

ATTITUDES AND ATTITUDE-DRIVEN INFERENCES IN ECONOMIC EDITORIALS

Marcella Bertuccelli Papi

University of Pisa

This paper sets out to describe the role of attitudes in inferential understanding of implicit meanings . Specifically, we shall discuss the relation of attitudes to opinions, and we shall exemplify our proposals in two economic editorials. Theoretically, our proposals rest on the hypothesis that no cognitive representation of an utterance meaning can be given independently of an attitude frame which is deputed to express the speaker position towards what he is saying.

attitude, meaning, inference, cognition, opinion, evaluation.

1. INFERENTIAL COMMUNICATION

The recent debate on the said-unsaid distinction (following Grice 1975/1989, Sperber and Wilson 1986, Carston 1988, Recanati 1989, Bach 1994), has drawn the attention to the role of inferential mechanisms not only in the derivation of implicatures, but also in the identification of the propositional representation expressed by an utterance. What is said is less than what is communicated, but is more than what is conceptually encoded by an utterance: what is said includes the specification of context-dependent information far beyond what Grice had hypothesized (essentially, reference fixation and disambiguation). The logical proposition expressing the context-independent literal meaning of the utterance is either to be saturated because it lacks some specification in order to be truth-evaluable, or it is to be enriched because it does not correspond to what the speaker really said, or again it is to

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be used as a premise in an inferential process leading to the identification of what the speaker meant .

In this paper I would like to concentrate on the role of attitudes in the identification of the speaker meaning. The discussion presupposes the following theoretical claim: The proposition p expressed by an utterance is not the minimal unit upon which explicit and implicit communicational meanings can be built. Even when complete in itself, p is able to guarantee the retrieval of only one part of the meanings conveyed by the utterance, namely, the ones that are linked to the content of what is said. A whole range of implicit meanings are derived, instead, via attitude-driven inferences, that is inferences that are drawn not so much from what is said as from the assumption that, in saying that p, the speaker has also expressed some position towards p.

Consequently, we propose that ATT(p) is the formula that should be taken into account for a systematic analysis of implicitness, where ATT is to be understood as the set of attitudes the speaker holds with respect to p, and p stands for the propositional rendering of what is said (as well as, possibly, of other components of the communicative situation, including the context and the addressee(s)).

This formula is semantico-pragmatic in nature, in that ATT clearly represents the speaker, while p represents the concepts expressed by his/her words .Both entities are mentally represented, but they belong to two different systems., respectively referential and evaluative. Attitudes express inner states, and originate in cognitive appraisals of some state of affairs which are directly or indirectly linked to general or encyclopaedic knowledge of the world and to how this knowledge is viewed in terms of the cultural values shared by a community. The existence of attitudes therefore necessarily leads to recognizing that meaning extends beyond language as a formal system to the social and cognitive domains of language use(see Ostmann 1986). Assuming attitudes as an inalienable component of communicational meaning is consequently necessary if we want to preserve the intuition that languages serve not only to express thoughts but also to communicate something about ourselves.

1. 1. *On the nature of attitudes*

Logicians have long recognized the existence of "propositional attitudes". Predicates such as *know, believe, assume, think, doubt* represent a well-known phenomenon to logicians and philosophers of language, since they give rise to considerable technical problems concerning concept intensions and extensions.

However, having been more interested in the solution of the problems they give rise to, than in the linguistic characterization of their meanings, logicians have never provided an exhaustive list of such predicates, nor have any satisfactory (empirically adequate) criteria for identifying plausible candidates to the expression of attitudes ever been made explicit.
The only generalizations that can be gathered from the literature on propositional attitude predicates are the following: attitudes are the link between the individual and reality; consequently, 2, attitudes relativize the meaning of a proposition by making it dependent on subjective judgments.

If moved from the field of logic to the field of verbal intercation, such statements - or better, the intuition they translate - have important consequences: assuming attitudes as a crucial link

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

between the individual and reality implies acknowledging that there is a subjective component in the framing itself of thoughts.

