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Implicitness impact: Measuring texts[☆]

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Abstract

Implicitness, besides being an indispensable feature of language whose primary function is economic in nature, also plays a major role in persuasive communication. *Contents* are conveyed as implicit mainly by means of *implicatures*, while the *responsibility* of the speaker is kept implicit mainly by means of *presuppositions* and *topicalisations*. We propose a system of quantification indexes to measure the intensity and the extent to which each of these strategies conceals some part of a message. This makes it possible to assess the implicitness impact of each single occurrence in a text, and of the text as a whole. The mentioned measurement system is applied to a sample of political propaganda (a discourse by Rick Santorum and one by Mitt Romney). Presuppositions and Topics hiding the speaker's responsibility seem to achieve a higher implicitness impact as compared to implicatures hiding notional contents. One of the two discourses receives a significantly higher implicitness score than the other, which signals it as more tendentious communication. © 2013 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

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1. Effects of implicit communication

At least since Frege (1892:40),¹ it has become clear to scholars dealing with language and texts (though it had been clear to professionals of rhetoric for millennia) that presenting some content implicitly may make it easier to convince the audience. This is quite evident for presuppositions (cf. Strawson, 1964; Garner, 1971; Ducrot, 1972), but it is easy to see how it applies to implicatures as well (cf. Grice, 1975).

1.1. What implicatures and presuppositions have in common

Both in implicatures and presuppositions, *part of the message remains implicit*. In the case of implicatures, it is the *content* of the message itself, that is not expressed:

- (1) - Is John back from Paris?
 - Well, there is a red bike in front of the florist shop.

In (1), the content “John is back” is not overtly expressed. The addressee can/must imply it (according to Grice's Cooperation Principle) from shared knowledge such as John's possessing a red bicycle, and the florist shop being

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¹ Cf. also Rigotti (1988:118), Lombardi Vallauri (1993, 1995).

managed by – say – John's girlfriend, etc. In fact, if the knowledge shared by the participants is that the red bike belongs to John's love rival, (1) ends up meaning the exact opposite: "John is not back".

As for presuppositions, what remains implicit is not the notional content of the message, but another aspect of its introduction into the hearer's knowledge, namely the endorsement, by the speaker, of the *responsibility for its truth*²:

(2) Kay is in the country. Her crime will be punished.

In (2), the idea that Kay has committed a crime is taken for granted, by means of the definite description *her crime*. More precisely, the speaker presents that content as if ((s)he is convinced that) the addressee is already aware of it, so (s)he need not state it. Otherwise, one should say:

(3) Kay has committed a crime.

This *act of informing the addressee* is absent in (2), or more accurately it is *skipped* and treated as not necessary. The speaker directly implies a world where the addressee already knows about the content of (3).

1.2. Assuming less responsibility

So, while implicatures "contain" (but conceal) the content to be held as true, presuppositions contain but conceal the very act³ of proposing it as true. This is most effective for the purpose of convincing someone of certain content, because it looks as if the speaker has no commitment to transferring that content. Instead of a world where the speaker wants the addressee to believe something, presupposition builds a world where the speaker believes that the addressee already knows and agrees upon that something, so there is no need to assert it again, but just to resume it for the sake of understanding the rest. The speaker apparently has *no intentionality* bound to that content.⁴

Now, if there is something that can raise a critical reaction in humans, it is the recognition of any attempt (on the part of someone else) to modify their status. That is what defines an assertion. It is an admission that you consider the addressee unaware, and an attempt to modify his/her status into that of being aware, and to become a believer. This may raise a critical reaction, such as "you want me to believe X, but exactly because you want that, there is probably some drawback for me; so I'd better carefully evaluate, and preferably reject X". This is especially true when the addressee has reasons not to trust the speaker, or to suppose that he or she has some interest or some advantage to be drawn from the addressee, as is typically the case in public communication, contrary to what happens among friends, etc.

By increasing her/his distance from the message, a presupposition has the advantage of concealing the speaker's responsibility for the proposed belief, i.e. the intention to modify the cognitive status of the addressee. It is suggested that some other situation causing previous knowledge (tacitly attributed to the addressee's independent experience) is responsible for that content, and not the speaker. As a consequence, the addressee's critical reaction towards the speaker has less reason to rise, and may be weaker, or null: there is little need to double check the truth of something we already know about. This effect of what is taken for granted is included by Givón (e.g. 1982) among the phenomena that he calls "unchallengeability" on the part of the addressee. One is strongly led to treat presupposed content as not subject to possible discussion. Sbisà (2007:54) attributes this attitude of the addressee to the fact that "rejecting an utterance (because deemed inappropriate or not assessable as true or false) is tantamount to undermining the speaker's authority to produce that utterance, isolating him from the communicative relationship. As the interactants in a conversation are generally likely to keep such a relationship working, they accept the utterance as appropriate and, in turn, its presuppositions", if there are any.

1.3. Reducing the addressee's attention

A further effect of presupposition concerns effort economy while processing communication exchanges. When some content is already in the knowledge of the addressee, the speaker should not ignore this fact, and should present such information as presupposed. Otherwise, the addressee would be instructed to treat that piece of information as completely

² The concept of Responsibility, as we put it, has relations (which we cannot develop here) to that sometimes employed by studies on Evidentiality (cf. e.g. Fox, 2001; McCready, 2011).

³ We mean here "act" as a speech act in the very sense of Searle (and Austin), namely the act of informing the addressee of some content, by asserting its truth.

⁴ In recent philosophical studies (Toribio, 2002), the intentionality of the speaker has been reworded in terms of "semantic responsibility", whose incidence on an utterance basically depends on the communication of *mindful* (including speaker's commitment) vs. *mindless* contents (exempt from speaker's commitment).

new, to focus her/his attention on it and “build” it as a new piece of knowledge in her/his mind. For example, if one says, using assertive constructions:

- (4) In this world there is a country called Egypt, and in Egypt there are some huge, extremely old, triangular monuments called “Pyramids”... (etc.) Well, last week I have been there and I have seen them.

this tells the addressee to focus on what is being said and build a new mental “slot” for something to be called Egypt, one for something to be called the Pyramids, etc. Then, the addressee will realize that (s)he already has such slots: in more common words, that (s)he already knows about Egypt and the Pyramids. To avoid this waste of processing effort, it is much better for the speaker to use a presupposing expression, which will “authorize” the addressee not to process that content in deep detail, because it is something (s)he is supposed to know already:

- (5) Last week I have seen the Egyptian Pyramids.

Actually, if a piece of information is properly presented as presupposed (here, the existence and identifiability of the Pyramids, by means of a definite description), the addressee will not make any unnecessary effort. (S)he will pay *much less attention* to that content, because it comes with the “warning” that it does not need thorough examination, being something already known to her/him: a resumptive, “mentally opaque” recollection of the already known (“the Egyptian Pyramids”) is enough for the purpose of understanding the part of the message which is really new (“I have been there”). Full examination of already-known content would be the superfluous repetition of some effort that one has done in the past.

This is the very essence of presupposing a content: *instructing the addressee to devote less attention to it*, because more is not needed for full understanding of the message.

Linguistic devices for presupposing content primarily perform this function (and probably arose in order to fulfil it) when some content is already in the knowledge of the addressee. But, once such devices exist, they can be used in slightly different situations. Namely, it is possible to instruct the addressee to pay less attention to some content, not because it is actually known to her/him, but just because the message will be understandable *even if that content is not fully examined*. Thus, content can be presented as presupposed even if it does not exist in the memory of the addressee. This is what may happen in many contexts where the speaker’s having visited the Pyramids with his parents is encoded by a presupposing temporal clause (in italics) in (6):

- (6) *When I visited the Pyramids with my parents*, I got to know a girl. Well, she has now become my wife.

The same can be observed for the presupposition arising from a change-of-state verb such as *open* in (7):

- (7) Please, go down and open the kitchen door: I want to hear the telephone.

In principle, if the addressee is not aware of the conditions of the kitchen door, the speaker might have said:

- (7a) The kitchen door is presently closed. Please, go down and open it, so I can hear the telephone.

But this is unnecessary. Focusing on the state of the kitchen door results in superfluous effort: the information that it is presently closed can be conveyed as presupposed (exactly as if the addressee already knows about it), together with the request to open it, so that the addressee can devote to it only the amount of attention which is necessary for understanding the request. Utterance (7) is more natural than (7a) in many situations, because it saves processing effort.

Presupposing can then fulfil a further function, derived from the preceding two. Presenting information as not to be processed thoroughly although it is actually unknown to the addressee may be aimed not only at allowing the addressee some economy of effort, but also at *avoiding full understanding of that information on the part of the addressee*. When certain content is doubtful or even false, the addressee will not accept it if (s)he pays due attention to it, but may accept it if, paying less attention, (s)he remains partially unaware of its most questionable components. The unacceptability of some information may be evident when it is stated, but may remain unperceived if the same information is processed in a more vague and less attentive way. For example, a commercial by Philips diffused in Italy used to presuppose that the addressees were living with (figuratively) “closed eyes”:

The translation of the headline in Fig. 1 is (8):

- (8) Let Philips open your eyes

Now, nobody in the target would have accepted – even if interpreted figuratively – a statement such as:

- (8a) You are living with closed eyes

Fig. 1. “Let Philips open your eyes”.

but the very same, identical content could easily be accepted by everyone in the form of a presupposition. This is because, if presupposed, it is processed in a vague, less scrupulous way. While the asserted idea of opening one's eyes receives strong evidence, the presupposed idea that they were previously “closed” passes into the addressee's knowledge without undergoing a moment of true focusing by her/his attention, which may probably lead to full awareness – and rejection. As a result, the message is accepted (although it contains strongly offensive content), to the extent that even that very content can become part of the “state of the world” believed by the addressee after reading the message.⁵

The same thing happens if the content, although not directly offensive, is questionable for some other reason, as in the commercial in Fig. 2.

