CHAPTER 7: AMBIGUITY DIALECTIC

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a procedural account of active ambiguity will be presented. The theory carries out part of Hamblin’s program for a theory of charges and Krabbe’s program for an immanent dialectical theory of fallacy. The dialectical model, called ambiguity dialectic, will satisfy the requirements derived at in chapter 4.

1. DEGREES OF STRICTNESS

Given that actively ambiguous expressions can have positive side-effects, and, more importantly, given that discussants are not always in control of the resources needed to avoid using such expressions, these ambiguities should not be banned from persuasion dialogue completely. Nevertheless, active ambiguities result in consequences that are detrimental for achieving the main goal of a critical discussion and they should ideally not be used. The commitment to the ideal of a clear language is a commitment to the active effort and the serious attempt to formulate clear enough statements. The use of contextually univocal expressions is a regulative ideal inherent in the normative concept of persuasion dialogue. The constitutive rules of ambiguity dialectic oblige the parties to attempt to express themselves univocally, while the rule that obliges them to express themselves univocally and to succeed in the attempt, is only of a regulative nature.

Because active ambiguities must be allowed in persuasion dialogue we have to enable the parties to correct and repair deficient expressions. The two main instruments in the proposal of this chapter are to give Black the option to raise the objection ‘That is actively ambiguous!’ and to give both Black and White the option to disambiguate statements and arguments. As we have already seen, to point out an active ambiguity is not to comment neutrally upon the dialogue’s course, but to point out that some formulation has a possibly damaging effect on the dialogue. Such a locution, called an ambiguity criticism, does not concern so much the topic at issue, but the procedural issue of the appropriateness of the choice of words. Hence, such an objection starts a metadialogue. Moreover, both parties may disambiguate their statements spontaneously. This act will be seen as a way to anticipate a justified ambiguity criticism and consequently also as a part of a metadialogue.

In order to enable a normative model to provide rules for both ground level discussion as well as metadiscussion, the solution outlined in section 8 of chapter 1 will be adopted: regulative rules determine an ideal way of resolving disputes while constitutive rules determine a method by which violations of regulative rules can be revealed and corrected.

Regulative rules should rule out the use of actively ambiguous expressions. The constitutive rules of a complete model are to be such that (1) the parties are enabled to discuss the topic at issue, (2) the parties may violate the regulative rules, (3) the commitment to the constitutive rules implies a commitment to attempt to obey the regulative rules, (4) the parties may raise a point of order, objecting that a regulative rule has been transgressed, (5) loss of the resulting metadialogue must be disadvantageous to the looser, and (6) the metadialogue is functional with regard to resolving the original conflict of opinions (cf. Krabbe 2003). The model for ambiguity
dialectic is to be seen as a fragment of a richer, more complete model. Because attention is restricted to the issues of active ambiguity it contains just one regulative rule: 'do not use actively ambiguous expressions'.

A discussion in which the parties do not violate any of the constitutive rules of ambiguity dialectic is called a discussion according to the rules of ambiguity dialectic, or more shortly, an ad-discussion. Ambiguity dialectic is the normative model that defines such discussions. A discussion in which the parties succeed in obeying both the constitutive as well as the regulative rule at every stage is an optimal discussion and the rules that define such discussions can be seen as defining a normative model, called the optimal model. Below ambiguity dialectic will be defined, and consequently, so will the optimal model.

When we focus our attention on the analysis of real discussions in chapter 8, we have to distinguish a third kind of normative model for discussion, called the attempt at ad-discussion. Discussants sometimes fail in following the constitutive rules of ambiguity dialectic while these rules remain in force as a regulative ideal. The attempts at ad-discussions can also be captured by a normative model, called attempt at ad-discussion, although this model will not be defined in this study.

Whether a rule is constitutive or regulative depends on the model to which we relate the rule. Some rules that constitute the optimal model, regulate ambiguity dialectic and the attempt at ad-discussion. Some rules that constitute ambiguity dialectic regulate the attempt at ad-discussion. These relations are pictured in the following diagram. That some box y is placed within another box z indicates that at least some rules that constitute y are regulative rules for z. The boxes are taken to enclose possible dialogues. The dotted line indicates that in my proposal this model is not defined in any precise way.

Figure 1.

Because the main perspective of this study is the model for ambiguity dialectic, the term constitutive rules normally refers to the rules that define ambiguity dialectic, while regulative rules normally refers to the rules that define the optimal model but not ambiguity dialectic.

2. The General Format of Ambiguity Dialectic

Ambiguity dialectic forms an expansion of the model for complex persuasion dialogue that has been developed by Walton and Krabbe (1995). For the purpose of carrying out Hamblin’s program some important features of their proposal can be left aside, and other features will be added.\[123\]

\[123\] For instance, no use has been made of their notion of dark-side commitments.
The parties in the discussion are called White and Black. There is one main standpoint in the discussion, although the way it is formulated may change during the course of dialogue. White is the proponent of the main standpoint, and Black is its opponent. However, a role reversal may take place if Black raises the issue of active ambiguity. In such a case, Black becomes the proponent of a critical move. The burden of proof for such criticism will be discussed in the next section.

Ambiguity dialectic accounts for the fallacy of ambiguity and the fallacy of equivocation, whether they arise from the contextual ambiguity of a word, of a phrase or from an ambiguity arising from the grammatical construction of a sentence. However, in order to accommodate ambiguities in larger stretches of texts, or to accommodate ambiguities in illocutionary force, the model has to be adapted in certain directions.

If the issue of active ambiguity does not arise, White offers local arguments for assertions that Black’s challenges. Local arguments consist of one standpoint, one reason and a connection premise or warrant and have the following form:

\[ \neg S \lor S \rightarrow T \]

This can often be abbreviated as \( S \text{ so } T \) (more complex arguments will be presented in the graphical mode). In pragma-dialectical terminology, local arguments look like instances of single argumentation (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 73). However, the reason of a local argument can be very complex, and the several reasons in a real-life argument can be dealt with in ambiguity dialectic by constructing a conjunction. White may prepare a local argument by trying to elicit concessions from Black. She can do so by posing a request to concede a statement.

Black is allowed to challenge one element of a local argument, that is, either the reason or the warrant, but not both. Thus, Black must reflect carefully on his strategy before making a choice. After a challenge, White has a prima facie obligation to provide a new local argument for the challenged assertion.

Black may concede statements in the opening stage before the exchange of arguments and criticisms has started, or in the argumentation stage as a response to a request by White to concede a statement. Black is committed to these statements in the sense that he is not allowed to challenge them. Concessions function as the material on which White can base her argumentative strategy. Different from assertions, concessions cannot be challenged and do not lead to a burden of proof.

If White has, at a stage i, already offered more than one local argument, these local arguments can always be put together into one complex argument. This complex argument will be called the global argument at stage i, or more shortly, GA. White wins the discussion whenever Black concedes the main standpoint. Black wins whenever White retracts her main standpoint.

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124 The notion of a local argument resembles the notion of an elementary argument (Walton and Krabbe 1995, 128)

125 The rationale is to construct a system of dialectic that is as simple as possible.

126 The notion of a global argument resembles the notion of a basic argument (Walton and Krabbe 1995, 129).
As has been supported in section 3 of chapter 6, the issue of active ambiguity can best be raised and examined in the permissive parts of a persuasion dialogue, because the occurrence of active ambiguity does not compel us to adopt an alternative notion of logical validity. Ambiguity dialectic is a permissive kind of dialogue in which parties may correct defective formulations. If they see the need to check the logical validity of an argument, they can start a rigorous subdialogue on the issue. Within such rigorous persuasion dialogues the presumption of meaning constancy has turned into a non-defeasible and rigid rule. Before the rigorous subdialogue starts, Black has the option of raising the issue of active ambiguity. This make-up implements Naess's idea that the application of logic presupposes a theory of interpretation.

The issue of active ambiguity can be raised in two different ways. First, a party can raise an ambiguity criticism against the other party. In addition, both parties can criticise and correct themselves. In all cases a metadiscussion starts.

What kind of dialogue is such a metadiscussion? Van Eemeren and Grootendorst make a distinction that pertains to this issue (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 24). If a listener does not understand a speech act he could make that clear, for instance by requesting a usage declarative. The result is an explicative dialogue in which the attempt at communication is restored. If a listener does not accept part of what a speaker says, the resulting dialogue will be a problemizing dialogue, in which the original speaker tries to convince the other party of the acceptability of a speech act. A metadialogue that arises from raising the issue of active ambiguity neither results in a purely explicative, nor in a purely problemizing dialogue. Active ambiguity refers to the circumstance in which an expression can be understood in various ways while choosing between these ways affects the acceptability of statements. The resulting metadialogue partly concerns the meaning of an expression and is partly explicative, but it also leads to the instalment or retraction of commitments and is in that light partly problemizing or argumentative in nature.

According to the dialectical division of tasks, parties must be enabled to achieve their participant’s aims. Given the interests summarised in section 7 of chapter 4, we have to provide rules for several situations: first, where Black charges White with active ambiguity, second, where Black corrects himself and third, where White corrects herself. We will not provide rules for the situation where White charges Black with active ambiguity. Why this is not needed will be explained below.

Before dealing with the procedural rules in detail, we may consider the basic principles of dealing with active ambiguity. A party may raise the issue of active ambiguity, either by criticising the other party or by correcting his or her own use of words. When the parties have reached agreement about the correctness of such a point of order this results in all cases in White’s offering or upholding a disambiguated global argument (see below). If party 1 raises the issue of active ambiguity, then, in all cases, the other party has two critical options. (1) Since party 1, when raising the issue of active ambiguity, utilises a particular linguistic analysis, party 2 may challenge the admissibility of this linguistic analysis by invoking the utterance meaning testing procedure. (2) Party 2 may challenge the contextual relevance of the alleged active ambiguity. The relevance of a linguistic distinction is supported by pointing out a pseudo-agreement, a fallacy of equivocation, or a pseudodispute.