And indeed, cognitive psychologists have insisted on the idea that the mind does not just construct and store logical forms: it entertains them in different ways. Consequently, if we ignore the attitude component everything we say is but half-said - it is a "plicit", which can be made wholly ex-plicit only by taking into account the content of the sometimes implicit and sometimes ad-plicit attitudes they are associated with (I think the same basic intuition underlies Bally's notion of "modalité": cf. Bally 1913).

Attitudes enjoy the status of psychologically realistic entities, and attempts have been made at constructing semantic and pragmatic theories centred on such entities (Bach and Harnish 1979).The range of attitudes normally credited in the literature is limited, however, to the epistemic, deontic and boulomaic attitudes of logically-based semantics. In my opinion, linguistics needs further categories for the analysis of this notion. I have elsewhere explored the hypothesis that emotional and ethic attitudes are responsible for the identification of covert meanings conveyed by items from all levels of the linguistic organization of the message (Bertuccelli Papi 1996), but a deeper analysis is needed in order to fix the boundaries of the notion's conceptual extension and intension.
Such boundaries should extend at least in two directions - horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, attitudes range from one extreme to which some positive value is attached , to the opposite extreme to which some negative value is expressed. Vertically, various degrees of intensity can be measured. Attitudes are not, in other terms, rigid, discrete categories: rather, they are complex sets of internally articulated values resulting from intersections within a multidimensional space.

1.2. *Attitudes and opinions*

Attitudes are traditionally a cornerstone of social psychology. Much social psychological work is on 'attitude change' as a function of some variable in the message or in the communicator. In most works, however, the nature of attitudes is not theoretically analyzed. Within this traditionm the notion of attitude is usually conflated with that of opinion. Attention is especially paid to the discursive manifestation of attitudes and opinions in mass communication and political science, while their cognitive aspects, visisble even in the commonsense meaning of "having and attitude towards X" as "being in some mental state", or "having some mental representation of X" are almost totally neglected.

A cognitive approach to opinions and attitudes as forms of social cognition is in van Dijk 1981,1995.
Cutting a long and complex philosophical and psychological discussion short, van Dijk assumes that both attitudes and opinions are a type of belief. They share this property with knowledge, which is also a type of belief, namely, following the suggestions from contemporary epistemology, knowledge is assumed to consist of true justified beliefs. According to this definition, then , beliefs constitute knowledge if they are true and based on sufficient and acceptable evidence, which implies a view of knowledge as relative to socioculturally shared commonsense of scientific truth criteria or verification instances.
Opinions, instead, are defined as those beliefs that do not pass the test criteria for knowledge, either because they are false are because they are not agreed upon by other people. Furthermore, beliefs that qualify as opinions are characterized by an evaluative dimension -

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

that is, they imply a judgment (bad/good, or right/wrong) according to certain norms or values.
Both knowledge and opinions are, therefore, beliefs, but while the criteria for identifying the former as factual beliefs are epistemic in nature, the criteria used for identifying opinions as evaluative beliefs are doxastic and consist of norms and values.
Opinions are not, of course, necessarily only personal opinions; they may be shared by other people, by social groups and communities, thus becoming social opinions which are measured and evaluated relative to some moral order.

The notion of social opinion is assumed by Van Dijk as the basis for the definition of attitudes Attitudes are here identified as "complex structures of social opinions", that is sets of social, general, and abstract evaluative belief shared by members of a group.
"Les attitudes sont des complexes d'opinions....Les attitudes ne sont jamais spècifiques mais toujours générales, et donc indépendentes due contexte. Finalement, les attitudes ne se constituent pas d'opinions générales quelconques, mais d'une structure hiérarchique d'opinions cohérentes...Du point de vue social nous pouvons ajouter que les attitudes, comme notion intuitive mais aussi comme notion théorique, existent seulment pour des objets ou des faits socialement pertinents"(1981:560).
This implies that, within this system, it does not make sense to say that individual persons have an 'attitude' about this apple, or their neighbour. They either have personal opinions about them, or in case of socially known events or issues, they may share (social) opinions or attitudes with others. Coherent complexes of attitudes, in turn, contribute to the building up of ideologies, which are fairly abstract systems of evaluative beliefs, typically shared by a social group, that underly the attitudes of a group. Thus, a racist ideology may be assumed to organize more specific attitudes, and consequently opinions about immigration, integration, housing, work, education etc. of immigrants and minorities.

