is plausible that attributing truth conditions to premises featuring lexicalised metaphors as they were literal terms influenced the evaluation of the strength of the whole argument.

Novel metaphors as middle terms made the arguments patently fallacious, as the premises were perceived as false. However, the participants tended to make sense of the premises with novel metaphors and to consider them as true anyway, by resorting to a more creative style of reasoning. They did not directly assign naïve truth conditions as they did in case of lexicalised metaphor as middle terms. They instead added information to the premise in order to broaden its context and to make the novel metaphor understandable in the premise, thus ending up perceiving the premise as true. An example is the following *quaternio terminorum*:

- [P1] Old age is a dinner;
- [P2] A dinner is quite long;
- [C] Old age is quite long.

Participants tend to explain P1 by suggesting that a dinner is at the end of the day, i.e. adding information, and in this sense it can be compared to old age, that is at the end of life. In this perspective, the conclusion might seem plausible or at least it is no longer patently false. In adjusting their comprehension of the truth conditions of the premise, participants made sense of the analogy between “old age” and “a dinner”, and thus of the conclusion of the argument.

As experimental literature has shown (Schwanenflugel et al. 1988; Glucksberg and Estes 2000; Giora 2003), because of their unfamiliarity, a wider context is required to understand novel metaphors. The contextual information in a premise would be too narrow to produce the typical imagistic effect novel metaphors possess (Lai et al. 2009). In argumentative contexts such as those represented by the concatenation of premises in a *quaternio terminorum*, the context needed to interpret novel metaphors is very narrow. As the available information in such a narrow context is not sufficient to recognize the relevant properties conveyed by the metaphor, a broader context is necessarily required. This might be the reason why participants need to resort to imagination to add information and interpret the premises with novel metaphors and make the argument meaningful. In contrast to lexicalised metaphors, novel metaphors have the positive role of enhancing imagination (Carston 2010; Carston and Wearing 2011) and recovering non-said (sometimes invented or imagined) information which elicits a new, alternative interpretation of the argument.

In case of lexicalised metaphor, instead, a narrow context provided by the argument itself might be sufficient to make sense of the analogy. For instance, in the following *quaternio terminorum*:

- [P1] Writing a thesis is a marathon;
- [P2] A marathon is a long-distance race;
- [C] Writing a thesis is a long-distance race.

“Marathon” is used as a lexicalised metaphor in P1 and as a literal term in P2, thus generating the fallacy of equivocation. However, participants might have read the plausible conclusion as metaphorical and as the outcome of an extension of the metaphor in P1. In this perspective, P2 might simply represent an extension of the metaphor in P1, making explicit or even adding a property (“being a long-distance race”) which might not have been considered relevant in the initial interpretation of P1, thus adjusting the “ad hoc” concept of “marathon”. The possibility to extend the metaphor as middle term in P1 and to read the conclusion metaphorically is specific of reasoning with metaphors and completely missing in literal language. Such extension in the interpretation of lexicalised metaphor in the argumentative context is expedient to maintain analogical reasoning, when the conclusion is far from being patently false and might still preserve the metaphorical meaning of the first premise.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter argued that metaphor might act as a persuasive device in argumentation and, specifically, in arguments soliciting analogical reasoning. In case of faulty analogy, such arguments might have the structure of a *quaternio terminorum*, where a shift in the meaning of the middle term leads to the fallacy of equivocation. In case of lexicalised metaphors as middle term, the metaphorical reading of the middle term might be extended exploiting the narrow context of the argument, where the meaning of the middle term in the second premise is literal. Such an extension would be functional to the maintenance of the analogy already settled in the first premise in the argument and to make sense of the plausible conclusion from a metaphorical point of view. Reading the overall argument as metaphorical would be indeed a pretty reasonable alternative from participants’ point of view, when compared to its evaluation as being simply fallacious, above all when the conclusion is plausible and interpretable under “other lenses”.

In the case of novel metaphors being used as the middle term, instead, a wider context would be needed to make sense of the first premise itself and to perceive it as true. An imaginative route would lead the interpreter to add the relevant information required to make sense of the analogy in the first premise. Contrary to the standard conceptual theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), according to which both lexicalised and novel metaphors are the “superficial” counterpart of

(more or less conventional) conceptual structures, this chapter argued that lexicalised and novel metaphors differ in terms of both linguistic and cognitive processing. In particular, lexicalised and novel metaphors also differ in terms of communicative effects, the former being more persuasive than the latter in narrower contexts. The standard conceptual theory of metaphor conflates the communicative dimension of metaphor into its linguistic and cognitive dimensions, and therefore cannot explain communicative aspects which cannot be simplistically reduced solely to either the framing effect or the linguistic structure (Steen 2008; Gola and Ervas 2016). As argued in this chapter, the linguistic nature of the middle term interacts with the argumentative context and the overall persuasive effect depends not only on the framing effect given by the metaphor but also on the possibility of extending it with the creation of an “ad hoc” concept (in case of lexicalised metaphors) or with recourse to imagination (in case of novel metaphors) to make sense of the analogy.

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Chapter 8

The Straw Man Fallacy as a Prestige-Gaining Device

Louis de Saussure

Abstract In this paper, we consider the straw man fallacy from the perspective of pragmatic inference. Our main claim is that the straw man fallacy is a ‘pragmatic winner’ not primarily because of its persuasive power but rather because it targets the pragmatic cognitive-inferential skills of its victim while enhancing the prestige of its author. We consider that in the context of a straw man fallacy, the issue of the burden of proof, which is ‘reversed’, does not directly bear on the argumentation itself but has essentially to do with the difficulty for the targeted speaker of getting the attention of the audience back. It is difficult because countering this fallacy involves primarily a discussion of the reasons why the inference drawn (the meaning or the thought fallaciously attributed to the targeted speaker) was unduly derived, a process which is virtually destined to be a failure first of all because of the lack of relevance (in the sense of Sperber and Wilson in *Relevance. Communication and cognition*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1995) of *justifications* in comparison with that of actual points. Notions of retractability and the explicit-implicit divide are central to our approach.

8.1 Introduction¹

Among the main questions raised by fallacies, these two are of particular interest not only for the argumentation scholar but also to the pragmatist, if considering the notion of ‘winning an argument’ from a wide, pragmatic and communicative, perspective:

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- (1) How is it that fallacies are successful in persuading?
- (2) How is it that fallacies may occasionally fail in persuading an audience but still constitute a winning move in some argumentative interactions?

The description of fallacies and of their effects does not exhaust the need for deeper, cognitive, explanations relatively to their actual efficiency on these two levels.

The first question is about *how* we actually process information: since fallacies are demonstrably invalid or unacceptable from a normative point of view, they have to be processed through ‘peripheral’ routes (cf. Petty and Cacioppo 1986), relying on heuristics (Tversky and Kahneman 1974) and ‘fast and frugal’ processes (Gigerenzer 2004).²

Human verbal information processing is not only about comprehending utterances or grasping others’ acts of communication. Information processing does not only have an informational outcome, but also an epistemic one. These processes have a bearing on epistemic attitudes and as such they involve some sort of evaluation. Fallacies, just as other types of arguments, are filtered out by our cognitive abilities of ‘epistemic vigilance’ (Sperber et al. 2010) before they are integrated in the cognitive environment (i.e. before they are accepted as true).

The second question has to do with what humans actually do with information as far as actual individual opponents are considered. The literature has various views on the question of why we actually enter into argumentative dialogues. The first hypothesis that comes to mind is that we do so in order to achieve better knowledge through an informed exchange of ideas. It’s certainly generally true but arguing involves several layers of problems and several reasons to be persuaded or convinced. Actually, this question has two aspects, reflected in the two questions above. First, one can be impressed by an argument. Second, however, one can be impressed by the argumentative skills of an individual, regardless of the quality of the arguments themselves.

Dessalles (2011) develops a theory where language has basically two functions, narration and argumentation. Argumentation is then viewed as being only incidentally an ability to do collective problem-solving; its main function is rather to chase the lies of others, which entails gaining prestige out of it and promoting oneself in the social hierarchies and patterns of dominance against others. A related claim is made by Pinker et al. (2008) in a paper on how implicit meaning, therefore retractability, enables the passing of proposals to others without being formally held responsible for them (we will discuss more precisely the question of retractability further down). They claim that the fact that speakers may retract from meanings to which they are not formally committed enables them to enter complex interactions

²These approaches are not similar; they diverge on various points which we cannot discuss here. They however all tackle the fact believability often relies on other processes than analytical, reflexive, judgement.

where briberies, and other forms of manipulative attempts, can be performed without being exposed to social sanctions.³

Commitment (in the sense of Hamblin 1970: the contents to which the speaker is formally committed to having put forward),⁴ and therefore retractability, are logically binary: a speaker cannot retract from what is said (unless in order to make a corrective statement), because retracting from what is overtly stated raises a formal inconsistency. On the contrary, what is implicated is retractable.⁵ However, de Saussure and Oswald (2009) point out that in fact, there are indeed implicit meanings that are, pragmatically, very unlikely to be retracted without a feeling of bad faith (that is a sense of informal, or pragmatic, inconsistency). Logical inconsistency is of course a true-or-false objective property, but retractability is actually a gradual psychological notion.

Contents which are communicated pragmatically can be more or less committing in contexts, but all are logically cancellable without formal inconsistency. As a principle, implicatures that are remote from the linguistic form are perhaps more likely to be retracted without problems, and pragmatic modulations that are mere extensions of the linguistic form, or ‘explicatures’ (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995), are more likely to trigger feelings of bad faith if they are retracted, but these are only main trends. De Saussure and Oswald (2009) claim that the more a content is relevant in the circumstances, the less it can be retracted without raising issues of bad faith. For this reason, inferences that come up automatically in most contexts, although they are of course available or cancellable in specific contexts, are unlikely to allow for a retraction without raising issues of bad faith. An inference like ‘Mary has exactly four children’ derived from utterance *Mary has four children*, or a scalar implicature like ‘Not all students came to the party’ from *Some students came to the party*, or even a conventionalized indirect speech act like ‘I ask you to pass me the salt’ triggered by utterance *Can you pass the salt?* are strongly committing, i.e. they can’t be retracted without raising a feeling of bad faith. Needless to say, such processes concern potentially all types of utterances and all types of contexts, argumentation and persuasion among them, fallacious argumentation included.

Making a strawman fallacy (henceforth SMF) is precisely a way of playing with these elements, since it involves processes such as extracting pragmatic meanings, attributing thoughts and intentions on the basis of behaviour, and claiming that what is in principle retractable is on the contrary obviously unretractable.

³For a thorough discussion of language evolution at large, including these types of verbal behaviour, see Reboul (forthcoming 2017).

⁴See Morency et al. (2008) and de Saussure and Oswald (2009) for elaborations on the notion of commitment and how it can be dealt with from a pragmatic perspective.

⁵Needless to say, the notion of retractability is the cognitive psychological counterpart of the formal cancellability of implicatures pointed out by H. P. Grice. We will come back to these notions below.

In this chapter, we suggest that the processes involved in the search for relevance (following the notion by Sperber and Wilson 1995)⁶ are a key factor in the success of fallacies at two levels: (i) they prompt the feeling, by individuals, of their acceptability despite objective logical deficiency, and (ii) the authors of fallacies manifest their own ability in deriving inferences and predicting relevant pieces of meaning, through their rhetorical ability, which enables them to gain prestige and the allegiance of an audience while disrupting their epistemic vigilance.

We suggest that the SMF is particularly efficient in manifesting a superior rhetorical ability; the SMF is a winning argument, and it is so for pragmatic reasons, since it exploits and satisfies particularly well the expectations of economy raised by the hearers—in particular because SMFs arise virtually only in order to gain the support of a third party (a general audience, in general) and thus to gain a dominating position in the social context.

In the following section, we will start by exposing a pragmatic puzzle with the straw man fallacy: whereas it could simply be an obvious misunderstanding, given the pragmatic principles of interpretation, the SMF appears on the contrary as a particularly successful interpretation. Then, in Sect. 8.3, we argue that the straw man fallacy primarily targets not the meanings but the pragmatic abilities of the speaker. Section 8.4 addresses more specifically the issue of the *burden of proof*.

8.2 A Pragmatic Puzzle with the Straw Man Fallacy

8.2.1 *The Straw Man Fallacy: Properties and Problems*

The SMF consists in attributing to an individual, generally on the basis of her verbal utterances,⁷ commitments to contents which she did not actually intend to convey. The literature offers many examples of SMFs constructed for the aim of the theoretical understanding of the notion, such as these, taken from Lewiński and Oswald (2013):

(3) A: Many right-wing politicians are devout believers.

B: I am not so sure that most right-wing politicians are devout believers.

⁶Sperber and Wilson (1995, first edition 1986) argue that the process of comprehending an utterance relies on a principle which can be summarized as follows: ‘look for relevance’. The hearer assumes (and the speaker assumes that the hearer assumes) that the speaker is speaking relevantly: his utterance provides as much information as expected for the smallest possible cognitive expense.

⁷In fact, the SMF may also occur on the basis of other communicative or even non communicative behaviours, which is not surprising because this fallacy is basically about attributing intentions and thoughts to an individual, which can be reconstructed on the basis of various forms of behaviour, not only verbal utterances. This chapter focuses specifically on those SMFs that are linked to verbal utterances.

- (4) A: Social policies of the government are plainly inefficient: a number of scientific studies, including one recently published in *Sociology*, expose major faults of the policies.

B: It's funny to say that the government's social policies are inefficient based on just one scientific study.

- (5) A: In fact, the majority voted in favour, but the motion was not accepted since there was no quorum needed for the occasion.

B: I'm sad to hear the majority rule does not apply to our parliament anymore!

In short, what the arguments B here above do is simply to attack the speaker A on a position that she did not actually hold. Here is an authentic example of a straw man fallacy: during a TV debate, one of the interlocutors (French comedian Ramzy Bédia), annoyed by his opponent (French polemist Eric Zemmour) who constantly makes literary quotations, complains⁸:

- (6) Ramzy Bédia: Can't we speak normally without dropping names on every occasion?

Eric Zemmour: Excuse me for having read books.

(In the case above, we observe something like a shift from complaining about too profusely showing off one's knowledge to complaining about simply having knowledge at all.)

In principle, we know what fallacies are: they are arguments which depart from norms of valid or acceptable reasoning in some formal or pragmatic way. What is surprising is that humans have at the same time two opposite properties in this respect: they are able to distinguish fallacious from sound arguments upon reflection, and are prone to be persuaded by fallacious arguments. Yet, it is also true that a number of argumentative schemes can be fallacious in some contexts but sound in others, such as the argument of authority or the *ad populum*. We also know that cognitive processes can take various heuristic routes, therefore they bypass critical evaluation and lead to systematic results, which allow suggesting that the success of fallacious arguments reside in the exploitation of such heuristics; yet, in turn, these heuristics prove very useful in ordinary, non-malevolent, contexts.

All in all, there is a true complexity in the project of identifying fallacious arguments and explaining their success. In particular, even though there is abundant literature about cognitive biases on one side and about fallacies on the other, we have little knowledge of how specific types of fallacies—for example the SMF—work precisely. There are also a number of cognitive approaches to argumentation and manipulation which provide fundamental lines along which explanations can be brought, to which we will turn further down.

⁸Example by courtesy of Thierry Herman, Steve Oswald and Misha Müller. Our (approximate) translation.

The SMF involves an original speaker (henceforth ‘the speaker’) who utters some linguistic string, and an opponent who makes a SMF [henceforth ‘the author’ (of the SMF)]. It has four key properties which, once put together, are puzzling.

First, the SMF is about reversing the burden of proof to the (original) speaker. Interestingly, while in many situations the author of a questionable interpretation is expected to make justifications about it, in the case of the SMF, the opposite is happening: the author of a SMF is making an incorrect interpretation of the speaker’s utterance but it is the speaker, not the author of the SMF, who finds herself with the burden of proving that the interpretation is incorrect. A problem with the reversal of the burden of proof is that it impairs the speaker’s performance in the argumentative interaction (it is a ‘burden’). After all, there is no obvious reason for which *providing justifications* should be an impairment, a ‘burden’, in an argumentation: it could as well be an opening to furthering the discussion and openly rectifying the misinterpretations. But it is not.

The second remarkable property of SMFs is that they generally involve a (silent) third-party witnessing the exchange and whose support is important to the interlocutors.

Hence a question: does the third party have to be persuaded by the SMF or not for the SMF to be a winning move in a debate? The question is not absurd: after all, an incorrect interpretation may actually have little persuasive power. In fact, we even venture to suggest that in some cases, if not in most cases, the external audience is indeed not persuaded by the fairness and soundness of the inference leading to the SMF. And if we are correct, then how come the speaker, but not the author of the fallacy, falls short of argumentative resources and usually surrenders in front of the reversal of the burden of proof? And how come this reversal happens at all, if the audience is not persuaded itself? In other words, how is it that attributing false conclusions to a speaker does not ridicule the author of the wrong conclusions but places the burden of proof on the shoulders of the speaker who did not intend them? And this, moreover, even when there is no acknowledgement of the validity of the interpretation on the part of the audience?

The third property, in line with what precedes, is that the SMF fails (of course) to persuade the targeted speaker, since no one can be persuaded that she meant something or that she thinks something.

The fourth property is the key to a puzzle and we will address it in the following section.

8.2.2 *The Puzzle with Straw Man Fallacies*

We are now approaching a funny conclusion: the SMF is an argument which is not raised in order to persuade the addressee, and which may well even fail in persuading the witnessing audience, and still be a winning move in an argumentative dialogue.

We noticed above that the SMF generally involves a third party. However, there are also cases of SMFs in face-to-face interactions without involving a third party. This is important to underline: because of this, and because no one can be persuaded that he entertains some thought or has some meaning intentions, therefore, it can simply *not* be about persuading, or at least, it has other, more fundamental, effects, than persuading.

The fourth property of the SMF is that it relies on pragmatic processing (*cf.* de Saussure and Oswald 2009; Lewiński and Oswald 2013; Oswald and Lewiński 2014). The SMF relies on pragmatic processing simply because the alleged standpoint has never been explicitly stated and therefore it is a pragmatic reconstruction on the basis of what is said (or, better, on the basis of what is explicitly communicated).⁹ It targets an unsaid element, i.e. something that counts as a pragmatic inference. Therefore, the SMF is obtained by following a path of inference and thus is derived from the original utterance by following pragmatic principles.

Altogether, these properties lead to a puzzle which unfolds as follows:

- (a) The SMF is pragmatic because it targets an unsaid element and therefore it exploits standard pragmatic meaning derivation procedures.
- (b) Communication is generally efficient, in particular because, usually, speakers' predictions and hearers' inferences match one another in communication, which, generally and in fact virtually always, involves pragmatic meaning discovery procedures. Of course, misunderstandings do occasionally occur, but usually the hearers get the right pragmatic meaning intended by the speakers because a speaker makes successful predictions about the ability of the hearer to contextualize appropriately the utterance so that the intended meaning, including in particular what was not properly *said*, is recovered safely enough.
- (c) Given (a) and (b), it is expectable that the author of a SMF manifestly displays a misunderstanding, therefore a failure. But instead of that, the SMF is not taken as a misunderstanding but as a particularly witty understanding, which goes far beyond the speaker's ostensive meaning intention, and which even reverses the burden of proof.

This is a pragmatic puzzle, in the sense that it is not a question of semantic decoding but a question of pragmatic language use, inferences and contexts.

In what follows, we suggest that this puzzle cannot be solved if we fail to take into account elements which are in some way beyond meaning itself.

⁹Even if this reconstruction may come from some manipulation of 'what is said': such a manipulation is actually extracting a potential inference (for example, when *many* is rephrased as *all* as an inference of an understatement).

8.3 The Straw Man Fallacy Targets Skills, Not Meanings

8.3.1 Cancellations and Retractions

Pragmatic meaning is pervasive in verbal communication; it develops into various levels and types of contents, from indirect speech acts to non-literal communication and to presupposing a shared common ground. These dimensions of meaning all have in common the fact that they are inferential in some way: these meanings are not directly decoded from the sentence but are constructed on top of them in order to form a plausible assumption about what the speaker seeks to render manifest to the audience.

Whereas Grice's theory of implicature viewed the world of pragmatic meaning as one big category of 'what is meant by the speaker' (as opposed to 'what is said by the sentence'), the main trends in semantics and pragmatics today consider that such inferential meanings can be classified (at least) in the two separate dimensions that we mentioned in the introduction: implicatures 'proper' and explicatures, which are these elements of meaning which are context-dependent extensions of the linguistic 'logical' form, i.e. add-ons or precisions to what was actually verbalized.

A very relevant aspect of the distinction between implicatures and explicatures in our discussion of the SMF relates to speaker's commitments on contents and their cancellability, as mentioned in the introduction. Let us shortly elaborate on this issue.

Pragmatic contents are, by nature, cancellable without creating a formal inconsistency. This applies to conversational implicature as a principle and is even a test to identify them in the classical Gricean approach. When uttering *It's raining*, the Speaker can easily control the interpretation of unwanted implicatures (such as *you should not go out*) by preventing the hearer from deriving them, by uttering something like *but you can play tennis anyway*. Similarly, the speaker of *Mary has four children*, which is normally triggering the explicature *Mary has exactly four children*,¹⁰ can then utter *she even has five*, and there is no formal contradiction.

There are other pragmatic contents which similarly are cancellable: weak implicatures, i.e. these inferences which are not necessarily part of the intentional meaning but which are rational consequences of them, such as *the speaker doesn't like luxury* from a sentence like "I don't like fancy cars", can be controlled just as any other implicature. Equally, elements of the common ground may occur to a hearer in the course of interpreting (presupposed types of weak implicatures, or *discursive presuppositions* in de Saussure 2013); they are also cancellable.

The cognitive corollary of cancellability, in conversation, is *retractability*.

If implicit meanings are cancellable, then it follows that the speaker is not formally committed to them: they are constructed, deduced, derived, by the hearer

¹⁰This is a scalar inference. Such inferences are sometimes still named *scalar implicatures* by reference to the Gricean conception that there is only 'what is said' and 'what is implicated' but they actually fall within what is felt as explicit but context-dependent.

and are under his responsibility: it is the hearer who makes the (generally spontaneous) decision to use this or that piece of knowledge, present in his cognitive environment, as an implicit premise.¹¹

If a wrong inference is made, i.e., if the speaker did not correctly predict how comprehension processes would be worked out by the hearer, she can make manifest that something was not intended by uttering a correction, for example by saying *that's not what I meant* in order to retract from the pragmatic content incorrectly constructed by the hearer. This is not a cancellation, since a cancellation occurs immediately, because the speaker correctly predicts the possibility of the inference. It's a retraction, because the speaker makes it *ex-post*, only when she realizes that the unintended inference was actually drawn.

But of course, only the speaker knows what she meant, and elaborating a formal proof of why this or that was not pragmatically meant is a challenge which can probably never be met. It is part of the game that if a speaker clarifies that she did not mean something, we accept it as a fact: asking for virtually impossible proofs would seem clearly unfair.

Such a corrective utterance would also be the natural reaction of a speaker in front of a SMF when she discovers the misinterpretation that has occurred to her interlocutor.

Retractability is not similar to cancellability. Whereas cancellability is a binary property of propositions relatively to linguistic forms (content is or is not cancellable), retractability is a psychological attitude of humans about their responsibility in communicating and interpreting what was not said. Cancellability can be objectively observed by a logical analysis but retractability is primarily a matter of intuitive feeling.

Retractability is therefore not subject to a binary evaluation: contents are more or less retractable depending on the feeling of people in front of utterances, interpretations, and on their own confidence in what the speaker should expect from her speech acts. Retractions are of the style 'I did not mean it' and as such are not valid or invalid: rather, they are felt as fair or unfair to various possible degrees. In sum, retractability is more or less *plausible*, whereas cancellation is or is not *valid*.

Cancellability and retractability can of course very much converge: an implicature such as *you can't go and play tennis now* from an utterance like *It's raining* is cancellable, of course, and in most contexts the speaker can undisputedly retract from it.

However the two can very much diverge too. In de Saussure and Oswald (2009) we argued that in some cases, a formal cancellation can be validly performed, i.e. without any logical inconsistency, but at the same time, a retraction will leave the hearer with a feeling of bad faith. This happens with all pragmatic contents: implicatures, strong or weak, explicatures, and background assumptions.

¹¹For more details on this process, as well as on the notions of strong and weak implicatures and explicatures, see Sperber and Wilson (1995).

With an implicature, since we are dealing with conclusions drawn through non-demonstrative inferences, obviously, the feeling of bad faith in front of a retraction is usually less blatant than with explicatures. But suppose a father is telling his son: “There are a lot of people at your wedding party” (de Saussure and Oswald 2009). Given the triviality of the explicit piece of information (it is indeed expected that there is a lot of people at a wedding party) the hearer might experience a sense of lack of informativeness, leading, for the sake of recovering a relevant piece of information, to further inferences about what the speaker has in mind. Add to this some contextual information such as the fact that the father is paying the bill, and you get the derivation of a complaint about the costs, that is, an implicature like *it’s going to be very expensive*. The son should be expected by the father to get this implicature and he may either swallow it or on the contrary react by something like “Dad, stop always complaining about money”. To this, in turn, the father can respond that he did not imply anything. But the feeling of bad faith is expectably going to be strong, given the triviality of what was said and the context of paying the bill, even though the cancellation behind it is valid and possibly blocks further discussions.

This example directs us towards the following assumption: the most relevant inference in the circumstances is the more difficult to retract without bad faith. By ‘more *relevant*’ we mean, following Sperber and Wilson (1995), an inference that provides the most optimal balance between processing costs (the further remote the inference is, that is, the more derivations and incorporations of implicit premises it involves in the deduction, the costlier it is to process for the mind) and rewarding cognitive effects (a piece of information that has more consequences on the assumptions held by the hearer has more cognitive effects). In the case above, it is the lack of such cognitive effects in the literal, explicit, meaning, which triggers further inferences, imposing a supplementary cost but an informational reward when the hearer speculates that the speaker means something about *too many people* too expensive.

More precisely, we suggest that among the possible inferences that can be derived from the utterance in given circumstances, the more relevant one is expectedly the most likely to be recovered by the hearer. If this is a general pragmatic principle of communication using mindreading (theory of mind) abilities, then the hearer naturally expects the speaker to be aware of the likeliness of its derivation. If the speaker does not prevent it by anticipating a cancellation, then it is legitimate to assume that it is going to be derived and the speaker is intuitively—not formally—considered aware of conveying it. And as a consequence, it is harder for the speaker to retract from conveying it without suggesting bad faith (unless she concedes that she did not master the intuitive procedure of inference in communication, which is self-face-threatening, but actually happens occasionally to everyone in ordinary conversations, and is simply a misunderstanding).

Yet the legitimacy of an intuitive feeling of bad faith is unlikely to be proved, and furthermore it is certainly more or less present to the consciousness of the speaker, who may sometimes be completely aware of her behaviour but sometimes speaks with a lower level of self-monitoring (more ‘intuitively’ in the usual sense of

that term). Even in the case above, there is no objective criterion that could be used to formally decide between a conscious attempt at bringing forward considerations about the costs of the wedding, which is a potential harm to the father-son relationship, a vaguely intuitive behaviour awkwardly exhibiting a worry to some lower degree of consciousness, and a comment that could be just intended as small talk without weighing the potential inferences in full. Retractions that appear commonsensically as bad faith are not *necessarily* such.

Sometimes, explicitly preventing unwanted but likely inferences can also trigger feelings of bad faith: it is funny to point out that when speakers utter “nothing implied”, they make manifest that undesirable pragmatic meanings are actually invited by the sentence in the circumstances, but that they don’t want to commit themselves to them—and it is often a way to actually imply without taking formal responsibility for it and at the same time making the whole process fully manifest. And, clearly, things like “nothing implied” sometimes trigger feelings of bad faith that the speaker even endorses to be obviously insincere—as long as it cannot be proven.

Therefore a retraction may be spotted as insincere and still allow preventing an accusation of lying, for example.