Saying that I felt grown up with my first Alfa is much more effective than directly asserting the content which is presupposed here by means of the adjective *first*, i.e.:

(9) The depicted person has owned another Alfa after the first one

In Fig. 2, the addressee is invited to focus on the idea of feeling grown up with the car of one's youth, and not to carefully consider the content we have made explicit in (9), because the ad, although it actually conveys that content, crucially does so by means of presupposition. As a consequence, such a questionable content is more likely to be accepted without any critical challenging. This content is particularly persuasive because it implies, as its most probable inference, that who buys an Alfa is usually so satisfied that (s)he goes on buying more Alfas.

Resuming what we have said, presupposition *instructs the addressee to pay less attention* to certain content. This may be aimed at⁶:

⁵ Loftus (1975), in what she calls a *construction hypothesis*, suggests that presuppositions “silently” drive the receiver to “reconstruct” or “visualize” portions of reality which are neither in her/his memory, nor in her/his general knowledge of the world. Hence, they are effective strategies to “introduce information without calling attention to it” (Loftus, 1975:572).

⁶ This is also recognized within studies from the field of rhetoric and argumentation theory. Cf. for instance Van Eemeren (2010:13): “In argumentative practice, elements that are indispensable to the resolution process are regularly left unexpressed, either because they are considered evident or because they are not considered worth mentioning (*but also for less honorable reasons*). Such unexpressed elements may include the exact make-up of the disagreement, the division of the discussion roles and other starting points, the relation between the arguments put forward in defense of a standpoint, the way in which premises are supported to support the standpoint, and even some of the premises employed” (italics ours).



Fig. 2. "...and I felt grown up with my first Alfa".

- a) *saving the addressee superfluous effort, because that content is already known to her/him;*
- b) *saving the addressee superfluous effort, because that content can be processed with minor attention without any damage to the comprehension of the message;*
- c) *preventing the addressee from becoming completely aware of (all the parts of) that content, lest (s)he may challenge and reject it.*

In what follows, we will consider both main effects of presupposition (discharging the speaker from responsibility and triggering reduced attention in the addressee) under the single label of "concealment of responsibility".

1.4. A compelling silence

So far, we have emphasized how presupposition weakens the tendency to critical reaction "at its very origin", by minimizing temptation to critical responses; but we can add that it also inhibits critical reaction *ex post*, i.e. immediately after its possible onset, especially when communication takes place in public contexts. In dialogic situations, where (s)he is alone with the speaker, the addressee knows that the possible challenging of a presupposition entirely rests upon her/him. For example, the hearer of (2), if in a good relationship with Kay or if (s)he just thinks that Kay is innocent, may be tempted to say: *But she has committed no crime at all!*, thus exposing the presupposition and dissociating her/himself from any supposed sharing of the speaker's belief. More significantly, (s)he knows that if the presupposition is false, no one else can expose it. In public communication (such as advertising or political propaganda), on the contrary, everybody feels that many people are addressed. This means that the presupposed content is presented as already shared and agreed upon by very many people. And, typically, *nobody stands up to challenge it*. As a matter of fact, the possibility for someone to actually raise one's hand against a broadcasting, a newspaper article, an advertisement, and say "I don't share the presupposition: that woman is innocent", or "I am not living with closed eyes", or "what you call 'the commitment of your Party to the poor' does not exist", is merely virtual. Still, every single addressee feels that there is a "confirming silence" on the part of a vast audience, possibly up to millions of people. This results in a "compelling silence", because if some content is apparently shared and agreed upon by so many people, each single person, even if (s)he has doubts, feels too weak and too little authoritative to discuss it.

This is obviously a function associated with television, newspapers, public ads, etc. Interestingly, this function hardly has good reasons on its part, but it is effective: in such contexts, implicitness of the speaker's responsibility for

the truth of a content “protects” that content from being challenged by the audience even better than in private communication.

Implicitness of content, as effected by implicatures, can be regarded as partly leading to the same effect as implicitness of responsibility. Although they do not present the content of the utterance as knowledge shared and agreed upon by the addressee, in a different way implicatures still involve the addressee as a decisive part in the building of the truth conveyed by the utterance. First, they make appeal to pieces of information shared by the participants, as necessary to attain the common interpretation of the utterance. Second, in implicatures it is *the addressee her/himself* who builds the content to be communicated. Now, discussing something that you have created yourself is much lesser a temptation than discussing something stated by someone else.

In (1), for example, the speaker does not really maintain that John is back from Paris, nor the opposite. He is just giving hints, and the addressee is “free” to do what (s)he wants out of them. This gives the addressee the impression that (s)he can trust the conclusions (s)he will get at, since they come from her/himself. The fact that the addressee is not really free, and the speaker can compute quite well which conclusions the addressee will be able to draw and which not, ends up playing a lesser role.

1.5. What implicatures and presuppositions have in common with other means of communication

The points we have made in section 1 are only partly new, and the literature on some of them is even too abundant to refer to it here.⁷ However, what we wish to stress is the similarity between implicatures and presuppositions in using implicitness (of content or responsibility) as a means to reduce the addressee’s tendency to critical reaction. We will see that this practice is extensively represented in persuasive communication.⁸

In this respect, language works similarly to the main components of any multimedia message. Images and sounds, which are, for example in advertising, recognizably more important than textual headlines, are very effective also because they are *not explicit* in conveying contents. That is to say, *they do not make statements*. In an ad, you can see a group of young, handsome, rich and happy people drinking some whisky in a wonderful house. The meaning of the message is: “If you drink that whisky, you will be young, handsome, rich and happy, and you will live in a wonderful house”. The same content, if stated explicitly, would convince nobody, possibly provoking rather hostile reactions; but in its visual, “implicit”, not-stated version it works very well. The same is true for a music inducing happiness, solemnity or the like: it is by far more effective than any explicit statement about the capacity of a product to make you happy, important in the opinion of others, etc.

The reason for this is that statements, being explicit, completely reveal the intentions of the source as regards certain content, while images and sounds leave the addressee a (mostly just illusory) freedom to give them any value (s)he wants. The feeling of this freedom is exactly the opposite of the feeling that the source of the message is trying to modify our status, and thus reduces the tendency to challenge the corresponding contents.

The “ideal” version of this implicitness is known as *subliminal communication*, i.e. effected below an individual’s threshold for conscious perception. As is well known, this practice is prohibited in almost all civil countries, being considered unfair. Now, both for implicatures and presuppositions, we suggest that they are – though by no means the same thing – the most similar thing to subliminal communication that language offers, because they can be seen as attempts to reduce as much as possible the awareness of the addressee that some content is being conveyed to her/him by the source that produces the message.

2. Trying to be quantitative

Now, it may be interesting to explore a further hypothesis. Namely, that the *amount*⁹ of implicit information present in texts may be *measured* in order to assign rankings of implicitness to different texts. This would mean being able to compare different texts with respect to whether they convey their contents in a more or less straightforward way. This is the main concern of this paper, which obviously presents just a tentative hypothesis.

⁷ Other features we haven’t tackled in the present paper are more exhaustively outlined in Sbisà (2007). Cf. also Van Eemeren (2010) for the use of implicit strategies in argumentative discourse.

⁸ Cf. also Lombardi Vallauri (1995, 2009a) and Sbisà (2007).

⁹ The following sections will make it clear that “amount” must be understood here in a relative, not in an absolute sense.

We will try to assign an “index of concealment effectiveness”, which we may call more simply an *index of implicitness*, to different structures belonging to the implicature or the presupposition type. As a consequence, implicitness will be computed differently depending on whether it conceals content or responsibility.

2.1. What should be counted as tendentious

A preliminary remark must be made concerning the credibility of the information conveyed implicitly. As we have already noticed, the content of a linguistic expression which is presented by means of implicature or presupposition may be basically of three types:

- (i) something of which the speaker still needs to convince the addressee;
- (ii) something of which the addressee is already convinced;
- (iii) something which is objectively true, no matter if the addressee knows about it or not.

In other words, the reason why some content is conveyed implicitly may often not be that the speaker wants to exploit the effectiveness of implicit encoding to convince the addressee in an almost subliminal way; rather, the reason may just be that the content is already shared or simply true. So, if (ii) or (iii) is the case, i.e. if it is *bona fide* true content, or in any case generally known and agreed upon, there is nothing less than honest in presenting it as such. Presuppositions or implicatures leading to the transmission of this kind of information, although they undoubtedly use implicitness, do not exploit it to convince someone of something which would be less convincing if conveyed explicitly: so, in this case implicit constructions should not be counted among those which increase the ranking of a text on our particular scale of implicitness: only implicitness of doubtful contents is significant, not implicitness of obvious contents, which is just a form of brevity and economy of effort.

2.2. Topics as weak presuppositions

Presenting some information as the Topic of the utterance is a sort of “weak” version of presupposition. Presupposing a content amounts to bypassing its first introduction to the addressee, hinting at the fact that it has been already introduced to her/him by some previous circumstances (typically extraneous to the speaker). In other words, it hints at the presence of that information in the Long-Term Memory of the addressee. Assigning the status of Topic to certain content is a similar proceeding in that it suggests that the speaker considers it already (presently) *active* in the hearer’s Short-Term Memory because it has been just introduced by the preceding discourse.¹⁰ This does not completely exclude the responsibility of the speaker for the introduction of that content, which may have been carried out by her/himself just a few seconds before; but at least it reduces his/her responsibility on display within that utterance. And previous utterances are already in part forgotten, so that responsibilities stemming from them are rather vague. Moreover, exactly as for presupposition, Topic status of certain information instructs the addressee to pay less precise an attention to its details, which allows for it to be accepted even if highly questionable.