Although contributing an important tessera to the understanding of attitudinal meaning, the definition proposed by Van Dijk hinges upon criteria which are far from being unquestionable.
The distinction between factual and evaluative beliefs as the discriminating criterion for the identification of opinions, and of attitudes as their hierarchically superordinate organizing category is, in fact, fairly thin. On one side, it might be argued that true/false is an evaluation as much as right/wrong or good/bad - what makes the difference is simply the domain of validation. On the other side, true beliefs may be knowledge, but much of our knowledge is imbued with evaluative elements. A sentence like "Many African immigrants have reached Europe" may contain a piece of knowledge, but depending on our opinions on immigrants, the sentence may acquire the communicative sense of a criticism or a complaint.

Not even the quantitative criterion turns out to be satisfactory, because an opinion initially held by one sole person may well become a piece of knowledge by objective criteria.
As to the relationship between opinions and attitudes, van Dijk's definition misses the important insight that one's attitudes may diverge from one's opinions, to such an extent that one can express the same opinion with different attitudes. Furthermore, opinions may be proved to be true or false, while attitudes cannot - they can be criticised, rejected, agreed upon, but they cannot be said to be true or false, which implies that expressing an opinion is not exactly the same as expressing an attitude. Attitudes can determine opinions, but the reverse does not seem to be intuitively the case.

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1.3. *A tentative definition*

In the lack of any explicit theorizing about it, I shall put forward some hypotheses on the nature of attitudes that will function as guidelines for the discussion that follows (for a more detailed analysis, see Bertuccelli Papi in prep.).
Specifically, I shall assume a notion of attitude as the cognitive representation of the speaker within his/her utterance (since now onward we shall assume that the same holds for the written counterparts of these notions).
An utterance is such because there is a speaker who produces it. Its meaning, therefore, is inalianable from the speaker, and as long as there is a cognitive representation for the utterance meaning, there must be some representation of the speaker within it. I would like to claim that the speaker is represented within an utterance meaning in the form of a category ATT, internally articulated into subcategories that may be implicitly or explicitly conveyed at all levels of the utterance linguistic structure- from sounds to texts , at micro- and macrolevels. It follows from this hypothesis that while it may be the case that an utterance does not express an opinion, it is never the case that an utterance does not express an attitude.
Attitudes are the direct expression of a position, they are not a description of it (the distinction between expressing an attitude and describing it ideally matches the distinction between performatives and constatives).
Attitudes position people with regard to one another by signalling the status of the information that is being communicated in terms of both cognitive and emotional evaluations. I shall identify the former as corresponding to an underlying structure "In saying x I believe so and so" , the latter to an underlying "In saying x I am being so and so", evidently moulded on the Austinian "In saying x I am doing y" (Austin 1962)
Attitudes therefore function as indexes for how a person wants to be understood.

2. ATTITUDES IN TEXT/DISCOURSE

Intuitively, attitudes would seem to be less relevant in scientific discourse, but this intuitive claim in fact is not right. Attitudes may be more or less transparent, and in scientific discourse they may be more difficult to detect, but they are nonetheless essential. In theory, it may be possible to produce a totally neutral, non committal text; in reality, no such text is ever produced, and if it is, their non-committal quality is likely to conceal an unwillingness to take sides, to enter into debate or discussion. Highly technical discourse, whether written or spoken, such as those belonging to mathematics or economy, seem to be candidate for neutrality, but even these typically argue a thesis or disprove a theory and therefore embody evaluations . Unlike in conversational exchanges or testimonials, appraisals in scientific discourse, however, are more likely to emerge at the global text level, than at the micro-level of the individual sentence , but once they have been identified, it is always possible to uncover their roots in the attitudes implicitly conveyed by smaller units, be they lexical items, clauses, or individual speech acts.
The degree of transparency of the speaker/hearer's attitude is a potential parameter for the setting up of text-typologies.