Constraints on retractions are stronger with explicatures than with implicatures, since we are closer to what was verbalized (explicatures, let us recall, are (mostly) extensions of the original sentence). Suppose you meet John and you talk about Mary, whom you just recently met. He tells you: “Mary has four children”. Then some days later you discover that Mary has five children and you meet John again, and complain that he lied to you. If John is a logician, he could tell you that the pragmatic meaning was cancellable, for the reason that having x children does not entail not having $x + n$ children. But unless he is a complete failure in terms of theory of mind and metarepresentation, he will not be able to claim in all fairness that he never intended to mean that Mary had four and only four children, without being suspected of blatant bad faith. It is not that John cannot pretend that he did not *mean* something, but rather that he can hardly pretend unawareness of the pragmatic meaning; he cannot pretend that he did not predict that the meaning would be spontaneously derived and therefore he cannot assume that he is not committed to that particular meaning. The process is globally the same as with implicatures except that with explicatures, there is very little room for doubts about what is meant in the context, for the reason that they are mere add-ons to what is formally presented (there is no deductive inference going on, just the grasping of a more precise meaning on the basis of a general proposition). The speaker is thus highly committed to explicatures, and he cannot assume that others will not assume this.

There is of course a whole range of cases where retractions trigger no feeling of bad faith at all (proper misunderstandings, implicatures that compete with other possible ones in the circumstances...) or feelings of bad faith so strong that they can actually be converted into accusations of lying, as in the case of *Mary has four children*. The case of the father complaining about the wedding is somewhere in between on the scale. In any case, the feeling of bad faith has something to do with

an impression of a discrepancy between the relevance of some particular inference and the difficulty to find other ways to obtain relevance.

De Saussure and Oswald (2009) suggest that while wrong cancellations—which obviously hardly happen at all in real speech situations—trigger formal inconsistencies, unfair retractions trigger a pragmatic form of inconsistency.

Consider example (3). Here, *many* is interpreted by the author of the SMF as *most*. It is a typical pragmatic inference whereby the first speaker resorts to a common type of understatement, that is, she tries to convey a stronger quantification than explicitly stated. There are many scalar pragmatic meanings based on quantification, and the way they are enriched can be to the *more* or to the *negation of the more* depending on all sorts of information in the context. An utterance like *Some students of mine are damn good* can be interpreted either as meaning *Not all my students are good* (the typical ‘scalar implicature’ of the pragmatic literature) or as an understatement, for *Most of my students are damn good*. Both of these pragmatic meanings can be cancelled, and retracted to various degrees given the expectations of relevance in the circumstances.

The interesting thing is that if someone uses such interpretations to form a SMF as in example (3), retraction on the part of the original speaker seems a truly hard work, a ‘burden’. A possible explanation for this would be that the author of the SMF displays that he took *many* to be an understatement for *most*, which could be legitimate in a number of contexts. However, interestingly enough, the intuition suggests that his taking *many* for *most* is actually *not* merely a misunderstanding. Rather, it appears to the audience as a possible interpretation that was not appropriately controlled (i.e. prevented) by the speaker. In sum, the author of the SMF shows that the speaker did not foresee one possible interpretation of the utterance, as Aikin and Casey (2011) note, pointing out that this is an *ad hominem* component of the SMF.

All in all, things look like this: the author of the SMF suggests, by this pragmatic enrichment, that the speaker uttered *many*, without intending to make it a decipherable understatement for *most*, but actually thinks *most*. The SMF therefore exhibits that the speaker awkwardly tried to cover some deeper, real, thought of hers, which is about *most*, by means of using a quantifier perhaps more acceptable in the circumstances, namely *many*. Therefore the SMF bears an accusation of attempting to manipulate the audience, and at the same times suggests that the speaker performed badly in doing so. Therefore the SMF portrays the targeted speaker as both malevolent (she tries to hide a thought which is relevant to the discussion) and pragmatically incompetent.

8.3.2 Targeting the Individual

Dennett (1989) claims that interpreters simulate the behaviour of speakers as a strategy to attribute beliefs and intentions to them (the ‘intentional stance’), in order to adopt an adequate interpreting strategy. Sperber (1994) recalls that if hearers

follow paths of least effort, in ideal circumstances, they should adopt a strategy which is both *naïve*, i.e. they assume that the speaker is benevolent, and *optimistic*, i.e. that the speaker is competent on the topic. We follow Padilla Cruz (2012) in suggesting that according to a constant monitoring of believability, which Sperber et al. (2010) call ‘epistemic vigilance’, hearers might adapt their interpretive strategy and switch from *naïve* to *cautious* (when raising doubts about the speaker’s benevolence) and from *optimistic* to *pessimistic* (when raising doubts about the speaker’s competence) or—of course—a combination of both.

At the same time, speakers continuously attempt to appear at least benevolent, and if they want to be convincing or persuasive, they will also attempt to appear competent. Let us shortly elaborate on this important aspect of argumentative interactions.

Trying to be convincing or persuasive is probably the most crucial property of what makes a context ‘argumentative’. In such contexts, of course, roles alternate: the speaker’s perlocutionary aims are to convince and persuade, while the hearer processes the utterance with epistemic vigilance. Doing so, not only does he infer, evaluate, accept, reject, etc. arguments, but he also tracks various signs, external to the content of the arguments themselves, in order to get feedback on the speaker’s reliability, which is basically about assessing his *benevolence* and *competence*. Mirroring this, the speaker intuitively sends such signals and attempts to monitor their production.¹²

In short, in argumentative contexts, the speaker and the hearer, each in their turn, enter in a competition:

- (a) The speaker who prefers the hearer to adopt a naïve optimistic strategy of interpretation and thus lower his epistemic vigilance; and
- (b) The hearer who intuitively tracks signs of the contrary in order to best adapt his attitude of epistemic vigilance.

Not being competent is a problem of course but it can be avowed and assumed to a large extent, as it does not bear on moral principles. On the contrary, malevolence cannot. Therefore, an accusation bearing on benevolence is stronger in damaging the credibility of the speaker than one of incompetence (hence the success of *ad personam* fallacies). If the SMF targets an individual as we suggested, then it has the consequence of damaging the speaker’s credibility on both levels: malevolence (the speaker tried to hide some less acceptable thought) and incompetence, but a specific type of incompetence: pragmatic incompetence, i.e. a cognitive type of incompetence leading to wrong predictions on what an interpreter can make of her utterance.

The irony of it is that the SMF is a fallacious accusation of fallaciousness; it is a non-cooperative move performed to allege non-cooperation. Since the SMF portrays the target as having low interpretative, cognitive, skills, and since it does so by uncovering a hidden meaning or thought, it displays by contrast the high pragmatic skills of its author.

¹²On the notions discussed in this paragraph, see Sperber et al. (2010).

Escaping an accusation of being tricky and manipulative under such circumstances is actually a burden. The *burden of proof* effect with the SMF is therefore not residing in the fact that the speaker merely has to correct an interpretation but that she has to resist an accusation of being misleading. As a consequence, she needs not only to correct the interpretation (she does so, of course), but furthermore to show that her opponent uses a wrong interpretation with the aim of unfairly accusing him of hiding thoughts that would be actually relevant in the current discussion.

Reacting to such an accusation requires, on the part of the original speaker, a switch from the ongoing argumentative interaction to the level of meta-argumentation: she must stop the current discussion in order to introduce a new topic, which is meta-discursive, and which is not about what is being discussed, but about how it is discussed, whether it is fair or not, etc.

This is very similar to what happens with fallacious presupposition accommodation. Consider (7) in this respect:

(7) The problem with our egalitarian society is that it disempowers the people.

Here, there is a claim (the problem with our society is that disempowers the people) and a justification is presupposed (our society is egalitarian). If the interlocutor is agnostic about the justification, then the presupposition has chances of being incorporated in the hearer's background without cautious evaluation. But the interesting thing is that if the hearer has a view on this, or if he wants to question the presupposition, he needs to escape the normal flow of the dialogue in order to enter into a metadiscursive negotiation.¹³ This has a serious cost for both participants of the dialogue: it threatens both interlocutors' faces, for two directly related reasons: first, it implies that the speaker made wrong assumptions about what belongs to the common ground, and at the same time that the hearer should have something in his common ground which he actually does not have, and, second, the hearer is basically saying that the speaker's utterance poses problems of relevance and informativeness. There is, therefore, a 'face-oriented' *burden* also posed to anyone questioning fallacious presuppositions. This happens also with *discursive presuppositions* which are weak implicatures or background assumptions that are necessarily drawn from what is said in order not to obtain a meaning but to obtain relevance (for example, the notion that guns are forbidden in these premises activates a background assumption that they may be permitted elsewhere); see de Saussure (2013) for elaborations on this notion.

Yet it must be noted on the other hand that argumentative discussions involve naturally face-threatening acts; raising such acts in an argumentation, especially when being personally targeted by a SMF, which is itself a dramatic face-threatening act, should not be an issue in the first place and therefore should not be the cause of the 'burden'. We will come back to the issue of the burden of proof further down, but let us already observe that this is an important difference with wrong or unfair

¹³This is a problem well-known to pragmaticists since the works of Ducrot (1972, 1980) on presuppositions, and it has been discussed at large in the literature since then.

presupposition accommodations, which can (i) occur outside of harsh debates and (ii) be intertwined with in-group versus out-group problems (rejecting a presupposition may socially amount to rejecting a tacit agreement inside a group).

In sum: the author of a SMF appears as the witty person who is uncovering what the speaker has in mind and which she (malevolently) tries to cover or hide; the author of the SFM puts the thoughts of the speaker in full light, therefore ridiculing her. It does so by showing that the speaker has bad cognitive skills, while the author of the SMF appears as mastering the whole path of reasoning available, starting from an utterance in a context and including the recovery of (possibly imagined) contextual premises. As a consequence, the author of the SMF gains prestige in two related dimensions: uncovering the hidden, and being particularly apt in doing so. The SMF has then a secondary consequence: its author tries to come across as an excellent arguer.

From the prestige so gained, the author of the SMF achieves a social victory, regardless of the validity of the interpretation sustaining the SMF.

Strikingly, it may even be that the author of an SMF does *not* hold the content of the SMF (he probably very seldom holds it true) and nonetheless wins the argument simply because of the prestige gained by exerting and showing his pragmatic, cognitive, skills, which are underlying components of argumentative skills.

8.4 The Burden of Proof and the Lack of Relevance of Justifications

So far, we have tried to explore the main pragmatic effects of a SMF: it targets the pragmatic skills of the speaker, which has two consequences: the speaker can only react by a complicated act of switching to a meta-discursive discussion, and the author of the SMF gains prestige by displaying his pragmatic abilities, which are about (allegedly) uncovering hidden thoughts of the speaker and showing that the speaker was unable to control the availability of some pragmatic interpretations which are dangerous for her position.

This can be a sound explanation for the fact that the SMF is a winning move, but still, it does not account satisfactorily for the particular weight of the burden of proof.

A typical error of the victim of a SMF is to still assume that it will be overcome by explaining that the interpretation is undue, but this would correct only the minor dimension of the SMF and not its major effect, i.e. social prestige.

Strangely enough, countering this prestige is very difficult. This is surprising because after all, argumentative interactions between skilled arguers often show an alternation of winning moves and virtually each move can make the preceding winner be the next loser. After each move, another argument, fair or fallacious, can achieve this reversal. Good arguments are certainly ultimately better in achieving this aim (see Mercier and Sperber 2011), but good arguments are also, sometimes, more complex and difficult to unfold.

Therefore, that the SMF is a winning move in an argumentation should not, in principle, prevent the speaker to react appropriately and serve a new argument which will constitute a winning move in its turn, therefore re-establishing the argumentative equilibrium. Yet it seems precisely to prevent such a move, at least in an unexpected measure. There must be something more specific to the SMF (and certainly to some other fallacies as well) that specifically impairs this possibility, and which the literature calls the *burden of proof*.

The fact that the speaker has to switch the level of the discussion from the topic being discussed to the way it is discussed, i.e. that she has to operate a move from discussing P to discussing the discussion about P, is of course the major cause of this burden, but we suggest that the SMF makes it *particularly difficult* for one reason, which is that the original speaker has to make *justifications* about what she said and what she meant, which are not only impossible to prove, but which will look overall irrelevant—therefore miss the objective of regaining prestige in front of an audience. Only *making points* is relevant ‘in its own right’.

In terms of expectations, *making a point* is a conversational contribution in the full sense, raising expectations of relevance of its own. Making a point means updating the context with something new, adding it to the conversational back-ground, i.e. to the commitment store (in Hamblin’s 1970 terms).

Producing a SMF amounts to making a very strong point, explicitly about the thought that is attributed to the original speaker, and implicitly about her inability to predict that this thought could be derived from her verbal behaviour. On the contrary, reacting by embarking into a justification about why the interpretation presented by the author of the SMF is unfair, undue, incorrect or false is not ‘making a point’. It is an operation of metadiscursive justification. And precisely, making a justification is by nature—because of its logical discursive structure—an argumentative move that is subordinate to some other claim (or ‘point’). Making a justification is an elaboration of a point, not a point. In fact, if the speaker elaborates on why the interpretation is incorrect, she is merely commenting on the point, rather than making a point herself.

Still by nature, making a comment triggers less attention than making a new point.¹⁴ In other terms, it is much more difficult for someone to raise expectations of relevance when *explaining the reasons why P was asserted* than when *asserting P*. So to say, the effort one would spend in processing the complexity inherent to justifications, in particular when one has to endure a stop in the flow of the interaction in order to pay attention to a metadiscursive type of justification, is not expected to trigger in return enough rewards in terms of knowledge for one’s cognitive environment.

A speaker who begins to justify why her words were not correctly interpreted encounters a problem of attention also because it is common knowledge that it is virtually beyond any proof. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to prove that one

¹⁴Certainly, a justification is a point in some way, but since it is directly subordinate to some other point, we will not call them *points* proper.

does not believe Q. Trying to prove that Q does not follow from P, which she uttered, is a complicated thing even for ordinary, not fallacious (at least intentionally) implicatures. In ordinary conversation, you merely say “That’s not what I meant”; but it is unlikely that a long explanation about *why the interlocutor should not have derived the implicature* is going to literally prove anything.

With a SMF, since the move was not benevolent, the escape cannot simply be to say that it was not meant. Trying to explain that the conclusions held by the opponent are not in one’s head is obviously going to be a total failure.

In practice, what could be a successful countering of a SMF?

Given the picture we have delineated above, the answer lies in targeting the skills, not directly the contents. Irony and rhetorical questions seem good candidates, even though their success is difficult to guarantee. In order to react from a wrong interpretation of quantifiers, as in (3), the speaker might perhaps say something like “You are good at maths, aren’t you”. In front of a SMF, asking a question like “Waow, did I actually say *this*? Amazing!” ironically implying that the author of the SMF is telling you what you are supposed to mean, might have some potential to ridicule him in turn and reverse the argumentative equilibrium or even put the author of the SMF in greater trouble. However the risk of escalating the metadiscursive argument is real and may have problematic consequences of turning into a series of mutual accusations which would be detrimental to both arguers if the setting is one of talking in front of an audience whose agreement is sought and who may then view the two arguers as playing childish games.

8.5 Conclusions and Cognitive Perspectives

Going back now to the main cognitive question raised by fallacies and in particular by the SMF, which is to understand why humans, who have such cognitive abilities, can be prone to accepting, or surrendering, to fallacious argumentative moves, a number of explanations, although rather general, are on offer.

Certainly, the existence of fast and frugal heuristics (Gigerenzer 2004), and more broadly the general economy of cognitive processes, are key parts of the explanation. The processing of arguments, and in particular of manipulative ones and of fallacies, is starting to be addressed with new cognitive approaches such as Maillat and Oswald’s (2009, 2011) notion of *context selection constraint*,¹⁵ which shows how various strategies can be put in place by a speaker to prevent the audience from accessing propositions that would actually be relevant to them in order to make wise rational decisions about the acceptability of what the speaker says or manifests. Our account falls nicely with Dessalles’ (2011) approach for which arguments serve primarily to track manipulative attempts and gain social benefits out of it, but also with Sperber et al.’s (2010) and Mercier and Sperber’s (2011) approach; they

¹⁵See also de Saussure (2005).

develop a theory (the *Argumentative Theory of Reasoning*), with impressive experimental support, which postulates that the human ability to reason evolved as a means to argue with others, which entails an advantage in attaining truths via collective reasoning. Their approach convincingly predicts that group reasoning works better than individual reasoning, and, at the same time, that the outcome of argumentation is achieved better by sound, rather than bad, arguments. Yet, this approach also predicts the existence of cognitive biases, for the reason that the achievement of argumentation is actually better obtained in the presence of biases. Mercier explains:

If reasoning evolved so we can argue with others, then we should be biased in our search for arguments. In a discussion, I have little use for arguments that support your point of view or that rebut mine. Accordingly, *reasoning should display a confirmation bias*: it should be more likely to find arguments that support our point of view or rebut those that we oppose. Short (but emphatic) answer: it does, and very much so. The confirmation bias is one of the most robust and prevalent biases in reasoning.¹⁶

They emphasize that an individual has little interest in arguments that do not support one's own standpoints.

It could be that the SMF, if we are right that it does not actually target arguments themselves but pragmatic skills, is a counterargument to Mercier and Sperber, but in fact it is not. In fact, the SMF is not powerful at *convincing* others in an argumentative interaction. Rather it is successful in order to have the opponent surrender in front of an audience for causes that are alien to the validity of the arguments themselves. The SMF, we claim, manifests a superior skill in manipulating arguments on the part of its author, which is the basic cause of the opponent's defeat in the eyes of an external audience. This makes clear sense within the Mercier and Sperber view, since pragmatic skills are valuable in themselves as a warrant for good argumentative skills, despite the fact that in some cases the argument itself is not successful in actually persuading (sometimes, of course, a SMF is successful at doing that).¹⁷

In this paper, we argue that the SMF is a 'pragmatic winner' not because of its potential persuasive force, but rather because it targets the pragmatic cognitive-inferential skills of its victim while enhancing the prestige of its author.

In particular, we claim that:

- (i) the burden of proof has essentially to do with the difficulty to get the attention of the audience back, because
- (ii) a reaction to the SMF is mostly a discussion of the reasons why the inference drawn was unduly derived,

¹⁶The argumentative theory of reasoning blog': <https://sites.google.com/site/hugomercier/theargumentativetheoryofreasoning>.

¹⁷Both *better outcomes in collective decision making* and *targeting manipulative attempts* are operations that go hand-in-hand in argumentation; that one is the main evolutionary reason of argumentation is out of the scope of this paper, so we will not attempt at discussing the various positions on offer here in this respect.

- (iii) which is virtually destined to be a failure first of all because of the lack of relevance of *justifications* in comparison with that of actual points, and because of the intrinsic difficulty of arguing about one's meaning intentions and thoughts on the basis of some behaviour.

These conclusions await, of course, further empirical validation.

We also suggested that the victim of a SMF should probably also favour a reaction targeting pragmatic and cognitive skills, such as irony or rhetorical questions.

One thing that we did not discuss is the actual format of inferences grounding SMFs. It appears that sometimes these inferences are drawn just like normal implicatures or explicatures, i.e., either by complementing the linguistic logical form with some contextual fine-tuning, as when "Some like it hot" is understood as conveying "not all persons like it hot". Many inferences are however not achieved through processes that correspond to logical patterns but through non-logical heuristics, such as analogies. All these inferential ways have emerged because they have positive outcomes: many fallacies lead to bad results in some contexts but are successful pieces of knowledge in others. This makes the identification of a SMF very tricky. Ultimately, the SMF relies on the ability of the audience to grasp the inferential path, logical or not, followed by the author of the SMF. The effects of connivance that are, as a result, also achieved by the SMF make it even more difficult to counter, because the victim finds himself ousted of the group and targeted as someone to be pessimistic and cautious about, while the author itself attracts the prestige of denunciation on top of the rest.

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Chapter 9

Types of Dialogue and Pragmatic Ambiguity

Fabrizio Macagno and Sarah Bigi

Abstract The purpose of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, our goal is theoretical, as we aim at providing an instrument for detecting, analyzing, and solving ambiguities based on the reasoning mechanism underlying interpretation. To this purpose, combining the insights from pragmatics and argumentation theory, we represent the background assumptions driving an interpretation as presumptions. Presumptions are then investigated as the backbone of the argumentative reasoning that is used to assess and solve ambiguities and drive (theoretically) interpretive mechanisms. On the other hand, our goal is practical. By analyzing ambiguities as stemming from different presumptions concerning language or, more importantly, expected communicative roles and goals, we can use communicative misunderstandings as the signal of deeper disagreements concerning mutual expectations or cultural differences. This argumentation-based interpretive mechanism will be applied to the analysis of medical interviews in the area of diabetes care, and will be used to bring to light the sources of misunderstanding and the different presumptions that define distinct cultures. We will consequently illustrate the analytical tools by identifying and distinguishing the various types of ambiguity underlying misunderstandings, and we will address them by describing the communicative intentions ascribed to the ambiguous utterances.

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9.1 Introduction

Since the first sophistic theories, the concept of ambiguity has been investigated in relation to its role in natural language, and in particular to the communicative and argumentative problems or strategies that result from the different interpretations of an utterance (Aristotle, *Topics*, 112b 22). From a linguistic point of view, ambiguity is crucially related to the problem of establishing the best interpretation of a speech act (Atlas and Levinson 1981; Atlas 2008). On this view, ambiguity is not only the possibility of ascribing different meanings to a lexical item. Instead, it needs to be considered as the actual or potential disagreement or uncertainty concerning the meaning to be attributed to an utterance in a specific context. Within this broader picture, misunderstanding and ambiguity concern utterances performed in a specific context, considering not only the “prehistory” of an utterance (Mey 2001, 13) but more importantly the purpose of the conversation and the pretended function of the utterance within it, and the institutional and cultural factors that contribute to the meaning.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. We pursue a theoretical goal, as we aim at providing an instrument for detecting, analyzing, and solving ambiguities based on the reasoning mechanism underlying interpretation. To this purpose, combining the insights from pragmatics and argumentation theory, we represent the background assumptions (namely the contextual factors considered in the broader sense, see Mey 2001, 2003) driving an interpretation as presumptions. Presumptions are in turn shown to constitute the backbone of the argumentative reasoning that is used to assess and solve ambiguities and drive (theoretically) interpretive mechanisms. Our claim is that in case of interpretive disputes or misunderstanding, the various contextual presumptions need to be confronted and their defeasibility conditions assessed. The “best interpretation” is thus the least defeasible one considering all the available contextual presumptions.

Our second purpose is practical. By analyzing ambiguities as stemming from different presumptions concerning language or more importantly expected communicative roles and goals, we can use communicative misunderstandings as the signal of deeper disagreements concerning mutual expectations or deeper cultural differences. This argumentation-based interpretive mechanism will be applied to the analysis of medical interviews in the area of diabetes care, and will be used to bring to light the sources of misunderstanding and the differences in the presumptions (epistemic, linguistic, evaluative, etc.) relied upon (Flores 2000; Angelelli 2004; Kecskes and Zhang 2009, 2013; Kecskes 2015).¹

In this chapter, we apply the theoretical framework consisting of the presumptive mechanism of interpretation and the types of dialogue to the analysis of a corpus of

¹We argue that that such different presumptions define distinct cultures, building on Kecskes’s broader notion of culture as “a system of shared beliefs, norms, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another” (Kecskes 2013, 4).

medical conversations. We illustrate the analytical tools by identifying and distinguishing the various types of ambiguity underlying misunderstandings, and we address them by describing the communicative intentions ascribed to the ambiguous utterances. The presumptions guiding the conflicting interpretations are brought to light, showing the cultural differences at various levels of reasoning and communication (Macagno and Walton 2017: chap. 3).

9.2 Ambiguity, Misunderstandings, and Context

Misunderstanding and miscommunication are rooted in the crucial notion of ambiguity. Ambiguity is a widely discussed concept in pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson 1986; Atlas 1989, 2005; Jaszczolt 1999; Levinson 2000; Saka 2007) and argumentation theory (Walton 1996a, 2006; van Laar 2003). While the studies in philosophy of language focus on how ambiguities are processed, works in the field of argumentation mostly address the sources of ambiguities, their use for strategic or manipulative purposes, and the dialectical procedures for resolving them.

9.2.1 *Ambiguities and Ambiguity Resolution*

A fundamental distinction traced in both the field of argumentation and philosophy of language is the one between the level of semantic interpretation (sentence meaning) and the speaker's meaning, i.e. the output of further processing of sentence meaning considering various contextual factors. The semantic representation resulting from compositional semantics needs to be processed pragmatically, namely subjected to pragmatic processing aimed at solving ambiguity at different levels (Sperber and Wilson 1986; Levinson 2000). A first type of processing concerns disambiguation issues, such as the ones concerning lexical ambiguity or structural (syntactic) ambiguity. We consider the following examples of disambiguation (Levinson 2000, 174):

- (1) Lexical ambiguity (Lyons 1977, 550) (includes homonymic words and homographs):
 - a. The view could be improved by the addition of a plant out there.
 - b. The view would be destroyed by the addition of a plant out there.
- (2) Structural ambiguity (Prepositional-Phrase attachment):
 - a. Mary left [the book] [on the bus].
 - b. Mary left [the book on the atom].
 - c. He looked at the kids [in the park] with a telescope.
 - d. He looked at the kids [in the park with a statue].

Lexical and syntactic ambiguities (called also grammatical ambiguities) can result in sentences that are related to different semantic representations. On the contrary,

semantic ambiguities “are characterized by a general semantic representation from which a truth-conditionally evaluable proposition can be derived by means of pragmatic rules” (Jaszczolt 1999, 2). Semantic ambiguities, in this sense, include interpretive phenomena distinct from lexical or syntactic “disambiguation” (Levinson 2000, 174–186; Atlas 2005, Chap. 1), such as indexical resolution, reference identification, ellipsis unpacking, and generality narrowing. Such phenomena are related to the “underdetermination” of the semantic representation of a sentence (or “what is said”) (Atlas 2005, 40), and govern the passage from a semantic nonspecific structure to a proposition that can carry a truth-value. We summarize the most important types of semantic ambiguity (as defined by Jaszczolt above) as follows:

- (3) Indexical resolution:
 - a. Suppose A is in Los Angeles and B is in New York and the following exchange takes place:
 A: “Where’s the conference being held?”
 B: “It’s being held here.” (“here” does not refer to the exact location of the speaker in that very moment, but rather to the university where the conference takes place).
- (4) Reference Identification:
 - a. Only Felix voted for him (“him” can refer to either Felix himself, or the candidate that does not correspond to Felix).
 - b. The king is powerful (“the king” can refer to the person who is the king at the time of the utterance or to the role of the king) (Bezuidenhout 1997; Jaszczolt 1999; Capone 2011).
- (5) Ellipsis Unpacking:
 - a. A says “Who came?” and B replies “John” (“John” is elliptical and the whole sentence needs to be reconstructed, resulting in “John came”).
- (6) Generality Narrowing:
 - a. Fixing this car will take some time (“some time” means “longer than expected,” otherwise it would be a tautology).
 - b. I’ve eaten breakfast (“I have eaten” means “I have just eaten” or “I have eaten breakfast this morning,” and does not refer to the fact that the speaker is a breakfast eater).

In addition to semantic interpretation of context-oriented elements (indexicals, etc.), the reconstruction of “what is said” (or sentence-meaning) requires pragmatic (contextual) inferences (Récanati 1987, 224; Carston 2002; Kissine 2012, 17), based on presumptions of different kinds, including the goal and the topic of the conversation (Atlas 2005, 38). Once sentence meaning is reconstructed, further pragmatic processing leads to drawing implicatures.

The distinction between grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic ambiguity is mirrored by the studies in argumentation theory addressing the problem of ambiguity and equivocation.