For presuppositions (and topics) it must be noticed that they can be considered honest if their content, although not *bona fide* true, has been previously introduced by the speaker her/himself. If the presupposition conveyed by the last clause in (2) is preceded by a straight assertion, it cannot be considered an attempt at bypassing the speaker’s assumption of responsibility in introducing that content, but only at economy of effort:

- (10) Kay has murdered her husband. She is in the country. Her crime will be punished.

2.3. Different strengths of implicitness

In order to measure the amount of implicitness contained in texts, we need to assign “indexes of implicitness” (or “indexes of concealment”) to the different types of implicit encoding strategies we have mentioned so far.

With respect to the *concealment of content*, conventional implicatures can be seen as less implicit than conversational implicatures, because they result from visible lexical triggers. Such triggers do not express explicitly the

¹⁰ Cf. Chafe (1987, 1992), Cresti (1992, 2000), Lombardi Vallauri (2001, 2009b).

Scheme 1

Relevant categories of implicit communication	Implicitness of responsibility	Implicitness of content	Global ratings
Explicit assertion	0.0	0.0	0.0
Focus	0.0	0.0	0.0
Topic	3.0	0.0	3.0
Conventional implicatures	0.0	1.0	1.0
Generalized implicatures	0.0	2.0	2.0
Conversational implicatures	0.0	3.0	3.0
Fully encoded presuppositions (lexical and syntactic triggers – definite phrases, subordinate clauses)			
Presupposition in <i>Focus</i>	4.0	0.0	4.0
Presupposition + <i>Topic</i>	4 + 3 = 7.0	0.0	7.0
Presupposed implicatures			
Presupposition + conventional implicature in <i>Focus</i>	4.0	1.0	5.0
Presupposition + conventional implicature + <i>Topic</i>	4 + 3 = 7.0	1.0	8.0
Presupposition + generalized implicature in <i>Focus</i>	4.0	2.0	6.0
Presupposition + generalized implicature + <i>Topic</i>	4 + 3 = 7.0	2.0	9.0
Presupposition + conversational implicature in <i>Focus</i>	4.0	3.0	7.0
Presupposition + conversational implicature + <i>Topic</i>	4 + 3 = 7.0	3.0	10.0
Pragmatic presuppositions (not depending on syntactic or lexical triggers) in <i>Focus</i>	4.0	3.0	7.0
Pragmatic presuppositions (not depending on syntactic or lexical triggers) + <i>Topic</i>	4 + 3 = 7.0	3.0	10.0

whole content to be conveyed, but cause the addressee to understand it: *also Mary likes muffins* implies that others like muffins, and does so by exploiting the meaning of *also*. When saying *it is nice but very cheap*, the expectation that something nice should be expensive is not expressed as such, but it is implied by means of the overt contrastive conjunction *but*.

Conversational implicatures, on the contrary, have no overt, explicit linguistic unit that makes them noticeable (cf. ex. 1 above). They arise in a completely implicit way, from the evaluation of the context and the discourse as a whole on the part of the addressee.

Generalized conversational implicatures can be seen as intermediate between the other two types also in this respect, in that they arise as consequences of certain linguistic expressions, but – differently from conventional implicatures – not directly from their *meaning*. If I say *John has three children*, it is through the Maxim of Quantity that my addressee can infer John's having *no more than three* children. The meaning of *three* in itself does not exclude that John may have four or five children, but in this case my linguistic behaviour would violate the Cooperation Principle, because, by saying “three”, I would be less informative than it is reasonable.

For these reasons, as it can be seen in [Scheme 1](#), we have given conventional implicatures an implicitness index of 1, generalized implicatures an index of 2 and conversational implicatures an index of 3.

As for the *concealment of responsibility*, presuppositions triggered by definite descriptions of all kinds (11), by factive predicates (12) and by adverbial clauses (13) can be regarded as having more or less the same index of implicitness, because they all arise from specific linguistic structures that, while encoding certain content, present it as already shared by the addressee:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (11) | <i>His yacht</i> arrives tomorrow
<i>John</i> is ill
<i>The sun</i> is hot today | (as you know, <i>he has a yacht</i>)
(as you know, <i>John exists</i>)
(as you know, <i>the sun exists</i>) |
| (12) | <i>It is really bad</i> that he has stolen Claire's money
He was <i>blamed</i> for having left earlier | (as you know, <i>he has stolen Claire's money</i>)
(as you know, <i>he has left earlier</i>) |
| (13) | <i>When he moved to Khartoum</i> , he was 28
He swims <i>better than I do</i> | (as you know, <i>he moved to Khartoum</i>)
(as you know, <i>I swim</i>) |

We may call such presuppositions “fully encoded presuppositions”, because they explicitly encode their content, although they conceal the speaker’s responsibility for it.¹¹ We assign to them an implicitness index of 4, higher than that of conversational implicatures, for the following reason: both implicatures and presuppositions effect a concealment (respectively, of content and of responsibility), but the final results of such concealments are different. The content concealed by a linguistic utterance by means of implicature is supplied by the addressee during the processing of the utterance, and at the end of this process we can say that it has been recovered. In other words, when the processing of the utterance begins, that content is concealed; but when the processing ends, it has become clear. The concealment effect is thus only partial. In the end, the receiver can attribute to the speaker the intention to convey that content.

In presuppositions, on the contrary, not only does the speaker admit no responsibility for the presupposed content at the beginning of the communication process, but the addressee can do nothing to change this situation. Unlike the content of an implicature, the responsibility of the speaker for the content of a presupposition may never be restored in the process of communication.¹² Moreover, the cognitive effects of the momentaneous lack of attention on the part of the addressee triggered by presupposition may last for long, because there are no limits as to how long the presupposed opinion may remain in her/his mind after the end of the communication event.

We have assigned Topics a lower index of responsibility concealment than presuppositions (namely: 3), because the kind of previous agreement they hint at is slightly less effective in excluding the speaker’s responsibility. While presuppositions present their content as part of the shared knowledge in its strong sense,¹³ i.e. the encyclopedic knowledge shared by all participants in their Long-Term Memory, Topics just present it as recently introduced, which does not exclude a certain amount of responsibility on the part of the speaker for its introduction:

- (14) If they attack, we will be ready (as we just said, they may attack)
As for next summer, we will spend it abroad (there is some discourse pending between us on next summer)

In our opinion the strongest index of concealment must be given to what we suggest to call “pragmatic presuppositions”.¹⁴ Of course all presuppositions are pragmatic in nature with respect to their effects, but the ones we have called “fully encoded” are rather lexical or syntactic as concerns the linguistic material that causes them to arise. On the contrary, those contents that are often called “felicity conditions” for an utterance may also arise as mere pragmatic requirements for the utterance itself to be produced, their content not being encoded by any linguistic material whatsoever.

- (15) What time is it?

In (15) the utterance is appropriate to the situation (as it *has to be*) if (i) the speaker wants to know the time, (ii) the listener can probably provide such information, (iii) the speaker is socially allowed to address the listener with a request, etc. These contextual contents are *fully implicit*, and must be recovered by means of implicature; at the same time, they are presupposed because the very fact of uttering (15) conveys the knowledge of (i)–(iii), although the speaker does not assert them, because (s)he considers the listener aware of them. As a result, pragmatic presuppositions must receive, in our scheme, a double index: 3 (as conversational implicatures) + 4 (as presuppositions) = 7.

Scheme 1 also deals with the fact that the mentioned categories can appear alone, or they can coincide within the same linguistic material. For instance, a presupposition can be codified as the Topic or the Focus of the utterance, and this results in stronger or weaker concealment of responsibility, i.e. in stronger or weaker presupposition effect:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Topic/Presupposition | |
| (16) | The present King of France | visited the Exhibition |
| | | Focus/Presupposition |
| (17) | The Exhibition was visited by | the present King of France |

¹¹ As pointed out by Sbisà (2007:155), “contrary to presupposition, implicature never coincides with what is explicitly coded in the textual segment conveying it”.

¹² Sbisà (2007:59) underlines that while implicatures add new information to the hearer’s knowledge, presuppositions point to utterances (whether present or not in the text) linked to a presupposition trigger and which must be accepted as unchallengeable.

¹³ Cf. Strawson (1964).

¹⁴ Cf. Lombardi Vallauri (2009b).

When more categories appear together, their indices are added to each other in [Scheme 1](#). As a result, a presupposition in Topic has a responsibility concealment index of $3 + 4 = 7$. In the same way, an implicature can be presupposed. In (1), that we resume here, the implicature “John is back” is conveyed by an assertion:

- (1) - Is John back from Paris?
 - Well, there is a red bike in front of the florist shop.

But it may also be triggered by a presupposing structure as in (1a):

- (1a) - Is John back from Paris?
 - Well, the red bike in front of the florist shop leaves no doubt.

The definite description in the answer of (1a) receives, in our scheme, a content concealment index of 3 because it activates a conversational implicature, and a responsibility concealment index of 4 for presenting its content as presupposed. This results in a total concealment index of 7.

More combinations (presupposed conventional implicature, topical generalized implicature, and so on and so forth) can be seen in [Scheme 1](#). It is worth remarking that the whole index assignment system is designed to obtain that the most conceivable level of implicitness, represented by pragmatic presuppositions in Topic, has index 10. This means that a (hypothetical, impossible) text made *only* of this kind of construction would receive an overall implicitness index of 10. A text (also impossible and merely hypothetical) made only of fully encoded presuppositions (index 4) would receive an overall index of 4, and another (impossible) text made half of presuppositions (index 4) and half of generalized implicatures (index 2) would receive an overall index which would be the average between the two, i.e. $(4 + 2)/2 = 3$. A (more possible) text made half of plain assertions (index 0) and half of presuppositions (index 4) would receive an overall index of 2. We will apply this kind of computing to some real texts in the next section.