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

2.1. *Attitudes in economic editorials*

Newspaper editorials are a type of text that exhibits a high degree of transparency : they are articles in which the reader expects to find the author's position about some problem or state of affairs. In particular, I would like to show the way attitudes emerge in economic editorials, and the ways they contribute to identify the author's opinion.

2.1.1. *Editorials*

Editorials are a type of opinion discourse which is mass-communicated and circulated.
A general warning is in order when considering this type of texts. Despite all appearances, they rarely express the personal views of the individual editor. Rather, editorials are a typical instance of the polyphony of language use (cf. Ducrot 1984) in that they count as the opinion of the newspaper, and are normally assumed to be shared by the social or cultural group it belongs to (remarkably, editorials are seldom signed, and rarely written in the first person). This has clear consequences on the overall structure of the text, both in terms of linguistic choices and in terms of its rhetorico-strategic organization. Here, we shall concentrate on the ways the attitudes of the polyphonic editor help track the newspaper's opinion upon some specific matter.
To this end I have selected two articles from the Financial Times which I found particularly interesting because in them the author's attitudes turn out to be the pivot of the multilayered dimension of implicitness they are characterized by. The first one exploits literary allusion as a means to uncover implicit meanings beyond words, the second hinges on the polisemy of the lexicon, on evidentiality and on the quality of speech acts.

3. TEXT 1

EUROPE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Jonathan Swift would have been richly *diverted* by the contortions western European governments are performing over how they should *christen* the 12-nation grouping just *reborn* under the Maastricht treaty. Just as in Gulliver's Travels the *rulers* of Lilliput and Blefescu fought for decades *over whether they should crack their eggs at the big end or at the little end, the leaders* of late-1993 Europe are spreading *confusion* over *the small matter* of a *name* for their remodelled organisation. Is it still the European Community grown from the 1957 Treaty of Rome and responsible for 35 years and deepening economic and political integration? Or is it something new, with ambitions that sound grander and vaguer - the European Union?
The legalistic answer is that it is both. Maastricht created a *hybrid* in which the old European Community coexists with a new framework for cooperation between its individual sovereign governments, within the European Union. When its members discuss matters that fall within the parameters of the Treaty of Rome, such as Trade, they are the EC. When they talk about new areas of cooperation under Maastricht -foreign and security policy, justice and home affairs - they are EU.
Confused? You are not alone. Even the organisation's own foreign ministers have already found difficulty in following this fine distinction to the letter. Deciding when they should switch EC hats for EU ones in the Council of Ministers this week looked like becoming the diplomatic equivalent of *determining how many angels can dance on the head of a pin*. Small wonder that they decided to *rename* themselves the Council of the European Union, regardless of whether they are discussing EC or EU business.
In doing so, they (like Maastricht) papered over fundamental disagreements between governments concerning the nature of their enterprise. "Federalist" ministers could go away crowing that the cause of Union had been advanced by one glorious centimetre, even though the EU enjoys no "legal personality". Sceptics such as Britain could protest that they had not budged one inch from their insistence on cooperation case by case.
That still leaves the problem of what *mere mortals* are to make of it all. To listen to the British government sometimes, you would think it was still more appropriate to call the EC/U the Common Market, when it has long

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since been something *substantially* more than that. The *euro-priests*, on the other hand, invest the nomenclature iitself with almost *mystical powers*, as if to think Union means that it is.

This newspaper has no easy answer to the *conundrum*, but in order not to sow *daily confusion*, we have to choose. As the opening words of the treaty state: "The high contracting parties establish among themselves a European Union, hereinafter called 'The Union' ". The FT will take the union's heads of state at their word: European Union it is. (Financial Times 13 November 1993).

The Financial Times anonymous editorial comment conveys a range of implicit meanings, among which some are derived via attitude-driven inferences and contribute to defining the final appraisal of the author . This, I will summarize in the following macroproposition: " The author believes that the name is not the most important problem the European Community has to face". In what follows I shall explore the paths of meaning that the reader has to follow in order to get to the final evaluation.

