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The Interface Between Semantics and Discourse Functions: Exploring the Adjective *Possibile* in a Corpus of Italian Financial News

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(conversational backgrounds) which is saturated in the situational or discourse context of utterance focusing on the different roles played by its predicative and attributive constructions. It has turned out that the two constructions impose different constraints on the saturation of the conversational backgrounds.

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1. The project entitled “Modality in argumentation. A semantic argumentative study of predictions in Italian economic-financial newspapers” has been supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant: 100012-120740/1) from 2008 to 2011. Although the whole paper has been the result of a continuous process of interaction between the two authors, Andrea Rocci is the main responsible of Sects. [1](#), [2](#) and [4.1–4.3](#), while Elena Musi of Sects. [3](#), [4.4](#), [4.5](#) and [5](#).
2. The ample gamut of discourse analytical works broadly based on Systemic-Functional Linguistic are the typical example of this paradigm-based strategy, a very successful illustration being Martin and White’s ([2005](#)) Appraisal Theory. While these works can still provide valuable insights for understanding communicative strategies in discourse, we believe that they suffer, in terms of depth and precision, because of the lack of consideration for the contextual

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5. Consider purely institutional states of affairs (like ‘being elected President of the USA’) and the constitutive rules that put them into being (as opposed to the regulative rules that can lead natural actions). Suppose that it turns out that someone was not eligible as U.S. president, because he/she was not a natural born citizen. In this context, the election is not simply *illegal*, it is also *null*. In a sense, the “elected” has never been truly elected. In these cases there seem to be a complete coincidence of deontic and alethic modalities.
6. Financial news reports are, for the most part, written in what Martin and White ([2005](#): 168–169) call a *reporter voice*: that is they do not contain explicit judgment, unless this judgment is attributed to external sources. Financial news articles are not strictly speaking, *news reports*, as they routinely exhibit the kind of complex argumentative structures we have exemplified in Fig. [1](#) in Sect. [4.3](#) in order to support evaluative and predictive opinions (cf.

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