9.2.2 *Levels of Ambiguity and Their Argumentative Effects*

In the studies of argumentation theory, three levels of ambiguity are distinguished: potential, actual, and imaginary (Walton 1996a, 262), which broadly correspond to the aforementioned distinctions between grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic ambiguity. Potential ambiguity includes lexical, syntactic, and intonational ambiguity, and refers to the grammatical elements that can result in ambiguity when taken out of co-text. On the contrary, actual ambiguity is ambiguity of use, i.e. concerns the phenomena involved in the interpretation of the sentence expressed by an utterance. Finally, imaginary ambiguity refers to the further implicatures that can be drawn from the utterance of a sentence in a specific context (van Laar 2001, 2003, Chap. 4), but also the possible distinct interpretations of the intended effects on the interlocutor, i.e. the so-called “illocutionary” and “perlocutionary” effects. For example an utterance can be interpreted as a request or as an order, depending on the context; an assertion of a negative behavior can be taken as an accusation or as a complaint, depending on the type of dialogue the interlocutors are engaged in (Macagno 2016; Macagno and Capone 2016). Moreover, an utterance can be intended to result in accessory effects, such as reassuring, persuading, threatening, which do not constitute the effect performed by uttering the specific sentence (Searle 1976; Searle and Vanderveken 2005). An utterance can turn out to be ambiguous due to such effects (“I did not mean to offend you!”).

A controversial issue in the classification of ambiguities concerns emphatic and intonational ambiguities. On Walton’s approach, imaginary ambiguity includes not only perlocutionary and illocutionary ambiguity, but also the so-called emphatic ambiguity. This type of ambiguity is not clearly defined, but can be identified with the stress placed on a specific word or phrase (“VERY nice, isn’t it?”; “He is an ITALIAN”) and leading to further implicatures (the speaker is sarcastic; he is expressing his contempt). To this purpose, we need to stress the distinction between emphatic ambiguity and the mere intonational one, which can concern also different theme-rheme (focus-topic) articulations, namely different syntactic structures that may be grammatically ambiguous if not disambiguated at the utterance level. For example, the sentence “Bob went to the party” may mean that it was Bob that went to the party, or that the party was the place where Bob went to, or that what Bob did was to go to the party. These different syntactic structures can be disambiguated by means of different intonations of the utterance (Reinhart 1981; Gundel and Fretheim 2004).

The different types of ambiguity can be summarized as follows (adapted from Walton 1996a, p. 262) (Table 9.1).

Whereas potential ambiguity and propositional pragmatic ambiguity concern the level of what is said (Bezuidenhout 1997; Carston 2002, 2013; Soames 2008), what is at stake in ambiguity at the illocutionary and perlocutionary level is the reconstruction of the pragmatic purpose of a speech act, namely what is meant. The same utterance can be interpreted as intended to produce different illocutionary or perlocutionary effects depending on the type of reconstruction and the factors taken into account in reconstructing its meaning.

Table 9.1 Levels of ambiguity

Potential ambiguity (grammatical ambiguity)			
Lexical		Syntactic	Intonational
Homographs	Different definitions	Different syntactic construction	Different deep structures manifested by different intonations
Pragmatic ambiguity			
Actual		Imaginary	
Semantic ambiguity		Illocutionary and Perlocutionary	Emphatic

This distinction is important for determining the level at which a strategy of equivocation occurs (Deppermann 2000). In particular, this distinction points out the role of context in disambiguating utterances. As Mey puts it (Mey 2001, 13):

Ambiguity only exists outside of the actual speaking situation; abstract sentences can be Ambiguous, real speakers are not (unless they want to) [...] Often, it is said that we must invoke the context to determine what an ambiguous sentence means. This may be OK, if by ‘context’ we understand all the factors that play a role in producing and understanding utterance.

On this view, the context—intended as the institutional setting, in addition to the conversational one and the co-text (the “history” of an utterance in a discourse)—determines the correct interpretation intended by the speaker (Mey 2003, 346). In this sense, pragmatic inferences can prevent ambiguities from arising (Jaszczolt 1999, 4); however, ambiguities can arise because not all the contextual factors on which the speaker relies in communicating his communicative or dialogical intentions (Grosz and Sidner 1986, 178) are shared by the hearer. Moreover, in cases of manipulation, ambiguities are introduced by preventing the interlocutor from accessing all the contextual factors needed for a correct or univocal understanding of the utterance (Macagno 2016). Typical cases of such types of manipulative uses of ambiguity are the fallacies of straw man (Walton 1996b; Aikin and Casey 2011; Macagno and Damele 2013; Macagno and Walton 2017) and wrenching from context (Walton and Macagno 2010; Macagno and Capone 2016).

9.3 Presumptions and Best Interpretation

The theories advanced in philosophy of language provide clear insights on how context and more importantly the presumptions resulting from various types of contextual factors contribute to determining the intended meaning. While the processing of utterances and the disambiguation processes involved are usually automatic, non-reflective (Patterson 2004; Wilson and Sperber 2004; Wilson 2016), when an interpretation is controversial or doubtful and needs explanation the reasoning underlying interpretation needs to be brought to light and analyzed (Dascal and Wróblewski 1988). The purpose of an argumentative approach to ambiguity thus does not only concern the analysis of the factors that, once concealed, can result in ambiguity, but also the argumentative reasoning in support of an interpretation that can be made explicit in case of dispute. In this section, we will address the problem of representing the argumentative reasoning used for supporting and evaluating an interpretation. This type of reasoning is intended to describe a dialogical mechanism for bringing to light and assessing the various factors that contribute to supporting or dismissing an interpretation.

9.3.1 *Presumptions and Presumptive Reasoning in Interpretation*

The process of dialectical motivation (and theoretically, a possible dialectical model of reconstruction) of an interpretation of an utterance can be represented in terms of presumptions. On this perspective, normally utterances are processed relying on heuristic, presumptive mechanisms. On the relevance-theory approach, such mechanisms are cognitive in nature (Sperber and Wilson 1986; Wilson and Sperber 2004; Wilson 2016). On the contrary, in neo-Gricean and radical pragmatics accounts, such automatic processes are based instead on the content and the metalinguistic properties of an utterance (the utterance-type) (Levinson 2000, 6–7). While in the former approach the basic heuristics concern the maximization of information, i.e. cognitive response vis-à-vis processing efforts, in the latter theories the content and the form of an utterance provides a preferential reading, which can be disconfirmed by other linguistic or contextual evidence. This view is expressed through the following heuristics (Levinson 2000, 7):

- (i) If the utterance is constructed using simple, brief, unmarked forms, this signals business as usual, that the described situation has all the expected, stereotypical properties;
- (ii) If, in contrast, the utterance is constructed using marked, prolix, or unusual forms, this signals that the described situation is itself unusual or unexpected or has special properties;

- (iii) Where an utterance contains an expression drawn from a set of contrasting expressions, assume that the chosen expressions describe a world that itself contrasts with those rival worlds that would have been described by the contrasting expressions.

Both accounts provide explanations of what may happen during the processing of an utterance. In particular, Relevance theory purports to explain how an utterance is processed automatically, bringing to light the cognitive processes underlying the automatic processing of an utterance, while neo-Griceans aim at investigating what generates a preferential interpretation, detecting the linguistic and structural aspects of a preferential reading. The two approaches, however, do not take into account the systematic interpretive process involved when an automatic or preferential interpretation is subject to default, namely the reasoning leading to and supporting the choice of an interpretation over another. Neither theory provides a framework for assessing the acceptability of an interpretation, questioning it, and defending it against criticisms. The investigation of this problem requires a connection between interpretation and argumentation, and more precisely an explanation of the interpretive process in terms of defeasible reasoning. More specifically, it is necessary to analyze the reasons that can be brought forward, assessed, questioned, and defended for or against a specific reconstruction of the meaning of an utterance, and that can concern the various interpretive dimensions, from the meaning of a lexical item to the determination of the purpose of an utterance or its implicatures.

A possible solution consists in representing the interpretive process as a form of reasoning that can be discussed upon and be evaluated to conceive it as an argument aimed at providing the best explanation of the meaning of an utterance, which in turn can be supported by various reasons. Such reasons can be regarded as grounded on defeasible “rules” of reasoning concerning how language is commonly used, how communication is usually conducted, how interlocutors usually behave, etc. In particular, such rules can represent from a reasoning perspective not only the shared conventions or the individual habits of language use, but also behavioral regularities that can be used to predict and account for sentence processing (Altmann and Mirković 2009; Brothers et al. 2015), usually referred to as “scripts” (Schank and Abelson 1977; Samet and Schank 1984).²

Our approach is grounded on the concept of presumption and presumptive reasoning (Atlas and Levinson 1981), namely a pattern of reasoning based on what is usually the case (Thomason 1990), and leading tentative and defeasible conclusions, holding until further conflicting evidence is provided (Walton 1995; Rescher 2006; Macagno 2012; Macagno and Walton 2014, Chap. 5). Presumptions

²Contemporary approaches to language processing point out the importance of the use of prior knowledge to generate expectations about how a discourse will unfold. Context can activate networks of related concepts or event schemas that can be used to process the utterance (Brothers et al. 2015, 135–136).

Table 9.2 Presumptive reasoning

Premise 1:	<i>P</i> (the proposition representing the presumption) obtains whenever the condition <i>C</i> obtains unless and until the standard default proviso <i>D</i> (to the effect that countervailing evidence is at hand) obtains
Premise 2:	Condition <i>C</i> obtains (Fact)
Premise 3:	Proviso <i>D</i> does not obtain (Exception)
Conclusion:	<i>P</i> obtains

work to move the dialogue further when knowledge is lacking. If not rebutted, the proposition representing the conclusion of this pattern of reasoning can be considered as tentatively proved. Rescher represented the structure of this type of inference as follows (Table 9.2) (Rescher 2006, 33):

For example, we can maintain the aforementioned structure of pragmatic processing represented in Table 9.2 and provide the presumptive interpretation of the following utterance:

(7) You are blackmailing us.

According to this perspective, two patterns of presumptive reasoning are involved, namely an automatic (also called “default”) and a systematic one. The first pattern is activated when the utterance is interpreted relying on the presumptive meaning of the various lexical items, in particular “to blackmail.” Unless other evidence is provided (if the contextual elements available fit the interpretation), the tentative conclusion is that the speaker is asserting that, “You are committing the crime of extorting money or other valuable object by threat.” In this case, since the utterance asserts an illegal behavior of the interlocutor, it can be taken as an accusation (or complaint), leading to a default of the “literal” meaning of the utterance (Atlas 2005, 15–16). This type of reasoning is grounded on the idea that utterance processing is based on the most accessible, or stereotypical elements of meaning, and that such a presumptive interpretation holds unless rebutted by conflicting contextual information, accessed at the same time (Giora 2003, 104–105).

Without taking into account all the contextual elements and the presumptions that they carry with them, the interpretive process is only an abstract and idealized model. As Hamblin pointed out, there are several presumptions that act at the same time and contribute to the interpretation of an utterance (Hamblin 1970, 295). The reconstruction of the actions performed by means of an utterance (and the attribution of commitments resulting from them) is matter of assessing together the various presumptions that can emerge in a specific context (Giora et al. 2017). As Kecskes puts it (Kecskes 2010, p. 2895; see also Kecskes 2008):

[...] utterances are not underspecified, and they do not get their full specification from the actual situational context because these linguistic units usually bring as much into the situation as the situation gives them. What gives specification to utterance meaning is neither the actual situational context nor the prior context encoded in the utterances but both.

On this view, an interpretation or interpretive process abstracted from the context, the interaction, the institutional setting, and the background knowledge means

only an interpretation in lack of such elements and leading to a conclusion providing a stereotypical representation thereof. In (7) above, the utterance is interpreted regardless of its conversational context by providing a stereotypical intention, a stereotypical context, and a stereotypical setting. If we consider the context, the background information, the type of dialogue or discourse, and the utterance content and type, then we reconstruct the meaning of an utterance systematically through several presumptions of different type and level, which result in inferences that are more or less defeasible (Capone 2005, 1360; Kecskes 2010; Capone 2013). Only when all these factors (presumptions) are evaluated together, can we assess an utterance as ambiguous or not (Bell 1997).

9.3.2 *Levels of Presumption and Reasoning from Best Interpretation*

When an utterance is processed systematically, an interpretation can be supported by providing different types of evidence, related to different types of presumptions concerning what can be shared by the interlocutors (Clark 1996, 113–115; Kecskes 2013, 4; Kecskes and Zhang 2013). They can be divided in four types. Presumptions of the first type (Level 0—pragmatic presumptions) concern the pragmatic purpose of a speech act, connecting for instance an illocutionary force (assertion) with an intention (informing) (Kecskes 2008; Kecskes and Zhang 2009; Kissine 2012). The second type (Level 1—Linguistic) refers to presumptions related to the knowledge of linguistic (or rather semantic-ontological) items and structure (called semantic presumptions). For instance, dictionary or shared meanings of lexical items are presumed to be known by the speakers of a language. Such presumptions represent the presumptive meaning of linguistic elements (Hamblin 1970; Levinson 2000; Macagno 2011), which, however, are subject to default in case the context requires a different interpretation (such as in the case of metaphors, see Giora 2003, p. 60; Giora et al. 2017). Other presumptions (Level 2—Factual, encyclopedic) are about encyclopedic knowledge, such as facts, common connections between events, or behaviors and habits that are shared within a specific community, culture, society. Finally, the last kind of presumptions includes information shared by the interlocutors, i.e. presumptions about the interlocutor's interests or values based on previous conversations, interactions, or other types of evidence. The levels of presumptions can be represented in Fig. 9.1.

The co-existence of different interpretations of the propositional content of a speech act, leading to distinct communicative effects (and different legal consequences), does not mean that the two constructions are equally reasonable or acceptable. The assessment of the conflicting interpretations can be carried out systematically by reconstructing and evaluating the argumentative structure underlying them. We consider the logical form encoded by an utterance in terms of presumptions that need to be assessed together with other presumptions also of different kind.

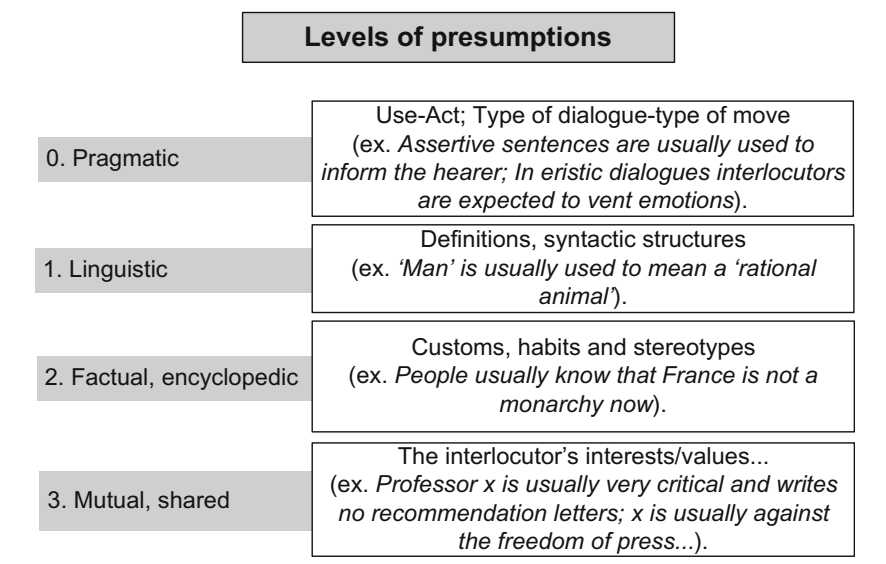


Fig. 9.1 Levels of presumptions

On this view, interpretation becomes the conclusion of an argumentative process of reasoning grounded on the abductive pattern (Atlas 2005, 13) of reasoning from best interpretation (Atlas and Levinson 1981; Atlas 2005), which can be reconstructed as an argumentation scheme from best explanation (Walton et al. 2008) (Table 9.3).

Ambiguity is based on the coexistence of two possibly satisfactory interpretations of the utterance in premise 2, which needs to be resolved in premise 3. In particular, when two interpretations are advanced, their defeasibility conditions need to be analyzed considering all the possible contextual evidence available. The least defeasible interpretation is the one that should be preferred.

For instance, example (7) above can be reconstructed by providing the contextual elements and the contextual presumptions leading to the best interpretation. The interpretation of the aforementioned utterance was in fact the crucial issue in one of the leading cases in defamation law (*Greenbelt Pub. Assn. v. Bresler*, 398 U.S. 6, 1970) (Franklin and Bussel 1983, 831). The context was the following: a developer, Mr. Bresler, held an extremely unreasonable and aggressive negotiating behavior with the city council of the city in which he was doing business,

Table 9.3 Argumentation Scheme 1: reasoning from best explanation

Premise 1	<i>U</i> (an utterance) is an observed communicative act.
Premise 2	<i>I</i> (Interpretation 1) is a satisfactory interpretation of the meaning of <i>U</i> .
Premise 3	No alternative interpretation <i>I'</i> (such as Interpretation 2) given so far is as satisfactory as <i>I</i> .
Conclusion	Therefore, <i>I</i> is a plausible interpretation, based on what is known so far.

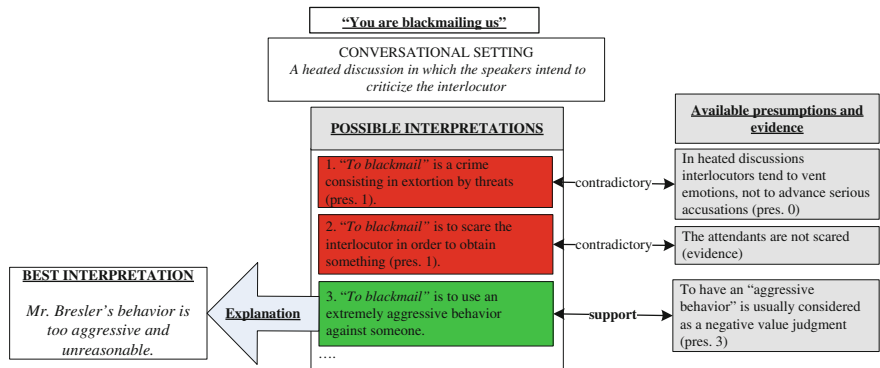


Fig. 9.2 Explaining pragmatic ambiguity

Greenbelt. The discussion became heated, and some council members used the aforementioned utterance to vent their emotions. The newspapers reported the quote in the context, and Bresler accused the journal of defamation. The Court (398 U.S. 13–14) reconstructed the various presumptions and their contextual defaults, and the reasoning structure can be represented in Fig. 9.2.

In this case, we notice that the presumptions are evaluated together, but the most important overarching presumption guiding the interpretation is given by the type of dialogue the interlocutors are engaging in. As already noted by Levinson (1992) and pointed out by Kecskes (Kecskes and Zhang 2009; Kecskes 2013, 2015), interpretation needs to stem from the intended goal of the interaction and contribution of the move to the conversation. For this reason, the type of interaction the interlocutors are engaging in guides the analysis of the various presumptions involved in the interpretive process. To this purpose, we need to introduce the idea of dialogue move as an instrument for representing the presumptive or actual communicative purposes of the interlocutors within an interaction.

9.4 Dialogue Moves

In philosophy of language, the notion of “illocutionary force” is commonly used to describe the inherent and constitutive effects of an utterance (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 92–95). This leads to a description of utterances in terms of intended cognitive responses (Grice 1968; Kissine 2012), which says very little about the effects that an utterance can have on the conversation, or the intentions expressed by non-serious utterances (Kissine 2012, 177), which is one of the crucial elements for interpreting an utterance in context (Giora 2003; Atlas 2005) and the coherence thereof with the rest of the conversation (Bell 1997, 51; Giora 2008). Moreover, the description of some speech acts in cognitive terms does not account for the interactional intention of the speaker, namely the effect he intends to have on

the conversation. A speaker performs an assertion for many reasons that cannot be reduced to representing a belief concerning state of affairs. If we do not take into account their interactional and conversational dimension we cannot capture when an utterance is aimed at informing or just reminding of a commitment, or when it is aimed at warning the hearer or threatening him (Grosz and Sidner 1986; Bell 1997; Kissine 2012). A different approach is needed, which we describe in terms of dialogue types and dialogue moves.

9.4.1 *Dialogue Types and Communicative Intentions*

Communicative intentions (and commitments) can be analyzed starting from the communicative purposes of utterances, namely the way they contribute to the “work of the interaction in which it occurs” (Levinson 1983, 291; Geis 1995, 10, 32). In this sense, we need to focus on the joint (social) actions performed by the interlocutors, and not on the individual actions that speech act theory describes (Mey 2001, 214; Kecskes 2010, 2889). Such purposes are captured neither by a speech-act level description nor by a sequence-level analysis. A higher-level classification is needed, in which the individual higher-order intentions that the participants express through their utterances are described according to “conversational demand” (Mann 1988; Dascal 1992; Mey 2001, 163), namely their dialogical and communicative aims (Bunt 2000). The focus is not on the connection between the individual moves, but rather on the relationship between the joint purpose of the dialogue (such as making a decision) and the individual utterances, explaining why a participant is performing a specific “pragmatic act” (Mey 2001, 94) or dialogue act (Bunt 2000) (for example, is the speaker requesting information? Is he trying to persuade the interlocutor?). We will refer to the acts corresponding to the units of dialogue (which can correspond to an utterance, a sequence of utterances, or a part of an utterance) (Grosz and Sidner 1986, 177) as dialogue moves. The underlying intentions will be referred to as “conversational intentions” in the sense of intents (that can be presumed in a given context) to carry out some conversational effects by means of their utterances (or parts or strings thereof) (Bach and Harnish 1979, 7).

On this view, dialogue moves (and utterances) cannot be interpreted independently of their communicative contexts, which necessarily involve an audience or an interlocutor (even only potential). In argumentation theory, communicative contexts are conceived as dialogues, actual or potential, in which the speaker and the audience or the interlocutors pursue a specific joint goal. On this view, dialogical (and communicative) contexts are represented in terms of communicative or dialogical intentions (in the sense of Grosz and Sidner 1986: 178), which mirror the main purposes of the agents engaging in a discussion (Grice 1975, 45; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 72).

The joint purposes of a dialogue, namely the interlocutors’ generic “we-intentions” of pursuing a joint activity (Searle 2002, 92–94), were classified by Walton (1989, 1990, 1998; Walton and Krabbe 1995; Macagno 2008) in six “types

Table 9.4 Types of dialogue and their characteristics

Type	Initial situation	Main goal	Participants' aims	Side benefits
1. Persuasion dialogue	Conflicting points of view	Resolve or clarify an issue	Persuade the other(s)	Develop and reveal positions, Build up confidence, Influence onlookers
2. Negotiation	Conflict of interests	Reach a settlement both can live with	Get the best out of it for oneself	Reach an agreement, Reveal position, Influence onlookers, Add to prestige
3. Inquiry	Need to have proofs		Find and verify evidence	Add to prestige, Gain experience
4. Deliberation	Dilemma or practical choice	Decide the best course of action	Co-ordinate goals and actions	Reach an agreement, Develop and reveal positions
5. Information-seeking	Need of information	Exchange information	Acquire or give information	Gain and share knowledge
6. Eristics	Personal conflict	Reveal a deeper basis of conflict	Verbally hit out at opponent	Reach an agreement, Vent emotions

of dialogue”: persuasion, negotiation, inquiry, deliberation, information seeking, and eristics. The typology of dialogue types, even though non-comprehensive, represents the most common and generic goal-oriented types of dialogical interactions (Dunin-Keplicz and Verbrugge 2001; McBurney and Parsons 2009). The types of dialogue are represented in Table 9.4 (from Walton and Krabbe 1995, 66):

The various dialogue types can be used as an instrument for describing and analyzing actual communicative practices. There is a discrepancy, however, between what the dialogue types represent and actual dialogical practices. The aforementioned abstract models of dialogues correspond to higher level communicative aims, such as: information seeking, deliberation, inquiry, persuasion, etc. (Walton and Krabbe 1995). In normative, formal approaches to dialogues, such models can be thought of as protocols that agents need to comply with, and for this reason the moves they are composed of need to belong to the same “game” (Bench-Capon et al. 1991; McBurney and Parsons 2009). However, in an actual dialogue the global communicative aim is achieved through several “dialogue moves” that can be of different nature. For example, a dialogue aimed at making a

decision can include phases in which the interlocutors try to support their view-point, or share information (Levin and Moore 1977; Mann 1988).

Building on Levinson's idea concerning the relationship between activity types and the role that utterances play within it (Levinson 1992), we can use the idea of dialogue types as the framework of the proposed continuation of a dialogue that a move advances. According to Levinson, the inferences concerning the interpretation of the role of the utterance in a dialogue depend on the activity the interlocutors are engaging in (Levinson 1992, 72), which affects the degrees of cooperation and compliance with the maxims. For example, in order to understand how an answer to a question should be interpreted (for example, by drawing the needed implicatures or rather interpreting it literally), it is necessary to begin from the purpose of the dialogue, and determine whether it is aimed at exchanging information (mutual interest of the parties) or proving a conclusion (leading the answering party to admit a point).

This insight can be combined with Van Dijk's approach of macro-structure of dialogue. On his perspective, the global purpose of a discourse cannot be captured by a composition of grammatical units (or their underlying propositions). Rather, the discourse units need to be defined starting from the global purpose (Van Dijk 1977), defined in terms not only of topic, but rather of communicative action or game. According to Van Dijk, discourse coherence needs to be determined not only syntactically (and/or semantically) as connections between sentences, but also pragmatically, namely in terms of contributions to a joint communicative purpose (Van Dijk 1977) or appropriateness to a conversational demand (Dascal 1992, 45).

In this sense, the "macro-interpretation" of the type of activity the interlocutors are engaging in and the generic purpose they are pursuing defines the relevance (or importance) of the single units of discourse (Van Dijk 1977). The relationship between moves is defined based on the relationship between the various dialogical intentions and sub-intentions (Levin and Moore 1977).

9.4.2 *Classifying Dialogical Intentions*

In a more general sense, the dialogical intentions that the moves instantiate can be described using the typology of Walton and Krabbe (sharing some crucial features with the typology presented in Mann 1988, 515). Such dialogue types, even though non-comprehensive, represent the most common and generic goal-oriented types of dialogical interactions that a move can propose (Dunin-Keplicz and Verbrugge 2001; McBurney and Parsons 2009), which can be further specified by identifying sub-goals or more specific goals related to specific contexts of interaction.

These general moves can be described as in Table 9.5 (Macagno and Bigi 2017a). The Category indicates the type of move, the Description provides an explanation of the dialogical intention instantiated by the move and the final column provides examples from (adapted) real dialogues in the context of medical chronic care interviews:

Table 9.5 Categories of the coding scheme

Category (code)	Description of category	Example
Information sharing (IS)	Dialogue moves aimed at retrieving and providing information	<u>Doctor</u>: I would like to know how you feel, and if your condition has changed from the last visit <u>Patient</u>: I feel a bit tired. In the last four months, I have been hospitalized three times <u>Doctor</u>: Why? <u>Patient</u>: I passed out <u>Doctor</u>: Were the collapses related to your diabetes? <u>Patient</u>: Apparently there was no relationship
Persuasion (P)	Dialogue moves aimed at persuading the interlocutor, leading him or her to accept a specific point of view	<u>Patient</u>: eh I know you should drink drink drink, even two liters per day <u>Doctor</u>: Two liters can even be even too much especially for someone like you who drinks half of it, but if we do things gradually, your health will improve. Drinking improves also your kidney functionality
Deliberation (D)	Dialogue moves aimed at making a decision	<u>Doctor</u>: Having always the same therapy what is it that changes? what changes is what you have been eating <u>Patient</u>: I don't know but maybe I see something tempting I eat it and then I realize right away from this number <u>Doctor</u>: [exactly] so then at this point what should you do? <u>Patient</u>: I shouldn't eat it <u>Doctor</u>: no one should you should at this point not sit down but try to [do a little of activity] physical activity. I know that in the evening one [would sit] <u>Patient</u>: yes then
Negotiation (N)	Dialogue moves aimed at solving a conflict of interests or goals, and making a joint decision satisfying the interests of both interlocutors	<u>Doctor</u>: I will fix the next visit in October, so you can return to Milan <u>Patient</u>: Ok, or November, if it is possible <u>Doctor</u>: Let's go for October. I cannot leave you 9 months without any control. Do you want a visit in November? <u>Patient</u>: I wanted to go to the South in October. If it is at the beginning of October it is ok <u>Doctor</u>: Mid-October? <u>Patient</u>: Ok

(continued)

Table 9.5 (continued)

Category (code)	Description of category	Example
Eristic (E)	Dialogue moves aimed at reaching an accommodation in a dialogical relationship (for example, defining roles and offices)	<u>Patient</u>: I no longer take these pills. I thought that they were too many, and I decided not to take them <u>Doctor</u>: Why have you done it? Your values are now terrible, and we need to intervene with other treatments. Why have you made such a decision without consulting us? <u>Patient</u>: I thought you said so <u>Doctor</u>: Look at your therapeutic plan. I have never said such a thing! You were supposed to take these pills twice a day! <u>Patient</u>: I thought... <u>Doctor</u>: You cannot do such a thing and then blame it on others!