3. Measuring texts

As suggested above, implicit strategies are to be counted as tendentious, i.e. as trying to convey contents by exploiting the unawareness of the addressees, only if the contents they convey are neither objectively true, nor already shared by the addressees themselves. Assessing the presence of this second condition may of course be subject to uncertainty, because it is impossible to know what all the addressees of a text actually know and believe. As a consequence, aiming at an absolute ranking of implicitness, potentially including all texts, would make no sense. But it is possible to establish *relative* values for texts belonging to the same genre and sharing the same audience. In other words, texts can be compared with some plausibility if they were produced in the same cultural and social environment and with the same purposes.

Of course, subjectivity of evaluation cannot be completely removed. But one can try to reduce it to a minimum. The most important thing is that the same criteria are adopted for the different texts to be evaluated, in order to obtain comparable results. This is easy for texts addressing narrow and homogeneous audiences. But many texts are addressed to multiple audiences whose knowledge and beliefs can vary: in our opinion such texts should be regarded as concealing contents or responsibilities every time they imply or presuppose content that is neither simply true nor evidently shared by *everyone* they may be addressed to. As a consequence – apart from possible oversights, which would not invalidate the principles of the analysis we propose – in the texts evaluated in this section we counted all implicit constructions except those whose content could be considered factually true or certainly believed as true by anyone in the audience.

We have selected a pair of political speeches pronounced by the two Republican candidates Rick Santorum and Mitt Romney during the 2012 Presidential primary campaign. The length of each text is expressed in characters, which allows us to know which portion of the text a single implicit expression represents. For example, in a text of 4200 characters, a time adverbial clause of 21 characters like *When you decided to leave* represents $1/200$ of the total, which we will represent as 0.02. For greater convenience, the occurrences of implicit strategies have been bold-typed. The computation outcome will be discussed later on in this section.

Rick Santorum's speech is approximately 9237 characters long¹⁵:

Rick Santorum's speech

1. So we've been -- I've been very, very blessed, very blessed with great role models for me, as someone who goes out and tries
2. to do the job I'm doing right now, to balance the rigors of running a campaign and trying to **maintain a good and strong**
3. **family**.
4. We all have to do that as Americans. We all have that responsibility, to make both work and work as well as we can, and
5. it's getting harder out here in America. It's getting harder for people to make ends meet, because we have a government
6. **that is crushing us every single day with more taxes, more regulations, and the idea that they know better than**
7. **you how to run your life**. That ultimately is about what this race is about. It goes down to the **very nature of who we are**
8. **as Americans. Are we a country that believes in big government? Do we believe in the smart and elite in this**
9. **country to manage us? Or do you believe in free people and a free economy and building a great America from the**
10. **bottom up?** What do you say?
11. Well, we've put together a plan, and we announced it here in Michigan, **our first 100 days and what we're going to do,**
12. **our freedom agenda, as to how we're going to get this country turned around.** And the first thing we talked about is
13. **what's on the minds of a lot of people right now,** and that is the rising energy costs in this country.
14. We can put millions of Americans -- and that's under-scoring -- millions of Americans back to work if we would **unleash**
15. **the entrepreneurial spirit of -- of our energy sector of our economy.** We can drive down prices, decrease our dependency
16. on foreign oil. We can do it all, but we have a president **who says no.** We have a president who, **when the opportunity to**
17. **open up federal lands for mining and oil and gas drilling,** says no. We have a president who's -- **we have an opportunity**
18. **to open up offshore,** he says no, **deep water,** he says no, **Alaska,** he says no, **build a pipeline,** he says no. We need a
19. president **who says yes to the American people and energy production.**
20. That's right. It's **not just the consumer that's affected by it,** but it's many communities across this country, rural
21. communities that have been struggling. You look at **where the population loss is in this country.** You look at where the
22. unemployment rate's its highest. It's in areas **where the government has shut down and made it virtually impossible**
23. **for us to use our natural resources, to be able to get to that oil, to get to that coal, to get to that timber,** whatever
24. the case may be.
25. Bureaucrats in Washington don't care about flyover country and **those sparsely populated areas that provide us the**
26. **resources upon which we live.** I was in one of those areas just a couple weeks ago, in the Bakken in northwestern North
27. Dakota, and I went to a little town of Tioga, North Dakota. I'll tell you how small Tioga, North Dakota, is. That's about
28. the fifth time I've mentioned it in a speech, and I've yet to get a shoutout from Tioga, North Dakota.
29. It's a small town. It's a small town, and it could be a boomtown. But they're nervous, because the president and EPA is
30. hovering. Yes, they developing oil on private lands, this oil, yeah, this is oil. Oil. Out of rock, shale. It leaches oil. In fact,
31. the highest-quality oil in the world, light sweet crude. It can produce thousands and thousands of jobs up in northwest
32. North Dakota, but they have trouble. They have trouble getting investors to come here. Why? Because they believe --
33. they believe the government is going to shut them down or potentially pull the plug on them. They have a pipeline that
34. they'd love to be able to build to get that oil to market, instead of running truck after truck after truck through the roads of
35. North Dakota and then on the rail. This crude that comes out of this rock is a premium product, but not in North Dakota.
36. They have to pay -- they get a \$32 discount when they sell their oil. Why? Because we have a president **who won't let**
37. **them get their oil to market.**
38. Folks, we need a president **who's on the side of rural America, who's on the side of small-town America, and opens**
39. **up those energy resources for America.** And it's **not just the energy industry that small-town and rural America**
40. **thrive on.** Of course, as you know here in Michigan, it's manufacturing. One of **the things I think that I felt very good**
41. **about** in the -- as well as we did here tonight is **the message of creating jobs,** manufacturing jobs for small-town
42. America resonated here with the people of Michigan. They saw a vision for **how their lives could be better.** They saw a
43. vision **how their ladder to success now could be built down to people with limited skills,** but they desire to work hard
44. and be able to upgrade their skills as they work in a manufacturing facility. We've lost -- from 21 percent of the economy
45. to 9 percent -- not of the economy, but of workers in manufacturers down to 9 percent. That's -- that's just inexcusable,
46. all of it **because government regulation and government taxation.**
47. We put forward a plan the Wall Street Journal calls supply-side economics for the working man, the working men and
48. women of this country, to be able to get those jobs in manufacturing, to be able to get those skills, provide for their
49. family. The average manufacturing job in America pays \$20,000 more a year than the average job in America.
50. We can get those jobs back. We need to slash the corporate rate for taxes to zero. We need to let the regulatory
51. environment, which Barack Obama is destroying and crushing manufacturing. We will repeal every single one of Barack
52. Obama's big government regulations on day on.
53. That is the biggest issue in this race. It's an issue about fundamental freedom. It's an issue about **whether you want the**
54. **government to take your money,** in exchange, give you a right. Give you a right. They're going to give you the right to
55. health care; that's what President Obama promised. But, of course, when the government gives you a right, they can take
56. that right away. And when the government gives you that right, they can tell you how to exercise that right. And they do,
57. not just what doctors you can see and what insurance policies or **how much you're going to get fined** if you don't do what
58. the government tells you to do, but even go so far as to tell you how to exercise **your faith** as part of your health care bill.
59. If the government can go **that far** with Obamacare, just think what's next.
60. Ladies and gentlemen, we need a candidate **who can go out and take on Barack Obama,** who was -- who was an author
61. from 20 years ago, **the author of free-market health care economics, health savings accounts,** has been a fighter for
62. replacing all of these programs across this country at the federal level (inaudible) government-run health care, with not
63. Romneycare or Obamacare, but a program that's based upon **you** called YouCare (ph), because that's **what we believe in,**
64. in America.
65. We've got a -- a great conservative track record on not just health care, but on taking on the big problems that confront
66. this country, the deficit, huge, expanding, exploding debt in this country. Someone has been an advocate ever since I was
67. in politics for a balanced budget amendment, fought tooth and nail to get it passed, came within one vote, but have never
68. **given up trying to fight.**

¹⁵ Both texts are available on the web sites provided in the sitography at the end of this article.

69. We will work to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, but in the meantime, we will do something that
70. no one else has ever successfully done -- but I did -- and that is we will go out and we will end entitlement programs on
71. the federal level, give them back to the states, and cut them dramatically to save money.
72. People said we couldn't do it. We did it. I was the author of welfare reform, welfare reform, which ended a federal
73. entitlement, cut the program, capped it, gave it back to the states, like we need to do with Medicaid and food stamps and
74. a whole host of other programs that are already run by the state and have no business according to -- remember that
75. document, what's it called, oh, yeah, it's the U.S. Constitution. That's it, right?
76. We need to get **those programs back to the states**. We need to save the federal government money. And, more
77. importantly, welfare **didn't just save money, didn't just cut the rolls**, but it saved lives. It put people back to work. It
78. brought people out of poverty. It gave them something that **dependency** doesn't give: hope. And that's **what America is**
79. **all about**, giving opportunity and hope.
80. All of **our economic plan** is based on a very simple concept, based on **what's worked for America from its very founding**.
81. I wave this Constitution at every speech, and I talk about it being **the operator's manual of America**. It's **how America**
82. **works**. It's the "how" of America. But there's another document equally important, which is **the "why" of America**, and
83. that's the Declaration of Independence. And in that declaration is these words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident
84. that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights."
85. That -- that phrase was the most transformation phrase ever written in a government document. That phrase said that we
86. are going to be a country with limited government and believing in free people to be able to form families, and
87. communities, and churches, and educational institutions, and hospitals, and be able to build a great and just society, a free
88. society from the bottom up.
89. That's how America works best, from the bottom up. And that's the solutions that we're going to propose for America,
90. the bottom up.
91. The men and women who signed that Declaration of Independence wrote this final phrase: We pledge to each other -- we
92. pledge to each other our lives, our fortune, and our sacred honor.
93. When they signed that document, they had very little hope, real hope, of actually succeeding in a revolution against the
94. British. The British were the most powerful army in the world and the navy in the world. They were ruled by highly
95. educated, noble people. The uniforms were crisp and stiff. They looked good.
96. But their rulers ruled them from on high, didn't listen to them as they fought the Revolutionary War. Our leaders were
97. different. George Washington, the signature leader of America, was different. He understood that **the greatness of this**
98. **new country was to have leaders who understood that, in spite of their breeding and education, they didn't have**
99. **all the answers, that they could trust the people, that ragtag group of people who stepped forward to volunteer to**
100. **create freedom in this land**.
101. And they believed General Washington believed in them. In fact, some of his boldest moves came not from him or his
102. generals, but from the ranks. That's how America's freedom was won, leaders believing in the people that they led
103. against **those who just thought all the answers resided in those in charge**.
104. Ladies and gentlemen, that is **what made America free**, and that is **what will make America free in the future**. Thank
105. you, and **God** bless.

