**Deception and implicitness: how to tell whether people mean what they don't say**

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One of the most difficult tasks we face when we want to analyse discourse has to do with over-interpretation. How do we know that what we see in a given discourse actually *is* in that discourse? How do we know that what we interpret (or want to interpret) was actually what the speaker meant?

Many times analysts resort to the context in order to make sure they get to the right interpretation. Yet, one question remains elusive regarding context: what are the grounds for the analyst to decide whether an assumption is part of the communicative context of the data s/he analyses? Analysts seldom make explicit formal criteria in this respect. To illustrate the issue, I will discuss the difficulties involved in accounting for i) deceptive discourse (as an elaboration on Galasiński’s (2000) account of deception) and ii) unexpressed/implicit/missing premises in argumentative discourse, by means of two examples, one from political discourse, the second from media discourse.

In this methodological contribution I will postulate that cognitive pragmatic insights on how people understand each other (building on Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory, 1995, 2012) provide sensible guidelines to legitimise an analyst’s reconstruction. More specifically, I will argue that considerations of relevance (construed as a ratio between the amount of effort language users put into communication and the benefits they get from it) can be used as criteria for informed and plausible interpretative reconstructions of discourse.