Every discourse move can thus be regarded as a proposal to pursue a dialogue goal (Levin and Moore 1977; Walton and Macagno 2007; Macagno 2008), relevant to a global joint intention (Walton 1989, 68). It needs to interact with the other dialogical moves to reach the higher goal of the dialogue. The interlocutor can accept the proposed interaction (for example, exchanging information, making a decision...) or contribute to the higher goal with an appropriate response, proposing a distinct type of interaction. On this perspective, discourse moves are defined not in terms of individual intentions (illocutionary acts), but rather in terms of *proposals of joint activities* (Mann 1988). They pursue a joint dialogical goal, which can be accepted and continued, or refused and replaced with an appropriate counter-proposal.

In this sense, we can interpret the aforementioned category of “illocutionary ambiguity” as dialogical ambiguity (ambiguity at the level of the interpretation of the dialogue move). Depending on the relationship between the move and its intended effect, we then redefine the previous concept of imaginary ambiguity distinguishing between the following categories:

- a) Dialogical ambiguity, or ambiguity of the intended effects that constitute the dialogical goal of the move. For example, a question (Do you think that this behavior is acceptable?) can be interpreted as a deliberation move, encouraging the interlocutor to commit to a certain course of action, or as an information sharing move, demanding an opinion.
- b) Perlocutionary ambiguity, or ambiguity consequent to the performance of a move and not directly intended. For example, an assertion (My aunt’s dog died today) can be intended to provide a piece of information (Information sharing), but it can result in the hearer’s grief (in case he believes that the dog was a source of joy) or relief (in case he believes that the dog was suffering).

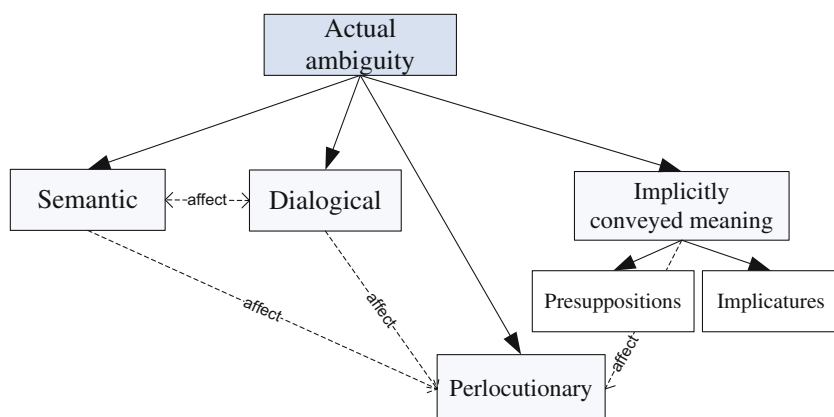


Fig. 9.3 Classifying actual ambiguity

- c) Indirectly conveyed ambiguity, namely ambiguity of contents that are not explicitly intended, but that are presupposed (implicated by semantic items or syntactic structures) or implied by the speaker. For example, in the following exchange: “Did you have a bank account?” “The company had one,” the reply can be considered as ambiguous relatively to its implicature (it can mean that the interrogated person had no bank accounts, but also that he does not intend to answer by providing personal information).

The distinction can be represented in Fig. 9.3.

In the following section we will analyze ambiguities in chronic care interviews, distinguishing between the different levels of ambiguity.

9.5 Interpreting Ambiguities in Chronic Care Interviews

Chronic care consultations about diabetes offer crucial cases of conflicts of presumptions resulting in ambiguities of different kind. Medical interviews can be conceived as instances of intercultural communication (Angelelli 2004; Schouten and Meeuwesen 2006; Bigi 2016, 49–51). On the one hand, the physician is presumed to have a background of scientific knowledge not shared by the interlocutor. On the other hand, the patient’s preferences and lifestyle are presumed not to be known by the doctor (Bigi 2011, 2014a). Moreover, patients and doctors may not share the same cultural background in terms of language, ethnicity, or social class. These factors may result in communication problems at different levels, which unveil underlying presumptions that need to be addressed in order to avoid deeper misunderstanding.

In this chapter, we propose examples of analyses from a corpus of diabetes interviews. Our corpus consists of 60 video-recordings of doctor-patient encounters collected at a public diabetes outpatient clinic in northern Italy from 2012 to 2014

(the corpus is described in Bigi 2014b). Apart from the “cultural” differences (Kecskes 2015) stemming from different uses of language and different explanations of scientific facts, in some cases also the very roles of the doctor and the patient are conceived differently. Some patients act based on the presumption that the doctors shall impose a treatment and the patient has no other role than obeying or not obeying. Our analysis was aimed at identifying instances of misaligned presumptions at different levels that could be considered as the causes for such “cultural” differences (Macagno and Bigi 2017b). Indeed, the latter can be conceived as presumptions at various levels that can be subject to default and may result in ambiguity and misunderstanding at a semantic (the language used), encyclopedic (the knowledge about relations between facts or events), pragmatic (presumed communicative intentions), or mutual (how people generally behave or what they like most) level.

9.5.1 Semantic Ambiguity—Lexical Ambiguity

The following excerpt involves a linguistic presumption.³ In diabetes care, the problem is the control of glycaemia; therefore, a crucial issue is the glycemic index of food. Bread has a high glycemic index, higher than sliced rusk. In some Italian linguistic communities, however, the same word “*fette biscottate*” can refer to both slices of rusks and slices of toasted bread. The word “*biscottato*” can refer to the browning of baked food (slices of bread, cake, biscotti), but when used in combination with “*fette*” (“slices”) it is used as a phrase and it refers to “rusk” (Zwieback). The doctor presupposes that it should be clear what the expression “*fette biscottate*” refers to, because it is an item that belongs to the common knowledge of the Italian community. The patient and his wife seem to focus on the ambiguity of “*biscottato*” and presuppose that the issue is with *toasting* bread and not with the nature of the baked good they eat (pre-sliced bread for toast has a higher glycemic index than sliced rusk).

(8) Case 1

1. D: What do you have for breakfast? Coffee with milk and two *fette biscottate* (rusk)...
2. P: Two *fette biscottate*
3. D: or *biscotti*?
4. P: no, two slices of rusk, toasted bread
5. D: ah! that’s a different thing, toasted bread
6. Wife: no, it’s not toasted, it’s those slices of bread that you can toast but we don’t toast it.

³This example has also been discussed in Macagno and Bigi (2017b).

7. P: they're from Buitoni
8. Wife: Mulino Bianco, Buitoni [popular Italian brands of baked goods]
9. D: Buitoni... but, can't you get the normal *fette biscottate*?
10. P: ehmm...
11. D: the normal ones? *Fette biscottate*?
12. P: I think those are normal... why, what do you mean by *fette biscottate*? These are slices
13. D: *fette biscottate*?
14. P: slices
15. D: all right

The patient (and his wife) and the doctor interact on the basis of different presumptions. At 1 and 9, the doctor presumes that slices of toasted bread are a concept different from rusk, or rather that two distinct words refer to these concepts, and that *fette biscottate* refers exclusively to rusk (“can’t you get the normal *fette biscottate*?”). On the contrary, at 2, 4, 12, and 14, the patient presupposes that *fette biscottate* refers to two synonymous concepts, rusk and toasted bread (“two slices of rusk, toasted bread”; “These are slices”). This misunderstanding is based on defaulted and conflicting presumptions on both sides. Both the doctor and the patient presume that the meaning of *fette biscottate* is shared (linguistic presumption). Moreover, they both ground their interaction on the presumption that the interlocutor knows respectively the equivalence or the difference between rusks and toasted bread *for the purposes of diabetes care*. On this view, encyclopedic presumptions underlie the linguistic ones: the equivalence (presumed by the patient and disregarded by the doctor) indicates that the speaker does not know that bread is much more detrimental to his condition than rusks. Conversely, the doctor presumes that this difference is shared, and does not insist on this point.

9.5.2 Semantic Ambiguity—Syntactic Ambiguity

In the following excerpt, the nurse is commenting on the patient’s parameters and notices that her weight has diminished, which is an improvement for this particular patient.

(9) Case 2

1. N: Your weight is much better, have you noticed?
2. P: Yes, many thanks for giving me those instructions concerning eating less. You know, sometimes in the evening I almost forget to eat.
3. N: No, eating less does not mean forgetting to eat. You are under medication, so be careful otherwise you risk hypoglycemia.

We noticed in this case a broader interpretation of “eating less” conflicting with a more restricted one, in which the “hidden constituent” (the food) is more specified and narrowed. Indeed, the nurse presumes that the patient understands that “eating less” refers to the reduction of the amount of food eaten during each meal, not to the reduction of the food ingested overall. The patient instead seems to be acting on a broader interpretation of “eating less”, which includes skipping meals altogether. In this context, however, the broader interpretation conflicts with the factual presumption that not eating will cause risky drops in the levels of the glycaemia, due to the fact that the patient is taking her medication, which was prescribed based on the assumption that the patient is having regular meals.

9.5.3 Pragmatic Ambiguities

The last example is a more complex one, involving two types of pragmatic ambiguity, dialogical and perlocutionary. In the history taking phase the doctor observes a worsening of the general situation of the patient’s diabetes. She then starts looking into his self-monitoring journal and notices values that do not fully explain this global worsening. So, she looks into the glucometer and finds out that the patient has measured very high values but has not written them in the journal.

In a rather abrupt manner, she begins a dialogical move in which she explains to the patient why it is important for him to write into the journal all the values he measures.

(10) Case 3

1. D: *[not answering the patient, but as though talking to herself]* 291 is almost 300; 299... that’s why the values are so strange. So, dear Mr. Smith, the things you write in here *[pointing to the journal]* are for yourself, they are not for me, is this clear? We are collaborating, right now I have an agreement with you, I am accompanying you, to help you. But the goal of our meeting must be that your health improves, that you feel better, that you are well. If you don’t display all the information, I cannot help you improve.
2. P: yes yes *[tries to say something but D stops him and keeps talking]*

This move seems to presuppose that the patient has fully understood the function of the journal, the need for the self-monitoring in relation to the customization of the therapy and the urgency of keeping his glucose values below a certain level. It also seems to presuppose that the patient has intentionally not written the higher values in the journal. The patient does not reply much, except displaying certain impatience at the doctor’s talk.

At the end of the doctor's turn, when she ends by pointing out that the very high values that had not been transcribed in the journal have contributed to increasing the overall glucose parameter (HbA1c), the patient's wife replies (at 12) by asking: "so, what can be the cause of this situation?", thereby demonstrating that she failed to understand the pragmatic function of the doctor's previous moves.

3. D: now, if you don't write them of course you are damaging yourself. You are the one who is feeling worse
4. P: basically I am not writing all of my values
5. D: and this is wrong because you are the first person, you are the first person...
6. P: yeess [sounding impatient]
7. D: who should become aware of the fact: look here, I have had hyperglycemias, I got up to 300, what did I do?
8. P: what, what, why did this happen?
9. D: exactly, you are the first person who should do this kind of work, then you can talk to us and we are always here for you
10. P: to give explanations
11. D: but I see you today with a glycated hemoglobin of 9 after seeing you with a 7.3, which was perfect for your age, and I think, what happened?
12. Wife: yes, right, what happened? what do you think it depends on?
13. P: this difference, this sudden change?

The ambiguity problem we see in this excerpt has to do with the interpretation of the dialogical function of an explanation. The doctor's pragmatic presumption is that her dialogical move consists in offering the patient reasons and data for making a specific decision: to write into the journal all the measured values. The patient, instead, seems to presume that the doctor is trying to inform him of higher values regarding his glycaemia, and asks for the reason thereof.

The pragmatic misunderstanding is at a twofold level, a local and a global one. At a local level, the Wife's reply at 12 shows the misunderstanding of the dialogical purpose (the speaker's intention) resulting in a different interpretation of the perlocutionary effect of the doctor's rhetorical question at 11. The doctor wants to express his puzzlement at worrying values that are not documented by the only evidence that the patient can provide on his habits and condition, i.e. his updated journal. The doctor's question is intended to express the seriousness of the effects of the patient's failure to comply with the instructions. It is aimed at backing up her global communicative intention, consisting in committing more strongly the patient to updating the journal correctly (deliberations moves). However, the wife's reply—backed by the patient—is a reply to an interpretation of the doctor's question as an expression of uncertainty or difficulty to explain the increased values ("eristic" moves, aimed at venting emotions). If we use the "classic" speech act classification, she interprets the doctor's utterance not as an assertive act (*I cannot retrieve the information that I need for understanding the values*) supporting a directive (*you should update the journal*), but rather as an expressive (*I do not know what happened*).

At a global level, the moves mirror that the interlocutors are engaging in different dialogues. The wife (and the patient) are interpreting the doctor's words as a mere provision of information regarding a worrying situation (information sharing). The doctor's presumption that the patient is aware of the gravity of his behavior (deliberation dialogue), which constitutes a risk for himself, is not confirmed by the patient's reaction. The patient responds as though he were listening to a provision of information about facts that happened independently of his will.

9.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we claim that ambiguities and the possible misunderstandings resulting from them are not simply interpretive problems. They can reveal much deeper cultural differences, which can be of fundamental importance for the purposes of communication. Our theoretical approach is grounded on the notion of interpretation as the best explanation of meaning (Atlas and Levinson 1981; Atlas 2007, 2008) and the corresponding heuristic mechanisms underlying meaning understanding (Dascal and Wróblewski 1988; Dascal 2003). Our focus, however, is not on the processing and the mechanisms triggered to interpret an utterance (Giora 2003), but more specifically on the possible arguments and the possible argumentative structure that can be used to support or justify an interpretation. To this purpose, the insights and the advances provided by linguistic pragmatics can be used with a different target.

On this argumentation perspective, both in the case of heuristic and systematic processing, utterances are interpreted based on presumptions and hierarchies of presumptions working at the same time, namely defeasible rules used to draw conclusions in situations of lack of knowledge. The presumptive interpretation used to automatically process the utterance leads to a *prima facie* meaning, which holds until it is challenged or subject to default (until communicative problems arise from this interpretation) (Giora et al. 2017). In order to establish a presumptive or non-presumptive reading and the possible defeasibility conditions thereof, it is necessary to assess the possible presumptions that can contribute to establishing the meaning, including the pragmatic presumptions concerning the goal of the conversation. The analysis of the contextual presumptions can lead to an interpretation that is less subject to refutation, and thus can be used to solve the possible ambiguity of an utterance. A fundamental implication of this view is that ambiguity can arise because of different presumptions at different levels. If the interlocutors do not share the same linguistic, pragmatic, factual, and mutual presumptions, they can provide different interpretations supported by different reasons. Misunderstandings thus become signals of ambiguities, and ambiguities can reveal deeper cultural differences.

This theoretical framework can be highly relevant in professional contexts, in which due to differences in education, society, or context, the interlocutors can have communication problems due to pragmatic misunderstandings. Bringing out the

causes of these conflicting meanings can lead to a better understanding of deeper differences. In particular, in the medical context detecting and addressing the presumptions underlying pragmatic misunderstanding can shed light on the patient's presumptions characterizing his choices, his values, and his ideas about doctor-patient interactions. Within the ideal medical communication model of shared decision making and the paradigm of patient-centered communication (Stewart 1995; Arora and McHorney 2000; Bigi 2014b), the doctor's awareness of the presumptions underlying ambiguity and the argumentative mechanism for tackling them can become crucial.

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Chapter 10

Practical Argumentation in the Making: Discursive Construction of Reasons for Action

Marcin Lewiński

Abstract The goal of this chapter is to catalogue ways in which practical argumentation (PA)—argumentation aimed at deciding on a course of action—is produced discursively in deliberative discussions. This is a topic largely neglected in the literature on PA focused primarily on the abstract features of practical inference. I connect to this literature by arguing that the complex scheme of PA inferentially hinges on three different principles for rationally selecting means to achieve the desired goal: the means have to be either the best, satisfactory or necessary in order to ground the practical inference and thus be adopted. Based on these theoretically-derived distinctions, I scrutinise the linguistic indicators of the three types of means-goal inferences of PA. As a corpus, I use a set of official European Union policy documents called *Transforming Europe’s energy system* released in Brussels in July 2015.

10.1 Introduction

Practical argumentation is called “practical” because its conclusion is always some kind of a decision to be implemented: an arguer’s intention to act, a proposal to jointly do something, an advice that someone else does something, etc. (Lewiński 2016).¹ In this sense, it is traditionally contrasted with “theoretical” argumentation,

¹Whether the decision (or even a weaker predisposition) to act is eventually implemented is quite another issue, traditionally discussed as the problem of weakness of will or *akrasia*. Still, regardless of whether the action is finally undertaken or not, the action-orientation is a definitional feature of practical argument.

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which concludes in a truth-relevant statement of what we believe is the case. All the same, the work on practical argumentation (henceforth: PA) is predominantly theoretical, with the focus being firmly fixed on the abstract elements of the reasoning scheme. The crucial question is: How do our practical arguments proceed from our desired goals and values, via our beliefs about the possible means, to concrete intentions to act?

The “how” in the question hardly ever concerns the linguistic aspect of PA.² Here, I want to go against this tradition and ask: How do we actually make practical arguments in everyday deliberative discourse aimed at producing reasons for actions? What are the linguistic indicators of various elements of practical arguments? To meaningfully ask these questions, I need to make at least two assumptions. First, PA is a concept different from practical reasoning, because it is not just reasoning, a cognitive act internal to the thinking mind, but also a type of discourse, an externalised linguistic performance through which practical reasoning is constituted or, at least, transpires. Second, specific linguistic units can be functionally related to the elements of practical, or any other, argumentation. In this way, they can be treated as *argumentative indicators*.³ These assumptions are widely shared in argumentation theory, so here I merely mention them and refer to their extant justifications which are far more detailed than I can produce in this small study (van Eemeren et al. 2007, 2014). Yet, they are important to state as crucial starting points that let us get off the ground.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I provide the theoretical basis for studying practical argumentation by describing its elaborate scheme. Second, I argue that the scheme inferentially hinges on three different principles for rationally selecting means to achieve the desired goal: the means have to be either the best, satisfactory or necessary in order to ground the practical inference and thus be adopted. Third, based on these distinctions, I identify the linguistic indicators of the three types of means-goal inferences of PA. As a corpus, I use a set of official European Union policy documents called *Transforming Europe’s energy system* released in Brussels in July 2015.

²An exception is van Eemeren et al.’s (2007) study of *argumentative indicators* of what they call “pragmatic” argumentation, discussed below.

³I follow the terminology of van Eemeren et al. who “call words and expressions that may refer to argumentative moves such as putting forward a standpoint or argumentation *argumentative indicators*” (2007, p. 1). According to them: “Argumentative indicators constitute keystones in the discourse, facilitating the identification and reconstruction of argumentative moves that are made in argumentative discussions and texts” (2007, p. 1).

10.2 Practical Argumentation: An Extended Scheme

Practical argumentation in its most usual understanding starts from an action-question: What shall I (we, she) do? It thus starts from a situation which calls for action, such as a problem which needs a solution or an undertaking which needs some measures to be implemented. This, typically, involves a gap between current (unwelcome) *Circumstances* (C) and envisaged *Goals* (G)—desired future states of affairs. These future states embody our main *Values* (V). In order to get from C to G we should take some *Means* or *Measures* (M) (see Atkinson et al. 2006; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012; Walton 2007). But which ones? Here lies the “informal logic” of practical inference: there are different principles for rationally selecting *Means* and they require taking different “paths” by arguers.

As mentioned above, when expressed in language, internal practical reasoning takes the form of externalised practical argumentation (PA). In argumentation theory, PA has been analysed as a separate *argument scheme* with its own set of premises, inference rules and critical questions (e.g. Fairclough and Fairclough 2012; Feteris 2002; Ihnen Jory 2016; Snoeck Henkemans 2016; Walton 2006, 2007).

The extended scheme of PA presented in Fig. 10.1 stems from a rich literature on practical argument in philosophy, Artificial Intelligence, and argumentation theory (see Lewiński 2015, 2016, 2017, for a more detailed discussion). In particular, it builds on a recent account of PA by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012; who, in turn, advance the work of Atkinson et al. 2006, and Walton 2007). The crucial advantage of Fairclough and Fairclough’s approach is that they employ the scheme as an indispensable tool for a discourse analysis of political deliberation, thus departing from the philosophers’ and computer scientists’ rather abstract study of the normative and inferential aspects of practical argument. Their work includes an in-depth analysis of all the premises constituting the scheme (*Circumstances*, *Goal*, *Values*; see Fairclough and Fairclough 2012), and a number of advantages of the scheme in the task of analysing actual deliberative discourse have been distinguished (Lewiński 2015, 2016, 2017). Crucially, it gives a comprehensive overview of the elements we construct our PA from, whether they are explicit or implicit. This, in turn, allows for a careful analysis and critique of various instances of PA, as they are performed in actual discourse.

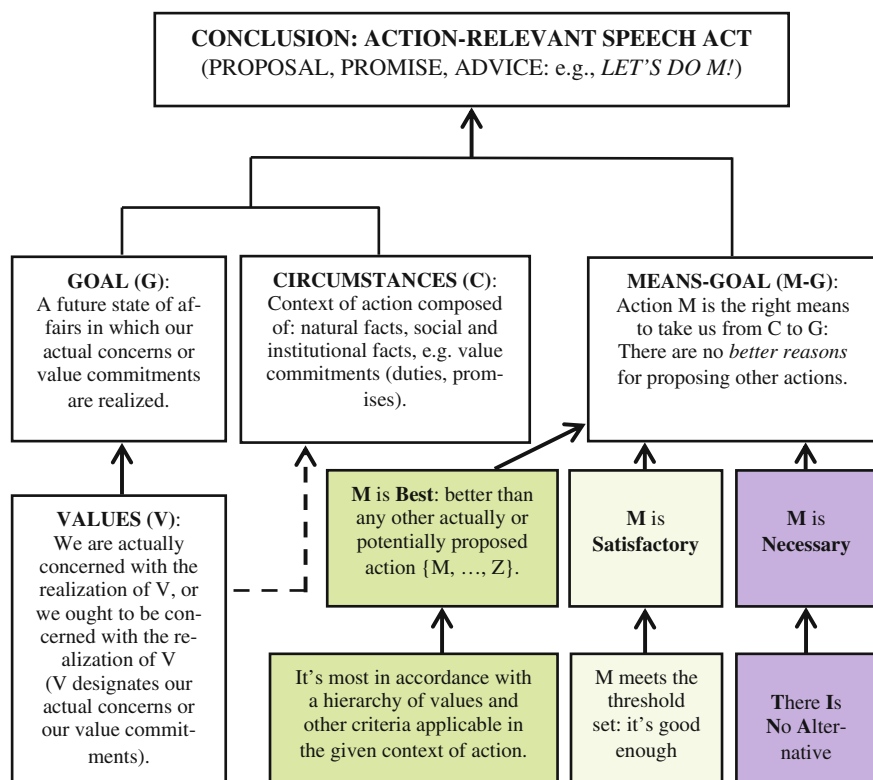


Fig. 10.1 The extended scheme of practical argument. *Derived from:* Fairclough and Fairclough (2012)

Possible, contextually-determined decision criteria (*derived from:* McBurney et al. 2007, p. 99):

- direct or indirect costs and benefits (negative and beneficial consequences/side effects)
- opportunity costs
- practical feasibility
- ethical, moral, or legal implications
- likelihood of realization or of success
- conformance with other goals or strategies, their timing, duration, or location

I have previously elaborated on two elements of the scheme which are crucial to the practical inference, and yet have been largely overlooked in argumentation literature. In the first place, the conclusion of PA can be understood in terms of a class of *action-relevant speech acts*, thus pointing to a “unity in diversity” of what

we can argue for in PA (Lewiński 2016).⁴ As already mentioned, in PA, by its definition, we always argue for some action to be performed. Two variables are to be considered here. The first is the agent of the action. It can be the very arguer ('I', exclusive 'we': *so, I should do X*), the listener ('you', 'they': *so, I think you should do X*), or both (inclusive 'we': *So, let us do X*). As I have argued, contrary to much philosophical literature, it is not the first, but the last option that best characterises PA as used in actual deliberation, with the paradigmatic case being the speech act of *proposal*: *Let's do X*. (Of course, first-person *promise* and second-person *advice* can too conclude PA.) The second variable is the strength of the speech act: from mere suggesting, to neutral but binding commitment, to solemn, forceful acts. An arguer can thus, for instance, *recommend* that someone take an action, *request* that someone take an action, or *demand* that someone take an action.

In the second place, the scheme clarifies the notion of the means-goal premise. This premise is grounded in one of the three basic inference licences warranting the choice of "the right means" taking us from the current *Circumstances* to the *Goals*: the means can be necessary, satisfactory (good enough) or simply the best among all the possible, comparable alternatives. Since this is the crucial element of the practical inference, it requires some further elaboration to which I now turn.

10.3 Three Paths to Argue Practically

10.3.1 *The Best, the Good Enough, and the Necessary*⁵

The basic scheme of practical reason discussed in philosophy and argumentation theory looks more or less like this:⁶

Let's do X!	(Conclusion)
<i>because</i>	
X leads to Y.	(Means–Goal premise)
<i>and</i>	
Y is our desired goal.	(Goal premise)

⁴In Searle's (1975, 2001) taxonomy, action-relevant speech acts are either directives or commissives, or some mixture of them. As such, they are characterised by their world-to-words direction of fit, as their point is to get an agent (whether "I", "you", or "we") to perform an action that will bring the world into a state captured in the intentional content of the speech act.

⁵This section is based on Lewiński (2017).

⁶According to philosophers such as Broome, this would be a paradigmatic case of "[f]ully spelt out and made explicit, correct [practical] reasoning" (Broome 2013, p. 260). See van Eemeren (2016, p. 17) for a similar account within the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation.

That this scheme does not quite capture the rationality of PA can be shown by producing arguments that clearly follow the scheme but are not so clearly rational:

- (1) Let's stop feeding our children!
 because
 This will save us lots of money
 And
 We really need to start saving.

Here, from acceptable premises (the *Goal* of saving money is morally acceptable; the *Means-Goal* relation between stopping feeding children and saving money is technically speaking correct in many contexts) we get a highly objectionable conclusion. That means that there is a problem with the validity of the practical inference drawn here—and thus with the simple scheme in general. What is missing is the *inference licence*⁷ regarding the quality of the link between the desired goal (premise) and the proposed means of action (conclusion). The *Means-Goal* inference needs to be thickened beyond asserting simple causality: “X leads to Y.”

One obvious option is to take X as a means *necessary* to reach Y. Whenever we want to achieve Y, we have to do X. An exception occurs when X involves an objectionable (morally unacceptable, too expensive) action, in which case we should abandon our goal.⁸

While being the philosophers' favourite, the necessary means is something of a laboratory case. It is appealing, for it allows to construe the practical inference as *modus ponens* which makes the practical inference valid by standards of classic deductive logic:

If we want (ought to)Y, then only by means of X	$p \rightarrow q$
We do want (ought to)Y	p
Ergo, we need to do X	q

Yet, in real life, we often have several alternative ways of reaching the goal. Each of these alternatives is typically considered as a *sufficient* means, an action that in itself does the job of taking one from the current state of affairs to the desired goal. The choice between available alternatives in PA was recognised already by Aristotle, who famously declared that if the desired end “seems to be produced by

⁷The notion of *inference-licence* is used by Toulmin (2003/1958) interchangeably with *inference-warrant* (see p. 91). Toulmin traces the origins of the notion to the work of Gilbert Ryle, who also uses the notion of *inference-ticket*, “which licenses its possessors to move from asserting factual statements to asserting other factual statements” (1949, p. 121).