Let me begin from the title. Probably everybody will be able to recognize the literary allusion evoked by it:

Shakespeare, II,ii "What's a Montague? It is nor hand nor foot/ nor arm, nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man. Oh! Be some other name:/ What's in a name? That which we call a rose BY ANY OTHER NAME would smell as sweet...."

The indirect reference is not so much to the tragedy of the two unfortunate lovers, as to the philosophical dispute lying behind and beyond Shakespeare's quotation, namely the querelle between nominalists and realists amounting to endless discussions on the relationship between language and reality. It is this nested allusion that creates the background against which the first hint of the author's attitude is set. It is clear from the beginning that he is casting a doubt on the real relevance of a mere change in the name of the European community. On the other hand, the philosophical debate implicitly alluded to in the shakespearean quotation is echoed by explicit reference to another, idle philosophical dispute, that is the one about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. The two, isotopically interwoven , references contribute to reinforce the idea of FUTILITY as one of the semantic components of the author's attitude to the problem under discussion. The latter is further strengthened by the next literary reference we are going to analyze, the one from Swift's Gulliver's Travels.

Placed at the the very beginning of the article, the name of Jonathan Swift cannot but trigger in the reader a host of associations that are likely to reverberate on the rest of the article. To the majority of the readers, the name of the Irish satirist is most likely linked to that of Gulliver, and of his adventurous "Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World."(the complete title reads further: In four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several Ships "), in which the fictitious character tells of his shipwreck on the island of Lilliput, whose inhabitants are dwarfs only six inches tall, of his staying with the giants of Brobdingnag, and of other fantastic lands he happens to visit during his voyages at sea. The second sentence of the article evokes an episode from the first part of Swift's famous masterpiece . As Reldresal," Principal Secretary (as they style him) of Private Affairs" in Lilliput tells Gulliver

"....the two great Empires of Lilliput and Blefescu....have.....been engaged in a most obstinate War for six and thirty Moons past. It began upon the following Occasion. It is allowed on all hands That the primitive way of breaking Eggs before we eat them, was upon the larger End: But his present Majesty's Grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the ancient Practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers.

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

Whereupon, the Emperor his Father published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penaltys, to break the smaller End of their Eggs. The People so highly resented this Law, that our Hostorys tell us there have been six Rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his Life, and another his Crown. These civil Commotions were constantly fomented by the Monarchs of Blefescu; and when they were quelled, the Exiles always fled for Refuge to that Empire. It is computed, that eleven thousand Persons have, at several times, suffered Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller End. Many hundred large Volumes have been published upon this Controversy. But the Books of the Big-Endians have been long-forbidden, and the whole Party rendered incapable by Law of holding Employments. During the Course of these Troubles, the Empersors of Blefescu did frequently expostulate by their Embassadors, accusing us of making a Schism in Religion, by offending against a fundamental Doctrine of our great Prophet Lustrog, in the fifty-fourth Chapter of the Brundecral.....This, however, is thought to be a meer Strain upon the Text: For the Words are these; That all true Believers shall break their Eggs at the convenient End: and which is the convenient End, seems, in my humble Opinion, to be left to every Man's Conscience, or at least in the power of the Chief Magistrate to determine" (Book I, Ch. IV).

The explicit simile between the problem for which it was fought (not exactly "for decades") in Lilliput and the "small matter" for which European governments are "performing contortions" hides some more meanings that are implicitly conveyed through the evocation of Swift's work. For one thing, the literary allusion is enriched by the use of the verb "to divert", which occurs, inter alia, in the summary prefaced to Chapter 3 of Gulliver's Travels ("The author diverts the Emperor and his nobility of both sexes in a very uncommon manner") . Moreover, the "rulers" of Lilliput and Blefescu were Emperors, and their comparison with the European "leaders" is not without consequence, in that something is implicitly suggested about their stature. But the thing we are mostly interested in concerns the information we gather from our cultural knowledge of Swift's work: Swift's "bitter wisdom" as Yeats called it, is at the same time a sharp criticism of the evils of his age and the expression of a wish for a greater use of commonsense, of rationality. It is to this piece of background knowledge that we connect our search for the attitude of the author of FT. The latter is gradually taking shape in the mind of the reader as a compositional function of the two literary references mentioned so far and further follows two main semantic paths : on one side, the semantic area created by the lexical items "christen - reborn- europriests - mystical powers", which ironically equals the renaming of the European Community to the christening of a new-born child, and consequently endowes the European Ministers with thaumaturgical powers ("as if to think Union means that it is"). As such, they appear high above the existence of "mere mortals", who are left with the problem of what to make of it all. The "mere mortals" thus become the crossroads from which the second semantic path departs, the one made up of terms which revolve around the idea of "confusion" - " confusion, hybrid, confused, conundrum, confusion".

