

Stereotypes favour implicatures, implicatures smuggle stereotypes

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We propose that implicatures and stereotypes reinforce each other in producing persuasive effects. Both categories' persuasive effectiveness has been studied quite in depth. For implicatures including implicatures cf. for ex. Ducrot 1982, Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1986, Rigotti 1988, Sbisà 2007, and specifically concerning their working in texts with persuasive purposes Lombardi Vallauri 2009, 2016, Lombardi Vallauri - Masia 2014. For stereotypes, cf. Smith 1990, Browne 1998, Darke – Ritchie 2007, Zawiska – Cinnirella 2010, Sheehan 2014, Domaneschi-Penco 2016.

However, the way these two categories interact still deserves thorough account. This will be done, in the proposed communication, on the basis of first-hand data from advertising texts, where persuasion is surely a primary function.

Implicatures are more easily drawn if the content to be recovered is a stereotype, as compared to less expectable information. At the same time, stereotypes are more easily accepted and less probably challenged if they are presented implicitly, via implicature. By way of example, this can be seen in the following announcements from the 2006 national political campaign in Italy:



(9) Inheritance tax again?
No, thanks



(10) The “no globals” in the government?
No, thanks



(11) Illegal immigrants
at will?
No, thanks



(12) More taxes on your
savings?
No, thanks



(13) More taxes on your
house?
No, thanks



(14) Halting major works?
No, thanks

Each announcement implicated an accusation to the Left:

| statement (by the Right) | Gricean path | implicature (drawn by the target) |
|--|---|--|
| we are against the inheritance tax | “It makes no sense to mention this threat, if there is no danger that it comes true. Consequently,” | the Left will introduce the inheritance tax |
| we are against the “no globals” in the government | | the Left will put the “no globals” in the government |
| we are against illegal immigrants without regulation | | the Left will accept illegal immigrants without regulation |
| we are against more taxes on your savings | | the Left will put more taxes on my savings |
| we are against more taxes on your house | | the Left will put more taxes on my house |
| we are against halting major works | | the Left will halt major works |

Interestingly, the implicature is always guided by a stereotypical concept of the Left:

- a. - The Left strongly taxes incomes, properties, real estate and even savings.
- b. - The left is against major economical enterprises, including big construction work.
- c. - The Left takes sides with all “irregular people”: immigrants, no globals etc.

Here, the exploitation of stereotypes and implicatures has a twofold, *bidirectional* effect. The stereotypical assumptions guide the implicature process, and at the same time they are re-inforced by that process. If directly asserted, such stereotypes would appear as a too simplistic and exaggerate representation of reality (Sheehan 2014); but since they are only evoked implicitly during the inferential process, they get some chance to bypass the addressees’ critical reaction and to be transferred into their set of beliefs.

These facts are widely exploited in persuasive communication, especially when trying to *convince the target audience about things that are not true*. Consequently, awareness of them should be regarded as an important ingredient of democratic cohabitation.

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