⁸“Who wills the end, wills (so far as reason has a decisive influence on his actions) also the means which are indispensably necessary and in his power” (Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 80–81; cited in Broome 2013, p. 159). Indeed, the necessity of means is typically considered the paradigmatic type of inference licence in practical reason (Broome 2013; Walton 2007).

several means they [deliberators] consider by which it is most easily and best produced” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1112b12-15). Unsurprisingly, in practical philosophy there is a long tradition of investigating what the “most easily and best produced” means might be. Briefly, when reasoning or arguing over the *Means* to produce our *Goals*, we can licence our inference through one of the two basic strategies (see Byron 1998, 2004):⁹

- (A) Going for “the best”: *optimising/maximising*. What “the best” is, is typically contextually determined, sometimes loosely (when deciding on the best place to take summer holidays), sometimes in a very strict, administratively defined way (when deciding on the best public procurement offer, or best job or grant application). While the general criteria or parameters for selecting the best course of action can be suggested (see the bottom of Fig. 10.1, also: Hitchcock 2011; McBurney et al. 2007), their exact set, scope, precision and weight depend on the context and cannot be pre-defined. Therefore, they constitute the fluctuating conditions in the scheme of PA. One can, however, distinguish between simple and subtle optimising:
- i. *Simple* optimising applies when deliberators deal with a “static context,” that is, when the set of alternative options (means of action) is finite and known (Byron 1998; this is what Chang (2016) calls a “well-formed choice situation”): we should simply take the best option that is “on the table”.
 - ii. *Subtle* optimising takes place when we are facing an ever-changing “dynamic context” in which the set of options is open-ended and constantly updated (Byron 1998): Shall we implement the current “best” technology for tackling climate change or wait for some new developments to happen? What better solutions can we get in the near future? Such *risky* questions (Hamblin 1970, p. 216) call for an on-going calculation of costs and benefits under uncertainty.¹⁰

⁹We need such a “material” licence, if only because the simple scheme for other than necessary means is formally invalid—it is based on the fallacy of affirming the consequent: If p leads to q , and we desire (ought to) q , then we should do p : $p \rightarrow q, q$, so p (e.g., Searle 2001, p. 244).

¹⁰Beyond uncertainty regarding the set of options to be considered, one can distinguish further sources of uncertainty, typically affecting our practical argumentation. Hansson and Hadorn (2016) discuss unidentified consequences, undecided values, undetermined demarcation of the decision, unclear connections with later decision on the same subject-matter, and unforeseeable dependence on decisions by others. Over and above simpler decisions under “risk” or “uncertainty” (e.g., when the options and their consequences are known, but not their precise probabilities of success), these complications may lead to decisions being argued for under “deep” or “great uncertainty” (Hansson and Hadorn 2016). Under such circumstances, even “static” contexts (as described here) become “dynamic”, in the sense of ever present uncertainty regarding the complete foreseeable impact of the means taken. Importantly, the scheme of PA presented above incorporates, in an informal fashion, the possibility of critically discussing most of these sources of uncertainty: values and their hierarchies, goals and other consequences of means taken, the way problematic circumstances/decision problems are framed, as well as the options to be considered and how they compare to the options advocated by others. In this way, while not minimally elegant, the scheme comprehensively includes many of the crucial concerns in practical argumentation.

- (B) Going for the “good enough”: *satisficing* by setting a threshold which will fulfil our basic criteria: “Any policy that limits CO₂ emissions by 40% is fine.” This, of course, is not the “best way all things considered” but it is an important and reasonable way to licence conclusions of our PA under many typical circumstances:
- i. In dynamic contexts, satisficing lets us “economise” on resource-intensive subtle optimising, which requires constant updates and cost-benefit analysis.
 - ii. In static contexts, it allows for global optimisation by letting us being somewhat “easy” on less important local results.

In these ways, satisficing also falls under the “no better reasons” principle (see the Means-Goal box in Fig. 10.1). In dynamic contexts, we (so far) have no better option than the one which first meets the threshold. In static contexts, while locally merely satisficing, we might be optimising in terms of the bigger plan.¹¹

The basic inference licence in PA is then: *there are no better reasons for proposing other courses of action*.¹² Only when strengthened with this principle can the “X leads to Y” *Means-Goal* premise be properly licensed and the entire PA can generate reasonable, even if expectedly defeasible, results. As an example, compare the above-mentioned unqualified inference (1), where from acceptable premises we reach an objectionable conclusion, with the following case:

- (2) Let's stop feeding our children!
 because
 This is the best way to save money
 And
 We really need to start saving.

Here, it is clear that the *Means-Goal* premise (stopping feeding our children is *the best way* to save money) is suspicious, indeed plainly outrageous, and as such cannot justifiably license the inference. Even the weaker formulation relying on the satisfactory means remains intolerable:

- (3) Let's stop feeding our children!
 because
 This is an acceptable way to save money
 and
 We really need to start saving.

In short, by specifying the nature of the *Means-Goal* premise in these ways, the practical inference gains the load-bearing capacity, so to speak.

¹¹For similar reasons, it has been argued (e.g. Byron 1998) that satisficing is eventually a species of optimisation, as it aims at finding the optimal balance between overall costs (effort, time, other resources) and benefits (satisfaction of preferences and values) of our actions.

¹²Chang (2016, p. 231ff.) criticises this way of defining rational choice—which she calls “maximalism”—on the account that it is based on a *negative* (no better reasons, not worse) rather than a *positive* comparative fact (better than, equal to). However, with some uncontroversial additional assumptions (not worse iff better than or equal to), both views are compatible in this respect.

It is important to stress that despite its focus on the means-end inference, the scheme proposed here is not limited to consequentialist arguments in the strict sense. It does give the opportunity to challenge, discuss and revise goals (cf. Edvardsson Björnberg 2016) and, crucially, values (cf. Möller 2016). Values, apart from directly shaping the goal, also influence the way we frame the circumstances (decision problem) and provide the primary criteria for evaluating means to be taken. This can be done in terms of moral prohibitions (e.g., no rights violations) or imperatives (“our decisions must with no exception protect environment”). These can be seen as *sine qua non* parameters for rationally selecting the means; in bureaucratic discourse one can call them admissibility or eligibility criteria. In this way, the scheme of PA is not blind to deontological arguments. It can render both strictly instrumental (prudential, consequentialist) practical arguments (where goals and values are fixed, and one is merely looking for the right means) and the moral (value-based) arguments, where values and goals are equally up for discussion. Moreover, in cases of dilemmatic choices, such as, “We must keep this person alive even if killing him would likely save ten others, because human life is sacred”, the “moral” argument takes the necessary path rather than the best path defined, for instance, by the consequentialist principle of expected utility maximisation. So the means-end inference is understood here quite broadly, to the extent that implementing a moral imperative under given circumstances is a means to the end of fulfilling that imperative or value in the sense of the necessary choice.¹³

Before moving on, I still need to briefly discuss one more option, which is likely the most common and the least discussed kind of means we consider in our PA. Apart from the *necessary* and *sufficient* (either satisfactory or best) means, we can distinguish what I call *conducive* means. Such means are presumably useful in approaching the desired *Goal*, without being either necessary or sufficient means. Conducive means should be considered against a disjunction of other alternatives (for they are not necessary) and in conjunction with other means (for they are not sufficient). Examples of such means are plenty: “In order to cut household spending I should give up an expensive cable TV plan I hardly ever make use of.” Clearly, doing so is not a necessary means to save money. Instead, I can quit smoking, eat out twice rather than five times a week or replace my household appliances with energy efficient ones. Or do all of these and keep my TV subscription. Likewise, it is not a sufficient means: alone, scrapping the monthly TV bill will not save me all that much. Still, when supported with other premises of the scheme of PA, and as part of a bigger plan, doing so is a reasonable action to take. It might be more efficient, or less painful or troublesome than quitting smoking, giving up on nice

¹³Accordingly, various “decision principles” for practical argument distinguished, e.g., by Brun and Betz (2016, Sect. 5.2) can be seen as specific instantiations of one of the three paths proposed here. For example, their “Practical Syllogism” defines the necessary path, “Optimal Choice” and “Expected Utility Maximisation” are instances of the best path, and so forth.

restaurants or investing in new appliances. Or it might just save me per annum the sum I'm looking to save. Shortly, whether because it is an optimal or a satisfactory means, it takes us some way from current *Circumstances* to the *Goal* and is thus presumably reasonable.

Following all this, we arrive at the following types of inferences licencing our PA:

- (a) Doing X is the best (whether sufficient or conducive) way to get to Y
- (b) Doing X is a good enough (whether sufficient or conducive) way to get to Y
- (c) Doing X is necessary to get to Y

In other words, it is one of these three principles that makes our practical argument reasonable. For this reason, it is crucial to investigate how these three paths are performed discursively—and this is what I will focus on while studying the argumentative indicators of PA. This is not to deny that other elements of PA—the desirability of the Goal, the urgency of the Circumstances, or the Values underlying our desires—cannot or should not be closely investigated. Indeed, extensive studies of PA, such as the one by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) provide insightful analyses of some of these elements. Yet, the inferential paths on which PA rests are largely overlooked—or are indiscriminately treated as but ones among many causal connections capable of grounding practical inference. Such is the case with the pragma-dialectical study of indicators of PA discussed in the next section.

10.3.2 *Previous Work on the Indicators of Practical Argument*

Each of the three inferential “paths” of practical argument has supposedly different discursive instantiations: (a) for the best means: “it’s better than...”, “it’s optimal”, “no other option can take us that far”; (b) for satisfactory ones: “it’s good enough”, “it will suffice to...”; (c) for necessary means: “this is the only way”, “we need to do this”, “there is no alternative”. These, however, are but examples—a fuller account of the argumentative indicators of practical inference is missing.

In their monograph on *argumentative indicators*, van Eemeren et al. (2007, Chap. 6) provide an extensive overview of the indicators for the general *causal* argument scheme, one of the three major types of schemes distinguished in their pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (the other ones being the *analogy* and the *symptomatic* scheme). Accordingly, they list numerous expressions used to indicate a causal relationship which can license the step from premises (arguments) to a conclusion (standpoint), such as “X causes Y” or “X contributes to Y”. *Pragmatic*

argumentation, a means-end (hence causal) reasoning concluding in some form of a decision to act, is in their typology a subtype of the general causal scheme.¹⁴

To start with, the type of the causal connection they focus on is a *sufficient* connection. This is not explicitly mentioned, but is clearly evidenced in their references to Garssen's study of argument schemes where the cause "inevitably leads to" an effect (van Eemeren et al. 2007, p. 164), thus establishing "the inevitability of the result" (2007, p. 174), once the cause is effective. However, by listing examples such as "only with" X could you get to Y (p. 186), they also introduce the *necessary* means as an option. Further, expressions such as "X contributes to Y" (X is "one of the causes of" Y, p. 168) point to the *conducive* form of a causal argument.

When it comes to the specifically pragmatic subtype of causal argumentation, again, by reference to Garssen, the sufficient connection is established in its very definition: "A reasonable case for the standpoint that the course of action involved is recommendable is made by showing that the course of action *automatically* leads to a favourable or desirable situation" (van Eemeren et al. 2007, p. 166, emphasis added). The specificities and complexities of the means-end relationship are not directly discussed. However, they do transpire in their examples, both in a sub-section dedicated to "specific indicators of the pragmatic argumentation subtype" (2007, pp. 174–177) and elsewhere.

In particular, "better" is mentioned as a linguistic means to "pass a positive judgment on a particular course of action" (p. 174). Later on, specifically comparative uses of "better" are mentioned too: "R is a better way/method or alternative" (p. 181). Comparison is, arguably, the very basis of a reasonable choice involved in practical argumentation (Chang 2016; Lewiński 2017). Most directly, it is part of "the best" path of the practical inference, where comparisons among alternative means allow to reasonably select the best one to be taken.¹⁵ Expressions such as "added advantage" or "added bonus" of a given means (van Eemeren et al. 2007, p. 187) similarly point to the "betterness" and, eventually, "bestness" of a given means.

In sum, while van Eemeren et al.'s work on argumentative indicators provides a rich reservoir of possible devices for discursively preforming PA, it cuts across many of the fine distinctions that can be made regarding the ways practical inference is licenced. This contribution aims in part to build on such work and to fill the gaps by refining the classification of the argumentative indicators of PA.

¹⁴Following Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), pragma-dialecticians use the term *pragmatic*, rather than *practical*, argumentation.

¹⁵The two other paths are also based on comparisons, but in a less direct way. Realising that a given means is necessary requires its prior comparison to other—inadmissible, unattainable or inefficient—means, thus leaving this means as the only, hence necessary, alternative for reaching the goal (possibly in conjunction with other means, which can all be individually necessary, and jointly sufficient). The satisfactory path requires a comparison to the threshold set in advance ("Will giving up on the TV plan save me enough money per month?").

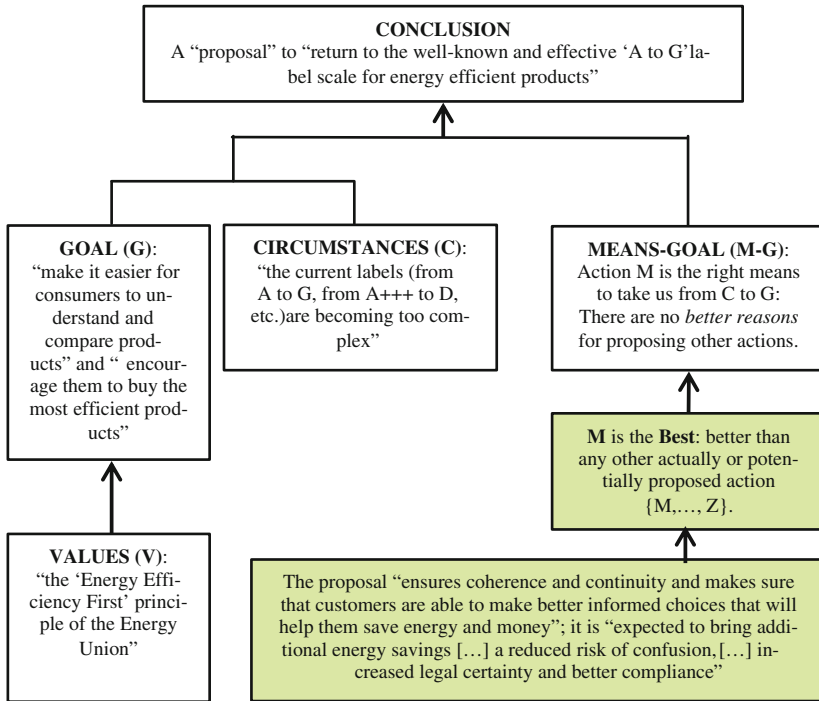


Fig. 10.2 A reconstructed scheme of practical argument

10.4 Data and Method

This study is part of a larger project investigating European Union documents on energy and climate change policies, especially the new “Energy Union strategy” (launched in February 2015). Here, I analyse a set of related official documents called *Transforming Europe’s energy system—Commission’s energy summer package leads the way* consisting of one press release and three related “fact sheets” in the form of Question and Answer documents—all released on 15 July 2015 in Brussels.¹⁶ Together, they comprise 6289 words (some 20 printed pages). For the sake of the analysis, I reconstructed the basic practical arguments and identified 49 unique instances of argumentative indicators of the type of means-goal inference licences appealed to (some are repeated). I used the English version of the documents—however, authorised translations into other 22 official EU languages (all apart from the Irish Gaelic, a lower-status, “treaty language” of the EU) are also

¹⁶Available from the official EU Commission website: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5358_en.htm.

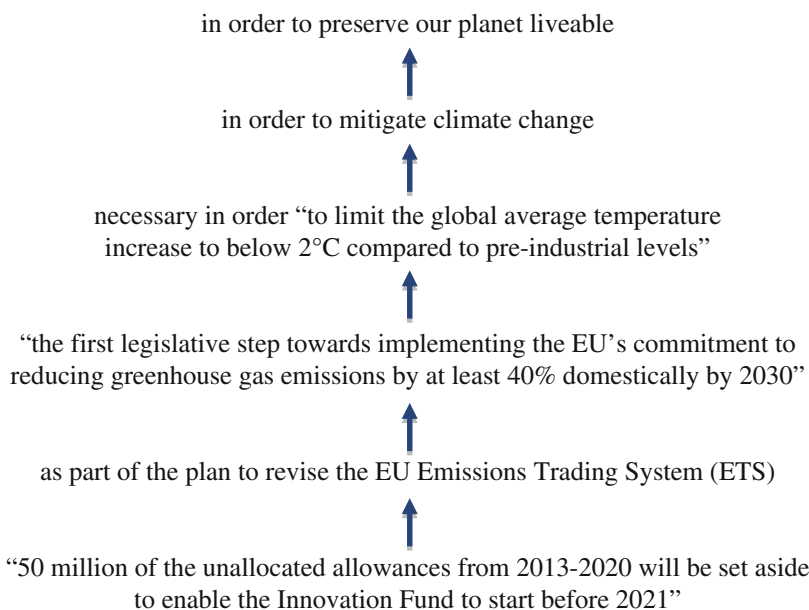


Fig. 10.3 “Energy Union strategy” as a long chain of practical arguments

available on the Commission’s website, which allows for a possible cross-linguistic study.¹⁷

In Fig. 10.2, I provide an exemplary reconstruction of the PA regarding the revision of the energy efficiency labels used for consumer appliances sold across the EU (anything from lightbulbs to refrigerators; typically, A or A+++ means the most energy efficient device, D or G the most energy consuming device). This line of argument takes “the best” path for supporting the proposal—so only this one is presented here (the three paths are mutually exclusive).

Before moving on to analysing the argumentative indicators of the three possible inferential paths of PA, I need to stress three points. First, the *Commission’s energy summer package* consists of three major “proposals”: “[1] to launch a redesign of the European electricity market, [2] to update energy efficiency labelling and [3] to revise the EU Emissions Trading System.” This is significant, since proposals have been considered paradigmatic speech acts concluding PA in a deliberative discourse (Aakhus 2006; Lewiński 2016). Second, being a public document of an official international body, the energy package very explicitly stresses commitments and obligations of the EU Commission and EU member states. It is thus an example of

¹⁷These languages are: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish.

publicly accountable form of practical inference created through institutional language, and thus characterised by public commitments and desire independent reasons for action (Searle 2001, 2010; Walton and Krabbe 1995). As such, it lends itself particularly well to an externalised account of PA where the analysis of argumentative discourse, rather than cognitive operations, is of primary importance.

Finally, practical inferences in these official documents are from the onset introduced as being a part of “the *package*” of EU proposals, which “is an important step towards implementing the Energy Union *strategy* with a forward looking climate change *policy*” (emphasis added). As such, each practical argument analysed is inescapably a part of a long chain of means-goals relations which together make up the complex “strategy” or “policy”. In this way, *Goals* to be reached in one (sub-)argument via some *Means*, themselves become *Means* (or perhaps *Circumstances*) in another, higher-level argument. However, each inferential step is justified by one of the three principles of choice described above, so whether it is a bottom-level means or a means which functions as a goal in a lower-level argument does not affect the analysis.

An example of such a long chain of practical arguments making up a part of the “Energy Union Strategy”—based on the proposal to revise the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)—is presented in Fig. 10.3. Here, the ultimate goal is to preserve the Earth liveable, *by means* of mitigating climate change, *by means* of “limit[ing] the global average temperature increase to below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels”, etc. At the bottom of the chain are concrete, detailed measures which affect the daily life of EU citizens and businesses and are expressed with a determined financial impact and timeline.

10.5 Indicators of Practical Argument

Equipped with the extended scheme of PA, and the clear theoretical distinctions proposed here, the guiding research question of this study—What are the linguistic indicators of various elements of practical arguments?—can be asked, and answered, more precisely.

In this section, I catalogue the ways in which PA is produced discursively in the EU documents analysed. As an organising principle, I use the type of the inference licence appealed to, that is, the best, the good enough or the necessary means to be taken. As argued above, these distinctions are theoretically-derived, are mutually exclusive and, I would suppose, also have a strong claim to being jointly exhaustive. Therefore, they form a solid basis for characterising indicators of various forms of PA.

By contrast, the types of linguistic forms or indicators distinguished below are empirically-derived, based on the discourse analysis of the EU documents described above. While they are clearly demarcated, and thus mutually exclusive—or so I hope—they constitute an open-ended and undoubtedly incomplete set of indicators.

As is typically the case, further work is needed to refine and extend this nascent typology.

10.5.1 *Indicators of the Best Path*

For “the best” path, I first distinguish between *grammatical* indicators and *semantic* indicators of the means to be taken.

10.5.1.1 Grammatical Indicators

These indicators are based solely on the grammatical form of the expressions used—we do not need to understand the semantic connections within the sentence to assign them a specific argumentative function.

A. *Superlative adjectives and adverbs*

The superlatives most clearly indicate “the bestness” of a given means—this is what we have them for in a language like English. The examples are plenty in the documents analysed (emphasis always added):

- (4) The Commission revised the Emissions Trading System to ensure that it remains the most efficient and cost-effective way to cut emission in the decade to come.
- (5) Increasing energy efficiency in the European Union, in combination with the development of renewable energy sources, *is the best* way to reduce our dependence on external energy suppliers.
- (6) the highest level of consumer protection
- (7) encourage consumers to buy the most efficient products, thereby reducing energy use with a positive impact on the energy bill
- (8) This should reap maximum benefits from cross-border competition and allow decentralised electricity generation, including for self-consumption and support the emergence of innovative energy service companies.

B. *Comparative adjectives and adverbs*

Somewhat weaker are the comparatives; they do not necessarily directly state “the bestness” of the proposed measure, but instead engage in its favourable comparison with other possible measures, whether explicitly or implicitly.¹⁸ As already mentioned (see above Sect. 10.3.2), comparisons constitute the very “logic” of practical inference: to (decide to) take an action is reasonable only after a well-justified comparison with other available actions is made. In the end, “the best” means

¹⁸For a recent analysis of the intricate linguistic relations between comparatives and superlatives, see e.g. Dunbar and Wellwood (2016).

simply “better than anything else”: a superlative is an accumulated result of comparatives. Again, there are plenty examples of comparatives in the text:

- (9) Today’s EU ETS proposal will therefore contribute to a better functioning European wide electricity market which is the best means to ensure that electricity can be delivered to private consumers and industries in the most cost-efficient way.
- (10) This proposal advocates for a stronger, better functioning EU ETS
- (11) the system will be more flexible by better taking into account...
- (12) allowing greater transparency and easier market surveillance by national authorities
- (13) will save consumers a further €15 per year
- (14) This will further stimulate the uptake of renewables
- (15) The Commission proposes returning to the original A to G energy label scale, simpler and well understood by consumers.

10.5.1.2 Semantic Indicators

By contrast to grammatical indicators, semantic indicators require our analysis of the meaning of the expressions used vis-à-vis other expressions to assign them any particular argumentative function in the scheme of PA. Here, I distinguish five different combinations, although, logically speaking, a sixth category (negative nouns with negative objects) is surely possible. Yet, I did not find any instances of this category in the corpus analysed.

A. Positive *adjectives, adverbs, participles, adverbial phrases with positive objects*

- (16) The new system is expected to bring additional energy savings
- (17) increased legal certainty
- (18) enhanced regional cooperation
- (19) to take full advantage of new technology

B. Negative *adjectives, adverbs, participles, adverbial phrases with negative objects*

- (20) reduced risk of confusion
- (21) reduced administrative burden

C. Positive *verbs with positive objects*

The proposed measures will:

- (22) integrate national energy markets further and improve the participation of consumers, [...] enhance energy efficiency
- (23) add to the current savings

(24) further increase the necessary flexibility

(25) help create new opportunities

D. Negative *verbs with negative objects*

(26) It can also lower energy system costs

(27) The proposed changes aim to minimise the need for a correction factor

E. Positive *nouns with positive objects*

The proposals will bring about:

(28) an overall revenue increase

(29) the reinforcement of a popular marketing tool

(30) time savings

(31) considerable efficiency gains

10.5.2 *Indicators of the Good Enough (Satisfactory) Path*

For “the good enough/satisfactory” path (which requires the strategy of “satisficing” rather than “maximising”), in the EU texts under analysis I recognised only instances of threshold setting, and these were rare:

(32) Today we take a decisive step towards enshrining the EU’s target of at least 40% emissions cut by 2030 into law.

(33) EU emissions reductions will be an important contribution to the international effort to limit the global average temperature increase to below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels.

It might be that due to the nature of ambitious EU policy statements, no satisficing is officially promoted: it might seem as resting on our laurels. Possibly satisficing solutions are outsourced to concrete administrative tasks not mentioned in the general policy statement. Observers of the global climate change and energy policies also mention another obstacle: “The trouble with [long-term] targetism” (Geden 2015). The trouble with targets or thresholds such as these in examples (32) and (33) is, in essence, that “so far, setting ambitious long-term global climate targets has not been a prerequisite but a substitute for appropriate action” (Geden 2015). Rather than rationally driving long-term strategic policies, quantifiable but hardly attainable targets often fulfil other objectives such as claiming responsibility for saving the planet or mobilising short-term action within the negotiation process (Geden 2015). (Note that, while these are presented as “targets”, “goals”, or “policy objectives”, as mentioned above, they can also be seen as “means” or “steps” towards ulterior goals, such as mitigating climate change and “saving the planet”).

This is partly evidenced in the examples above. The policy-makers are cautious of the strength of their long chains of means-goals relations. They avoid making

strong claims of proposing and implementing *sufficient* means which “inevitably” or “automatically” lead to achieving the stated goals. Instead, they explicitly resort to what I have called above *conducive* means: they might be “a decisive step towards” or “an important contribution” to the purported goals, but without committing the policy-makers to their effective sufficiency.

Whatever the explanation here, these forms of justifying the practical inference were conspicuously rare.

10.5.3 *Indicators of the Necessary Path*

Within this way of grounding practical inference, the sole group of indicators are semantic modalities which clearly refer to the necessity of the measures to be taken. These modalities can be expressed through verbs (“have to”, “need to”), adjectives (“necessary”, “unique”, “sole”) or adverbs (“necessarily”, “only”—but these were not present in the corpus analysed).

- (34) A fundamental change is *necessary* in the role consumers play in the market. We *need to* give consumers the opportunity to adapt their energy usage to take advantage of real-time changes in supply and demand
- (35) Consumers *need to* be able to act as buyers and sellers
- (36) other flexibility options *have to* be used
- (37) the market *has to* give clear financial incentives for renewable energy generators
- (38) this *requires* efficient cooperation from all market actors
- (39) Achieving these goals *will require* a fundamental transformation of Europe’s electricity system including the redesign of the European electricity market

Two comments are in order. First, necessary means must not be confused with sufficient means. Therefore, while emphasising across the documents the necessary, unavoidable character of some means, the authors of the documents often bundle them together with, or make them conditional on, large sets of other means. Means such as “giving clear financial incentives for renewable energy generators” are ones among many other to reach the professed goals of increasing energy efficiency and mitigating climate change. They are thus individually necessary but only jointly sufficient—or merely conducive—to meet the objectives. Second, being a specimen of official, that is, balanced, moderate, restrained, indeed boring, language of the EU institutions, the energy package documents also shy away from using emotionally charged forms of expression. As a result, strong forms of indicating necessity of means in a practical inference—such as: “*only through* radical change will we be able to...”, “there is *no alternative* to”, “we *must*”—are entirely left out of the documents. All the same, they seem to be common features of political discourse (see Fairclough and Fairclough 2012).

10.5.4 A Complication¹⁹

Consider the following example from the corpus:

- (40) the system of free allocation *needs to* be revised in order to distribute the available allowances in *the most effective and efficient way*.

Here, the means to be taken is clearly a necessary Means (“the system *needs to* be revised”), while the superlatives (“*the most effective and efficient way*”) instead characterises the Goal itself. Further, let us slightly rephrase this example:

- (40a) the system of free allocation *needs to* be improved by *further 10–15%* in order to distribute the available allowances in *the most effective and efficient way*.

Here, additionally, we have a comparative (“*further 10–15%*”) that describes the satisfactory threshold for the type of measure to be taken.

Altogether, in practical argumentation, among the indicators discussed we can distinguish between those that characterise:

- (a) The Means
- (b) The relation between the Means and the Goal
- (c) The Goal

It is (b) that has been taken in this study as the basis for classification. Therefore, in example (40a) we are dealing with the necessary variant of PA, despite the presence of superlative and comparative, threshold-setting expressions. Altogether, we need to carefully distinguish between different uses of indicators to capture the correct type of indicator/argumentative function relation.