Two central concepts in ambiguity dialectic are disambiguating reformulation (see section 1 of chapter 2 and section 2 of chapter 5) and disambiguation. As we have seen in chapter 2, $E_i$ is a disambiguating reformulation of $E$ if and only if $E_i$ is
presented by a party as more precise than \( E \). By using disambiguated reformulations a party can present a *disambiguation* of a sentence, of a set of sentences, or of a global argument at stage \( i \). It is stipulated that for each \( x \) and \( y \) (where \( x \) and \( y \) are either both sentences or both sets of sentences or both global arguments), \( y \) is a *disambiguation* of \( x \), based on an allegedly ambiguous expression \( E \), and on disambiguating reformulations \( E_1, \ldots, E_n \), if and only if all occurrences of \( E \) in \( x \) are replaced with occurrences of \( E_1, \ldots, E_n \) (different occurrences of \( E \) can be replaced with different disambiguating reformulations). The set of all possible disambiguations of \( x \), based on \( E \) and \( E_1, \ldots, E_n \) is indicated as \( D_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \). When a party disambiguates a sentence, a set of sentences or a global argument, he or she chooses an element from \( D_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \), \( n \geq 2 \). The expressions \( f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \), \( g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \), etc. stand for different choices from \( D_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \), while the difference between \( f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \) and \( g_{E_0, \ldots, E_r}(x) \) stands for the difference between a choice from \( D_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(x) \) and a choice from \( D_{E_p, \ldots, E_r}(x) \)\(^{127}\).

The rules for ambiguity dialectic will be specified in some detail. This enables us to get a clear picture of how the model works. Part of the specification will be the choice for a certain language being used in the model: the language of first order logic. However, the structural rules and the win-and-loss rules of ambiguity dialectic are also applicable to other languages, and in chapter 8 these rules are applied to English. So, ambiguity dialectic is to be understood as a general model that can be applied to various languages.

### 3. An Ambiguity Criticism Raised by Black

If Black thinks that White uses an active ambiguity he may criticise White of having violated the regulative rule for univocal language use. The alleged violation can take place when White presents her standpoint, offers an argument or when she requests Black to concede a statement.

The locution by which an ambiguity criticism can be raised is constituted from parts that can be derived from the definition of active ambiguity (section 1 of chapter 2). The form of an ambiguity criticism, and the proper burden of proof that is associated with it will be discussed by using an abstract example. For a concrete example, one may instantiate the abstract example using the following translation key:  
\[ T \equiv \text{The bill *Termination of life on request* should be passed.} \]
\[ S \equiv \text{Euthanasia is morally acceptable.} \]
\[ E \equiv \text{euthanasia} \]
\[ E_1 \equiv \text{termination of life on request} \]
\[ E_2 \equiv \text{termination, by a doctor, of the life of a patient who is suffering unbearably, who has no prospects, and who has expressly and earnestly requested for this termination} \]
\[ S_1 \equiv \text{Termination of life on request is morally acceptable.} \]
\[ S_2 \equiv \text{Termination, by a doctor, of the life of a patient who is suffering unbearably and without any prospect of improvement and who has expressly and earnestly requested for this termination is morally acceptable.} \]

\(^{127}\) The difference between \( E_1, \ldots, E_n \) and \( E_p, \ldots, E_r \) must be understood as follows. If \( E_1, \ldots, E_n = x \) and \( E_p, \ldots, E_r = y \), then \( x \subseteq \{ E_i \mid i \geq 0 \} \), \( y \subseteq \{ E_i \mid i \geq 0 \} \), and it is not the case that \( y \subseteq x \).
Consider the following *heuristic profile of dialogue*.\(^{128}\) An arrow means that the move below is an allowable continuation of the discussion. Moves given in bold are moves at a metalevel.

| White: T | White presents the main standpoint |
| Black: Why T? | Black challenges it |
| White: S so T | A local argument in which E occurs |
| Black: You violated a regulative rule for persuasion dialogue! | Black raises a point of order and starts a metadiscussion |
| White: Which rule? | |
| Black: The regulative rule for using only univocal expressions | |
| White: In what way? | |
| Black: E, occurring in S, is actively ambiguous | |
| White: Between what readings? | |
| Black: Between the readings expressed by \(E_1\) and \(E_2\) | |

*Figure 2.*

We can read this as a dialogue where Black raises one objection that is being specified and completed as the dialogue proceeds. Thus, the standard formulation of an ambiguity criticism can be taken to have the following form: *E is actively ambiguous between \(E_1, \ldots, E_n\).* In ambiguity dialectic the following shortcut is appropriate:

| White: T | |
| Black: Why T? | |
| White: S so T | |
| Black: E is actively ambiguous between \(E_1\) and \(E_2\) | |

*Figure 3.*

Such an ambiguity criticism can also be raised in response to a move where White presents her main standpoint or where she requests Black to concede a statement. From the stage where \(E\) is criticised as actively ambiguous, \(E\) is considered to be disqualified and may not be used without making clear in what reading it must be

\(^{128}\) A heuristic profile of dialogue is way of presenting reasonable fragments of a discussion. Different from a normative profile of dialogue, a heuristic profile is not defined by a dialectical system. It provides a way of examining what discussion fragments should be assessed as admissible by a satisfactory dialectical model (cf. Krabbe 2002).
taken. If Black retracts the ambiguity criticism at a later stage, $E$ is no longer disqualified. Using active ambiguities that are disqualified involves committing a fallacy in the sense of violating a constitutive rule of ambiguity dialectic.

White can choose to assent to the ambiguity criticism and present a disambiguated global argument. White may fully acknowledge Black’s criticism by using the disambiguations $E_1, \ldots, E_n$ proposed by Black and choose any desired disambiguation $f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA)$ of the original global argument $GA$. Because White uses disambiguating reformulations that are proposed by Black, White’s disambiguation of the global argument is not liable to a request for a linguistic test by Black. Black is obliged to resume the ground level discussion in his next move.

However, White may also partly acknowledge Black’s criticism and choose a disambiguation $g_{E_p, \ldots, E_r}(GA)$, that is, a disambiguation based on an alternative linguistic analysis, where $E$ is replaced by occurrences of $E_p, \ldots, E_r$. Thus, going back to our example, if Black would criticise an expression as actively ambiguous between $E_1$ and $E_2$ then White may also disambiguate her argument in the following alternative way: termination of life on request of the patient or on request of the patient’s family, is morally acceptable, therefore, this bill must be passed. (It is only at this point of the discussion that White has the option to acknowledge Black’s ambiguity criticism only partly. If she chooses to challenge the ambiguity criticism and if she is, at a later stage, nevertheless compelled to present a disambiguated global argument, then that disambiguated global argument must be based upon a fully acknowledged ambiguity criticism, that is, it must be based on the disambiguating expressions $E_1, \ldots, E_n$.)

If Black accepts the disambiguating reformulations used by White he may resume the ground level discussion and challenge an element of the disambiguated global argument. Because White introduces new disambiguating reformulations of $E$, these new ones are liable to a request for a linguistic test, in other words: Black has the option to challenge their linguistic admissibility. If he does so, White must invoke the utterance meaning testing procedure (see section 1 of chapter 2) that has been adopted by the parties in a preliminary opening stage.

Following the procedure results in a positive or a negative verdict about the disambiguating reformulations introduced by White. The resulting verdict ‘positive’ is to be interpreted as ‘each of them is a proper disambiguation of $E$ in this context, that is, the set of meanings expressed by them, in this context, is a proper subset of the meanings expressed by $E$ in this context.’ This verdict does not imply that this set of proper disambiguations is a complete set for the context of utterance. The verdict ‘negative’ is to be interpreted as ‘at least one of them is not a proper disambiguation of $E$ in this context’.

If the result is positive, then White must repeat her last (disambiguated) argument and resume the ground level discussion that way. If the result is negative, she must present a disambiguation of her global argument, based on the disambiguating reformulations of Black, that is, she must choose some $f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA)$.

In the profiles below, a splitting of arrows indicates a choice for the next speaker. An occurrence of $d_{alt}$: stands for “I disambiguate, using disambiguating reformulations that are not liable to a request for a linguistic test”. An occurrence of $d_{lt}$: stands for “I disambiguate, using disambiguating reformulations some of which are liable to a request for a linguistic test”. These profiles are incomplete and other kinds of moves might be reasonable continuations as well.

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129 A splitting of arrows will also be used for indicating moves that are forced on the parties due to a certain result of the utterance meaning testing procedure.
Chapter 7

Black: E is actively ambiguous between readings expressed by E₁ and E₂

White: d¹ : S₂ so T

Black: why(S₂→T)?

White: d¹ : S₃ so T

Black: is S₃ admissible?

White: [carries out a test, if positive] d¹ : S₃ so T

White: [carries out a test, if negative] d¹ : S₂ so T

Figure 4. Fully and partly acknowledging Black’s ambiguity criticism

If White does not want to acknowledge Black's ambiguity criticism, how can she challenge it? Given the definition of active ambiguity, and my proposal on how to evaluate active ambiguity, Black's ambiguity criticism can be split up in two distinct statements. An ambiguity criticism is equivalent to: *E might, according to our standards of correct English, mean the same as E₁, or... or as Eₙ such that each of these Eᵢ is more precise than E and, moreover, using E without disambiguating it may harm the process of conflict resolution.* White can request Black to take responsibility for both statements. Thus, the dialogue might proceed in the following ways:

Black: E is actively ambiguous between readings expressed by E₁ and E₂

White: What do you mean?

Black: E may, according to our standards of correct English, mean the same as E₁ or E₂ such that each of them is more precise than E, and moreover using E may harm the process of conflict resolution.

White: Defend the left conjunct. White: Defend the right conjunct.

Black: E may, according to our standards of correct English, mean the same as E₁ or E₂ such that each of them is more precise than E

White: Show me that these disambiguating reformulations are linguistically admissible.

White: why?

Figure 5.

In order to speed up the dialogue, we can adopt a shortcut that does not interfere with any of the parties' opportunities:

Black: E is actively ambiguous between readings expressed by E₁ and E₂

White: Show me that these disambiguating reformulations are linguistically admissible.

White: Why is the distinction relevant?

Figure 6. White challenges either of the two components of an ambiguity criticism
If White challenges the linguistic admissibility of the disambiguating reformulations, Black has to apply the utterance meaning testing procedure. This results in a verdict on the linguistic appropriateness of the set of disambiguations $E_1,...,E_n$ proposed by Black in his ambiguity criticism.\textsuperscript{130}

If the procedure followed by Black has a positive result Black must say so and White is now required to present a disambiguation, based on the disambiguating reformulations proposed by Black, of the global argument that she has put forward until then: $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA)$. If the procedure has a negative result, Black is obliged to retract his ambiguity criticism and White must resume the ground level discussion by repeating her move just before Black raised his ambiguity criticism.

If White challenges the contextual relevance of the ambiguity criticism, Black may specify his ambiguity criticism in two directions: he may contend that the alleged active ambiguity is part of a fallacy of equivocation, or he may hold that responding in a direct way to the move that contains the expression probably leads to misunderstanding.\textsuperscript{131} Moreover, he may have second thoughts and withdraw his ambiguity criticism, after which White may resume the ground level discussion by repeating her argument in the original formulation.