Number of characters [9.237]

The computation chart we will propose is made up of 10 columns.

- *Column A* indicates the line(s) of the text from which the occurrence has been extracted.
- *Column B* shows the selected occurrence.
- *Column C* tells the categories of implicit communication instantiated by the occurrence (say, presupposition, conversational implicature, Topic, etc.).
- *Column D* indicates the length of the occurrence, limited to the cases of responsibility concealment.
- *Column E* displays the index (that is to say, the intensity) of responsibility implicitness attributed to the categories instantiated by the occurrence (from [Scheme 1](#)).
- *Column F* contains the figures resulting from the product of the extension of each responsibility implicitness occurrence and its concealment index (namely the product of column D and column E). In other words, it tells what is the contribution of that utterance to the overall implicitness of responsibility in the text.
- *Column G* reports the length of the occurrence, limited to the cases of content concealment.
- *Column H* displays the index (intensity) of content implicitness attributed to the categories instantiated by the occurrence (from [Scheme 1](#)).
- *Column I* contains the figures resulting from the product of the extension of each content implicitness occurrence and its concealment intensity (product of column G and column H).
- *Column J* contains the sum of Columns I and F, i.e. the total contribution of each utterance to the implicitness of the text, including (when both present) implicitness of responsibility and content.

The totals at the bottom of columns D and G indicate the extension occupied by implicit strategies within the text. The figure at the bottom of column F expresses the total impact (extension by intensity) of responsibility implicitness in the text. The figure at the bottom of column I expresses the total impact (extension by intensity) of content implicitness in the text.

The overall total at the bottom of column J is the sum of the former two, and expresses the total weight of implicitness (of both kinds) in the text.

In column C, presupposition is represented by the abbreviation *ppp*, and the kind of linguistic trigger is specified, as follows:

- *def. descr.* = definite description (e.g. possessive phrases, definite phrases, proper nouns, personal pronouns, demonstrative adjectives and pronouns);
- *factive* = subordinate clauses depending on factive predicates;
- *lexical trigger* = single words activating presupposed meanings (e.g. in the texts *just, keep, maintain, restore, return, unleash, still*);
- *relative clause* = restrictive relative clause with definite head, presupposing its content;
- *adv. sub. clause* = adverbial subordinate clause (such as temporal, causal, concessive, purposive or comparative) presupposing the truth of its content.

When the occurrence is part of the Focus of the utterance, no further detail is generally added to the above mentioned labels. Only when the occurrence belongs to the Topic of the utterance, is the label “+Topic” added (e.g. “*ppp – def. descr. + Topic*”); in which case, the intensity index will result from the sum of the intensity indexes of the two convergent categories. As for conversational, conventional or generalized implicatures, we haven’t resorted to any further labels.

As can be seen in the computation charts below, the figures (except the intensity indexes) have all been rounded off to the fourth decimal in order to account for the impact of smaller occurrences such as *you* or *God*.

Computation chart 1: Santorum’s speech

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L1	<i>We</i>	<i>ppp – def. descr.</i>	0.0002	4.0	0.0009	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0009
L2–3	<i>maintain a good and strong family</i>	<i>ppp – lexical trigger (maintain)</i>	0.0030	4.0	0.0121	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0121
L6–7	<i>that is crushing us every single day with more taxes, more regulations, and the idea that they know better than you how to run your life</i>	<i>ppp – relative clause</i>	0.0120	4.0	0.0481	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0481
L7–8	<i>the very nature of who we are as Americans</i>	<i>ppp – def. descr.</i>	0.0037	4.0	0.0147	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0147
L8	<i>Are we a country that believes in big government?</i>	<i>conversational implicature</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0044	3.0	0.0133	0.0133
L8–9–10	<i>Do we believe in the smart and elite in this country to manage us? Do we believe in free people and a free economy and building a great America from the bottom up?</i>	<i>conversational implicature</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0142	3.00	0.0425	0.0425
L11	<i>our first 100 days</i>	<i>ppp – def. descr.</i>	0.0016	4.0	0.0065	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0065
L11	<i>what we are going to do</i>	<i>ppp – relative clause</i>	0.0019	4.0	0.0078	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0078
L12	<i>our freedom agenda</i>	<i>ppp – def. descr.</i>	0.0017	4.0	0.0069	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0069
L12	<i>how we’re going to get this country turned around</i>	<i>ppp – adv. sub. clause</i>	0.0044	4.0	0.0178	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0178
L13	<i>what’s on the minds of a lot of people right now</i>	<i>ppp – def. descr.</i>	0.0041	4.0	0.0165	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0165
L14–15	<i>unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of – of our energy sector of our economy</i>	<i>ppp – lexical trigger (unleash) + Topic</i>	0.0068	7.0	0.0477	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0477
L16	<i>who says no</i>	<i>ppp – relative clause</i>	0.0010	4.0	0.0039	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0039

(Continued)

Computation chart 1: Santorum's speech

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L16–17	<i>when the opportunity to open up federal lands for mining and oil and gas drilling</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause + Topic	0.0073	7.0	0.0508	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0508
L17–18	<i>we have an opportunity to open up offshore</i>	Topic	0.0038	3.0	0.0114	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0114
L18	<i>deep water</i>	Topic	0.0010	3.0	0.0029	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0029
L18	<i>Alaska</i>	Topic	0.0006	3.0	0.0019	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0019
L18	<i>build a pipeline</i>	Topic	0.0015	3.0	0.0045	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0045
L19	<i>who says yes to the American people and energy production</i>	ppp – relat. clause + convers. implicature	0.0052	4.0	0.0208	0.0052	3.00	0.0156	0.0364
L20	<i>not just the consumer</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>just</i>)	0.0019	4.0	0.0078	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0078
L20	<i>that's affected by it</i>	Topic	0.0019	3.0	0.0058	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0058
L21	<i>where the population loss is in this country</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0040	4.0	0.0160	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0160
L22–23	<i>where the government has shut down and made it virtually impossible for us to use our natural resources, to be able to get to that oil, to get to that coal, to get to that timber</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0155	4.0	0.0619	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0619
L25–26	<i>those sparsely populated areas that provide us the resources upon which we live</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0073	4.0	0.0290	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0290
L36–37	<i>who won't let them get their oil to market</i>	ppp – relative clause	0.0037	4.0	0.0147	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00147
L38–39	<i>who's on the side of rural America, who's on the side of small-town America, and opens up those energy resources for America</i>	ppp – relative clause + convers. implicature	0.0112	4.0	0.0446	0.0112	3.0	0.0335	0.0781
L39	<i>not just the energy industry</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>just</i>)	0.0026	4.0	0.0104	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0104
L39–40	<i>that small-town and rural America thrive on</i>	Topic	0.0040	3.0	0.0120	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0120
L40–41	<i>the things I think that I felt very good about</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0040	7.0	0.0280	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0280
L41	<i>the message of creating jobs</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0026	4.0	0.0104	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0104
L42	<i>how their lives could be better</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0028	4.0	0.0113	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0113
L43	<i>how their ladder to success now could be built down to people with limited skills</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0073	4.0	0.0290	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0290
L46	<i>because government regulation and government taxation</i>	Topic	0.0052	3.0	0.0156	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0156
L53–54	<i>whether you want the government to take your money</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0045	3.0	0.0136	0.0136
L57	<i>how much you're going to get fined</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0030	4.0	0.0121	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0121
L58	<i>your faith</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0010	4.0	0.0039	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0039

(Continued)

Computation chart 1: Santorum's speech

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L59	<i>that far</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0008	3.0	0.0023	0.0023
L60	<i>who can go out and take on Barack Obama</i>	ppp – relative clause + convers. implicature	0.0034	4.0	0.0134	0.0034	3.0	0.0101	0.0235
L61	<i>the author of free-market health care economics, health savings accounts</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0068	7.0	0.0477	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0477
L63	<i>You</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0003	4.0	0.0013	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0013
L63	<i>what we believe in</i>	ppp – relative clause + Topic	0.0016	7.0	0.0114	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0114
L68	<i>given up trying to fight</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>given up</i>)	0.0022	4.0	0.0087	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0087
L76	<i>those programs back to the states</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0030	4.0	0.0121	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0121
L77	<i>didn't just save money</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>just</i>)	0.0021	4.0	0.0082	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0082
L77	<i>didn't just cut the rolls</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>just</i>)	0.0023	4.0	0.0091	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0091
L78	<i>dependency</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0011	3.0	0.0032	0.0032
L78–79	<i>what America is all about</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0023	7.0	0.0159	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0159
L80	<i>our economic plan</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0016	7.0	0.0114	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0114
L80	<i>what's worked for America from its very founding</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0044	4.0	0.0178	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0178
L81	<i>the operator's manual of America</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0030	4.0	0.0121	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0121
L81–82	<i>how America works</i>	ppp – relative clause	0.0016	4.0	0.0065	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0065
L82	<i>the "why" of America</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0018	4.0	0.0074	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0074
L97–100	<i>the greatness of this new country was to have leaders who understood that, in spite of their breeding and education, they didn't have all the answers, that they could trust the people, that ragtag group of people who stepped forward to volunteer to create freedom in this land.</i>	ppp – factive	0.0248	4.0	0.992	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.992
L103	<i>those who thought all the answers resided in those in charge</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0054	4.0	0.0217	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0217
L104	<i>what made America free</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0021	4.0	0.0082	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0082
L104	<i>what will make America free in the future</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0037	4.0	0.0147	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0147
L105	<i>God</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0003	4.0	0.0013	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0013
Total			0.2107		0.9159	0.0447		0.1341	1.0500