This complication is partly attenuated by the fact, discussed above, that practical arguments in major policy documents typically form long chains of means-goal relations (see Fig. 10.3). Therefore, the qualities of goals might become the qualities of means at the higher level of argument, eventually also indicating the relations between them.

Crucially, however, we can ask whether careful a-b-c distinctions made above adequately apply to our natural-language arguments, the object of analysis here. One can easily imagine contexts where a-b-c below are synonymous, especially under the “all things considered” assessment:

- (a) This is the best means that takes us to the Goal.
- (b) This is the means that best takes us to the Goal.
- (c) This is the means that takes us to the best Goal.

What can partly explain it is that in some contexts maximisation is adopted as an obligatory strategy: we *need to* “reap *maximum benefits*” (see example (8)) through

¹⁹This is in response to a comment of an anonymous reviewer, whom I thank.

our policies.²⁰ This can apply not only to the Goals, but also to the optimal Means, and the relations between the two. As seen in the scheme of PA (see Fig. 10.1), all these options are eventually underlain by the basic values, in this case the value of reasonable comparative choice: it is reasonable to select the option that, all things considered, is *better than* (or at least *equal to*) all other options.

10.6 Discussion

The goal of this study was to investigate the discursive means through which practical arguments are produced in real-life deliberative discourse. I set about this goal by proposing an extended scheme of PA. The scheme extends beyond most current proposals by specifying the quality of the means-goal premise as the basic element constituting practical rationality. Three different principles of means selection can license practical inference: that the means/action argued for is (1) the best; (2) good enough; or (3) necessary. Each of these principles or paths requires different forms of supporting arguments. Moreover, each is linguistically represented through different argumentative indicators.

I analysed documents making up the EU *Commission's energy summer package* from July 2015 to investigate what these indicators are. As a result of the analysis, I have distinguished some basic grammatical clues for the optimal path: superlative (the best, the most, -st) as well as comparative (better, more, -er) adjectives and adverbs describing the measures. Further, I identified some more complex semantic clues, such as a combination of positive words, mostly adjectives, adverbs and verbs, with positive objects (e.g., “additional energy savings”) and negative with negative objects (e.g., “reduced risk of confusion”). I noted that the good enough path is rarely used, given the problems in setting thresholds in official policy discourse. Still, the means that will lead to “at least 40% emissions cut by 2030” are deemed satisfactory at that stage. (Perhaps a goal of 50% is attainable too?) Finally, semantic modalities of necessity (necessary, need to, requires) are, unsurprisingly, used to indicate the necessary path, that is, to argue that the professed goal cannot be achieved without the proposed means.

My analysis is grounded in two types of considerations. The basic categories for cataloguing the ways to argue practically are theoretically-derived: arguers can appeal to three kinds of inference licence in supporting that a given action should be taken. While this provides a neat organising principle, particular linguistic forms functioning as argumentative indicators need to be empirically derived. This makes this study only an introduction to, or a partial overview of, the multiple ways in which practical inferences are linguistically performed. More studies are surely needed to provide a fuller account allowing for a near-complete classification.

²⁰In this sense, the necessity becomes a meta-argumentative principle in PA. We *need to* either: (1) do the best thing; (2) do what's good enough; or (3) do what we need to do.

Given the nature of the institutional discourse examined here, this further work can easily extend into different languages. Official EU documents are very convenient in this respect, as they are officially translated into all 23 languages of the Union and thus allow for direct cross-linguistic comparisons. Admittedly, we are dealing here with unexciting bureaucratic discourse, arguably one of the causes of the much bemoaned democratic deficit in the EU. Yet, this kind of discourse keeps shaping our lives, since the proposals argued for, if implemented, will have direct impact on European residents.

A certain difficulty in extending this study is the semantic nature of many of the indicators listed here. Any simple mechanical “mining” of indicators is hard to obtain for at least two reasons. First, an indeterminate set of adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc. can mark different types and elements of practical inference. Second, semantic complexes require careful contextual reading of the discourse. Therefore, further insights into how context impacts the use and understanding of the linguistic indicators of practical argumentation are necessary. As a principle, however, we need to exercise caution in assigning strong, let alone one-to-one, interpretation to the indicator-argumentative function relations. As already discussed, selfsame linguistic indicators can indicate various elements of PA. This, again, calls for careful contextual reconstruction guided by an adequate application of the principle of charity (see Lewiński 2012). Indicators might well *indicate* the way we identify, reconstruct and, eventually, evaluate a given piece of argumentation, but they do not *determine* it in any strong, universal fashion.

Finally, these results can be discussed relative to the pragma-dialectical work on argumentative indicators (van Eemeren et al. 2007). Overall, they seem to be largely compatible, yet bring about some additional clarity. To start with, some general indicators of a causal process (e.g. verbs: *increase*, *stimulate*) can be seen more precisely as indicators of the best path. Further, general indicators of a strong causal connection—*necessarily*, *inevitably*, *automatically*—can be clearly distinguished. When they pertain to the necessity (inevitability, etc.) of the means with regards to the goal, they function as indicators of the necessary path. When, by contrast, they refer to the necessity (inevitability, etc.) of the goal given the means, then they work as indicators of the sufficient means (either best or good enough). Lastly, specific indicators of *pragmatic* argument recognised by van Eemeren et al.—such as *better*, *added advantage*—also get a more precise function in the framework proposed here: they are indicators of arguing for the “bestness,” or at least “betterness,” of the means proposed.

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Chapter 11

Exercising Accountability in European Parliamentary Debates on Statements: An Argumentative Perspective

Dima Mohammed

Abstract In this chapter, I examine the argumentative discursive process through which accountability is exercised in debates that follow statements by Commissioners in the European Parliament (EP). The accountability practice is characterised as an activity type (van Eemeren in Strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse: Extending the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 2010), based on a careful examination of the institutional setting and combined with the analysis of actual debates. The characterisation highlights the conventionalised elements of the practice, offering us some indications on what to look for when examining the argumentative pursuit of accountability in these debates. In the characterisation, I pay special attention to the linguistic indicators associated with different argumentative aspects of the process. Following van Eemeren et al. (Argumentative indicators in discourse: a pragma-dialectical study, Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands, 2007), I take it that identifying argumentative indicators is in principle fruitful as it refines the analytic tools used to examine argumentative practices. However, as the examination in this chapter shows, as a result of the highly institutional nature of the practice, the multiple purposes it has and the consequent indirectness and implicitness, argumentative indicators are less straightforward than they are in other practices. The examination of EP debates on statements suggests we may need to think of different types of indicators to help us navigate more complex institutionalised argumentative practices.

11.1 Introduction

Accountability is an indispensable practice for modern democratic systems: The understanding that public officials are under the obligation to defend and justify their conduct has become hardly controversial, and the practices that are developed

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in order to do just that can be found in almost any public institution. Accountability practices control power by subjecting it to the rule of public reason (Schedler 1999), which makes adequate accountability arrangements central for conferring legitimacy on decision-making procedures and bodies. Despite the variety of approaches adopted by scholars who examine accountability (Mulgan 2000), the obligation to explain and justify conduct has been undisputedly considered to be at the core of the practice. Broadly understood, accountability is “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens et al. 2010, p. 35). Holding the power accountable is in this sense to a large extent a discursive argumentative activity. In it, the actor being held accountable and the forum to which the actor is accountable engage in argumentative exchanges about the conduct of the actor. Engaging in good argumentative exchanges about the conduct of those in power is central for a healthy political culture where the conduct of political agents is subject not only to the rule of law, but also to the logic of public reason. In this chapter, I focus on the argumentative element of accountability.¹ I examine an accountability practice in the context of European Union (EU) institutions, offering a characterisation of the discursive process involved in it.

Accountability in the EU is a particularly critical issue today. The issue is gaining extra significance because of the increasing powers exercised by EU executives. As the EU is turning into a genuine polity, many are concerned that the shift from national to transnational policy-making is not accompanied by adequate accountability arrangements (Bovens et al. 2010). EU policy-making institutions are gaining more and more power, they are affecting people more and more, and yet, there is a sense that policy-making bodies are not adequately accountable to the people affected by their decisions. In fact, accountability deficits are considered a key cause for the low legitimacy of the EU.

In the complex EU accountability web, the relationship between the EU core executive, i.e., the European Commission (EC), and the European Parliament (EP) is particularly interesting. One of the main powers of the Parliament is the supervisory power by means of which scrutiny and control over the work of the executive are exercised (Corbett et al. 2011, Chap. 15; Europa 2011; Hix et al. 2007, pp. 12–21; Staab 2011, pp. 67–69). One of the main responsibilities of the Commission as the main EU executive is to implement EU laws and policies

¹The literature on political accountability identifies three aspects of accountability practices: (i) putting an agent under the obligation to provide information about her conduct, i.e. monitoring, (ii) putting the agent under the obligation to justify the conduct and (iii) imposing sanctions on agents whose conduct is not satisfactory, i.e. enforcement (Tsai 2011). While in its complete form, accountability involves all three aspects, scholars recognise that “certain instances of accountability do not include aspects of answerability [i.e., monitoring and justification], while others go without elements of enforcement” (Schedler 1999, p. 18). The understanding of accountability as an argumentative activity applies mainly to the view of accountability as answerability rather than to the view of accountability as enforcement.

(Leonard 2010, p. 58). The EC is accountable to the EP by means of various formal relationships and informal practices; new accountability relationships between the EC and the EP are developing (Bovens et al. 2010). In this chapter, I examine one of the venues available for the EP to exercise scrutiny over the work of the EC, namely the parliamentary debates that follow statements by Members of the Commission. The EU institutional setting requires Members of the Commission to make regular appearances in Parliament. In these appearances, they typically make statements that are followed by debates. EP debates on statements constitute one way by means of which Parliament exercises its supervisory power over the Commission (Corbett et al. 2011, pp. 314–315). In this chapter, I characterise the discursive process of accountability in EP debates on statements. My goal is to gain a better understanding of this type of routine practice of accountability in the EU.

The discursive practice of accountability in EP debates on statements will be characterised as an activity type. I do that guided by the concept of activity types (van Eemeren 2010; van Eemeren and Garssen 2010), and based on a careful examination of the institutional setting as well as the analysis of actual debates (e.g. European Parliament 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016b, c). The characterisation as an activity type reveals the institutionalised and conventionalised aspects of the practice, identifying what to expect and what to look at when we analyse cases of this argumentative practice. In a sense, it creates an inventory of elements to look for in the analysis.

As I characterise the discursive practice as an activity type, I pay special attention to the linguistic indicators associated with different argumentative aspects of the process. Following van Eemeren et al. (2007), I would like to enhance the understanding of the accountability practice by identifying indicators that mark the argumentative function of discursive moves typical of the practice. Identifying argumentative indicators can be fruitful as it refines the analytic tools used to examine argumentative practices. I embark on the task of identifying argumentative indicators aware that the identification of such indicators in EP debates on statements would be a challenging endeavour. As a result of the highly institutional nature of the practice, and also because in this practice, accountability is not necessarily the primary purpose of the session, argumentative indicators may be less straightforward than they are in other practices. While identifying indicators would help us better understand what is happening in terms of accountability in EP debates on statements, I have doubts about the possibility of identifying indicators in this particular case. Therefore, as I characterise the activity type, I would also like to verify those doubts. If they turn to be misplaced, then I will benefit from identifying the indicators. If they are confirmed, then, we gain insights that are relevant for the study of argumentative indicators. Indeed, going through the complications faced while identifying the indicators will also be helpful for considering the more general question about the nature and potential of argumentative indicators in less spontaneous, more institutionalised contexts.

11.2 Accountability in EP Debates on Statements: The Argumentative Activity Type and Indicators

EP debates on statements are an interesting venue for examining the exercise of accountability. On the one hand, these debates are considered as venues for exercising the supervisory power that the Parliament has over the Commission (Corbett et al. 2011, pp. 314–315). But on the other hand, the supervision is not a case of a prototypical accountability practice, where the conduct of the actor being held to account is the centre of the discussion. Such cases can be found in institutions whose primary function is to call public officials to account, such as audit offices, ombudsmen and administrative tribunals. EP debates on statements are obviously not among such cases. In fact, EP debates on statements are partly also policy debates through which the EP influences the policy-making of the EC.

But the exercise of accountability is not restricted to institutions whose primary function is to call public officials to account. Accountability practices take place also in institutions which adopt an accountability role, though accountability is far from being their primary purpose (Mulgan 2000). For example, modern legislatures have a variety of functions among which holding the executive publicly accountable. Legislatures design arrangements and develop practices to serve this function in particular. Take for example, Prime Minister's Question Time in the British House of Commons. Accountability is the primary function of the session, and the rules and conventions that govern it are designed to achieve the goal of holding the Government accountable by discussing its conduct (House of Commons Information Office 2005, p. 1; House of Commons Procedure Committee 2002; Mohammed 2009; Rogers and Walters 2006, pp. 311–312). But EP debates on statements are not designed to discuss the conduct of the Commission *per se*. The supervisory power is exercised through the discussion of the plans, policies and actions taken by the Commission, which is at the core of scrutinising its conduct. However, the scrutiny is achieved through discussing a statement in which a Commissioner also presents its policy proposals and plans for action. As a result, the discussion is sometimes more about the right policies, plans and action to be taken and the conduct of the Commission is discussed indirectly. In other words, the debates function as a discussion about the conduct of the Commission, which is an accountability discussion, as well as a discussion about the policies and actions proposed themselves, which is a deliberation discussion.

It is important here to clarify that in this chapter I do not consider the justification of proposed future courses of actions as an accountability practice *per se* (see for example, Andone 2015). Without denying that there may be an element of accountability in the justification of future courses of action, which is often referred to as prospective accountability, I think that this type of argumentation would be better viewed as part of an exercise of deliberation about what needs to be done. I understand accountability in its retrospective mode, when the explanation and justification is about current and past conduct, about decisions that have already been taken (even if those are about future course of actions). I believe there are

significant differences between the justification of proposed future courses of actions and the justification of current and past ones. Most importantly, while past actions are justified in hindsight, the justification of future actions needs to put up with risk and uncertainty. Consequently, while the justification of past and present actions involves defending evaluative standpoints in which actions, or decisions about actions, are assessed, the justification of future courses of action involves defending prescriptive standpoints in which proposals for action are made.

The fact that EP debates on statements are not specifically designed to discuss the conduct of the Commission does by no means cast doubt on the debates' accountability role. Indeed, the exercise of accountability is not restricted to those procedures designed particularly in order to hold the power accountable. Accountability "may occur at any point, in legislative debate or financial authorization, where members of the government are required to explain their actions and take the consequences" (Mulgan 2000, p. 565). Debates on Commissioners statements are in fact a perfect example of routine accountability practices that are intertwined with other political processes, such as deliberation.²

In order to characterise the discursive process of accountability in EP debates on statements, I describe the discursive practice as an activity type. The characterisation of argumentative practices as activity types accounts for the conventionalised macro-contexts of argumentation (van Eemeren 2010) offering us a refined perspective from which the practice can be examined. When conventionalised argumentative discourses are characterised as activity types, the discourse is seen as an attempt to critically test some standpoint for the benefit of certain socio-political purposes (Mohammed 2016a, b). The practice is analysed from the perspective of the model of a critical discussion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004), under the assumption that critical testing is instrumental for achieving the purposes of the argumentative encounter (Mohammed 2016a). EP debates on Commissioners' statements are analysed as a discussion about the conduct of the EC. What better than subjecting an actor's standpoint about her conduct to critical testing for the purpose of holding the actor to account? The *ideal* model provides a good tool for diagnosing problems in the way critical testing is conducted in practice. But for that to offer a meaningful examination of a certain practice, it is necessary to pay careful attention to the characteristics of the practice when examining it, which is achieved through the characterisation of the practice as an activity type.

Following van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2005), the activity type is characterised in terms of four parameters. First, the initial situation that gives rise to the argumentative encounter. This is usually a difference of opinion typical of the practice examined. Second, the starting points, both material and procedural, which are typically shared in the practice examined. Third, the argumentative means typically used by arguers in the practice examined. Finally, the way in which the outcome is determined in the practice examined. The characterisation offers an account of the

²For examples of the intertwining of accountability and deliberation in EP debates on statements, see Mohammed (2013, 2016a, d).

conventionalised context of argumentation, which is indispensable for an examination of argumentation that is descriptively adequate and critically insightful. The activity type perspective enables an analysis that shows how argumentation contributes to socio-political processes and an assessment that can explain the success or failure of an argument to fulfil its purpose on the basis of its argumentative quality (Mohammed 2016b).

While characterising the accountability practice as an activity type, I will pay special attention to the linguistic markers that indicate the argumentative function of moves. My starting point is the examination of such indicators by van Eemeren et al. (2007), which combines theoretical linguistic insights with argumentative ones in order to identify argumentative indicators of the moves that are relevant to the critical testing of standpoints. They complement the theoretical investigation with examples of how such indicators work in actual argumentative texts. The texts they analyse come from the Eindhoven Corpus, proceedings of the Dutch Lower House, the Internet, letters to the editor and other publications in newspapers and magazines (p. 6). Based on the knowledge of the institutional context of EP debates and the analysis of actual debates, I expect the linguistic indicators will not be as straightforward in these debates as they are in the material examined by van Eemeren et al. My doubt about the straight-forwardness of the indicators is due to the highly institutional nature of the practice examined. Institutional preconditions assign a good deal of the argumentative roles and positions to the arguers, which leaves room for a great deal of implicitness. Furthermore, indicators may be even less straightforward than in other cases of highly institutionalised practices because in these debates, accountability is not the primary purpose of the exchanges.

11.3 The Initial Disagreement

Underlying any accountability practice is a disagreement about the conduct of the actor being held accountable. The actor being held to account is expected to justify her conduct as satisfactory to the forum that holds her to account, i.e. the account holder. The account holder is expected to be critical of the actor's conduct. After all, without such a criticism, why would an actor need to justify her conduct? Nevertheless, the critical attitude of the account holder varies in strength depending on whether or not the accountability practice is triggered by charges of misconduct, as well as on the seriousness of the charges at issue. On the one extreme, in situations triggered by concrete and serious charges of misconduct, the account holder is expected to assume a position that sees the conduct of the actor as not satisfactory. On the other extreme, in more routine accountability practices which are usually not triggered by concrete charges of misconduct, the account holder's critical attitude is nothing more than the minimum doubt necessary to put the actor under the obligation to justify her conduct. The disagreement about the actor's conduct is not always made explicit, but can be reconstructed whenever actors engage in justifying their plans, policies or actions.

Considering the accountability practice in EP debates on Commissioners' statements, the initial disagreement is between the Commission, represented by Members of the EC making a statement as the actors being held to account, and Members of the EP (MEPs) as members of the forum that holds the EC to account. The disagreement about the conduct of the EC can be reconstructed in terms of a proposition that includes an assessment of this conduct, something like *the conduct of the EC is satisfactory*.³ Given that the responsibility of the commissioners is domain-specific, the exercise of accountability needs to be domain-specific too. Usually the difference of opinion is not about the conduct in general, but rather about the conduct in relation to some particular policy area, the area of the responsibility of the Commissioner and about which the statement is made.

In order to justify her conduct, a Commissioner is expected to adopt a positive attitude towards the conduct of the EC in her area of responsibility. Consequently, a Commissioner can be assumed to be committed to a standpoint like *the conduct of the commission—in relation to area x—is satisfactory*. MEPs can be assumed to be at least in doubt about the Commissioner's standpoint. This is necessary in order to have the minimum disagreement that can trigger accountability discussions. The accountability practice in EP debates on statements is a routine accountability practice that does not require concrete charges of misconduct to be initiated. Consequently, it is possible that the disagreement underlying it is of the elementary dispute type. The elementary dispute, defined by van Eemeren and Grootendorst as a single non-mixed dispute (1992, pp. 16–22), is characterised by just a positive standpoint and doubt concerning it. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon that MEPs adopt a negative attitude concerning the assessed conduct of the Commissioner. In these cases, the difference can be characterised as a mixed dispute, where both positive and negative standpoints are assumed by arguers.

In most cases, the positive standpoint is left implicit. One reason for that is strategic: The Commissioner does not want to admit so clearly that her conduct is under suspicion, which is what an explicit standpoint would convey. Making the suspicion about the Commissioner's conduct explicit is obviously not an issue for her critics, who benefit from the doubt cast on the conduct. That makes it more likely for the negative standpoint to be expressed explicitly. Nevertheless, given the format of the session, the conduct of the commission is not discussed directly as such. The conduct is discussed through the discussion of certain policies, plans and actions. Consequently, even standpoints critical of the conduct remain mostly implicit.

In their investigation of argumentative indicators of confrontation, van Eemeren, et al. identify the different linguistic indicators of standpoints being expressed by arguers as well as the disputes that result from such standpoints (2007, pp. 21–62). They do that on the basis of an analysis of the different expressions that indicate propositional attitudes as well as expressions that modify the force of an assertive.

³See Mohammed (2016c) for a discussion of the rationale underlying such a reconstruction of the disputed position in accountability practices.

Furthermore, starting from dialectical profiles of argumentative confrontations, they discuss the possible indicators of each of the different types of dispute that can result from argumentative confrontations: non-mixed disputes (pp. 45–53), mixed disputes (pp. 53–57) and qualitatively multiple disputes (pp. 57–62). Examples of the way the indicators work are given from newspapers articles.

When considering the argumentative confrontations in EP debates on statement, one is faced with the challenge of the debates' institutional format. In these highly institutional debates, the disagreement about the conduct of the Commission is built-in and rather implicit. This doesn't mean that an MEP can never agree with the Commissioner, in fact, there are always MEPs who are satisfied with the conduct of the Commissioner (see excerpts (7) and (8) in Sect. 11.5 below). But there are always also MEPs who aren't satisfied (see excerpts (4), (5) and (6) in Sect. 11.5 below). This is part of the political accountability game. That the disagreement is built-in means that we do assume that there would be at least a minimum degree of disagreement about the conduct of the Commissioner, something like a critical doubt about the position that *the conduct of the commission is satisfactory*. Otherwise, why would the Commission need to justify its conduct? This assumption is not just normatively necessary for accountability to happen. The assumption gets also empirically confirmed, as MEPs start criticising the conduct of the Commissioner.

Unlike arguers in less institutional settings, where disagreement is the result of a series of choices arguers make themselves, Commissioners do not have the luxury not to assume a positive standpoint about their conduct. Where disagreement is a choice, it makes sense that arguers need to express a standpoint in order to initiate an argumentative confrontation. When disagreement is institutionalised and built-in, such as the case in EP debates on statements, there is no actual need to do that. The indicator of the standpoint occurs in fact in the arguments advanced in support of the standpoint which in itself is typically left implicit. As a result of such implicitness, it is not always possible to figure out what dispute is at stake. The elementary dispute is built-in, as a requirement for exercising accountability. Whether that is all there is or there is rather a mixed dispute is to be figured out on the basis of the arguments advanced by the MEPs. In this case, critical counter-arguments, advanced by an MEP in relation to the policies, plans or actions of the Commission, would for example be an indicator of a mixed dispute.

11.4 The Common Ground

Similarly to all other plenary meetings in the EP, debates on statements occur in an institutional context that assigns to the parties both material and procedural starting points. Like all other parliamentary sessions, the debates are governed by the rules of procedure of the EP (European Parliament 2016a), and just like other practices in the context of EU institutions, they are based on the common ground (both material

and procedural) drawn from the EU treaties, i.e. the binding agreements that have been approved by the EU member states.⁴

The material ground common between the parties in EP debates comprises the different treaties that are in force at the time of the debate. This includes founding treaties, accession treaties as well as other agreements and protocols, which together set out “EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member countries” (European Union 2012, p. 3). The two most important EU treaties are the Treaty on the European Union, originally signed in Maastricht in 1992, and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, originally signed in Rome in 1957. The two have been amended several times since they were signed. The last time has been by means of the Treaty of Lisbon, signed in 2007, and in force as of December 2009. The Lisbon treaty includes references also to the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights, signed in 2000, making the charter also legally binding. Other protocols, such as the Schengen Convention, signed in Luxembourg in 1985, provide further material common grounds. References to the treaties, protocols, procedures and agreements are common in the debates (e.g. excerpts 1, 3 and 9 below).

While all the rules of procedure of the EP are in principle applicable to the debates at issue, a few rules are particularly relevant. The most directly relevant are the rules that govern Statements in the EP: rules 123–127 in the 8th parliamentary term.⁵ In particular, rules 123 and 124 specify how the debates on Commissioners’ statements come about and they regulate the way the debates proceed as well as the tabling of motions for resolutions following the debates. The two rules make it possible for debates to come about either upon the request of Members of the Commission (Rule 123(1)) or upon the decision of the President of Parliament (Rule 124).

Rule 123. Statements by the Commission, Council and European Council

1. Members of the Commission, the Council and the European Council may at any time ask the President of Parliament for permission to make a statement. [...] The President of Parliament shall decide when the statement may be made and whether it is to be followed by a full debate or by 30 minutes of brief and concise questions from Members.

[...]

Rule 124. Statements Explaining Commission Decisions

After consulting the Conference of Presidents, the President may invite the President of the Commission, the Commissioner responsible for relations with the European Parliament or, by agreement, another Commissioner, to make a statement to Parliament after each meeting of the Commission, explaining the main decisions taken. The statement shall be followed by a debate of at least 30 minutes in which Members may put brief and concise questions.

⁴The complete texts of treaties, legislation, case law and legislative proposals can be viewed using the EUR-Lex database of EU law available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>.

⁵In the rules of procedure for the 7th term, these are rules 110 and 111.

Other rules of procedure which are also relevant are rules 118, 158 and 162. Rule 118 regulates the *Election of the Commission* and the debate on statement that is part of it:

Rule 118. Election of the Commission

4. The President-elect shall present the college of Commissioners and their programme at a sitting of Parliament which the President of the European Council and the President of the Council shall be invited to attend. The statement shall be followed by a debate.

Rule 158 regulates the use of *language* in Parliament, seeing to it that all relevant material is provided in all the languages of EU Member States. Rule 162 regulates the *allocation of speaking time and list of speakers*. The elaborate rule covers several aspects of the debates on Commissioner's statements. For example, under (8), the blue card procedure is regulated:

Rule 162. Allocation of Speaking Time and List of Speakers

8. The President may give the floor to Members who indicate, by raising a blue card, their wish to put to another Member, during that Member's speech, a question of no longer than half a minute's duration, if the speaker agrees and if the President is satisfied that this will not lead to a disruption of the debate.

In the debates, the participants can be assumed to accept the rules of procedure as their common procedural starting points. The President of Parliament is in charge of seeing to it that the debates go according to these rules.

When it comes to the dispute about the conduct of the Commission in EP debates on Statements, the treaties and the rules of procedure assign the argumentative roles to the parties. In line with the responsibilities of the Commission, a Commissioner making a statement has the duty to justify the decisions, plans and actions related to her area of responsibility. Similarly, in view of the supervisory power that the EP has over the EC, MEPs have the duty to scrutinise the conduct of the Commission. The rules of procedure place the burden of proof on the Commissioner who has the obligation to defend her position first.

In their investigation of argumentative indicators of the starting points, van Eemeren et al. identify the different markers that indicate the negotiation of procedural and material starting points by the arguers (2007, pp. 63–136). Here too, the highly institutionalised context of the argumentative encounter seems to make the indicators of the management of starting points unnecessary. Whereas in less institutional contexts, arguers may be 'free' to negotiate their material and procedural starting points and we may expect an explicit management of the starting points, in contexts where the disagreement is assigned and regulated by rules and conventions, this cannot be expected. In EP debates on statements, MEPs do not need to explicitly challenge the Commissioner to defend (her standpoint about) her conduct, nor does the Commissioner need to explicitly accept the challenge and assume her burden of proof. Likewise, the Treaties assign material starting points, and make it unnecessary for the MEPs and Commissioners to explicitly propose, accept or reject propositions as starting points.