\textbf{White: Show me that the distinction is linguistically admissible.}

\textbf{[If negative] Black: I take it back that E is actively ambiguous between readings expressed by $E_1$ and $E_2$}

\textbf{White: S so T}

\textbf{[If positive] Black: the result is positive}

\textbf{White: $d_{ab}: S_2$ so T}

\textit{Figure 7. White challenges the linguistic admissibility of Black’s ambiguity criticism}

If White challenges the contextual relevance of the ambiguity criticism, Black may specify his ambiguity criticism in two directions: he may contend that the alleged active ambiguity is part of a fallacy of equivocation, or he may hold that responding in a direct way to the move that contains the expression probably leads to misunderstanding.\textsuperscript{131} Moreover, he may have second thoughts and withdraw his ambiguity criticism, after which White may resume the ground level discussion by repeating her argument in the original formulation.

\textbf{White: Why is the distinction relevant?}

\textbf{Black: Equivocation, that is, E masks a dialectical weakness on your part such that you lack a effective persuasion strategy, that is, I you disambiguate, I’ll win}

\textbf{Black: E has led or might lead to a misunderstanding}

\textbf{Black: I retract my ambiguity criticism}

\textbf{White: S so T}

\textit{Figure 8. White challenges the relevance of Black’s ambiguity criticism}

\textsuperscript{130} The utterance meaning machine does not test whether two or more disambiguating reformulations are contextually synonymous. There is no need to test this because White has the option to challenge the contextual relevance if Black proposes contextually equivalent disambiguations.

\textsuperscript{131} The theory defended here is at odds with Powers’s one fallacy theory. He contends that there is only one kind of fallacy, the fallacy of equivocation (Powers 1995). The account defended here leaves also room for the alternative \textit{fallacy of (active) ambiguity}. Moreover, the present account leaves room for other ways by which an opponent may raise points of order. An opponent might successfully argue that the proponent committed a kind of fallacy without pointing out an alleged active ambiguity.
An *equivocation criticism* can be raised by saying something like "expression E masks dialectical weaknesses on your part such that you lack an effective persuasion strategy." This implies the prediction that Black will be able to win the discussion if White disambiguates her global argument, no matter what disambiguation choice she makes. Such an equivocation criticism constitutes one way in which an ambiguity criticism can be specified. White must challenge Black’s *preliminary verdict* (Krabbe 1999, 467) by choosing a disambiguation of her global argument. The ensuing discussion enables the parties to find out whether White lacks an effective persuasion strategy if she disambiguates her global argument, as Black expects. (Because White has already, at an earlier stage, decided not to challenge the linguistic admissibility of Black’s linguistic analysis, the disambiguation must be based on the disambiguating reformulations of E that Black has introduced in his ambiguity criticism.)

Because this subdiscussion is aimed at checking the correctness of Black’s equivocation criticism, it is still part of the metadiscussion. However, the parties can resolve their original conflict of opinions by resolving this subdiscussion, because the disambiguated global argument must also be seen as a presentation of what White takes her position to be. If Black wins the metadiscussion prompted by the equivocation criticism he sustains his equivocation criticism and wins the discussion as a whole. If White wins it, Black’s equivocation criticism is refuted, and White wins the discussion as a whole.132

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**Figure 9. Arguing about a charge of equivocation**

If White challenges the contextual relevance of Black’s ambiguity criticism and Black responds by stating that E might lead to misunderstanding then Black must show what the misunderstanding would look like. Because pointing out pseudodisputes is part of White’s job (see section 7 of chapter 4) Black must indicate a possible concession with diverging readings or a pseudo-agreement. In ambiguity dialectic the difference between a pseudo-agreement and a concession with diverging readings cannot be dealt with adequately. The reason is that, in ambiguity dialectic, White can only use concessions by asserting them, whereas in real discussions a proponent can argue without committing herself to the acceptability of the reasons: ‘you said S, so you should also admit that T’. Therefore, each case of a concession with diverging readings that matters in the dialogue appears as a case where White asserts this

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132 Within a metadiscussion about the correctness of an equivocation criticism, and only there, metadiscussions at still higher levels can be started.
concession (as a reason to support a thesis). As a consequence, we can, in the case where Black is to indicate a kind of (possible) misunderstanding, require Black to point out a pseudo-agreement.

Black should identify a statement $U$ that has been used by White or that is contained within Black’s set of concessions, and that contains the expression $E$. Black must identify a reading that makes the statement acceptable to him and a reading that makes it yet unacceptable. He should make it clear that he would concede $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$ if that were put to him, while he would challenge $g_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$ if White would have used a formulation that amounts to that disambiguation.

This counterfactual support of Black’s ambiguity criticism can be simplified. If a party declares that he would be willing to concede $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$ he can be taken as committing himself to it. It suffices to require Black to concede $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$. If a party states that he would be challenge $g_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$ he can be taken to express his doubts with respect to $g_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$. It suffices to require Black to challenge $g_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)$.

(However, this challenge should not lead to an obligation on White's part to support $U$ in this reading, because she may not have intended this reading of $U$. White has an obligation to offer an argument for statement $U$, if $U$ is challenged and, moreover, she has asserted $U$. If, as in the profile below, Black challenges a statement that has not yet been uttered by White, White does not need to offer an argument for it.) After Black has revealed the pseudo-agreement, White must acknowledge the ambiguity criticism fully and present a disambiguated global argument using disambiguating reformulations $E_1,...,E_n$, that is, she should present a $h_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA)$ for some $h$.

In the profiles, $d_{pa}$ stands for: I disambiguate in order to show a (possible) pseudo-agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black: E has lead or might lead to a misunderstanding</th>
<th>i.e., to a pseudo-agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White: Show me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black: $d_{pa}$: I concede $S_2$, Why $S_1$?</td>
<td>i.e., you might have meant $S_1$, while I am only willing to concede $S_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: [Presents a disambiguated global argument]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black: [resumes the ground level discussion]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Showing a pseudo-agreement

Because White’s move, “show me”, is a request for a specification we can use the following shortcut.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White: Why is the distinction between $E_1$ and $E_2$ relevant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black: Equivocation: I’ll win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black: $d_{pa}$: I concede $S_2$, why $S_1$?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Supporting the relevance of an ambiguity criticism

In addition to criticising statements, Black may criticise a request to concede some statement as containing an active ambiguity. If Black does so White must be able to challenge the ambiguity criticism in the same ways as when an ambiguity criticism is raised against an assertion. Consequently, Black must either be prepared to show what misunderstanding could have resulted had he not noticed the ambiguity, or be
prepared to predict that White covers up a dialectical weakness and henceforth lacks an effective persuasion strategy after disambiguation of the global argument of that stage.\(^{133}\)

One subtype of the fallacy of nit-picking, that which has to do with ambiguity, might be defined as criticising an alleged active ambiguity while not being able to state, in a convincing way, why the ambiguity matters to the current discussion. Thus, it is a fallacy on the opponent’s part, and it is not so much a fallacy of ambiguity, as a fallacy of ambiguity criticism. This fault, however, is not dealt with as a fallacy in ambiguity dialectic.\(^{134}\)

The burden of proof assigned to the proponent of a statement that an expression leads or might lead to misunderstanding, provides a check on the tendency to detect pseudo-agreement where there is none, but it does not provide a guarantee against it. Even the burden of proof assigned to one who is pointing out a misunderstanding, does not prevent Black from being a nit-picker. Black might be able to play the scholastic gambit skilfully: again and again Black points out a (looming) pseudo-agreement, accompanied by appropriate concessions and challenges. For instance, Black, in the following dialogue, seems to come up with distinctions that seem, for the discussion at hand, to be overly subtle and far-fetched, given that White is not a trained philosopher, but, for instance, a child.

White: Do not kill anybody, because that is not permissible.
Black: That’s actively ambiguous, for it might lead to a pseudo-agreement. I mean, I am prepared to accept your reason, if you intend to refer to moral permissibility, but I do not yet agree, thinking of soldiers at war and abortion, if you mean legal permissibility.
White: I think, killing is morally impermissible.
Black: Again I have to protest, do you mean morality in a deontic or in a utilitarian sense, for it might prove very useful to kill dictators, you know.
White: I guess, uh, I mean that it is our moral duty to abstain from killing anyone.
Black: Are you thinking about duties to God, for I’m not sure whether we have such a duty to keep others alive, or are you thinking, as you should, about a duty to others?
White: My conjecture is..., well, how do I know? Killing someone is just wrong, that’s what I mean.

Black fulfils his burden of proof by showing possible misunderstandings, and still we might say that he is nit-picking on White’s straightforward argument. The procedural rules that will be offered do not prevent Black from playing such a scholastic gambit in a skilful way. Neither should this kind of nit-picking be ruled out. If a sentence

\(^{133}\) If Black backs up her ambiguity criticism against a request by asserting that White lacks an effective persuasion strategy, the prediction is probably premature. White, presumably, has requested Black to concede S in order to find out whether she may use it to support the main standpoint U. If Black, due to S’s active ambiguity, predicts that White will not be able to persuade her of U, White may disambiguate her global argument, which probably does not yet include any occurrence of S. Suppose the global argument is constituted just by the argument T so U. Then in the ensuing discussion White may support T in a way that differs radically from the way she had in mind when she requested Black to concede S: she might offer the argument R so T instead of S so T. Thus, the fallacy of equivocation is not likely to be exposed after challenging the active ambiguity of a request.

\(^{134}\) That would require either a regulative or a constitutive discussion rule that says that one may not raise ambiguity criticisms if they cannot be sustained.
admits several readings, and if Black is able to reveal an acceptable and an unacceptable one (and neither reading can be disqualifies as linguistically inadmissible), then White should formulate his standpoint more precisely. The verdict that an expression is actively ambiguous is dependent on the specific position of the opponent. The situation can be compared with evaluating arguments, the basic premises of which must be acceptable to the opponent. Every standpoint is indefensible against a sceptic who refuses to accept any premise (given that the rules of dialogue do not present proponents with winning strategies for some special types of standpoints, such as tautologies). Similarly, every term might be actively ambiguous with respect to someone who plays the scholastic gambit skilfully (note that one cannot both play the scholastic game, and be a radical sceptic in one and the same discussion). This might disqualify the opponent more than the proponent: the more interesting the opponent, the more interesting the verdict of active ambiguity.

There is an important restriction on raising an ambiguity criticism against an expression $E$ used by White. If $E$ occurs among Black's initial concessions then he is himself partly responsible for this formulation (see section 7, chapter 4). If White uses $E$ in a way that is unacceptable in Black’s eyes then it may not be reasonable to charge White. Black himself is at least partly responsible for the fact that White uses $E$ strategically. Still, it would not be desirable to let White take full advantage of such an active ambiguity. In those cases Black has the option to respond to White's misuse of $E$ by criticising and correcting himself. This will be dealt with in section 6 below.