Romney's speech is made up of roughly 5310 characters:

Mitt Romney's speech

1. Thank you all. To the people of Florida tonight, thank you for **this great victory**. There are fewer
2. candidates than when the race began, but the three gentlemen left are serious and able competitors. And I
3. congratulate them on **another hard-fought contest in this campaign**. Primary contests are not easy – and
4. they're not supposed to be. As this primary unfolds, our opponents in the other party have been watching.
5. They like **to comfort themselves with the thought that a competitive campaign will leave us divided and**
6. **weak**. But I've got some news for them: A competitive primary does not divide us; it prepares us. And
7. when we gather here in Tampa seven months from now for our convention, ours will be a united party
8. with a winning ticket for America! Three years ago this week, a newly elected President Obama faced the
9. American people and said that if he couldn't turn the economy around in three years, he'd be looking at a
10. one-term proposition. We're here to collect. Since then, we've had 35 months of unemployment over 8
11. percent. Under this President, Americans have seen more job losses and more home foreclosures than
12. under any President in modern history. In the last ten days, I met a father who was terrified that this
13. would be the last night his family would sleep in the only home his son has ever known. I've met seniors
14. who thought **these would be their best years** and now live day to day worried about making ends meet.
15. I've met Hispanic entrepreneurs who thought **they had achieved the American Dream** and are now seeing
16. it disappear. In his State of the Union Address, the President actually said, "Let's remember how we
17. got here." Don't worry, Mr. President, we remember exactly how we got here! You won the election!
18. **Leadership is about taking responsibility, not making excuses**. In **another era of American crisis**,
19. Thomas Paine is reported to have said, "Lead, follow, or get out of the way." Mr. President, you were
20. elected to lead, you chose to follow, and now it's time for you to get out of the way! I stand ready to lead
21. this Party and our nation. **As a man who has spent his life outside Washington, I know what it is like**
22. **to start a business. I know how extraordinarily difficult it is to build something from nothing. I**
23. **know how government kills jobs** and, yes, **how it can help**. My leadership helped build businesses from
24. scratch. My leadership helped save the Olympics from scandal and give our athletes **the chance to make**
25. **us all proud**. My leadership cut taxes 19 times and cast over 800 vetoes. We balanced every budget, and
26. **we kept our schools first among fifty states**. My leadership will end the Obama era and begin a new era of
27. American prosperity! This campaign is about more **than replacing a President**. It is about **saving the**
28. **soul of America**. President Obama and I have **two** very different **visions of America**. President Obama
29. wants to grow government and **continues to amass trillion dollar deficits**. I will **not just slow the**
30. **growth of government**, I will cut it. I will **not just freeze government's share of the total economy**, I
31. will reduce it. And, **without raising taxes**, I will **finally balance the budget**. **President Obama's view of**
32. **capitalism** is to send your money to **his friends' companies**. **My vision for free enterprise** is to **return**
33. **entrepreneurship to the genius and creativity of the American people**. On one of the most personal
34. matters of our lives, our health care, President Obama would turn decision making over to government
35. bureaucrats. He forced through Obamacare; I will repeal it. Like **his colleagues in the faculty lounge**
36. **who think they know better**, President Obama demonizes and denigrates almost every sector of our
37. economy. I will make America the most attractive place in the world for entrepreneurs, for innovators,
38. and for job creators. And **unlike the other people running for President**, I know how to do that.
39. President Obama orders religious organizations to violate their conscience; I will defend religious liberty
40. and overturn **regulations that trample on our first freedom**. President Obama believes **America's role as**
41. **leader in the world** is a thing of the past. He is intent on shrinking our military capacity at a time when the
42. world faces rising threats. I will insist on a military so powerful no one would ever think of challenging
43. it. President Obama has adopted a strategy of appeasement and apology. I will stand with **our friends**
44. and speak out for **those seeking freedom**. President Obama wants to "fundamentally transform"
45. America. We want to **restore America to the founding principles that made this country great**. Our
46. plans protect freedom and opportunity, and **our blueprint** is the Constitution of the United States.
47. Together, **we** will build an America where "hope" is a new job with a paycheck, **not a faded word on an**
48. **old bumper sticker**. **The path I lay out** is not **one paved with ever increasing government checks**
49. **and cradle-to-grave assurances that government will always be the solution**. **If this election is a**
50. **bidding war for who can promise more benefits**, then I'm not your President. You have that President
51. today. But **if you want to make this election about restoring American greatness**, then I hope you will
52. join us. **If you believe the disappointments of the last few years are a detour, not our destiny**, then I am
53. asking for your vote. I'm asking each of you to remember **how special it is to be an American**. I want
54. you to remember **what it was like to be hopeful and excited about the future, not to dread each new**
55. **headline**. I want you to remember **when you spent more time dreaming about where to send your**
56. **kids to college than wondering how to make it to the next paycheck**. I want you to remember **when**
57. **you weren't afraid to look at your retirement savings or the price at the pump**. I want you to
58. remember **when our White House reflected the best of who we are, not the worst of what Europe**
59. **has become**. **That America is still out there. We still believe in that America. We still believe in the**
60. **America that is a land of opportunity and a beacon of freedom**. We believe in **the America that**
61. **challenges each of us to be better and bigger than ourselves**.
62. This election, let's fight for the America we love. We believe in America.
63. Thank you. And **God** bless America

Computation chart 2: Romney's speech

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L1	<i>this great victory</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0030	4.0	0.0121	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0121
L3	<i>another hard-fought contest in this campaign</i>	ppp – factive	0.0073	4.0	0.0294	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0294
L5–6	<i>to comfort themselves with the thought that a competitive campaign will leave us divided and weak</i>	ppp – factive	0.0154	4.0	0.0618	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0618
L14	<i>these would be their best years</i>	ppp – factive	0.0049	4.0	0.0196	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0196
L15	<i>they had achieved the American Dream</i>	ppp – factive	0.0058	4.0	0.0234	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0234
L18	<i>leadership is about taking responsibility, not making excuses</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0102	3.0	0.0305	0.0305
L18	<i>another era of American crisis</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>another</i>)	0.0049	4.0	0.0196	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0196
L21–22	<i>As a man who has spent his life outside Washington, I know what it is like to start a business. I know how extraordinarily difficult it is to build something from nothing</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0262	3.0	0.0785	0.0785
L23	<i>how government kills jobs</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0041	4.0	0.0166	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0166
L23	<i>how it can help</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0023	4.0	0.0090	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0090
L24–25	<i>the chance to make us all proud</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0047	4.0	0.0188	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0188
L26	<i>kept our schools first among fifty states</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>kept</i>)	0.0066	4.0	0.0264	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0264
L27	<i>than replacing a President</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0043	4.0	0.0173	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0173
L27–28	<i>saving the soul of America</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>save</i>)	0.0041	4.0	0.0166	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0166
L27–28	<i>the soul of America</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0030	4.0	0.0121	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0121
L28	<i>two visions of America</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0036	4.0	0.0144	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0144
L29	<i>continues to amass trillion dollar deficits</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>continue</i>)	0.0072	4.0	0.0286	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0286
L29–30	<i>not just slow the growth of government</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>just</i>)	0.0060	4.0	0.0241	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0241
L30	<i>not just freeze government's share of the total economy</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>just</i>)	0.0089	4.0	0.0354	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0354
L31	<i>without raising taxes</i>	Topic	0.0036	3.0	0.0107	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0107
L31	<i>finally balance the budget</i>	conventional implicature (<i>finally</i>)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0043	1.0	0.0043	0.0043
L31–32	<i>President Obama's view of capitalism</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0060	7.0	0.0422	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0422
L32	<i>his friends' companies</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0038	4.0	0.0151	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0151
L32	<i>My vision for free enterprise</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0047	7.0	0.0330	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0330
L32–33	<i>to return entrepreneurship to the genius and creativity of the American people</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>return</i>)	0.0126	4.0	0.0505	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0505

(Continued)

Computation chart 2: Romney's speech

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L35–36	<i>his colleagues in the faculty lounge who think they know better</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0100	7.0	0.0699	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0699
L38	<i>unlike the other people running for President</i>	Topic	0.0073	3.0	0.0220	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0220
L40	<i>our first freedom</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0028	4.0	0.0113	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0113
L40	<i>regulations that trample on our first freedom</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0045	4.0	0.0181	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0181
L40	<i>our first freedom</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0028	4.0	0.0113	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0113
L40–41	<i>America's role as leader in the world</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0058	7.0	0.0409	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0409
L43	<i>our friends</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0019	4.0	0.0075	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0075
L44	<i>those seeking freedom</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0036	4.0	0.0143	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0143
L45	<i>to restore America to the founding principles that made this country great</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (restore)	0.0119	4.0	0.0475	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0475
L46	<i>our blueprint</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0023	7.0	0.0158	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0158
L47	<i>we</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0004	4.0	0.0015	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0015
L47–48	<i>not a faded word on an old bumper sticker</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0062	3.0	0.0186	0.0186
L48	<i>The path I lay out</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0026	7.0	0.0185	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0185
L48–49	<i>one paved with ever increasing government checks and cradle-to-grave assurances that government will always be the solution</i>	conversational implicature	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0202	3.0	0.0605	0.0605
L49–50	<i>If this election is a bidding war</i>	conversational implicature + Topic	0.0051	3.0	0.0153	0.0051	3.0	0.0153	0.0305
L50	<i>who can promise more benefits</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0047	7.0	0.0330	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0330
L51	<i>If you want to make this election about restoring American greatness</i>	conversational implicature + Topic	0.0109	3.0	0.0328	0.0109	3.0	0.0328	0.0655
L52	<i>If you believe the disappointments of the last few years are a detour, not our destiny</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0134	7.0	0.0936	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0936
L53	<i>how special it is to be an American</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0053	4.0	0.0211	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0211
L54–55	<i>what it was like to be hopeful and excited about the future, not to dread each new headline</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0139	4.0	0.0557	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0557
L55–56	<i>when you spent more time dreaming about where to send your kids to college than wondering how to make it to the next paycheck</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0192	4.0	0.0768	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0768
L56–57	<i>when you weren't afraid to look at your retirement savings or the price at the pump</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0128	4.0	0.0512	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0512