The contrast between the two lexical sets clearly contributes to highlight the attitude of the writer towards the whole question, but it is not only the lexicon and the cultural background that determine its identification. The argumentative structure of the text is also globally responsible for further implicit meanings . The first paragraph explicitly states that "the leaders of late 1993 Europe are spreading confusion over the small matter of a name for their remodelled organisation", which contains two evaluative comments - "spreading confusion", "and small matters". The two questions that follow this statement are meant to clarify the confusion, and this they do by presenting the differences between the old European Community and the new European Union in the form of an alternative that demands a choice between two ways of "being" Europe.

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

The second paragraph conveys the implicit message that the legalistic answer is not a real answer to the problem of "substance". The foreign Ministers themselves are unable to make a choice, implicitly state the third and fourth paragraph.
The fifth paragraph takes into account the "mere mortals" and argues, on the basis of the contrast analyzed above, that the confusion in the minds of governments and ministers does not help the citizens to make an opinion upon the question.
The final paragraph finally focuses on the newspaper, and while explicitly declaring that the answer to the problem is not easy, it actually suggests a choice, "in order not to sow daily confusion", a clause which implicitly asserts the social role of the economist, a role that has long been established. "...the social function of the economist goes beyond the creation of theoretical models. As an expert, he is expected to intervene on the actual economic system and contribute something contingently practical, in terms of forecast, advice, recommendations and proposals"(Merlini Barbaresi 1988: 134). Due to this conventionally established role, the final proposal acquires a particularly influential power: the evaluations implicitly conveyed in the modalities outlined above add to it a subjective dimension which reinforces such power.

4. TEXT 2

The next article we are going to analyse equally exhibits some encoding of the economist's position towards the problem under discussion, along with attitudinal appraisals that are only implicitly conveyed. The latter lie hidden in the lexicon and , again, in an argumentative structure essentially consisting of the institutional acts of analysis, prediction and proposal that have been recognized as organizing the macrostructural patterns of the economist's discourse.

TOKJO'S BLUES
The Japanese authorities have long enjoyed an enviable reputation for astute management of the world's most dynamic economy. They are losing their reputation, as the economy has lost its dynamism. *Worse*, they seem unwilling, or unable, to do anything efective about it.
Earlier this week, Mr Yasushi Mieno, governor of the bank of Japan, admmitted that he could see no sign of the *recovery*, though he doubted whether the recession would develop into a "worsening spiral". *This is slight comfort.*
In any case, he insisted, the central bank has "taken all the necessary steps in terms of monetary policy" after cutting its discount rate seven times since July 1991. *This is an unpersuasive excuse.*
Even as he spoke, the Ministry of international trade and industry disclosed that industrial production had *dropped* by 3.8 percent year-on-year in the third quarter. Prospects for industrial output also remain poor, with inventories 1.1 per cent higher at the end of september than three months earlier and the monthly index of leading indicators *in decline*. Meanwhile, real house-hold spending was *down* 1.7 per cent in the year to September.
With companies suffering *declining* demand at home and the burden of an appreciated yen, profits are inevitably *depressed*, as is the stock market, *down* 19 per cent since september. Economists share **the gloom**, disagreeing only over whether gross national product will *stagnate* or *grow slightly* next year, after *stagnating* or *falling* this year.
Unlike Germany, Japan seems to be *in the grips* of a true *deflation*: wholesale prices have been *falling* at an annual rate of around 3-4 per cent a year, while consumer prices are *rising* at about 1 per cent. In the Japanese case, there is no excuse for monetary stringency. Yet broad money has *grown little* since 1991. No wonder nominal gross domestic product expanded by a mere 0.2 per cent in the year to the second quarter of 1993.
Since the combination of expansionary fiscal packages with slow monetary *growth* tends to *push up* the exchange rate, monetary policy must be loosened as well. If low interest rates have little effect, the Bank of Japan could *inject* money via *aggressive* open market *operations*. The authorities could also *increase* the *responsiveness* of bank lending to interest rate cuts, by helping *accelerate* the *removal* of bad debts from bank balance sheets. Meanwhile, radical deregulation - including liberalisation of agricultural imports - should be sold as a way of dampening any incipient inflation and creating new opportunities for *growth*.