But first we shall look into the situation where White corrects herself.

4. WHITE CORRECTS HERSELF

With respect to pseudodisputes, there is a problem that arises from the basic division of labour in dialectic. Sometimes, White needs to analyse a conflict of opinions, expressed by a statement $S$ on her part, and a challenge to $S$ by Black, as a pseudodispute. We have seen in section 7 of chapter 4, that this right is to be assigned to White, because she is the one who may profit from such a move. However, such an analysis implies that an expression $E$, used by herself, is actively ambiguous. And criticising one's own expressions as violations of a regulative rule seems to go against the division of labour.

This theoretical predicament is pertinent in circumstances where White has committed the dialectical fault of using an actively ambiguous expression in a standpoint or reason $S$. However, Black does not object to the ambiguity, but challenges $S$. If Black is opposed to $S$ in an interpretation that White is not able or willing to defend, then White would have benefited if Black had criticised $E$ as actively ambiguous, because that would have enabled her to restate her argument in a more promising way. Given this situation, and the fact that active ambiguities can not always be avoided, it is reasonable (although it may sound somewhat strange) to give White some sort of a “right” to be criticised for violating the regulative rule for univocal language use.

This right can be implemented by giving White the right to present a 'spontaneous' disambiguation of her global argument at that stage. White is allowed to present some $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA)$ at choice. Such a disambiguation can be interpreted as anticipating an ambiguity criticism raised by Black. The disambiguated global argument has the function of analysing a dispute as a pseudodispute. Because White makes it clear how an earlier assertion is to be interpreted, this disambiguation is part
of a metadiscussion. If Black acknowledges the disambiguation as appropriate, he
may respond to the topical content of the disambiguated global argument and resume
the ground level discussion.

In the profiles of dialogue \(d_{sp:E_1,...,E_n}\) stands for “I disambiguate my global
argument spontaneously, because \(E\) is actively ambiguous between disambiguating
reformulations \(E_1,...,E_n\)”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White: (T)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black: Why (T)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: (S) so (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black: Why (S)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White: (d_{sp:E_1,...,E_n}: S_2) so (T)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White analyses Black’s challenge as part of a pseudodispute</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black: Why (S_2 \rightarrow T)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 12. Spontaneous disambiguation by White*

White offers \(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA)\) as a response to a challenge of a statement \(U\). Black can
challenge the relevance of the disambiguated global argument by challenging also
\(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(U)\). This move would rebut White’s contention that Black’s earlier challenge
of \(U\) constituted a pseudodispute, because the alleged ambiguity of \(E\) would then have
been shown to be contextually irrelevant. In that case, White is obliged to retract her
disambiguated global argument, to reinstate the original global argument, and to
resume the ground level discussion by offering an argument for \(U\), that is, for \(U\) in its
original formulation.

Black must also be able to challenge the linguistic admissibility of the
spontaneous reformulation of \(E\) by requesting White to follow the utterance meaning
testing procedure. If the result is positive, White must repeat the disambiguated global
argument, and add that the disambiguating reformulations are no longer liable to a
request for a linguistic test. So, in that case, Black must resume the ground level
discussion by criticising an element from the disambiguated global argument (without
challenging the relevance). If, however, the result is negative, White is obliged to
resume the ground level discussion by offering an argument for the original \(U\).

From the stage where White utters \(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA)\) until the stage where she
retracts \(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA)\), expression \(E\) is disqualified.
5. Black corrects himself

Black needs the option of offering a spontaneous disambiguating reformulation of his complete set of concessions at a stage $i$ (Black’s set of concessions at stage $i$ is indicated as $CB_i$). He may do so if White uses an expression $E$ that also occurs in an initial concession of Black’s. If Black spontaneously disambiguates his set of concessions he has to state that some expression $E$ is actively ambiguous between disambiguating reformulations $E_1, \ldots, E_n$, and replace all occurrences of $E$ in his set of concessions with these disambiguating reformulations: $f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$. White may respond to this move in the three ways to be expected.

(1) White may acknowledge Black’s self-correction. If she acknowledges it fully, she presents a disambiguated global argument in which all occurrences of $E$ are replaced by occurrences of disambiguations of $E$ that Black introduced, that is, she presents some $g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA)$.

---

135 In this example, $S so T$ is the complete global argument at this stage. First a disambigu-ation of the global argument is retracted, then the original global argument is restored. Finally, a basic reason (that has been challenged) of the original global argument is supported with a local argument.

136 This move resembles Mackenzie’s move *Distinguo!* (see section 1, chapter 6).
If she partly acknowledges it she uses alternative disambiguating reformulations of $E$, possibly besides the disambiguating reformulations that Black introduced: $h_{E_{p_{-}}..E_{r}}(GA)$. In the latter case, Black may in turn acknowledge White’s alternative reformulations and resume the ground level discussion. However, Black may also choose to challenge the admissibility of White’s alternative reformulations. If the result of the linguistic test is positive, Black is obliged to resume the ground level discussion by challenging an element from $h_{E_{p_{-}}..E_{r}}(GA)$. If the result is negative, White is obliged to retract $h_{E_{p_{-}}..E_{r}}(GA)$, and to offer a certain $g_{E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(GA)$, that is, a new disambiguated global argument in which every occurrence of $E$ is replaced by the disambiguating reformulations $E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}$ introduced by Black. In the profiles of dialogue, '$d_{cb:E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(CB)$' stands for 'due to the fact that $E$ is actively ambiguous between disambiguating reformulations $E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}$, I disambiguate my set of concessions as follows: ...'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White: S so T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black:</strong> $d_{cb:E_{1_{-}}E_{2}}$: $S_{1}$ (Black’s set of initial concessions = {S})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 14. White acknowledges Black’s self-correction**

(2) White may also challenge the linguistic admissibility of Black’s disambiguating reformulations by requiring Black to follow the utterance meaning testing procedure. If the result is negative, Black remains committed to his initial concessions in their original formulation, and he should resume the ground level discussion. If the result is positive, Black must say so after which White is obliged to choose a disambiguated global argument using only the disambiguating reformulations that Black introduced: $g_{E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(GA)$.

(3) White may further challenge the contextual relevance of Black’s self-correction. Although Black is responsible for introducing an actively ambiguous expression $E$, White can still be held responsible for the use she makes of $E$ (in our example: in the move $S so T$ in figure 14 above). Black should respond by raising either an equivocation criticism, or by pointing out the possible pseudo-agreement with respect to a sentence $U$ that White has used, or by withdrawing his self-correction (this leads to changing his concessions to their original formulation). In the second case, Black concedes $f_{E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(U)$ where $f_{E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(U) \in f_{E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(CB_{i})$ and challenges some $g_{E_{1_{-}}..E_{n}}(U)$. In either case, White must present a disambiguated global argument, using only disambiguating reformulations of $E$ that were introduced by Black. As before, in response to an equivocation criticism this disambiguation is to be seen as a challenge in the metadialogue.

In the profile below, we take Black's set of initial concession to be {S}. 

142
White: S so T

Black: d_{ch:E,LE}: \{S_1\}

White: admissible?

Black: [if negative]

no commitment(S_1)

concede(S)

White: S_2 so T

White: relevant?

Black: positive

equivocation: I’ll win

Black: d_{pa}: concede S_1;

why(S_2)?

nocomm(S_1);

concede(S)

White:

[challenges by presenting a disambiguated global argument]

White:

[acknowledges by presenting a disambiguated global argument]

Figure 15. White challenges Black's self-correction

From the stage where Black disambiguates his set of concessions, and until the stage where he retracts commitment to the resulting formulations and reinstalls his original concessions, the expression $E$ that is the focus of the disambiguation is disqualified.

6. WHITE DOES NOT NEED TO CRITICISE BLACK OF USING AN ACTIVE AMBIGUITY

Thus far, we have examined three major devices. (1) Black must be able to correct his own defect formulations in order to prevent White from taking too much advantage from them. (2) White must be able to correct her own defect formulations in order to prevent Black from taking too much advantage from them. (3) Black must be able to compel White to disambiguate her global argument in order to prevent being damaged by actively ambiguous statements. It is, however, not required to give White the option of compelling Black to disambiguate his initial concessions. White is not obliged to use expressions that were used by Black in his initial concessions. Thus, if she supposes an expression $E$ that occurs in an initial expression (and for which Black is consequently partly responsible) to be actively ambiguous, she may simply decide not to use $E$, but a more precise formulation instead.

7. SOME FEATURES OF DISAMBIGUATION

Disambiguation is related to retraction (cf. Walton and Krabbe 1995), but differs in the important respect that the person who disambiguates remains committed to a proposition that can be expressed by the replaced sentence (even though it can at certain stages in the discussion still be undetermined what proposition that is). Thus, if statement $S$ is disambiguated by statement $S'$, then it is supposed that all propositions expressed by $S'$ in the context of utterance are also expressed by $S$, but not vice versa. According to my use of terms it is wrong to say that the proponent was first committed to all propositions expressed by $S$ and retracts, by disambiguating $S$ to $S'$, all propositions expressed by $S$ but not by $S'$. We should rather say that the proponent
was committed to the formulation $S$ and at least one proposition expressed by $S$, whether or not the parties know exactly what proposition that is. After disambiguation, the proponent is no longer committed to the wording of $S$, but is still committed to at least one proposition expressed by $S$. He becomes committed to the wording of $S'$. Thus, seen from the perspective of the wording, disambiguation might be called some special kind of retraction. Seen from the perspective of meaning, disambiguation is not retraction at all, but a way in which it may be made more clear what exactly a propositional commitment consists of.

Disambiguating reformulations can be criticised or corrected due to their active ambiguity. There is a choice to be made when constructing a set of reasonable rules for discussion. One may place a heavy burden on the parties by ruling that the disambiguating reformulations are safe from further ambiguity criticism or self-correction. Ambiguity dialectic, however, will accommodate the intuition of Lewis's pessimist who reckons with the possibility that every expression can be disambiguated endlessly (Mackenzie 1988, 473).

8. THE MODEL FOR AMBIGUITY DIALECTIC

In this section, the model ambiguity dialectic, outlined above, will be presented in a more detailed and rigorous way.

The language

The language that is used in ambiguity dialectic is a language for predicate logic, named $\mathbb{L}$.