11.5 The Argumentative Means

In EP debates on statements, the rules and conventions of the session require that the argumentative exchanges are presented by means of the statements made. Typically, arguments defending the positive standpoint are presented first in the statement made by the Commissioner. These usually include references to the elements that constitute a good record of the Commission, such as actions taken, policies crafted or plans made, and sometimes also the willingness and readiness to do more of these. Excerpts (1), (2) and (3) below are examples:

- (1) Commissioner Malmström, in the introductory statement of the debate on the Suspension of the SWIFT agreement, Strasbourg, 8 October 2013
 I am here tonight to inform you about the actions I have decided to take following the press allegations about the possible access of the US National Security Agency (NSA) to the data exchange through the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) Agreement. [...] Since the first allegations appeared in the press, as I told you then, I have immediately taken action. In July, I sent a first letter to my US counterpart, and on 11 September I called on the Under-Secretary for the Treasury Department, Mr Cohen, and told him that I was waiting for substantial information on the alleged tapping. The next day I also sent him a letter, in which I requested the opening of consultations under Article 19 of the TFTP Agreement. As you know, this is the procedure that is regulated in the agreement in case there are questions or things that need to be clarified. (European Parliament 2013)
- (2) Vice-president of the Commission Reding, in the introductory statement of the debate on the Future of the Safe Harbour Agreement in the light of the NSA affair, Strasbourg, 15 January 2014
 [...] There are deficiencies, and the Commission is addressing those. As requested by Parliament, we have analysed Safe Harbour, and on 27 November 2013 we issued our analysis and we were clear that Safe Harbour may be not so safe all the time. [...] We also take very seriously the risk that Safe Harbour, as a conduit for transfers of personal data, facilitates access by US national security authorities under large scale surveillance programmes. [...] I made it very clear to our American counterparts that this issue needs to be addressed in a satisfactory manner if we want to ensure the continuity of the Safe Harbour scheme. (European Parliament 2014)
- (3) Commissioner Avramopoulos, in the introductory statement of the debate on Refugee emergency, external borders control and future of Schengen, Strasbourg, 2 Feb 2016
 Madam President, I must start by thanking you for giving the Commission the opportunity once again to discuss the migration challenge with you in plenary. [...] We will be frank and objective about the poor progress we see on the ground today and about what needs to be done in the next days or weeks. [...] The Commission is putting every effort into achieving normalisation of the Schengen functioning and, in parallel, is preparing for all options. [...] The

Commission is working closely with both the Greek and Turkish authorities to scale up the returns to Turkey under the existing bilateral agreement, awaiting the full entry into force of the EU—Turkey agreement. We are exploring with Greece what further support it needs to be able to systematically return those migrants who do not have a right to stay in the European Union. (European Parliament 2016b)

The doubt concerning the positive standpoint as well as the arguments supporting the negative standpoint are presented in the statements made by critical MEPs speaking after the Commissioners' statement. These include expressing disappointment or dissatisfaction for the lack of adequate actions, policies or plans. Excerpts (4), (5) and (6) below are examples:

- (4) MEP Albrecht, speaking in the debate on the Suspension of the SWIFT agreement as a result of NSA surveillance, Strasbourg, 8 October 2013

Madam President, I have to say I am a bit shocked that the Commissioner is so comfortable with these answers from the US Government. (European Parliament 2013)

- (5) MEP in't Veld, speaking in the debate on the Future of the Safe Harbour Agreement in the light of the NSA affair, Strasbourg, 15 January 2014

Mr President, I would like to thank the Commissioner for her words and her proposal. It is good, but, frankly, not good enough. [...] We have asked the Commission repeatedly, for many years, to come up with a solution, but the Commission did not act. As a matter of fact, this famous evaluation of the Safe Harbour arrangement—because it is not actually an agreement—came, I think, two years after the deadline. [...] It is about time this House and the Commission stood up for the rights and the protection of individual EU citizens. These should take precedence over international relations and even over business interests. [...] (European Parliament 2014)

- (6) MEP Sargentini, speaking in the debate on European Agenda on Security, Strasbourg, 7 July 2015

Mr Timmermans, Mr Avramopoulos, this was the chance you could have grabbed to explain what you really think of the Council's proposals last evening. But if I listen to you, I actually hear some kind of "loyal cooperation". I also hear you as a form of disclaimer saying "within the law" and "within the international treaties" but I still suggest that we cooperate loyally with a proposal from the Council that it is not aimed at returning refugees. [...] I think it's not just the Council that misses leadership, but you too, and that's a pity because you were on the right track. (European Parliament 2015)

Sometimes, supportive arguments are also advanced in the statements made by MEPs who are satisfied with the Commissioner's conduct and who get to speak after the Commissioners' statement. These usually express a positive assessment of the Commission's policies, plans or actions. Excerpts (7) and (8) below are examples:

- (7) MEP Moraes, speaking in the debate on European Agenda on Security, Strasbourg, 7 July 2015

To be fair to the Commission, they have had many plans, and many with integrity. [...] The problem is the Council; the problem is the incoherent, often aggressive, reaction to established plans on a number of fields. (European Parliament 2015)

- (8) MEP Metsola, speaking in the debate on implementing the European agenda on migration, Strasbourg, 8 March 2016

Madam President, let me start by thanking the Commission for its consistent and clear commitment in trying to find a way forward to manage this crisis and to examine the tools we have at a European level in order to do so in the best possible way. (European Parliament 2016c)

Central to understanding passages such as the above as accountability practices is the reconstruction of argument from sign (Mohammed 2016c). This argument scheme is particularly suitable for the defence of evaluative standpoints such as the one at the centre of the discussion in accountability discussions. By means of the scheme, the actor being held to account presents her policies, plans and actions as indicators of satisfactory conduct. What counts as a satisfactory conduct depends very much on the context of the discussion. Nevertheless, adequate representation of the needs and interests of the public, and effectiveness in tackling problems and bringing about desirable consequences are two characteristics that are widely considered necessary for good governance (Colomer 2011). Consequently, we may expect the actor to defend her conduct in terms of policies, plans and actions that are *representative* and *effective* (Mohammed 2016c). The argument of a certain actor A can be expected to go along the following lines⁶:

- 1 A's conduct is satisfactory, because
 - 1.1a A's policies, plans and actions are representative of the needs and interests of the public; and
 - 1.1b A's policies, plans and actions are effective in bringing about desirable consequences; and
 - 1.1' Having policies, plans and actions that are both representative and effective is a sign of satisfactory conduct

A negative version of the scheme can be used by account holders who are of the opposite opinion about the conduct of the actor. The negative scheme can have three variants: Critical account holders may argue that a certain policy, plan or action is not representative, or that a certain policy, plan or action is not effective, or that the agent has not taken any policy, plan or action that is representative or

⁶This is a simplified version of the scheme. See Mohammed (2016c) for an elaborate version and for the discussion of it.

effective. Given the responsibility of commissioners is usually restricted to a certain area, we may expect that the standpoints and arguments are not about the conduct in general, but rather about policies, plans and actions in *a certain area x*.

Despite their normative importance in discussing conduct, it is unrealistic to expect Members of the Commission or MEPs to be explicitly stating that policies, plans and actions are or are not *representative* or *effective*. These general arguments are to be seen as categories of more concrete arguments: Representativeness may be expressed by asserting that policies, plans or actions are in alignment with the common good, or that they are in line with the values, goals and aspirations of the general public; and effectiveness may be expressed by asserting that policies, plans or actions bring about positive consequences or prevent negative ones. These sub-arguments may be explicit, as the excerpts above show.

In fact, the sub-arguments that refer to and assess Commission actions, policies and plans are all we have in terms of explicit components of the argument that assesses the conduct of the Commission. As explained in Sect. 11.3 above, the standpoints that assess the conduct of the Commission remain implicit. The major premises that link the minor premises to the claim, for example, one which states that an action that is in line of the commitments taken indicates satisfactory conduct, also remain implicit. This is not surprising, as this kind of major premises may be assumed to be shared and consequently in no need for being asserted. Well, in this case, do we have any indicators of the symptomatic scheme at all then? On which basis are we to infer that the reference to the policies, plans and actions is part of an accountability practice?

In their investigation of argumentative indicators, van Eemeren et al. identify different types of linguistic clues that indicate the argumentation schemes used by arguers. For each of the pragma-dialectical schemes, they identify three types of clues: (i) expressions that indicate the type of the relation underlying the scheme, (ii) clues in the criticism advanced by the opponent in an interaction and (iii) clues in the follow-up argument that builds on the scheme (pp. 138–188). For symptomatic arguments, the expressions identified include explicit indicative expressions such as *X shows Y*, *X implies Y*, *X testifies to Y...* etc. (p. 157); other expressions that indicate particular aspects of the symptomatic relation, such as *X is by nature Y*, *X is essentially/basically/at bottom/at heart/fundamentally Y ...* etc. (p. 159); as well as the structure ‘subject-copula-complement’ as a sentence structure that is pre-eminently suitable for constituting the standpoint or to the minor premise of a symptomatic argument, that is the premise where the claimed sign is asserted (pp. 160–1).

The last indicator, namely the minor premise where an assessment is expressed, is the only one that can be found in the accountability practice in EP debates on statements (see example (5) above). Apart from that, the other indicators are hardly to be found. Does that mean the symptomatic scheme is not there? That there is in fact no accountability practice in these debates? No, it does not.

The understanding that accountability takes place in such debates is firstly a normative assumption. It is derived from the roles assigned to the actors in the EU contexts, the rights and obligations associated with the roles and the design of the context of interaction at stake. The EP has a supervisory power that allows it to

scrutinise the work of the EC; Members of the Commission are required to make statements in which they explain and justify their actions, policies and plans to the EP; and MEPs are entitled to debate Commission statements. Furthermore, the assumption of accountability practice is empirically confirmed in the actual debates. The assumption is necessary in order to see the relevance of the listing and assessing of the Commission's past and current actions, policies and plans that is typical of the debates. Listing and assessing current or past actions of the Commissioners, or criticising the lack of action of Commissioners, is not usually relevant to the deliberation about the future actions proposed in the statements. Unless we consider the accountability practice, reference to such actions or to the lack thereof would not make sense. For example, unless Commissioner Malmström is arguing that her reaction is adequate (excerpt (1)), why would she go into the detailed listing of all the actions she has taken to respond to the alleged NSA surveillance? Similarly, unless MEP in't Veld was out to criticise the conduct of the Commission (excerpt (5)), why would she emphasise that the Commission has not acted as expected?

The above suggests that in the particular context of EP debates on statements, we may consider transitive verbs and other references to past and current actions as indicators of the symptomatic scheme that evaluates the conduct of the Commission. While the affirmation of action can be understood as a sign of good conduct, the negation of it is usually understood as a sign of inadequate conduct. The indicator here isn't just verbal; it is also contextual.

11.6 The Outcome

When considering the outcome of the discussion in accountability practices, it is important to distinguish between institutions whose primary function is to call public officials to account and those which adopt an accountability role, though accountability is far from being their primary purpose. In institutions where accountability is a primary function, such as audit offices, ombudsmen and administrative tribunals, there are clear procedures for 'passing the judgment' and determining the 'consequences' that an actor faces as a result of that. In institutions where accountability is not the primary purpose, such procedures are usually missing. Scrutinising the actor's conduct does not lead to any determinate judgment, at least not at the end of each discussion of it.

The lack of a determinate judgment in institutions where accountability is not a primary purpose does not mean the actor does not face consequences and the accountability practice is defective or futile. One way to look at the accountability practices that occur outside of institutions where accountability is a primary function is to see them as part of a bigger public discussion about the conduct of public officials. The discussion extends in time and place to cover all those instances where public officials are required to justify their conduct. Judgment is not passed at the end of each exchange, but rather later, for example when it's time for elections. Indeed, as

Mulgan explains, the general public is the ultimate account-holder and it gets to pass judgment through the election process (2004, p. 24).

EP debates on statements are one of those contexts where the exercise of accountability remains without a definitive outcome. While this type of debates plays an important role in keeping the conduct of the Commission under scrutiny, accountability is not the primary purpose of the debates. Consequently, there are no rules of procedure that would regulate a decision-making concerning the conduct of the Commission. The outcome of the accountability discussions conducted as part of the debates is not determined at the end of the session. The debate can be considered a part of an extended discussion about the conduct of the Commission. The judgment about the conduct of the Commission does not happen at election time, since the Commission is not directly elected by the European citizens, but is appointed jointly by the Member States and the European Parliament. Nevertheless, the European Parliament has several ways to pass judgments and make the Commission face consequences. For example, the EP has the right to approve the EC and the EP can censure the EC and ultimately dismiss it.⁷ Moreover, since 1994, commissioners-designate have been required to appear before an EP hearing, and under the Lisbon Treaty, EU heads of state propose a candidate for Commission President, taking into account the results of European elections. Furthermore, the EP has the power to set the conditions under which the Commission implements EU legislations, and has the right to revoke the delegation or to express objections to the delegated acts. Finally, another venue for the EP to make the EC face consequences was added by one of the new powers attributed to the EP under the Lisbon Treaty, namely the power to consent international agreements. MEPs aren't only aware of these powers, but they do more and more refer to them in their contributions. Excerpt (9) below is an example:

- (9) MEP in't Veld, speaking in the debate on the Suspension of the SWIFT agreement as a result of NSA surveillance, Strasbourg, 8 October 2013

And one final thing: I would say to the Commissioner and to the empty chair of the Council—the familiar empty chair of the Council—that this issue is also about something else.

This was the first serious international agreement approved under the Lisbon Treaty. It was the first agreement on which we were asked for consent. The problem is that once we have signed what is essentially a blank cheque we are out of the game, but we will be asked by the Commission and the Council to give consent to further international agreements, so this is a test case. If this House adopts a statement calling for the suspension or termination of the agreement, and the Commission and the Council do not react accordingly, that means that this House is not being taken seriously, and it will not give its consent to future agreements. This is about democracy in Europe. (European Parliament 2013)

⁷So far, none of the eight motions of censure brought before Parliament has been adopted. In 1999, the Santer Commission stepped down before Parliament forced its resignation.

Eventually, the Commission does face the consequences of the EP's judgment, but not inside the debates themselves. Indicators of concluding outcome cannot be expected in the debates.

11.7 Discussion

In this chapter, my goal was to gain a better understanding of a mundane routine practice of accountability in the EU, namely the accountability pursued in EP debates on statements. In order to do that, I have characterised the discursive process of accountability in EP debates on statements as an activity type and tried to identify the linguistic argumentative indicators typical of it. The characterisation of the activity type highlighted the conventionalised and often institutionalised elements of the practice, offering us some indications on what to look for when examining the argumentative pursuit of accountability in these debates. As expected, the linguistic markers were not straightforward. In a type of practice that is highly institutionalised, some initial disagreements and starting points are preconditioned by the design of the practice. The main standpoints and the starting points are attributed to the arguers rather than assumed voluntarily by them. They could then be taken for granted and do not need to be made explicit. We just have the arguments, and we need to rely on our understanding of the institutional context in order to reveal the role these arguments play in the accountability process. Also, since accountability is not the primary purpose of the session, only those elements of the argumentation that relate to the policies, plans and actions are usually made explicit, and no real outcome about the conduct of the Commission is expected to be achieved at the end of the debate. The arguers convey their (implicit) assessment of the conduct through their (explicit) assessments of the policies adopted, plans made and actions taken. Typically, the commissioner emphasises the efforts she has taken to bring about policies, plans and actions that are representative and effective, while her opponents emphasise that the commissioner has not taken policies, plans or action that are representative and effective or that the ones she has taken are not representative or not effective.

Considering the case of these debates, we may need to think of different types of indicators to help us navigate such fairly complex type of argumentative exchanges. The absence of straightforward indicators can by no means be taken to indicate the absence of accountability discussion in EP debates on statements. Not only is the session widely acknowledged as a venue for the EP to scrutinise the conduct of the EC, but the examination of the contributions made by Members of the Commission and the MEPs leaves no doubt that what is at stake is not just the influencing of future policies, plans and action but also assessing past and current ones. Discussing the consequences of plans, policies and actions can be considered part of deliberation, as long as the policy, plan or action is not decided yet, i.e., it is proposed to be taken in the future. Once the discussion is about a policy, plan or action that has already been decided, we're in the realm of accountability, even if the consequences

are yet to come in the future. The deliberation of future courses of action, including adopting policies and making plans, is no doubt important in these debates, but the discussion of past and present conduct is central too. In fact, the exercise of accountability in these debates may be just an example of the many day-to-day routine accountability practices that happen while other things are being done. These practices may be complex and messy, but they are important and deserve more attention than what they get.

Part of the complexity of EP debates on statements lies indeed in the intertwinement between the exercise of accountability and the deliberation of future courses of action. Take for example, the case of MEP in't Veld (excerpt (5)). Her elaborate description of the problematic situation is an argument that makes a case for the necessity of the future course of action of suspending Safe Harbour, as well as a case that is critical of the conduct of the Commissioner who did not act to prevent the problematic situation. The exercise of accountability is intertwined with the deliberation of future courses of action, and it is typical in the practice that the same contributions play a role in both processes. Consequently, an adequate characterisation of the activity type of EP debates on statements needs to include both of these purposes. This requires us to characterise the practice as a *multi-functional* activity type (Mohammed 2016d) and account for the intertwinement of the two important processes. The complexity of EP debates on statements is also due to the fact that the debates are public. They are a typical case where the audience is composite and complex. The intended antagonist may well be not the one addressed in the debate. The characterisation of the activity type needs to include the other antagonists who are conventionally associated with these debates. This requires us to see the argumentative exchanges as part of *argumentative polylogues* (Lewiński and Aakhus 2014). Accounting for the complexity of actual public political arguments is indeed a challenge but once achieved, it will make our examinations more adequate in terms of representing the actual conventionalised practice. That would probably help us better identify the argumentative indicators.

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Chapter 12

Collaborative Decision-Making in Argumentative Group Discussions Among Primary School Children

Vera Mundwiler and Judith Kreuz

Abstract When people have to reach agreement on a given problem, they can rely on various practices and resources. The present study focuses on collaborative processes of group decision-making and investigates the use of argumentative and alternative strategies. This allows to reconstruct the development across different age groups. The analyses are based on video-recorded group discussions among primary school children (grade 2, 4, 6). The results show how the pupils increasingly manage to combine various strategies and cooperatively elaborate the breadth and depth of their argumentation. We also find that younger pupils mainly use argumentation to handle disagreement, while older pupils also start engaging in argumentative elaborations in contexts in which everyone agrees.

12.1 Introduction

In general, oral communication skills are key competencies in school and society: Speaking and listening support learning processes (e.g. Coplan et al. 2011; Hristova 2014; Morreale and Backlund 2007; Smith 2003) as well as the individual development and personal success in school and career (e.g. Morreale and Pearson 2008). In the meantime, these insights have been considered in educational standards and national curricula (e.g. Common Core State Standards Initiative 2010 in the USA; EDK 2016 = Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education; KMK 2005 = Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and

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Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany). Compared to other skills, however, research on the development, education and assessment of oral communication skills have long been neglected (e.g. Hunt et al. 2014).

In our research, we particularly focus on oral argumentation skills, which are widely recognized as important competencies for academic learning and everyday contexts (e.g. Budke and Meyer 2015; Grundler and Vogt 2009). For example, studies have shown positive impact on problem-solving skills and motivation (Chinn 2006), a deeper understanding of scientific concepts (Baker 2009) and complex topics in history (De La Paz 2005; Mason 2001) or solving mathematical problems (Vye et al. 1997). While there have been quite a few studies on children's argumentation skills at preschool age and in secondary schools (e.g. Arendt 2015; Blum-Kulka et al. 2010; Felton and Kuhn 2001; Goetz and Shatz 1999; Grundler 2011; Komor 2010; Krelle 2014; Spiegel 2006; Vogt 2002; Zadunaisky-Ehrlich and Blum-Kulka 2014), there is still a lack of empirical data on the development of oral argumentation skills of children in their early school years (but cf. studies by Mercer 2009; Vogt 2002; Jadallah et al. 2011). Furthermore, many studies focus on data from highly structured settings, such as fishbowl discussions or debates with pre-allocated roles (e.g. Grundler 2011; Krelle 2014). Or they analyze contexts in which children and adults interact (e.g. Heller 2012; Wild et al. 2012), including discussions between teachers and students (e.g. Spiegel 2006).¹ Therefore, our research focuses on argumentative peer discussions among primary school children in order to analyze the development of competences in oral argumentation.

Argumentative discussions are typically characterized by joint action and a common goal, especially if the participants have to reach agreement (which they can achieve either based on consensus, compromise or even accepted dissensus). In such contexts, people do not only use argumentative practices but also alternative strategies to reach agreement, which are of special interest when studying younger children. In this paper, we address the following research questions: Which strategies do pupils use to reach agreement among peers? In which contexts and at what age do they rather use argumentative strategies or when do they rely on alternative strategies to reach agreement?

First, we briefly present our data and methods (Sect. 12.2). We then review theoretical approaches to (oral) argumentation in context (Sect. 12.3). In Sect. 12.4, we analyze the discussions among primary school children and we show how children use argumentative strategies across different age groups (Sect. 12.4.1) and how especially younger children often rely on alternative strategies to reach agreement (Sect. 12.4.2). Finally, we discuss and summarize the results in Sect. 12.5.

¹It seems that in German-speaking countries, there has been a growing interest in using conversation analytical methodology to study argumentation in (school) contexts, which is why we refer to many studies published in German.

12.2 Data and Methods

The analyses in this paper draw on an extensive corpus of 180 group discussions (with an average of 5 min) that have been video-recorded in 2015–2016 at various primary schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland.² We have collected data from different age groups (grade 2, 4, and 6 with varying age between 7 and 14 years) and we have tested two specific settings. Task (1) ‘Robinson Crusoe’: Pupils have to imagine being stranded on a desert island and they have to decide on which objects they need most. They get a list with twelve objects and as a group have to decide on the three most important ones. As a consequence of the task design, the pupils typically compare the objects on the basis of usefulness. Task (2) ‘Donation’: Pupils learn about four possibilities of spending 50 Swiss francs as a group and have to decide what they think is most important and worth the money. In both settings, there is no right or wrong solution, but the children are confronted with a problem or open question and are expected to reach agreement. The groups always consist of a random selection of four classmates who, after a short instruction, are left on their own to organize their discussions themselves. They do not get specific preparation on the topic or time to prepare any arguments beforehand and therefore do not have predefined opinions and positions. So they usually develop their ideas during the conversation. Due to the framing of the task as decision-making, the general mode of conversation can be characterized as *collaborative mode* (cf. Fasel Lauzon et al. 2009, 126), although we also identified locally established competitive sequences. The tasks can be—but do not necessarily need to be—solved by using argumentative practices. Even though we did not frame the activities as an *argumentation* and, for example, did not explicitly ask the children to *give reasons*, we nevertheless created a task that (partly) elicits argumentative talk. But additionally to argumentative practices, the children also use a set of other strategies, e.g. they rely on prosodic and multimodal resources, insist, vary the expression of modality or use strategies involving perspective-taking, establishing (epistemic) authority etc. (cf. Sect. 12.4.2).

The collected data can best be described as semi-authentic data because even though our quasi-experimental setting is partially controlled (e.g. age, topic, group size, cooperative goal, i.e. achieving agreement), it still allows for spontaneous discussions among peers in which they decide on their own what exactly they want to discuss, in what order, depth, mode etc. Furthermore, we have chosen a typical and therefore authentic task for a school context in which pupils are asked to work in groups on a given problem. Accordingly, our focus and interest is argumentation in context.

²The data has been collected in the context of the research project “Argumentative Discourse Skills in School: Contexts, Demands, Acquisition”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation; project managers are Prof. Dr. Martin Luginbühl, University of Basel and Prof. Dr. Brigit Eriksson, University of Teacher Education Zug; the project was formerly—and at the time of data collection—associated with the University of Neuchâtel.

The peer discussions were video-recorded on two stationary cameras and transcribed according to the transcription system GAT2 (Selting et al. 2011). The children speak Swiss German and for the purpose of this article, we have included interlinear translations into English. In our study, we focus on qualitative analyses³ within the framework of ethnomethodological conversation analysis and are thus interested in detailed analyses of the sequential organization of interaction (cf. Sacks et al. 1974; Sidnell and Stivers 2013). The analysis is developed ‘bottom up’⁴ and according to conversation analysis, we analyze oral communication from the participants’ perspectives in order to be able to reconstruct their understanding of the ongoing interaction (e.g. Heritage 2001, 914; Sacks et al. 1974, 729). This can be achieved by following the principle of the so-called *next-turn proof procedure* (e.g. Sidnell 2013, 79), which means that the analysis of the respective next turn allows to draw conclusions on the participants’ own understanding. Participants and analysts alike generally have access to practices that are *accountable*, i.e. “observable-and-reportable” (Garfinkel 1967, 1). Therefore, in the analysis of (argumentative) group decision-making, we can refer to agreement once we can identify specific practices, such as verbal and nonverbal ratification, expressed agreement or affirmative actions and conclusions, etc.⁵

12.3 Argumentation in Context

There are diverse disciplines interested in the field of (oral) argumentation and accordingly, there are many different definitions and approaches. Common to various theories is the basic idea that argumentation is the process of resolving a difference or conflict of opinion by justifying one’s claims (e.g. Barth and Krabbe 1982; Jacquin 2015; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Plantin 1996; Toulmin 1958; Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; etc.). Until now, there has been a long tradition of argumentation theories based on (antique) rhetoric and formal logic (cf. discussion in Van Eemeren et al. 2014). In contrast to those approaches, conversation analytic studies have focused on the “highly context-dependent nature of argumentation” (Zadunaisky Ehrlich 2011, 249) and the interactive characteristics of contextualized argumentation. We therefore adopt a “dialogic stance” rather than a “monologic stance” (cf. Antaki 1994; Zadunaisky Ehrlich 2011),

³In our project, we also follow a mixed methods approach and are currently working on quantitative analyses, which—in combination with qualitative findings—will allow us to gain new insights into argumentative skills.

⁴However, it has been critically noted that in the case of argumentation, it is impossible to conduct purely descriptive analysis because we are informed by definitions and preconceptions about what argumentation is (e.g. Deppermann 2006, 17ff.; Schwarze 2010, 121ff.).

⁵Sometimes the lack of response can also be treated as acceptance of an argument because there does not seem to be a need for (further) opposition (e.g. Grundler 2011, 47). Since such cases are ambiguous, our analyses are based on contexts in which observable accounts are available.

which means that arguments in context are rarely the product of just one speaker but rather they emerge collaboratively in discourse and are best described as “joint projects” (Clark 1996). Accordingly, we put a strong focus on co-constructed practices and the collaborative nature of argumentation in the ongoing discourse (e.g. Jacoby and Ochs 1995). Following pertinent studies conducted in German (e.g. Grundler 2011; Heller 2014; Spranz-Fogasy 2006), oral argumentation is understood as a situated social practice, in which two or more participants interactively deal with a topic, which has locally been established as controversial or up for discussion, by giving and questioning reasons.

In the sequential organization of talk, principally every action can be opposed and therefore lead to an argumentation (“action-opposition sequences”, Hutchby 1996, 22ff.; cf. Hester and Hester 2010; Maynard 1985). Especially when studying children’s argumentation skills, we need to take into consideration that there exist various ways of opposing a prior action, e.g. “negation, substitution, insistence, challenge, insult” (Maynard 1985, 5) and it is then of special interest to analyze the contexts in which children start using argumentative practices, such as giving reasons. While early conversation analytic studies in the field of argumentation and disagreement have usually focused on the organization of turn-taking and adjacency pairs (cf. Jacobs and Jackson 1989; Pomerantz 1984), we understand argumentation as globally structured discourse unit (cf. Heller 2015) and include in our analysis a wide range of communicative activities that support a proposition, e.g. conversational narratives or explanations (cf. Heller 2012).