(Continued)

Computation chart 2: Romney's speech

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L58–59	<i>when our White House reflected the best of who we are, not the worst of what Europe has become</i>	ppp – adv. sub. clause	0.0143	4.0	0.0573	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0573
L59–60	<i>That America is still out there. We still believe in that America. We still believe in the America that is a land of opportunity and a beacon of freedom</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (still).	0.0234	4.0	0.0934	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0934
L60–61	<i>the America that challenges each of us to be better and bigger than ourselves</i>	ppp – relative clause	0.0121	4.0	0.0482	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0482
L63	<i>God</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0006	4.0	0.0023	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0023
Total			0.3156		1.3842	0.0831		0.2405	1.6247

4. A more detailed comparison

The sums at the bottom of the charts show remarkable differences between Romney and Santorum's speeches, the former having higher ratings. This means that Romney uses more tendentious strategies.

The extension indexes must be compared to 1, which represents the whole text. As for intensity, each fraction of the text can be more or less implicit on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. For example, in Santorum's speech, implicit communication phenomena have an extension of about 25% (0.2554). Structures conveying implicitness of responsibility have an extension of $\approx 21\%$ (0.2107) and, multiplied for the intensity indexes of the different instantiated subtypes, add up to an impact of ≈ 0.92 (0.9159). Implicitness of content occupies $\approx 4.5\%$ (0.0447) in extension and, due to its intensity indexes, comes to ≈ 0.13 (0.1341). As a result the global impact of implicit communication in this text is estimated approximately at ≈ 1.05 (1.0500).

As compared to implicitness of content, strategies covering the speaker's responsibility are employed to a greater extent. A few examples are: *our freedom agenda* (line 12), in which the speaker presents as granted that he has a "freedom agenda", or *what's worked for America from its very founding* (line 80), where he presents as obvious that there exists something that "has worked" for America ever since. Santorum occasionally uses Topics to present information as given in the preceding discourse, although it is totally new instead. In lines 17–18: *we have an opportunity to open up offshore* (Topic), *he says no* (Focus), the "potential" opportunity is presented as Given information, although it has never been mentioned before. The same goes for the relative clause in line 63: *what we believe in*, where the information presented as Given and presupposed (but actually both New and questionable) is that all American people believe in the same something.

Conversational implicatures are also exploited at times, as in Santorum's lines 9/10 – *do you believe in free people and a free economy and building a great America from the bottom up?* It's rather straightforward to see that what Santorum really intends to communicate with this utterance is that, contrary to what he thinks Obama has done so far, he will stand up for free people and a free economy. This is clearly inferred by virtue of the Cooperation Principle (Maxim of Relation). The same goes for lines 8/9 – *Do we believe in the smart and elite in this country to manage us?* where he lets the receiver infer that only the smart people and the rich are presently ruling the country. Both utterances provide interesting examples of strategic exploitations of the Cooperation Principle, as the information communicated (or better said, the intentional meaning) is assumed to be relevant to the communicative situation. Differently from presuppositions, these contents are not presented as already part of the shared knowledge and, in this sense, they are slightly more challengeable than presuppositions; but certainly much less challengeable than explicit assertions.

Mitt Romney's speech proves to be richer in implicit strategies. Responsibility implicitness has an extension of $\approx 32\%$ (0.3156) and content implicitness an extension of $\approx 8.3\%$ (0.0831). The former, multiplied for its intensity ratings, leads to a total impact of responsibility concealment of ≈ 1.4 (1.3842); and the latter, with its intensity ratings, gives ≈ 0.24 (0.2405). Global implicitness shows a total impact of 1.6247 (≈ 1.6). The effectiveness of some interesting implicatures is

empowered by the use of negation, as in the occurrences in line 18: *Leadership is about taking responsibility, not making excuses*; and lines 47–48: *Together, we will build an America where “hope” is a new job with a paycheck, not a faded word on an old bumper sticker*. Here, negation bears the implicature that the government in office only makes excuses and considers “hope” just a word to print on old bumper stickers rather than a value to uphold proudly. The effect of such strategies is remarkably strong because the contents implicitly conveyed by the two implicatures, though probably unreal, will anyway be assumed to be cooperative and therefore commonly considered true information.

As already commented on Santorum’s line 63, both texts contain strategies where Presupposition and Topic are realized at a time. This predictably causes the speaker’s responsibility to be more concealed, and the processing of the related content to be less attentive. In Santorum’s speech we find occurrences of such “double strategies” like *when the opportunity to open up several lands for mining . . . (Topic/Presupposition) he says no (Focus) (lines 16/17)* where the presupposed content is also part of the Topic of the utterance. In Romney’s speech, a similar convergence can be found at line 52: *the disappointments of the last few years (Topic) are a detour (Focus)*, where the existence of “the disappointments” is presupposed and, at the same time, presented as Given information although it occurs for the very first time in the text.

The implicitness effect triggered by a topical presupposition is twofold: (a) by presupposing some content, the sender of the message is virtually saying to the addressee: “you already know that, so there is nothing to test about the truth of this content”; (b) by realizing it as the Topic of the sentence the speaker suggests a further reason (“we are already talking about that”) for directing the main decoding energies to the other part of the utterance. Vice versa, the effect of a focalized presupposition would be different, as illustrated by the following occurrence in Santorum’s speech: *One of the things I think that I felt very good about (Topic) – as well as we did here tonight – is the message of creating jobs (Focus) (lines 40/41)*, where “the message of creating jobs” appears as the Focus of the sentence, attracting more attention and placing less reliance on shared knowledge than a topical presupposition.

A further interesting combination of categories is represented by presupposed implicatures (cf. section 2.3). In Santorum’s speech, there are a few examples of this kind:

- (line 19) We need a president *who says yes to the American people and energy production*
- (line 60) We need a candidate *who can go out and take on Barack Obama*

On the strength of the Cooperation Principle, we understand via implicature that in line 19 the virtual president the speaker is talking about is himself. In addition, it is also presupposed that this president can say yes to the American people and energy production. Similarly, in line 60 it is implied that the candidate in question is Santorum himself, and it is presupposed that he can take on Barack Obama. Also here, we have twofold-level implicitness but, contrary to topical presuppositions, implicitness is partly on the side of content and partly on the side of responsibility.

In Schemes 2 and 3 we give the quantitative differences between the two speeches as they result from the computation charts above.

For a clearer understanding of the ratings, we present the figures about the extension of implicit material in Scheme 2, and those about the degree of implicitness intensity in Scheme 3. Mitt Romney’s speech exceeds Rick Santorum’s both with regard to the extension of responsibility concealment (32–21%) and to content concealment (8.3–4.5%). As for the resulting degrees of implicitness (Scheme 3), Romney’s text markedly tops Santorum’s in both kinds of implicitness (responsibility 1.38–0.92; content 0.24–0.13). Although always higher in Romney’s speech, in both texts implicitness of

Scheme 2

Differences of implicitness extension (% of whole text).

	Rick Santorum	Mitt Romney	Approximate differences
Extension of implicit responsibility	0.2107 ≈ 21%	0.3156 ≈ 32%	0.1049 ≈ 10.5%
Extension of implicit content	0.0447 ≈ 4.5%	0.0831 ≈ 8.3%	0.0384 ≈ 3.8%
General extension of implicit encoding	0.2554 ≈ 25.5% ^a	0.3987 ≈ 40%	0.1433 ≈ 14%

^a Resulting from the sum of Length of implicit responsibility (0.2107) and Length of content responsibility (0.0447). The same goes for Romney’s speech indexes.

Scheme 3

Differences of implicitness impact (or intensity).

	Rick Santorum	Mitt Romney	Approximate differences
Total responsibility implicitness	0.9159 ≈ 0.92	1.3842 ≈ 1.38	0.4683 ≈ 0.47
Total content implicitness	0.1341 ≈ 0.13	0.2405 ≈ 0.24	0.1064 ≈ 0.11
Total implicitness impact	1.0500 ≈ 1	1.6247 ≈ 1.6	0.5747 ≈ 0.57

responsibility has a wider extension as compared to implicitness of content, and this certainly backs up what has been said in section 2 about the stronger persuasive efficacy of strategies covering responsibility (presuppositions, Topics, etc.). The global difference in implicitness between the two texts is approximately 0.57 (Romney 1.6 to Santorum 1), which is not a negligible difference. The implicitness degree of Romney's speeches probably played a role in his being the winner in the race against Santorum, although the last phase of the campaign led Obama to victory once more.