There is a set of individual constants $\mathbb{C}$, each element of which refers to exactly one object, event, person, etc.: $c_1, c_2, \ldots$

Variables used to refer to elements from $\mathbb{C}$ are: $a, b, c$

There is a set of individual variables $\mathbb{V}$, an element of which can be used to quantify over objects, events, persons, etc: $x_1, x_2, \ldots$

Variables referring to elements from $\mathbb{V}$ are: $x, y, z, \ldots$

There is a set of individual terms $\mathbb{T}$: $\mathbb{C} \cup \mathbb{V}$

Variables referring to elements from $\mathbb{T}$ are: $t_1, t_2, t_3, \ldots$

There is a set of zero-order predicates $\mathbb{P}^0$, an element of which is a sentence.

There is a set of one place predicates $\mathbb{P}^1$, an element of which forms a sentence if its argument place is filled with members of $\mathbb{C}$: $P_1^1, P_2^1, \ldots$

Accordingly, there are sets for many placed predicates: $\mathbb{P}^2, \mathbb{P}^3, \ldots$

Variables referring to elements from $\mathbb{P}^1, \mathbb{P}^2, \mathbb{P}^3, \ldots$ are: $P, Q, R$

If $t_1, \ldots, t_n \in \mathbb{T}$ and $P \in \mathbb{P}^n$ then $Pt_1, \ldots, t_n$ is an element of the set $\mathbb{F}$ of formulas.

If $F$ is a formula and $x$ a variable then $\neg F$, $\exists x F$ and $\forall x F$ are formulas.

If $F$ and $G$ are formulas, then $(F \land G)$, $(F \lor G)$, $(F \to G)$ and $(F \leftrightarrow G)$ are.

Nothing else is a formula.

Variables referring to elements from $\mathbb{F}$: $F, G, H$
Formulas in which there are no occurrences of free individual variables are elements from $S$, the set of sentences. Elements from $P^0$ are sentences. $\bot$ is a sentence. Nothing else is a sentence of $L$. Variables referring to sentences are $S, S_1, ..., T, T_1, ..., U, U_1, ..., V, V_1, ...$.

The set $E$ of expressions of $L$ is the same as $C \cup P \cup S$. Variables referring to elements from $E$ are: $E, E_1, E_2, ..., F, F_1, F_2, ...$

**Presenting a disambiguation**

At any stage in a ground level discussion, Black is only able to challenge the (at that stage unsupported) *initial standpoint*, or a *basic reason*, or a *basic warrant*, as offered by White. A basic reason or a basic warrant of a local or global argument at stage $i$ is a reason or warrant that is not yet supported by a reason at stage $i$. The expression *basic elements* will refer to the basic reasons and basic warrants of a global argument. White is only allowed to offer support for reasons and warrants that have been challenged. Consequently, at every stage $i$ of the discussion, all reasons and warrants fit together into one configuration of local arguments that support the main standpoint. This configuration is the *global argument at stage $i$*, $GA_i$ (cf. the definition of a basic argument in Walton and Krabbe 1995, 129)$^{138}$

Every subargument that is part of a global argument, whether disambiguated or not, contains a warrant within its sets of reasons. A warrant has the form of a conditional sentence and has as its consequent the standpoint that it directly supports. The antecedent is a conjunction of all other reasons of the subargument. Thus, if at a certain stage in the dialogue, White disambiguates the occurrences of $A$ in her global argument at $i$

\[
\begin{align*}
&\vdash \text{B} \\
&\vdash \text{A} & \text{&} & \text{A} \rightarrow \text{B} \\
&\vdash \text{C} & \text{&} & \text{C} \rightarrow (\text{A} \rightarrow \text{B})
\end{align*}
\]

in the following mixed way,

\[
\begin{align*}
&\vdash \text{B} \\
&\vdash \text{A}_1 & \text{&} & \text{A}_2 \rightarrow \text{B} \\
&\vdash \text{C} & \text{&} & \text{C} \rightarrow (\text{A}_1 \rightarrow \text{B})
\end{align*}
\]

$^{137}$ $\bot$ has a fixed meaning and expresses in ambiguity dialectic “Black’s position is untenable” (cf. Krabbe 1991, 107).

$^{138}$ The main standpoint will be considered as a global argument that has no reasons. It is convenient to classify the main standpoint as an argument, because that enables us to formulate a simple rule that enables the disambiguation of both standpoints as well as of more complex global arguments.
then new warrants are automatically added:

\[
\begin{align*}
A_1 & \land A_2 \rightarrow B & (A_1 \land (A_2 \rightarrow B)) \rightarrow B \\
C & \land (A_1 \rightarrow B) & (C \land (C \rightarrow (A_1 \rightarrow B))) \rightarrow (A_2 \rightarrow B)
\end{align*}
\]

The main standpoint at stage i is the conclusion (the sentence at the top node) of the global argument at stage i. Thus, at stage 1 the main standpoint is identical to the initial standpoint. During the dialogue, the initial standpoint can be disambiguated.

A party may present a disambiguation of either a global argument, of a set of concessions, or of a single sentence, depending on the purpose of disambiguation. In some situations White is allowed to disambiguate her global argument in response to an ambiguity criticism by Black. If she uses only disambiguating reformulations that are introduced by Black in his ambiguity criticism she utters: \(d_{nl}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i)\), where \(GA_i\) is the global argument at stage i, where \(E_1,...,E_n\) are the disambiguating reformulation introduced by Black, and where \(f\) is the choice White makes from the set \(D_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i)\). The subscript \(nl\) indicates that Black is not allowed to challenge the linguistic admissibility of White’s disambiguation: the disambiguation is Not Liable to a request for a linguistic Test.

In some situations White is allowed to disambiguate her global argument, using disambiguating reformulations that she introduces herself. In that case she utters: \(d_{lt}: f_{E_p,...,E_r}(GA_i)\), where \(E_p,...,E_r\) are disambiguating reformulations, some of which are not proposed by Black. The subscript \(lt\) indicates that Black is allowed to challenge the linguistic admissibility of White’s disambiguation: it is Liable to a request for a linguistic Test. If White presents such a locution, it is always clear in the context of use which disambiguating reformulations White should test if Black requests her to do so: the elements of \(\{E_p,...,E_r\}\) that are not used in Black's ambiguity criticism or in Black's disambiguation of his set of concessions.

In some situations White is allowed to present a spontaneous disambiguation of her global argument. Then she utters: \(d_{sp}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i)\). In this case, White needs to make it explicit between which disambiguations \(E\) is ambiguous. White might disambiguate all occurrences of \(E\) in the same way. In such a case Black cannot infer from the disambiguation between what readings \(E\) is hold to be ambiguous, according to White. So, in order to make it clear to Black what reading or readings she intends to exclude, she must state between what readings \(E\) is actively ambiguous. Thus, if the global argument is \(S \ so \ T\), if White suspects that \(S\) is actively ambiguous between \(S_1\) and \(S_2\), and if she wants to disambiguate her global argument to \(S_1 \ so \ T\), she must also mention the rejected alternative \(S_2\) and utter: \(d_{sp}: S_1, S_2 \ so \ T\).

For the same reason, Black must provide more than one disambiguating reformulation when he spontaneously disambiguates his set of concessions, CB: \(d_{cb}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_i)\). If Black points out a pseudo-agreement, it has already made clear what readings the alleged ambiguous term allows, and Black may (simply) utter: \(d_{pa}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(S)\); why\((g_{E_1,...,E_n}(S))\) ?

**Types of locutions**

The following types of locutions or speech acts are permitted in ambiguity dialectic:

initial standpoint: \(\text{standpoint}(T)\)
local arguments:

\[
T \\
\downarrow \\
S \quad \& \quad S \rightarrow T
\]

or equivalently, \( S \) so \( T \).

Concessions: \( \text{concede}(x) \), \( x \) a sentence or a set of sentences

Challenges: \( \text{why}(S) \)

Requests: \( \text{concede}(S) \)

Ambiguity criticism: \( \text{(E)amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n) \)

Global arguments at stage \( i \): \( GA_i \) [a configuration of local arguments]

Disambiguated global arguments at stage \( i \):

\[d_{alb}: f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_i)\]
\[d_{bl}: f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_i)\]
\[d_{sp}: E_1, \ldots, E_n : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_i)\]

Criticism of linguistic admissibility: \( \text{admissible} \)?)

Criticism of contextual relevance: \( \text{relevant} \) or \( \text{relevant} \)\?; \( \text{why}(S) \)

Equivocation criticism: \( \text{equivocation: I’ll win} \)

Analysis of a pseudo-agreement:

\[d_{pa}: \text{concede}(f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S)); \text{why}(g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S))\]

Withdrawal of relevance claim:

not relevant

Disambiguated set of concessions:

\[d_{cb}: E_1, \ldots, E_n : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)\]

Linguistic test reports:

positive

Retractions or denials of commitments:

\( \text{nocomm}(x) \), where \( x \) is a sentence, a set of sentences or a global argument

\( \text{nocomm}((E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n)) \)

Resolution demand:

your position implies \( S \)

Regulative rule

It is not allowed to use actively ambiguous expressions.\(^{139}\)

Commitment Rules

**C1)** Each party \( N \), at every stage \( i \), has a commitment store, \( C_N \), that indicates \( N \)’s obligations at that stage of the discussion. Black’s commitment store is a set with sentences of \( L \) and ambiguity criticisms as its elements. White’s commitment store contains one global argument (which may consist of a standpoint only).

**C2)** At the start of the discussion the element of White’s commitment store \( CW_0 \) is one sentence, which is the initial standpoint. Black’s commitment store at the start of the discussion, \( CB_0 \), may be empty but it may also contain sentences of \( L \) that are Black’s initial concessions.

**C3)** If Black utters \( \text{concede}(S) \) at stage \( i \), then \( S \in CB_{i+1} \).

**C4)** If Black utters at stage \( i \) \( (E)\text{Amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n) \), then \( (E)\text{Amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n) \in CB_{i+1} \).

**C5)** If Black utters at \( i \) \( d_{pa}: \text{concede}(f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S)); \text{why}(g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S)) \) then \( S \notin CB_{i+1} \) while \( f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S) \in CB_{i+1} \).

\(^{139}\) It is however allowed to mention them, such as in an ambiguity criticism.
Chapter 7

C6) If Black utters at \( i \) \( d_{cb}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_i) \), then \( CB_{i+1} = f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_i) \).

C7) If Black utters at \( i \) \( nocomm(S) \) or \( nocomm((E)amb(E_1,...,E_n)) \), then \( S \) or \( (E)amb(E_1,...,E_n) \notin CB_{i+1} \).

C8) If Black utters at \( j \) both \( nocomm(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_i)) \) and \( concede(CB_i) \) for some \( i \) then \( CB_{j+1} = CB_i \).

