

The Manipulative Disguise of Truth: Tricks and Threats of Implicit Communication

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Distorting minds and visions of the world is one of the most threatening consequences of implicit communication. For this reason, its use in several communicative contexts ends up being manipulative, often in a weakly perceptible way. The discussion will zoom in on the role played by implicatures and presuppositions in underencoding relevant meanings in a message thus altering recipients' construal of a proposition. It will be contended that the reason why this is manipulative hinges on the property of these two discourse devices to exploit subliminal attentional processes in sentence comprehension. Also, based on data collected from a corpus of political speeches, the interplay of implicit language and evidentiality will be canvassed with particular regard to the way the assertion or presupposition of contents contributes to modulate degrees of sourceness and commitment of the speaker so as to keep his or her conversational moves from being challenged by addressees. Concluding remarks will highlight the importance of becoming familiar with the communicative tools responsible for manipulative language and how they should be properly mastered in order to become informed citizens and critical thinkers in contemporary democracies.