

Implicit communication in Twitter: a corpus-based analysis of the pragmatic functions of *implicatures* and *presuppositions*

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Twitter is nowadays a powerful means of political propaganda (Gheno 2008, Parisi & Rega 2010; Brocca & Garassino in press). Its effectiveness can be easily appreciated in the large amounts of messages exchanged by politicians every day (Comin & Partners 2014). This wealth of data, together with the interactive nature of the social medium, provides an ideal basis for the analysis of a striking feature of political messages, i.e. their implicitness, often achieved through the use of presuppositions and implicatures (Grice 1975, Brocca et al. in press), among other strategies.

The present discussion proposes an analysis of implicit communication in Twitter considering (a) the use that politicians – mainly from the Italian political scene - make of presuppositions and implicatures, and (b) the correlation of these strategies to specific types of contents, often the most contentious ones (Lombardi Vallauri & Masia 2014). Drawing on a corpus-based survey, we suggest that these contents are typically targeted at three main pragmatic functions: *self-praising*, *attacking* and *broadcasting*.

On a sample of about 1.000 tweets, our qualitative and quantitative analysis will show that some of these functions are strongly associated with implicatural, others with presuppositional, communicative devices. We will then compare these results with those obtained through a preliminary enquiry on the tweets of British and American politicians.

The aim of the research is therefore to “measure” the effects of implicit communication, together with the above-mentioned functions, in a medium that is nowadays pervasive and that often exploits the “subliminal endowment” of human language.

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