C9) If White utters the local argument \( S \) so \( T \) at stage \( i \), then \( S \) so \( T \) is part of \( GA_{i+1} \).

C10) If White disambiguates her global argument at stage \( i \) by uttering either \( d_{sp}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i) \) or \( d_{sp}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i) \) or \( d_{sp}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i) \), then \( CW_{i+1} = \{ f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i) \} \).

C11) If White at \( j \) utters \( nocomm(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i)) \); \( GA_k \) for some \( i \), and \( S \) so \( T \), then \( CW_{j+1} \) contains \( GA_k \) combined with \( S \) so \( T \), and nothing else.

C12) If White at \( j \) utters both \( nocomm(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i)) \) and \( d_{alt}: g_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_i) \), then \( CW_j = \{ g_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) \} \).

C13) If White wins a rigorous persuasion dialogue that has \( S \) as its main thesis and that started at \( i \), then \( S \in CB_{i+2} \).

Structural Rules

Most rules are accompanied with a normative profile of dialogue that illustrates the rule. The arrows represent the complete range of allowable options for the next speaker, unless a dotted line is added. Codes between brackets at the lower nodes refer to the rule that applies to the resulting situation.

S0) Black and White may utter exactly one locution at a time, unless a rule states an exception.

S1) At stage 1, White must utter \( standpoint(V) \), where \( V \) is the unique member of her commitment set at stage 1. In addition, White may also utter \( concede(T) \)? such that \( V \neq T \).

S2) White may only utter \( concede(T) \)? at stage \( i \), if \( T \) is not an element of Black's commitment set at \( i \), and only in addition to presenting a standpoint, or a local or global argument.

S3) If White at \( i \) utters \( concede(T) \)?, then at \( i+1 \) Black either must utter \( (E)amb(E_1,...,E_n) \), such that \( E \) occurs in either \( T \) or in an assertion by White at \( i \), or \( d_{cb}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_{i+1}) \) such that \( E \) occurs in either \( T \) or in an assertion by White at \( i \), or \( concede(T) \), or \( concede(V) \), or \( concede(V) \) where \( V \) is the main standpoint at \( i+1 \).\(^{140}\)

\[^{140}\) Due to clauses in s6 and s8, neither an ambiguity criticism nor a disambiguation of Black's set of commitments can be accompanied with a locution of a challenge (\( why(X) \)?), nor with any other locution. White cannot respond to a locution of \( nocomm(T) \) or of \( concede(T) \), except by the decision whether or not to use \( T \) in an argument. So, either exactly one rule applies (s9, s20 or w1), or no rule applies (although there will be a rule that applies to the locution that accompanies Black's move).
Ambiguity dialectic

S4) If White’s move at i contains an initial standpoint T or a local or global argument \( \Delta \) so T,\(^{141} \) possibly accompanied with an occurrence of \( d_{nl} \) (but not with an occurrence of either \( d_p \) or \( d_e \)), then Black at i+1 must either utter (1) why(S)?, where S is the initial standpoint uttered at i or a basic element uttered at i, or (2) \( (E)amb(E_1,\ldots,E_n) \) for \( E_1,\ldots,E_n \) at choice, where E occurs in a statement or a request at stage i, or (3) concede(V) where V is the main standpoint at i+1, or (4) utter \( d_{cb}: E_1,\ldots,E_n: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(CB_{i+1}) \) for some f where E occurs in a statement or request made at stage i.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
W & \text{d}_{nl} & \Delta & T & \text{so T} \\
\hline
B & \text{why}(S)? & (E)amb(E_1,\ldots,E_n) & d_{cb}: E_1,\ldots,E_n: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(CB_{i+1}) & \text{concede}(V) \\
\end{array}
\]

[\text{s5}] \quad [\text{s9}] \quad [\text{s20}] \quad [\text{w1}]

S5) If Black’s utters at i why(S)? (possible accompanied with concede(W) or nocomm(W)) then White at i+1 must either (1) utter T so S, possibly combined with concede(U)?, or (2) utter \( d_{sp}: E_1,\ldots,E_n: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) \) for some f and \( E_1,\ldots,E_n \) at choice where E occurs in a statement uttered by White at stage i-1, or (3) utter your position implies S, or (4) utter nocomm(V), where V is the main standpoint at stage i+1.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
B & \text{why}(S)? \text{ or why}(S)?; & \text{concede}(W) \text{ or why}(S)?; & \text{nocomm}(W) & \\
\hline
W & \text{T so S} & \text{to S}; & \text{concede(U)?} & \text{your position implies S} & \text{nocomm}(V) \\
\end{array}
\]

[\text{s4}] \quad [\text{s4, s3}] \quad [\text{s24}] \quad [\text{s28}] \quad [\text{w2}]

S6) Black is only allowed to utter \( (E)amb(E_1,\ldots,E_n) \) at i+1 if (1) White at i presents an initial standpoint V or a local or global argument such that E occurs in it or a request that contains E,\(^{142} \) and (2) E does not occur in CB_0, nor has E been presented by Black as a disambiguating reformulation of an expression that occurs in CB_0 and (3) E has not been criticised as actively ambiguous before stage i. Black is not allowed to put forward more than one ambiguity criticism at a stage. A locution of \( (E)amb(E_1,\ldots,E_n) \) cannot be accompanied with another locution.

S7) Black is allowed to utter why(S)? at stage i, only if \( S \notin CB_i \).

S8) Black is allowed to utter \( d_{cb}: E_1,\ldots,E_n: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(CB_i) \) at i, only if E occurs in CB_0 or if E has been presented by Black as a disambiguation of an expression that occurs in CB_0, and if Black has not disambiguated the occurrences of E in his set of concessions before stage i. A locution of \( d_{cb}: E_1,\ldots,E_n: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(CB_i) \) cannot be accompanied with another locution.

S9) If Black at i utters \( (E)amb(E_1,\ldots,E_n) \), then White must choose from the following options: (1) utter \( d_{nl}: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) \) for some f or (2) utter \( d_{sp}: g_{E_p,\ldots,E_r}(GA_{i+1}) \) for some g where \( \{E_p,\ldots,E_r\} \) is not a subset of \( \{E_1,\ldots,E_n\} \), (3) utter admissible?, or (4) utter relevant?, or (5) utter nocomm(V), where V is the main standpoint at i+1.

---

\(^{141}\) The \( \Delta \) in \( \Delta \) so T can refer to a set of reasons, but also to a complex argument.

\(^{142}\) Because a warrant, offered by White, by definition contains all expressions that occur in the supported (sub)standpoint, Black has in most cases at least two opportunities to criticise an actively ambiguous expression: first when it occurs in the main standpoint or in a reason for a (sub)standpoint, second when it occurs in a statement that is supported by reasons.
Chapter 7

| B i | \((E)\text{amb}(E_1,\ldots,E_n)\) |
| W i+1 | d_{\text{alt}}; g_{\text{alt}}; admissible? relevant? nocomm(V) |
| | \(f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\) \(g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\) |

**S10** If Black utters at \(i\) \(d_{\text{alt}}: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(CB_i)\), or \((E)\text{amb}(E_1,\ldots,E_n)\), and if White utters at \(i+1\) \(d_{\text{alt}}: g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\), then Black at \(i+2\) must choose from the following options: utter \(\text{why}(S)\)? where \(S\) is a basic reason or basic warrant of \(g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\), or utter \((F)\text{amb}(F_1,\ldots,F_2)\), or utter \(d_{\text{alt}}: h_{F_1,\ldots,F_n}(CB_{i+2})\), or utter \(\text{admissible}\)?, or utter \(\text{nocomm}(V)\), where \(V\) is the main standpoint at \(i+2\).

| B i+2 | why(S)? |
| W i+1 | \(d_{\text{alt}}: g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\) |
| | \(d_{\text{alt}}: h_{F_1,\ldots,F_n}(CB_{i+2})\) |

**S11** If Black utters \(d_{\text{alt}}: f_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(CB_i)\), or \((E)\text{amb}(E_1,\ldots,E_n)\) at \(i\), and White utters \(d_{\text{alt}}: g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\) at \(i+1\), and at stage \(i+2\) Black utters \(\text{admissible}\)?, then White must perform the utterance meaning testing procedure at \(i+3\) on the following set of disambiguating reformulations: \(\{E_1,\ldots,E_n\}\) \(\setminus\{E_1,\ldots,E_n\}\). If the result is positive, then she must at \(i+3\) utter \(d_{\text{alt}}: g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\). If negative she must utter \(\text{nocomm}(g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})); d_{\text{alt}}: h_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})\) at \(i+3\).

| B i+2 | \(\text{admissible}\)? |
| W i+3 | d_{\text{alt}}: g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) |
| | nocomm(g_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1})); d_{\text{alt}}: h_{E_1,\ldots,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) |

**S12** If Black utters \((E)\text{amb}(E_1,\ldots,E_n)\) at \(i\), and at stage \(i+1\) White utters \(\text{admissible}\)?, then Black must perform the utterance meaning testing procedure. If the result is positive, then he must utter \(\text{positive}\) at \(i+2\). If negative, he must utter \(\text{nocomm}(E)\text{amb}(E_1,\ldots,E_n))\) at \(i+2\).

---

143 This can be a severe punishment for acknowledging Black's self-correction by disambiguating her global argument using inadmissible disambiguating reformulations different from the ones Black used.
Ambiguity dialectic

S13) If stage $i$ contains Black’s utterance $\text{(E)amb}(E_1, ..., E_n)$, and stage $i+2$ contains Black’s utterance positive, then White must at $i+3$ utter $d_{\text{nh}}: f_{E_1, ..., E_n}(\text{GA}_{i+3})$ for some $f$ or utter $\text{nocomm}(V)$, where $V$ is the main standpoint at $i+3$.

S14) If stage $i+1$ contains Black’s utterance $\text{(E)amb}(E_1, ..., E_n)$, and stage $i+3$ contains Black’s utterance $\text{nocomm}((\text{E)amb}(E_1, ..., E_n))$, then White must at $i+4$ repeat the last move where she has presented either her initial standpoint, or a local, or global argument (such a move has been made at stage $i-2$ if Black at $i+1$ responds to a resolution demand, see s28, and at stage $i$ in other cases).\[^{144}\]

144 Given rule s6, Black is not allowed to raise an ambiguity criticism against $E$, and so he has to respond differently to White’s last move.
S15) If (1) stage i contains S as a reason or a warrant, or if i contains a resolution demand and i-2 contains S as a reason or a warrant, and (2) if stage i+1 contains Black’s utterance \((E)\text{amb}(E_1,...,E_n)\), or \(d_{cb;E_1,...,E_n}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_{i+1})\), and (3) if stage i+2 contains relevant?, then Black must at i+3 either utter (A) equivocation: I’ll win, or (B) \(d_{pa}: \text{concede}(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(S); why(g_{E_1,...,E_n}(S)))\), for some \(g\), or (C) either not relevant; nocomm\((E)\text{amb}(E_1,...,E_n)\), if i+1 contains an ambiguity criticism, or not relevant; nocomm\((f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_{i+1}))\); concede\((CB_{i+1})\) if i+2 contains \(d_{cb;E_1,...,E_n}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_{i+1})\).

