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Assimakis Tseronis

Qualifying Standpoints

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Stance Adverbs as a
Presentational Device for
Managing the Burden of Proof

A number of studies from pragmatics and discourse analysis have investigated the function of stance adverbs, such as *clearly*, *fortunately*, *frankly*, *perhaps*, and *technically*, when used to qualify utterances. Within the field of argumentation studies, scholars who have paid attention to these words have primarily focused on the so-called modal adverbs, and have not considered the insights that can be gained by treating the class of stance adverbs as the linguistic realisation of a certain move in an argumentative discussion. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the strategic function of stance adverbs when qualifying an utterance that functions as a standpoint.

In this study stance adverbs are examined as a presentational device at the arguer's disposal when putting forward a standpoint. Assuming the pragma-dialectical approach to the study of argumentation, the aim is to specify how qualifying a standpoint helps arguers to pursue their rhetorical goals without overriding the dialectical requirements pertaining to an argumentative discussion. The study is comprised of three parts. In the first part, the question 'What is a qualified standpoint?' is answered by combining illocutionary analysis of the move of advancing a standpoint with pragma-linguistic study of stance adverbs. In the second part, the question 'Why would the protagonist qualify the standpoint?' is answered based on the concept of burden of proof, which is essential to the move of advancing a standpoint. In the third part, the question 'How does standpoint qualification function strategically in an argumentative discussion?' is answered by postulating that the protagonist of a qualified standpoint is interested in managing the burden of proof, an assumption which builds on the results of the other two parts.

The book is of interest to advanced students and scholars of argumentation and communication studies as well as those interested in an explanation of language use from an argumentative perspective.

: LOT
Netherlands
Graduate
School of
Linguistics
ISBN 978-94-6093-005-8



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