Also, in contrast to traditional conceptions, we do not believe that argumentation is just a “subset of persuasion” (Pullman 2013, xx) and that persuasion is the *general* goal or function of argumentation (e.g. Baker and Huntington 1925; Ketcham 1917; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). Rather, this view has its shortcomings and has recently been criticized by scholars who are interested in dialogical discourse and who argue that the definition and characterization of the two concepts *persuasion* and *argumentation* need to be considered separately (e.g. Blair 2004; Doury 2012; Jacquin 2015; Jacquin and Micheli 2012; Micheli 2012; Plantin 2012). The main reason for a distinction and uncoupling of these concepts is their shared view “that the goal of persuasion is but one goal among others that can be assigned to argumentation, and that, as a result, persuasion cannot be considered as the central element in the definition of argumentation” (Doury 2012, 100). While it is acknowledged that persuasion can be a goal of argumentation, it is important, however, not to overlook the numerous other functions and purposes of argumentative discourse. For example, it can be “intended to alert one’s partner to certain difficulties, concerns, wonderments, anxieties, [...] to irritate, provoke, test, explore, undermine, upstage, hurt, and so on” (Gilbert 1997, 45). Argumentation can thus have the purpose to “generate new questions and problems” (Plantin 2012, 90), to elaborate and deepen (dis-)agreements (e.g. Koththoff 1993, 2015; Micheli 2012; Plantin 2012), to identify and position themselves and others (e.g. Doury 2012; Micheli 2012), etc. When talking about functions, it is useful to refer to Ehlich’s (2014) differentiation between *exploratory* argumentation (cf. Nonnon 1996), which includes functions as mentioned above, and *persuasive*

argumentation. To sum up, oral argumentation is a situated practice that is typically used to manage disagreements and conflicts but also, for example, to collaboratively explore open questions and problems or to support claims and positions, even when everyone agrees (e.g. Doury 2012; Ehlich 2014; Grundler 2011).

Our analyses in this paper mainly focus on instances of disagreement (i.e. persuasive communication)⁶ but we also illustrate how older pupils increasingly engage in argumentation in contexts in which there are no conflicts of opinions (i.e. exploratory argumentation). This will allow us to reconstruct the development of oral argumentation skills across different age groups.

12.4 Decision-Making in Peer Group Discussions

In the following, we discuss some of the results of our inductive and heuristic analyses of video-recorded peer group discussions in primary school. First, we show how pupils in our data generate reasons to support their claims and how they process disagreement by using argumentative strategies. Second, we illustrate what alternative strategies are used by children to reach agreement in group. The analyses will be related to the specific age groups (grade 2, 4 and 6) to discuss the development of argumentative discourse skills.

12.4.1 *Argumentative Strategies*

The recorded group discussions usually start with an opening phase in which everybody expresses his/her personal opinion. The argumentation then develops once the children validate their claims by supportive actions like giving reasons (e.g. Spranz-Fogasy 2006, 33) or once someone establishes an obligation to provide reasons, for example by explicitly asking for a reason (e.g. Heller 2012, 68; cf. Heller 2014). Giving and generating reasons can be seen as “the core job of ‘reasoning’” (Heller 2014, 139) and we will now present various contexts in our data and discuss the argumentative activities.

In the first example, four second-grade children are discussing the two objects ‘mosquito net’ and ‘tent’. Before the excerpt, everyone had agreed to take the tent. But since the mosquito net looks similar to a tent, Sofia⁷ puts this decision—mosquito net or ‘normal’ tent—up for discussion (line 01):

⁶As discussed above (cf. Sect. 12.2), conversation analytic approaches rely on accounts, i.e. on practices that are actually displayed in interaction. Therefore, we focus on displayed practices of (dis-)agreement. Since it is impossible to say anything about the participants’ intentions or beliefs, it often remains unclear, however, if somebody has been persuaded or not.

⁷The children’s names are pseudonyms.

Example 1: Ro_K2_WB_G1a (Andrin, Luana, Sofia, Pascal), 03:33-03:49

- 01 SOF: wÄmmer s (.) moskIto oder [s norMAle.]
do we want the mosquito (net) or the normal (tent)
- 02 AND: [s norMAle.]
the normal (tent)
- 03 LUA: s norMAle;
the normal (tent)
((looking at SOF))
- 04 AND: näi s mokItonetz das (-) das isch ja grad ä no WASSerdicht.
no the mosquito net this this is even water-resistant too
- 05 PAS: aber defür isch CHALT;
but instead/in return is cold
((performing emphasizing hand gesture towards AND))
- 06 AND: nÄI isch WASSerdicht,
no is water-resistant
((looking at PAS))
- 07 PAS: aber !CHALT!,
but cold
((performing emphasizing hand gesture towards AND))
- 08 AND: im zÄlt ischs ä CHALT-
in the tent it is cold too
((looking at PAS, shrugging his shoulders and laughing))
- 09 PAS: JO guet das stImmt.
yeah okay that's true
- 10 Aso isch GUET.
so (it) is okay

In overlap with Sofia's question in line 01, Andrin first chooses the normal tent (line 02) but then revises his opinion and now communicates his preference for the mosquito net (line 04). However, this time he does not only mention his opinion but gives a reason, too. His argument focuses on the quality of a mosquito net, which is also water-resistant (line 04)—this is also true for 'normal' tents, of course. Pascal does not reject Andrin's argument, he does, however, question the mosquito net as a good choice because it would be cold (line 05). Thus, implicitly, he argues for the tent, which in turn would be warm. In the following, both Andrin and Pascal further engage in their oppositional positions but without offering more elaborate arguments for or against the tent or the mosquito net respectively (lines 06, 07). They rather repeat their main points and produce syntactic fragments that are embedded in their corresponding turns. In line 08, Andrin manages to end their 'ping-pong' style dialogue by re-using Pascal's argument (that it would be cold in the mosquito

net) as a counter-argument: “in the tent it is cold too”. Thus, he does not offer new arguments but he is capable of shifting the focus and making use of his opponent’s argument for his own purpose. It is at this point that Pascal displays alignment by explicitly agreeing in lines 09 and 10.

It is typical for younger children in our corpus to remain at a rather simple and superficial level of argumentation, which means that they do not often elaborate each other’s arguments in more depth to develop a better understanding of the implications of the discussed objects. Also, they often insist on their standpoints by either repeating or slightly rephrasing their propositions and/or arguments. In Example 1, they use argumentative practices to reach agreement, but as will be discussed in Sect. 12.4.2, pupils of this age group often rather rely on alternative strategies to reach their goal. Regarding the participation structure in the discussions, we observe that among second-grade children it is often just two out of four pupils who competitively engage in an argumentative sequence, adopting the roles of proponent and opponent (Andrin and Pascal in Example 1).

Older children start building more flexible alliances to support each other collaboratively and to engage also in exploratory argumentation, which will be exemplified in the following. People do not only argue when there is dissensus (cf. Doury 2012) but also when they share the same opinions and generally agree (cf. Sect. 12.3). One possible interpretation of such contexts is that participants display accounts to reassure themselves that they share a *common ground* (e.g. Clark 1996). And, following Plantin’s (2012, 91) notion of a “third party” in the model of proponent and opponent, it is also possible to understand such sequences as persuasive talk, in which the participants “are not seeking to persuade their interlocutor who is present but are addressing an imaginary super-addressee [...], on whom they confer the right to evaluate the acceptability of the argumentation produced and whom they would eventually seek to persuade” (Doury 2012, 105).

Example 2 is taken from grade four. The pupils have been discussing the semantic field and basic need of ‘fire’ on an island and whether they wanted to choose the lighter or the matches. In the presented extract, they now ratify the matches as group consensus by co-constructively summarizing their standpoint (lines 01-05):

Example 2: Ro_K4_HZ_G1a (Lena, Julia, Tevin, Simon), 03:51-04:08

01 TEV: also dann äh mosKITonetz (.) verBANDSzeug (.) un:d-
okay then uhm mosquito net first aid kit and

02 (-)

03 JUL: STREICHhölzer;=
matches

04 TEV: =ge[NAU.
exactly

05 SIM: [streich,
match(es)

06 weisst du weil DER da;
you know because this one here
((pointing at the lighter))

07 wenn es einmal rEgnet dann ist das der (.) kaPUTT,
if it rains some day then this that one is broken

08 DAS da hier,
this one here
((pointing at the lighter))

09 JUL: jA und dAs hat auch (.) also: benZIN oder wie auch Immer das heisst;=
yes and this one has also well gas or however it is called
((pointing at the lighter))

10 TEV: =und wenn das AUSgeht.=
and if this is finished/if we're running out (of gas)

11 SIM: =wenn das AUSgeht dann ist [man (fertig);
if this is finished then one is (finished)

12 TEV: [und wir kö wir sind noch KINder;=
and we can we are still kids

13 =und das: GEHT nIcht so leicht;
and this is not so easy to do
((imitating the movement of lighting a lighter))

Even though the matches have been ratified by the group, Simon further develops the question ‘matches vs. lighter’ by giving a reason *against* the lighter, which in turn functions as an argument *for* the matches. He thus introduces a sequence of exploratory argumentation. He uses the conditional conjunction *if-then* to refer to expected circumstances on the desert island (“if it rains some day”, line 07) and relates the imagined condition (on an abstract level) to the quality of the focused object, i.e. the lighter is not water-resistant and therefore possibly destroyed by rain. Julia ratifies and expands further on the counter-argument by referring to gas as a substantial feature of the lighter (line 09). Her argument is syntactically marked as a topic-related expansion of Simon’s turn by the use of the conjunctions *and* and *also*. She does not fully develop her argument, since she only refers to the gas but without verbalizing any conclusions. The next speaker, Tevin, orients to the introduced aspect of gas and begins to expand on the imagined situation ‘what if they would be running out of gas’ (line 10). By using *and*, he expresses the continuation of Julia’s argument and by using the conditional conjunction *if*, he embeds his argument in Simon’s syntactical structure and thus aligns with the

overall purpose of the sequence, i.e. finding arguments against the lighter to establish the (agreed) choice in favor of the matches. While Tevin only produces the first part of the conditional phrase (line 10), Simon completes the argument by echoing the first part and then delivering the second part of the syntactical structure (line 11) (cf. Lerner 1991 on collaboratively constructed syntax). Still adding to the consensus-oriented discussion, Tevin develops another argument against the lighter, i.e. using a lighter is difficult for children (lines 12-13). He thus introduces a new argument: While they had already discussed the situational conditions and circumstances on an island (possibly rainy) and the quality and functioning of the object itself (not water-resistant, only functioning with gas), Tevin now relates both the situation and the object to themselves as imagined survivors on the island who have to be able to use the object.

In this sequence, we see how the children together explore various arguments to back up their agreed choice. They do not only elaborate the *breadth* of their argumentation, i.e. the number of positions and arguments for and against a specific object, but they are also capable of collaboratively expanding on their peers' (sometimes fragmented) arguments and thus together develop the *depth* of the argumentation, i.e. the elaboration of single arguments (on *breadth* and *depth* see e.g. Chinn and Anderson 1998; Grundler 2011; Klein 1980; Munneke et al. 2007). They establish several arguments (1-3), which they elaborate co-constructively:

- (1) A lighter is not water-resistant, hence easily damaged by rain.
- (2) A lighter needs gas;
→ if you run out of gas, it is finished.
- (3) The potential users of a lighter are the four children themselves;
→ children cannot easily use a lighter, hence it is useless for them.

The children's agreement is not only stated explicitly⁸ but also expressed by their co-constructed realization of sentences and arguments (cf. Kreuz in prep.). It is an example of exploratory argumentation, which shows how children co-construct shared knowledge (cf. Ehlich 2014).

The next example delivers insight into the interplay of diverse argumentative practices, realized by pupils at the age of 13-14 (grade 6). During the discussion, the girl Tefta has already twice mentioned her position in favor of the mosquito net but her claim has so far been ignored. In line 01 of the following extract, she finally supports her claim by giving a reason and consequently succeeds in establishing an argumentative discussion:

⁸Shortly after line 13, Julia again explicitly summarizes their agreement (as already collaboratively done in the presented extract, lines 01-05) and thus introduces the closing of the sequence.

Example 3: Ro_K6_BiO_G1a (Sara, Isabella, Aysegül, Tefta), 04:50-06:02

- 01 TEF: °h aber damit mir au GSCHÜTZT sInd,
but in order that we are also protected
- 02 cha üs das moskItoneTz VIL bringe;
the mosquito net can be of much use to us
- 03 AYS: <<whispering and laughing at TEF> DU (wider);>
you (again)
- 04 TEF: jo wottsch KRANK wärde;
well do you want to fall ill
- 05 SAR: wobii wobii (jEtz au i MÄIn;)
but but (now also I mean)
- 06 es cha jo au sii dass s wÜeudi TIER;
it can well be that there are wild animals
- 07 und denn nützt üs (natÜ) es mosKItonetz nid würkch viü;
and then a mosquito net is not really of much use to us
- 08 °h und dÄnksch dass mir det Ine passe;
and do you think we will fit in there
((pointing at the mosquito net))
- 09 TEF: (vIllicht) SCHO,
(maybe) yes
- 10 SAR: ah do schloofsäCKE (.) Äcke Äcke;
ah here sleeping bags s s
((pointing at the plural marking of 'sleeping bags'))
- 11 ((...))
- 12 SAR: guet de nÄmmer doch d SCHLOOFseck?=oder,
okay so let's take the sleeping bags right
- 13 (-) pAsse mir ALli ine;
do we all fit in
- 14 Oder was MÄINSCH,
or what do you think
((looking at TEF))
- 15 TEF: stEll dir vor es het uf eim so ne moskItO DINne,
imagine there is a mosquito inside of one
- 16 ((everyone laughs, appr. 2.5 sec.))
- 17 SAR: ja mosKITos mosKITos sind MÜcke ja;
well mosquitos mosquitos are midges well
- 18 (1.3)
- 19 AYS: Isch doch eGAL;
whatever/it doesn't matter
- 20 es hEt döt jo BLETter (au/mann);
there are leaves (also/man)

- 21 (1.0)
 22 SAR: mUesch di halt mit IRgendöppis ii,
 so you have to use anything
 23 wEisch wie die mit SCHLAMM iiriibe;
 you know like those (who) rub mud (on the body)
 ((imitating the use of mud to rub on the body))
 24 de chömme chömme mUcke nit zum [STÄche;
 then the midges do not come and sting
 25 TEF: [das STIMMT das (hilft/nützt);
 this is true this (helps/is of use)

Tefta manages to draw the attention to the mosquito net by first focusing on the need to be well protected on an island (line 01), which then leads to her suggestion to choose the mosquito net (line 02). Aysegül challenges Tefta's argument by orienting to her repeated attempt to discuss the mosquito net (line 03).⁹ In return, Tefta meets the obligation to further develop her argument. She chooses the strategy to formulate a rhetorical question to point to possible consequences if not well protected, i.e. becoming ill (line 04). Additionally, she uses the strategy of direct address and distinctive recipient design: She directly addresses Aysegül and refers to her well-being on the island and thus involves her addressee and her personal (imagined) world. This strategic move can be understood in the context of *proleptic argumentation*, i.e. the capacity to anticipate objections (cf. Walton 2009). At this point, Sara establishes the continuation of the argumentative discussion by giving a reason and conclusion against the mosquito net, i.e. there are possibly wild animals on the island, hence the mosquito net is useless (lines 06-07). She does not reject Tefta's argument (protection) per se but elaborates on the given situation on the island and comes to the conclusion that a mosquito net does not offer protection against all possible dangers. Sara keeps the floor and adds another oppositional argument, which refers to the size of a mosquito net and consequently its use for four children (line 08). By phrasing her opposition as a cautious question and addressing the proponent Tefta, she allows her to justify her view. It is also a strategy to not directly challenge an argument but rather initiate a collaborative exploration of advantages and disadvantages of specific objects. At that point, Tefta does not manage to rebut the counter-argument (line 09) and Sara takes the opportunity to suggest another object instead of the mosquito net, elaborating on the need for something where everybody fits in: the sleeping bags (lines 10, 12-14). Sara slightly shifts the focus of their argumentation, since she does not present a solution against the mosquitos, which was Tefta's original claim. Accordingly, Tefta, rejects the new proposition and insists on her chosen focus: "imagine there is a mosquito inside of one" (line 15).

⁹The analysis of the given contexts in the video (multimodal expression, context before/after the extract, etc.) allows us to interpret Aysegül's short turn in line 03 ("you (again)") as oriented to Tefta's suggestion to choose the mosquito net (and not, for example, to the action of taking a turn). At least, this seems to be the participant's understanding: Tefta's next turn in line 04 (again considering the embodied context) responds to a challenge or objection.

She directly addresses her opponent and asks her to visualize a situation on the island with a mosquito in her sleeping bag. Again, Tefta does not succeed in convincing her colleagues: Sara laughs and raises doubts about the danger of mosquitos by referring to them as midges (line 17). Then Aysegül tries to engage in the discussion by pointing to other solutions (lines 19, 20¹⁰). And Sara, too, presents an alternative way of protecting themselves against the mosquitos, i.e. by using mud (lines 22–24). Since they would easily find mud on the island, the suggested method implies that there is no need for a mosquito net. The rebuttal is finally successful and Tefta expresses her explicit agreement in line 25.

The episode shows that every single action can trigger an opposition and further contribute to an ongoing argumentative discussion (cf. Hester and Hester 2010; Hutchby 1996; Maynard 1985). The pupils elaborate various arguments and counter-arguments and together develop the breadth and depth of their argumentation by context-sensitively responding to the previous actions. The initial argument (importance of protection) is backed by specifying a possible source of danger (protection against disease) and supported by pointing to the exemplary locus of danger (in the sleeping bag), all by the same speaker (Tefta). She acts as the proponent and although she manages to deepen her viewpoint, she does not succeed in persuading the others. Sara, one of the opponents, also engages in the depth of Tefta's argumentation by elaborating on the dimension of protection (a mosquito net cannot protect against wild animals). She then develops the breadth of the argumentation by adding new aspects that need to be taken into consideration, i.e. the size of the mosquito net (too small for four pupils). Together with Aysegül, they also suggest alternative methods to protect themselves (leaves, mud). The depth of the argumentation is reached by further adding details (supports and conclusions) and explanations on how to protect oneself. In the end, the children manage to reach agreement.

While we observe that older pupils do not only develop a broad argumentation but also deepen individual arguments, the analysis furthermore shows how they vary between different argumentative strategies and combine argumentative moves with other strategies: They use rhetorical questions to challenge an argument, concrete examples in support of their arguments and they develop the depth of the argumentation by explicating the situational meaning of specific objects they are discussing. In addition, they often specifically design their (counter-)arguments for their respective recipients by using direct address, by perspective-taking and the expression of modality, which all show an orientation towards their co-present participants. This allows them to combine persuasive and exploratory argumentation, in which, on the one hand, they deal with disagreement and on the other hand, they collaboratively expand their knowledge (cf. Hornung 2014, 218; Miller 2006, 42), discuss different views and opinions, compromise and in the end, get a deeper understanding of the subject matter and possibly change their argumentation. Thus,

¹⁰It is, however, not clear in that context how to interpret Aysegül's (fragmentary) turn in line 20. A possible interpretation is that the children should cover and protect themselves with leaves.

it is not necessarily the case that all the participants have a settled opinion and a distinct idea to support but they can also develop their argumentation during the still ongoing discussion (cf. Grundler 2011). Arguments can also affect the relationship between the participants, for example by showing solidarity, alignment, empathy, etc. (see for example the concept of “face-work”, Goffman 1955; cf. Doury 2012; Kreuz et al. 2017).

So far, we have discussed how pupils aged between 7 and 14 manage to use argumentative strategies for their respective goals and increasingly combine various strategies. In the next section, we focus on discussions between younger children (aged between 7 and 8) who succeed in reaching agreement without using argumentation but by completely relying on alternative strategies.

12.4.2 *Alternative Strategies to Reach Agreement*

In general, we observe that younger children (aged 7–8) can reach agreement without entering into an argumentative discussion or by only rarely making use of reasons. Instead they rely on other strategies, e.g.

- prosodic and multimodal features (cf. Kreuz and Mundwiler 2016),
- the expression of modality (i.e. the use of modal verbs, adverbs etc. that express the speaker’s opinion on the possibility of something, e.g. Grundler 2011, 293ff.; cf. Frawley 2006),
- establishing (epistemic) authority (cf. Stivers 2005, 136ff.),
- insistence/repetition,
- perspective-taking (i.e. “capacity to assume and maintain another’s point of view”, Hale and Delia 1976, 195; related to the conversation analytic conception of *recipient design*, Sacks et al. 1974),
- and perspectivation (i.e. the extent to which people relate to various perspectives, e.g. Grundler 2011, 255ff.; cf. Graumann and Kallmeyer 2002),
- etc.

These strategies are also found in discussions among older children (aged 9–14) and they are used to further support the argumentative practices (as discussed above in Sect. 12.4.1). It is, however, typical for the second-grade children in our corpus to use such strategies exclusively, i.e. without giving reasons. In what follows, we present two examples in which children reach agreement by mainly using non-argumentative practices.

Example 4 shows a context in which a new object is proposed by Edgardo (line 01) as a direct reply/objection to Renato, who had proposed three different objects before:

Example 4: Ro_K2_HZ_G5a (Nick, Marc, Edgardo, Renato), 07:00-07:08

01 EDG: abEr nÄI: dAs dA DAS dA;;
 but no this one this one
 ((pointing to the first aid kit))

02 NIC: dAs WÖMmer ja [hAA;
 we want to have this
 ((referring to the first aid kit))

03 MAR: [ja (.) verbAnd °h kAsten !MÜ:S!sen wir hAben;
 yeah we must have a first aid kit
 ((moving forward while performing emphasizing gestures))

04 EDG: DAS (.) müe MÜEmer haa;
 we must must have this

Edgardo suggests taking the first aid kit by pointing to the object and by referring to it using deictic expressions (line 01). He positions himself as proponent of the first aid kit and Renato as opponent who needs to be persuaded (since Renato had proposed a selection of three other objects before). Nick and Marc support Edgardo's proposition and express their alignment by noticeable prosodic features. Especially Marc's turn in line 03 is striking: The extra strong focus accent lies on *must* ("yeah we! MUST! have a first aid kit") and at the same time he bodily performs the need for the object by gestures and facial expression that have emphasizing quality. On a lexical level it is interesting to notice that Nick uses the verb *to want* in line 02, which is now rephrased in Marc's statement who uses the less subjective verb *to must*. By changing the modal verb, Marc further strengthens his position. In line 04, Edgardo shows his agreement by partially repeating Marc's sentence and even imitating the prosodic quality after a self-initiated self-repair, namely the focus accent on *must* (this phenomenon is also known as "prosodic matching", Szczepek Reed 2012). After this extract, Nick and Renato also show agreement with Marc's proposition by multimodal alignment and in a later sequence they verbally ratify the first aid kit. We can see in this example how children are able to successfully achieve and display agreement without using argumentative language but instead relying on other strategies, such as the purposeful use of prosody, multimodality and modal verbs (cf. Kreuz and Mundwiler 2016).

The next example shows how repetition or insistence and the expression of modality is used to handle disagreement, again without the use of verbal argumentation. The extract shows the beginning of the group discussion and we focus on Vanessa who insists on taking the tent:

Example 5: Ro_K2_HZ_G1a (Boris, Melina, Vanessa, Antonio), 03:36-04:24

01 VAN: nÄmed mer vilicht s ZÄ:LT,
maybe we take the tent

02 MEL: [jO ZÄLT?
yeah tent

03 ANT: [jO (.) Aso-
yeah so

04 VAN: s ZÄLT und es moskItO[netz,
the tent and a mosquito net

05 ANT: [en SCHLOFsack und es z-
a sleeping bag and a t

06 nÄi °h [es <<laughing> HENdi:>?
no a mobile phone

07 VAN: [es ZÄ:LT, (-) es ZÄ:LT,
a tent a tent

08 ((...))

09 VAN: Aber s ZÄLT nämer uf JEde fAll;
but we definitely take the tent

10 ANT: °h s ZÄ:LT [und e SCHLAFsack.
the tent and a sleeping bag

11 MEL: [ZÄLT,
tent

12 VAN: DIÄ nämet mer uf JEde fAll.
we definitely take these

Right at the beginning, Vanessa suggests taking the tent (line 01). At that point, she uses rising intonation and hedging (*maybe*), which mark it as a cautious suggestion still up for discussion. In the following, Melina approvingly refers to the object in question (line 02) and Antonio changes the focus to other objects (lines 05-06), while Vanessa repeatedly refers to the tent (lines 04, 07). There is another topic change (omission in transcript, line 08), before Vanessa can successfully return to her suggestion, which she now presents as a decided matter: “but we definitely take the tent” (line 09 and similar in line 12). Instead of *maybe* she uses *definitely* and we also notice falling intonation. Antonio ratifies the decision (line 10) and Melina again repeats the object (line 11). Since they do not resume the discussion on the object ‘tent’ but the item remains one of the selected objects, this is the time where they have reached agreement. Even though the pupils do not seem to agree immediately, they do not use argumentation to solve the problem but Vanessa instead succeeds by insisting, repeating and changing expressions of modality (*maybe*, *definitely*) as well as modulating her intonation until finally, the others (explicitly or implicitly) agree.

Table 12.1 Decision-making through argumentative practices

Grade 2	Grade 4, 6
Argumentation in disagreement sequences (competitive)	Argumentation in disagreement sequences (competitive) AND Argumentation in agreement sequences (cooperative, co-constructed)
Use of (logical) arguments and objective reasons	Use of (logical) arguments and objective reasons AND Use of arguments on the relationship level (by combining them with e.g. perspectivation, expression of modality)
Use of arguments by repetition	Use of arguments by repetition AND Development of argumentative breadth and depth
Use of simple argumentative practices (e.g. giving reasons, justifications)	Use of simple argumentative practices (e.g. giving reasons, justifications) AND Use of various argumentative practices (e.g. using rhetorical questions to question each other, explaining, etc.)

12.5 Conclusion

The analysis of group discussions among primary school children shows how they can reach agreement through various practices, which include but are not limited to argumentation. We have focused on sequences where children deal with disagreement and have analyzed how they reach agreement. In some contexts, especially in discussions among fourth- and sixth-graders, argumentative sequences are not only used to handle disagreement but also allow to *explore* ideas when everyone agrees (cf. Sects. 12.3 and 12.4.1).¹¹

Table 12.1 provides a general and simplified overview of age-related differences regarding the use of argumentative practices in group discussions. We observe that it is at grade 4 that pupils start elaborating their argumentation on various levels and that the quantity and quality of strategies do not change much between grade 4 and 6, which is why both grades are summarized in one column:

Additionally to argumentative practices, there are various strategies that are used to reach agreement. In the above-discussed examples of second-grade children, we have mainly illustrated the use of prosodic and multimodal features, the expression of varying modality, repetition and insistence. These practices can be successful,

¹¹In contrast to these results, another Swiss study by Fasel Lauzon et al. (2009) has compared discussions among eighth- and twelfth-graders and has found that only the latter were engaging in collaborative argumentation and reflection. Since we have analyzed different data sets, the practices seem to depend on the task environment.

even without combining them with argumentative practices, and lead to group agreement. Further strategies, which are rather found in combination with argumentative strategies, include perspective-taking and perspectivation, establishing (epistemic) authority, etc. The children increasingly use the full repertoire of strategies.

In all cases, children need to flexibly adapt to the constantly changing contexts and accordingly act and react by using relevant practices in order to handle (dis-) agreement effectively. For these reasons, group discussions create an ideal learning environment for children (cf. Zadunaisky Ehrlich and Blum-Kulka 2010) where they can test and refine their strategies and additionally learn from the others' successful use of strategies. Children learn, for example, that in some contexts it can suffice to simply insist and repeat one's opinion but they also learn how to detect and fulfil an obligation to provide reasons. Furthermore, they learn to manage the discussions while dealing with the organization and structuring of the talk, the introduction and closing of topics, and aspects such as participant roles, identity and relationship management, etc. (for research on L2-contexts cf. Mori 2004; Nakahama et al. 2001). These observations have didactic implications (also see Hauser/Kreuz in press; Kreuz in prep.): While textbooks mostly contain rigid tasks with pre-allocated roles, prepared arguments, etc. (cf. Mundwiler et al. 2017), we argue for the often neglected inclusion of peer discussions in school to train oral argumentation skills. With a focus on collaboratively organized discussions, pupils can explore open questions and learn to deal with multiple perspectives, to cooperatively reflect on controversial topics and to make deliberate choices (cf. Grundler 2010; Spiegel 2010). Depending on the goals of an exercise, the pupils could then benefit from meta-discursive reflections on their discussions, e.g. based on videos or notes. Follow-up activities could include theoretical introductions to (oral vs. written) argumentation and/or general aspects of managing discussions.

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