S16) If stage i contains \((E)\text{amb}(E_1,...,E_n)\) or \(d_{cb;E_1,...,E_n}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_{i+1})\), and stage i+2 contains equivocation: I’ll win, then at stage i+3 White is obliged to utter \(d_{nl}: f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+3})\) for some f (and to challenge Black’s equivocation criticism that way).

145 Note that, due to s7 Black, is not allowed to challenge an assertion that he is committed to.
146 Within a metadiscussion about the correctness of an equivocation criticism, new embedded metadiscussions can be started.
Ambiguity dialectic

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{B } i & \quad (E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n) \text{ or } d_{cbE_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i) \\
\text{W } i+1 & \text{ relevant?} \\
\text{B } i+2 & \quad \text{equivocation: I'll win} \\
\text{W } i+3 & \quad d_{ah} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_{i+3}) \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{S17) If Black utters at } k \text{ concede}(V), \text{ such that } V \text{ is the main standpoint at } k, \text{ and if there is a stage } j, j < k, \text{ that contains equivocation: I'll win, then Black also utters at stage } k \text{ (1) nocomm}(x), \text{ where } x \text{ is an ambiguity criticism at stage } i-2, i \leq j, \text{ if the first occurrence in the dialogue of equivocation: I'll win at stage } i \text{ is preceded at } i-2 \text{ by an ambiguity criticism, or (2) nocomm}(x); \text{ concede}(CB_{i-2}), \text{ where } x \text{ is the disambiguated set of concessions chosen at } i-2, i \leq j, \text{ if the first occurrence in the discussion of equivocation: I'll win at stage } i \text{ is preceded at } i-2 \text{ by a move that contains } d_{cb} \text{ (and consequently a spontaneous disambiguation of Black's commitments).}^{147}\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{B } i-2 & \quad (E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n) \text{ or } d_{cbE_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i-2}) \\
\text{W } i-1 & \text{ relevant?} \\
\text{B } i & \quad \text{equivocation: I'll win} \\
\text{B } j & \quad \text{equivocation: I'll win} \\
\text{B } k & \quad \text{concede}(V); \text{ nocomm}(E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n)) \text{ or } \text{concede}(V); \text{ nocomm}(d_{cbE_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i-2})) \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{S18) If stage } i \text{ contains } d_{pa} : \text{ concedef}_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S)); \text{ why}(g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S))?, \text{ then White is obliged to utter } d_{ah} : h_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_{i+1}), \text{ for some } h \text{ at stage } i+1.\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{B } i & \quad d_{pa} : \text{ concedef}_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S)); \text{ why}(g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(S))? \\
\text{W } i+1 & \quad d_{ah} : h_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_{i+1}) \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{S19) If Black at stage } i+3 \text{ utters not relevant; nocomm}(E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n)) \text{ or not relevant; nocomm}(f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i+1})); \text{ concede}(CB_{i+1}), \text{ then White must at } i+4 \text{ repeat her move at stage } i, \text{ or if } i \text{ contains your position implies } S, \text{ repeat her move at } i-2.\]

\[147 \text{ This complicated formulation is needed, because discussions about equivocation locutions can be embedded into one another.}\]
Chapter 7

W i $\Delta_{so, T}$

B i+1 $(E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n)$ or $d_{cb; E_1, \ldots , E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i+1})$

W i+2 relevant?

B i+3 not relevant; nocomm($(E)\text{amb}(E_1, \ldots, E_n)$) or not relevant; nocomm($f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i+1})$); concede($CB_{i+1}$)

W i+4 $\Delta_{so, T}$

[S4]

S20) If Black at i utters $d_{cb; E_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$, then White must choose between the following options at i+1: utter $d_{nh} : g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_{i+1})$, utter $d_{h} : h_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_{i+1})$, utter admissible?, utter relevant?, or utter nocomm($V$), where $V$ is the main standpoint at i+1.

B i $d_{cb; E_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$

W i+1 $d_{nh; E_1, \ldots, E_n} : g_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(GA_{i+1})$

admissible? relevant? nocomm($V$)

[B] [S4] [S10] [S21] [S15] [W2]

S21) If Black at i utters $d_{cb; E_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$, and White utters admissible? at i+1, then Black is obliged to perform the utterance meaning testing procedure at i+2. If the result is negative, Black must at i+2 utter both nocomm($f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$) and concede($CB_i$). If the result is positive, Black must utter positive at i+2.

B i $d_{cb; E_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$

W i+1 admissible?

B i+2 nocomm($f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_i)$); concede($CB_i$).

positive

[S22] [S23]

S22) If Black utters at i+3 both nocomm($f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i+1})$) and concede($CB_{i+1}$), then White must at i+4 repeat her move at i, or, if that contains a resolution demand, repeat her move at i-2.

W i $\Delta_{so, T}$

B i+1 $d_{cb; E_1, \ldots, E_n} : f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i+1})$

W i+2 admissible?

B i+3 nocomm($f_{E_1, \ldots, E_n}(CB_{i+1})$); concede($CB_{i+1}$)

W i+4 $\Delta_{so, T}$

[S4]
S23) If Black at i utters $d_{cb;E_1,...,E_n}$ $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_i)$, and Black utters *positive* at i+2, then White is at i+3 obliged to utter $d_{nh;} g_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2})$ at i+3, for some g, or $d_{nh;} h_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2})$, such that $E_p, ..., E_r$ pass the utterance meaning testing procedure.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
B & i \quad d_{cb;E_1,...,E_n} \quad f_{E_1,...,E_n}(CB_i) \\
W & i+1 \quad \text{admissible?} \\
B & i+2 \quad \text{positive} \\
W & i+3 \quad d_{nh;} g_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+3}) \quad d_{nh;} h_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2})
\end{array}
\]

S24) If (1) Black utters at i *why*(S)?, or if Black and White have at i a rigorous persuasion dialogue while Black utters *why*(S)? at stage i-2, and if (2) White at i+1 presents a spontaneous disambiguated global argument $d_{sp;E_1,...,E_n} f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2})$, where S has been replaced by $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(S)$, then Black at i+2 must choose from the following options: (1) Black may utter *why*(U)?, where U is a basic element from $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2})$ different from $f_{E_1,...,E_n}(S)$, or (2) Black may utter *admissible*?., or (3) Black may utter *relevant*?; *why*(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(S))? (the way of challenging the relevance of White’s spontaneous disambiguation), or (4) Black may utter *concede*(V), where V is the main standpoint at i+3.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
B & i \quad \text{*why*(S)? or Black and White have a rigorous persuasion dialogue} \\
W & i+1 \quad d_{sp;E_1,...,E_n} f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2}) \text{ (containing } f_{E_1,...,E_n}(S) \text{ as a basic reason)} \\
B & i+2 \quad \text{*why*(U)?; } \text{admissible}?; \quad \text{Relevant}?; \quad \text{concede}(V) \\
W: \text{[if negative]} & \quad \text{nocomm}(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+2})); \quad \text{GA}_{i+1}; \quad \text{T so } S; \quad \text{nocomm}(V) \quad \text{[w2]}
\end{array}
\]

S25) If White at i utters $d_{sp;E_1,...,E_n} f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1})$, and Black utters at i+1 *admissible*?, then White is obliged at i+2 to perform the utterance meaning testing procedure. If the result is positive, she must utter $d_{nh;} f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1})$. If the result is negative, she must utter both nocomm($f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1})$) and GA_{i+1}, and either utter T so S, or utter nocomm(V), where V is the main standpoint.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
W & i \quad d_{sp;E_1,...,E_n} f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) \\
B & i+1 \quad \text{admissible?} \\
W & i+2 \quad d_{nh;} f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1}) \quad W: \text{[if negative]} \quad \text{nocomm}(f_{E_1,...,E_n}(GA_{i+1})); \quad \text{GA}_{i+1}; \quad \text{T so } S \quad \text{[w2]} \\
\end{array}
\]

148 The model can be extended by enabling White to use disambiguating reformulations that are *not* proper and to enable Black to request for a linguistic test. However, in order to keep the model within limits I propose this shortcut.
S26) If White at i presents a spontaneous disambiguated global argument \(d_{sp:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i)\), where \(S\) has been replaced by \(f_{E1,...,En}(S)\), and Black utters at i+1 relevant?; why(\(f_{E1,...,En}(S)\))? then White is obliged at i+2 to utter both nocomm(\(f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i)\)), and GA_i, and either offer a local argument in support of S, or retract her main standpoint.

\[
\begin{align*}
W & \text{ i} & d_{sp:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i) \\
B & \text{ i+1} & \text{relevant?; why}(f_{E1,...,En}(S))? \\
W & \text{ i+2} & \text{nocomm}(f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i)); \text{nocomm}(f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i)); \text{GA}_i; \text{GA}_i; \\
& & \text{T so S} \quad \text{nocomm}(V) \\
& & \text{[s4]} \quad \text{[w2]}
\end{align*}
\]

S27) If Black at i utters \((E)amb(E_1,...,E_n)\), then expression \(E\) is disqualified until Black utters nocomm(\((E)amb(E_1,...,E_n)\)). If at stage i Black utters \(d_{cb:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(CB_i)\), then expression \(E\) is disqualified until Black utters nocomm(\(f_{E1,...,En}(CB_i)\)). If at stage i White utters \(d_{sp:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i)\), then expression \(E\) is disqualified until White utters nocomm(\(f_{E1,...,En}(GA_i)\)). It is not allowed to use an expression \(E\) at stage j if \(E\) at j is disqualified.