4.1. A further comparison: more neutral texts

That massive implicit encoding of content or responsibility for disputable information is typical of texts characterized by strong persuasive aims is further confirmed by its minor presence in texts where this function is absent or weaker. We propose the analysis of a couple of such texts (which we call A and B), made with the same method.¹⁶

Text A. From the *Introduction to Cambridge Examination Papers* (2005: v–vi)¹⁷

1. This collection of four complete practice tests comprises past papers from the University of Cambridge ESOL
2. Examinations First Certificate in English (FCE) examination; students can practice these tests on their own or with the
3. help of a teacher. The FCE examination is part of a group of examinations developed by Cambridge ESOL called the
4. Cambridge Main Suite. The Main Suite consists of five examinations that have similar characteristics but are designed for
5. different levels of English language ability. Within the five levels, FCE is at Level B2 in the Council of Europe's Common
6. European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching assessment. It has also been accredited by the
7. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in the UK as a Level 1 ESOL certificate in the National Qualification
8. Framework. The FCE examination is widely recognized in commerce and industry and in individual university faculties
9. and other educational institutions. Paper 1. Reading. This paper consists of four parts. Each part contains a text and some
10. questions, Part 4 may contain two or more shorter related texts. There are 35 questions in total, including multiple choice,
11. gapped text and matching questions. Paper 2. Writing. This paper consists of two parts which carry equal marks. For both
12. parts candidates have to write between 120 and 180 words. Part 1 is compulsory. It provides texts which are sometimes
13. accompanied by visual material to help in writing a letter. In Part 2. there are four tasks from which candidates choose one
14. to write about. The range of tasks from which questions may be drawn includes an article, a report, a composition a short
15. story and a letter. The last question is based on the set books. These books remain on the list for two or three years. Look
16. on the website, or contact the Cambridge ESOL Local Secretary in your area for the up-to-date list of set books. The
17. question on the set books has two options from which candidates choose one to write about. Paper 3. Use of English. This
18. paper consists of five parts and tests control of English grammar, vocabulary and spelling. There are 65 questions in total.
19. The tasks include gap-filling exercises, sentence transformation, word formation and error correction. Paper 4. Listening.
20. This paper contains four parts. Each part contains a recorded text or texts and some questions including multiple choice,
21. sentence completion, true/false and matching. Each text is heard twice. There is a total of 30 questions. Paper 5. Speaking.
22. This paper consists of four parts. **The standard test format** is two candidates and two examiners. One examiner takes part
23. in the conversation, the other examiner listens and gives marks. Candidates will be given photographs and other visual
24. material to look at and talk about. Sometimes candidates will talk with the other candidates, sometimes with the examiner
25. and sometimes with both.

Number of characters [2.439]

As can be noticed, in Text A questionable information is basically entrusted to assertive statements (e.g. *The FCE examination is widely recognized in commerce and industry and in individual university faculties and other educational institutions*, lines 8–9). The text contains several presuppositional phrases – primarily definite descriptions – whose first introduction is generally done by plain assertion in previous discourse (e.g. among others, line 13 *there are four tasks* → line 14 *The range of tasks*; lines 4–5 *for different levels* → line 5 *the five levels*; line 11 *consists of two parts* → lines 11–12 *both parts*). Almost all presuppositions in this text can be regarded as “honest”, conveying content *bona fide* previously shared by the receiver. The one borderline case is probably represented by the definite description in line 22 (*The standard test format*), which presupposes that there is a “standard test format”, though arguably this is not commonly known information and though its existence has not previously been introduced in the text. Accordingly, the implicitness impact of the text seems limited to this occurrence, giving a global implicitness index of 0.0603 ($\approx 5.74\%$ of Santorum's discourse and 3.7% of Romney's).

¹⁶ For the sake of brevity, we analyze shorter texts as compared to Santorum and Romney's speeches.

¹⁷ The text has been extracted from *Cambridge First Certificate in English 7: student's book*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

Computation chart – Text A. *Introduction to Cambridge Examination Papers*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L22	<i>The standard test format</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0086	7	0.0603	0	0	0	0.0603
Total			0.0086		0.0603	0		0	0.0603

Text B promotes tourism in Scotland. As a consequence, it is to be expected that it makes use of persuasion strategies, though probably not as much as a sample of political propaganda. Still, unlike an oral production, the fact that its addressees will read it on a website (where it remains permanently exposed) can be expected to deter the excessive use of persuasive tricks, whose presence may become too evident with careful reading.

Text B. *Scottish Castles* (cf. sitography at the bottom)

1. **From magnificent city landmarks to mysterious ruins**, Scotland is renowned for **its iconic castles**. Whether you are looking
2. to explore **the largest** in the country, follow a regional trail or seek out those hidden gems, there is plenty of history to uncover
3. as each castle has a fascinating tale to tell. Show less Head to Aberdeen City and Shire where you will find Scotland's only
4. designated Castle Trail boasting 17 highlights to visit. Dunnottar Castle is perched on a cliff-top, a beautiful fortress,
5. while Craigievar is a fine example of Scottish baronial architecture and **the striking curtain wall** at Balvenie will leave you
6. awe-inspired. Scotland's capital is home to Edinburgh Castle, which overlooks the city from an extinct volcano. See the
7. nation's crown jewels before **admiring some of the oldest Renaissance decorations in Britain** in The Great Hall. Step back
8. to a time of James V at Stirling Castle's recently refurbished Royal Palace and experience a world of lavish colour with rich
9. and elaborate decor. The castle also houses some beautiful tapestries and you can experience what was once a bustling kitchen
10. as well as a Regimental Museum. Eilean Donan Castle, by the picturesque village of Dornie on the main route to Skye, is one
11. of **the most admired castles** in Scotland. Ruined in a Jacobite rising, it has now been restored and is the base of Clan McRae.
12. Many of Scotland's castles still belong to the clans, including Eilean Donan and Dunvegan Castle on the Isle of Skye.
13. Dunvegan has been home of the chiefs of Clan MacLeod for 800 years and is the oldest continuously inhabited castle in
14. Scotland. One of **the most romantic castles** in the Highlands, Cawdor is forever connected with Shakespeare's tragedy
15. *Macbeth*. Although this 14th century tower house was constructed long after the historical events that inspired the play took
16. place, it has always been the ancestral home of the Thanes of Cawdor. Wherever you are in Scotland, you're never far away
17. from a striking ruin or charming castle which will amaze and excite you with its tales of past lives and loves.

Number of characters [1.802]

Indeed, Text B is slightly more implicit than Text A. Most of the presuppositional phrases are proper names (*Scotland, Aberdeen City, Edinburgh Castle, The Great Hall*, etc.) designating tourist attractions that really exist. What can be regarded as less objective is the presupposition that certain (positive) qualities are associated with these attractions and monuments, as for instance in line 5: *the striking curtain wall*. Similarly, in line 11 *the most admired castles* presupposes that there are "much admired castles" in Scotland. The same holds for *the most romantic castles* in line 14. Because of a higher frequency of such presuppositions (see also the lexically triggered one in line 7), the global implicitness of this text

Computation chart – Text B. *Scottish Castles*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L1	<i>From magnificent city landmarks</i>	Topic	0.0261	3	0.0782	0	0	0	0.0782
L1	<i>its iconic castles</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0089	4	0.0355	0	0	0	0.0355
L2	<i>the largest</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0055	4	0.0222	0	0	0	0.0222

(Continued)

Computation chart – Text B. *Scottish Castles*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Line	Text	Instantiated category	Length (respons.)	Intensity indexes (respons.)	Length × intensity (respons.)	Length (content)	Intensity indexes (content)	Length × intensity (content)	Global implicitness
L5	<i>the striking curtain wall</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0133	7	0.0932	0	0	0	0.0932
L7	<i>admiring some of the oldest Renaissance decorations in Britain</i>	ppp – lexical trigger (<i>admire</i>)	0.0300	4	0.1199	0	0	0	0.1199
L11	<i>the most admired castles</i>	ppp – def. descr.	0.0133	4	0.0533	0	0	0	0.0533
L14	<i>the most romantic castles</i>	ppp – def. descr. + Topic	0.0122	7	0.0855	0	0	0	0.0855
Total			0.1093		0.4878	0		0	0.4878

amounts to 0.4878 ($\approx 46\%$ of Santorum's discourse and 30% of Romney's).

As can be seen, neither of these two texts contains implicatures conveying questionable information. Compared to the two political speeches analyzed in the previous sections, they exemplify less intense and less pervasive exploitation of implicit and tendentious strategies, albeit the persuasive intent of Text B locates it in an intermediate position.

5. Conclusions

As cursorily mentioned in the first part of this work, implicitness, in all its manifestations, is not the only “technique” exploited by persuasive communication. There are undoubtedly many other strategies helping the speaker convey her/his message as convincingly as possible. Still, implicit communication is definitely one of the most effective. Normally, the responsibility for the truth of a message is entrusted to the speaker, who can choose to convey it directly or indirectly. But when questionable content is proposed in a way that makes the commitment of the speaker less evident, it may become difficult for the audience to challenge it. In this case, the effect on the receivers' knowledge might be prejudicial.

What we have seen is one of the main functions information structure has in private as well as in public communication. So far our proposal to apply the results of theoretical research in a quantitative perspective is still in embryo, yet we believe it may be very productive. Of course there is a large amount of arbitrariness in the procedure we have adopted. The intensity indexes we have attributed to the different kinds of implicit encodings may be fixed differently. The extension of every single chunk of implicit information may be calculated differently. Some implicit strategies we have considered as conveying questionable information may be interpreted as encoding more or less *bona fide* true contents, and vice versa, according to different cultural standpoints. Some further parameters we have disregarded may be included. This may lead to slightly different results, for example as concerns the comparison between the implicitness impacts of the two speeches pronounced by the Republican candidates during the 2012 USA Presidential primary campaign, which we have examined. However, though some details may change, the general picture would probably remain quite similar.

In any case, since the results of what is just a first attempt seem to be promising, a lot more work may be worth doing in order to perfect the analysis carried out herein.

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