S28) If Black at i+1 utters why(S)?, and White at i+2 utters your position implies S, then Black at i+3 must either utter \(d_{cb:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(CB_{i+3})\), or utter \((E)amb(E_1,...,E_n)\), or start a rigorous persuasion dialogue.

\[
\begin{align*}
W & \text{ i} & \Delta \text{ so T} \\
B & \text{ i+1} & \text{why}(S)? \\
W & \text{ i+2} & \text{your position implies S} \\
B & \text{ i+3} & d_{cb:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(CB_{i+3}); \text{(E)amb}(E_1,...,E_n) \quad \text{(starts a rigorous persuasion dialogue)}; \text{[s20]} \quad \text{[s9]} \quad \text{[s29]}
\end{align*}
\]

S29) Suppose Black at i+3 starts a rigorous persuasion dialogue after White’s utterance of your position implies S at i+2. In this rigorous persuasion dialogue, White is the proponent defending S, while Black’s set of concessions is CB_{i+2}. If White wins the dialogue, she resumes the dialogue at stage i+4 by repeating her move from stage i. (Black’s commitment set includes from i+3 onwards S, and he cannot challenge S again). If Black wins the rigorous persuasion dialogue, White resumes the dialogue at stage i+3 by uttering T so S, possibly combined with concede(U)?, or by uttering \(d_{sp:E1,...,En} f_{E1,...,En}(GA_{i+4})\), or by uttering nocomm(V), where V is the main standpoint at i+4.
Win-and-Loss Rules

W1) If Black at i utters concede($T$), where $T$ is the main standpoint at i, or if Black utters concede($\perp$), then Black has lost the discussion, and White has won the discussion.

W2) If White utters nocomm($T$), where $T$ is the main standpoint at i, then White has lost the discussion, and Black has won the discussion.

9. EXAMPLES OF DIALOGUES ACCORDING TO AMBIGUITY DIALECTIC

The following normative profiles show how certain problems concerning actively ambiguous expression can be dealt with in ad-discussions.

Example 1: a ground level discussion

The first profile illustrates the workings of ambiguity dialectic if the parties do not suppose there to be any actively ambiguous expressions around. In the first column the stage is indicated and in the second column the player whose turn it is. Every move is accompanied with a reference to a structural rule that allows the party to make that particular move.

Initial concessions by Black, $CB_0 = \{ Ra, Ra \rightarrow (Qa \rightarrow Pa) \}$

1  W  (s1) standpoint($Pa$); concede($Qa$)?
2  B  (s3, s4) why($Pa$)?; concede($Qa$)
3  W  (s5) $Qa$ so $Pa$
4  B  (s4) why($Qa \rightarrow Pa$)?
5  W  (s5) $Ra$ so ($Qa \rightarrow Pa$)
6  B  (s4) concede($Pa$)

Figure 15. A ground level discussion

\(^{149}\) For a system of rigorous persuasion dialogue, see Walton and Krabbe (1995, chapter 4).
At stage 4, Black cannot challenge Qa (due to s7), but he may challenge the warrant Qa\(\rightarrow\)Pa. At stage 6, rule s7 does not allow Black to challenge the basic reason, or the basic warrant of White’s argument at stage 5, because he has conceded them. Rule s6 does not allow Black to raise an ambiguity criticism either, because all expressions used by White occur in CB\(_0\). Rule s4 leaves Black two remaining options: spontaneously disambiguating his set of initial concessions, or concede the main thesis. Black chooses the latter, and according to w\(_1\), White wins and Black loses.

**Example 2: Black criticises himself**

The following profile illustrates a discussion where Black decides to disambiguate his set of concessions. He supposes that White entertains an alternative reading of one of his concessions. The profile illustrates three different ways the discussion can develop. Stage 6 contains Black’s self-criticism: term \(a\) is actively ambiguous between \(a_1\) and \(a_2\). At stage 9, the arguments are presented in the graphical mode.

\[
\text{CB}_0 = \{Ra, Ra \rightarrow (Qa \rightarrow Pa)\}
\]

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W (s1) Pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B (s4) why(Pa)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>W (s5) Qa so Pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B (s4) why(Qa (\rightarrow)Pa)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>W (s5) Ra so (Qa (\rightarrow)Pa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B (s4) (d_{a1,a2}): Ra(_2), Ra(_1)(\rightarrow)(Qa(_1)(\rightarrow)Pa(_1))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>W (s20) admissible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>B (s21) nocomm({Ra(_2), Ra(_1)(\rightarrow)(Qa(_1)(\rightarrow)Pa(_1)}) ; concede({Ra, Ra (\rightarrow)(Qa (\rightarrow)Pa)})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>W (s22) (d_{alt}): Pa(_1) (\uparrow) Pa (\uparrow) Qa &amp; Qa (\rightarrow)Pa</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>B (s4) concede(Pa) (s4) why(Ra(_1))? (s4) concede(Pa(_2))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 16. Black disambiguates his set of concessions*
Example 3: Black analyses an agreement as a pseudo-agreement

In the next profile, Black analyses an agreement as a pseudo-agreement. Moreover, White's disambiguation is again criticised as actively ambiguous.

Black has not yet lost at stage 5, although he has conceded a statement that figures as the main standpoint. However, at the stage where he concedes $S_1$, this was not yet the main standpoint at that stage. By s7, Black is not allowed at stage 6 to challenge $S_1$. Black’s case does not need to be lost at this point, because it might still be reasonable to criticise an ambiguity in $S_1$.

Example 4: White criticises herself

The following profile shows a move where White analyses a dispute as a pseudodispute.

White tries to correct her use of an allegedly actively ambiguous expression.
In the first discussion, Black, at stage 4, cannot challenge White’s position without challenging the relevance of the disambiguated global argument. Because the global argument of that stage consists of a standpoint only, the option "why(U)?" of s24 is not available.

**Example 5: linguistic admissibility**

In the following profile, Black must support the admissibility of his ambiguity criticism. In the second discussion, at the right, Q might stand for desirable, Q₁ for worthy of desire and Q₂ for capable of being desired. In a system of dialectic where Black is able to charge White with committing the fallacy of figure of speech, he should have done so.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W (s1) standpoint(Pa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B (s4) why(Pa)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>W (s5) Q₁ so Pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B (s4) (Q)amb(Q₁,Q₂)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>W (s9) admissible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B (s12) positive (s12) nocomm((Q)amb(Q₁,Q₂))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>W (s13) dₐₙₛt: Q₁a so Pa (s14) Qa so Pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>B (s4) why(Q₁a)? (s4) why(Qa)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 19. The use of the utterance meaning testing procedure*

If Black is able to sustain the linguistic admissibility, the discussion continues after White has acknowledged Black's ambiguity criticism fully. If not, White may stick to the original formulations.

**Example 6: a successful equivocation criticism**

The following profile shows how White can respond to Black’s equivocation criticism. The first discussion shows a mixed disambiguation by White. This strategy fails because Black can successfully challenge the argument’s warrant. The other two discussions show non-mixed disambiguations that either have an unacceptable reason or an unacceptable warrant.
Take as an example:
Qx = Cat(x)
Q1x = Tomcat(x)
Q2x = Cat-male-or-female(x)
Px = Is-able-to-kitten(x)
a = Felicia

![Diagram](image)

Figure 20. A successful equivocation criticism

**Example 7: an equivocation criticism that fails**

In the following example, Black’s equivocation criticism is unjustified. Take as an example:
Qx = Cat(x)
Q1x = Tomcat(x)
Q2x = Cat-male-or-female(x)
Px = Is-able-to-kitten(x)
a = Felix
Example 8: criticising a request as actively ambiguous

In the following discussion, Black criticises a request as actively ambiguous. It shows how specifying this critique to an equivocation criticism can be premature.

At stage 5, White must present a disambiguated global argument. This does not contain any occurrence of T, and so her chances of winning are not diminished by the obligation to ‘disambiguate’ her argument.

Example 9: ambiguity and inconsistency

In the next profile, White tries to make use of seemingly contradictory statements within Black’s set of commitments. Black, however, points out an active ambiguity in his set of initial concessions that White’s tries to misuse.
At stage 3, White is heading towards a rigorous persuasion dialogue in order to force Black to concede the absurdity of his position. If, indeed, ex falso sequitur quodlibet is unjustified due to active ambiguity, this constitutes a case of the fallacy of equivocation. The reason is that Black can win the discussion that results from his locution of equivocation; I’ll win.

If, as in the second discussion, $S$ is not contextually ambiguous between $S_1$ and $S_2$, then Black cannot escape a rigorous persuasion dialogue, if White pushes him in that direction. Moreover, White will be able to show that, in that case, $\bot$ follows from Black's concessions.

**Example 10: equivocation in a chain of reasoning**

The following is an example of a fallacy of equivocation contained in a chain of reasoning, $U \text{ so } T$ and $T \text{ so } S$, where $T$ is actively ambiguous between $T_1$ and $T_2$. $U$ is only a good reason for $T_1$, while only $T_2$ is a good reason for $S$. Finocchiaro takes this to be the basic format of the fallacy of equivocation (Finocchiaro 1982, 427). The next profile describes four (of the eight possible) discussions where White lacks an effective persuasion strategy. Take as an example:

$U = \text{W.B. is moving the car forward by pushing his car though the open door.}$

$T = \text{W.B. is driving a car}$

$S = \text{W.B. is sitting behind the steering wheel}$

$T_1 = \text{W.B. is driving a car in the sense of controlling its motion}$

$T_2 = \text{W.B. is driving the car in the sense of sitting behind the steering wheel and controlling its motion}$
In the third and fourth discussion, the new warrant is added, by virtue of a mixed disambiguation.

10. THE CONSEQUENCES OF AMBIGUITY DIALECTIC FOR THE THEORY OF FALLACIES

A party in a discussion may violate two different kinds of rules for critical discussion, and may consequently, applying this idea to the pragma-dialectical definition of a fallacy, commit two different kinds of fallacies. A violation of a regulative rule forms a R-fallacy, while a violation of a constitutive rule forms a C-fallacy. C-fallacies are worse for conflict resolution than R-fallacies (cf. Van Laar 2001).

Another distinction within the model is that between the fallacy of equivocation, and the fallacy of ambiguity: the first is a subtype of the latter. These distinctions result in the following table:
Expression $E$, used by party $N$, is actively ambiguous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R-fallacy</th>
<th>C-fallacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$E$ is not disqualified at the stage where $N$ makes use of $E$</td>
<td>$E$ is disqualified at the stage where $N$ makes use of $E$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In other cases.</td>
<td>In other cases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no disambiguation of $N$’s global argument, such that she has an effective persuasion strategy, although there is a disambiguation in which all reasons can be made acceptable, and there is a disambiguation in which the warrant can be made acceptable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R-fallacy of ambiguity &amp; R-fallacy of equivocation</th>
<th>R-fallacy of ambiguity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In other cases.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C-fallacy of ambiguity &amp; C-fallacy of equivocation</th>
<th>C-fallacy of ambiguity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In other cases.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 25. A classification of fallacies**

In the next chapter, we will examine whether ambiguity dialectic can help us to understand and analyse real and complex debates.
Chapter 7