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

Why should an economy with no inflation, huge productive potential and an exceptionaly strong fiscal position suffer persistent stagnation? If the Japanese authorities cannot think of a really good answer to this question, they should try harder to stop it being asked. (Financial Times 26 November 1993)

The topics discussed in this article are explicitly stated in the opening paragraph, and can be semantically represented as the conjunction of the two propositions underlying the sentences S1: Japanese economy is in decline, and S2: Japanese authorities are unable to find a way out. The propositions are individually developed into paragraphs to warrant the truth of the initial statements. Thus, lines 4-11 report the opinions of the authorities - the governor of the Bank of Japan and the Ministry of international trade and industry- while lines 12-19 analyse the data of the economic crisis Japan is suffering. This much represents, in the global design of the text, the semantic content of the argumentation. But we have argued above that no propositional content is given as such in the communicative process : propositions are always associated with attitudes that specify the position of the speaker/ writer towards what s/he is saying/writing. Reading and understanding texts therefore implies understanding such position as much as its propositional content - even more, it implies understanding which propositional contents are really meant by the speaker/writer as a function of the attitude explicitly or implicitly expressed . In other words, the process of text understanding does not involve identification of propositional content on one side and attitudinal appraisals on the other side. Rather, identification of the author's attitudinal appraisals leads to the identification of deeper propositional contents, implicitly conveyed and inferentially recoverable, which represent the true point of the text.
In our text, the key for this level of understanding is provided by the lexicon.

This article is divided into two main sections , roughly corresponding to a) analysis of the situation (1-18) and b) proposals (19-27). The central paragraphs, in which the data of the Japanese crisis are analysed, are characterised by lexical items which cluster around a semantic notion of movement, negatively qualified as either downward movement or lack of movement - *dropped,remain, decline, down, depress, stagnate, fall, deflation.* The last paragraph, instead, includes positive movement lexical items - *growth, push up, inject, increase, accelerate.* The opposition is strengthened by the presence of phrases that empty some verbs in the first part of their potential for positive meaning("grow *slightly*",expanded by a *mere* 0.2 per cent). If we add to this that the negative data about the crisis are reported by the Japanese authorities, whose evidential presence is always clearly stated, while the positive proposals of the final paragraph come from the editorialist,whose presence is implicitly provided by the context, we are immediately aware of a diverging attitude in the way of dealing with the problem. It is this diverging attitude - negative and depressed in the first case, positive and constructive in the second - that provides the basis for the identification of the point the author is making. This point is synthetically provided by the title, and it is analytically scattered through the text via another lexical network, including items that cluster around the notion of PATHOLOGY. Let me expand upon this point.

The BLUES occurring in the title is a polysemous words.
On one side it stands for "depression of spirits, despondency" in the colloquial register, and it is generally thought of as a shortened form for "blue devils", the apparitions seen in delirium tremens. Associative meanings expand to the music, where the blues originating among the Negroes is so called because it exploits a melody of a mournful and haunting character, frequently in a twelve-bar sequence instead of the traditional 16 bars used by western music.

ISBN: 0 08 043 438X

On the other side, given the specific context of this article, "blues"cannot but evoke "blue chips", that is the shares that constitute the safest investments in the Stock Exchange. The two meanings are not given equal status in text, however. The first is resumed, both phonetically and conceptually by "the gloom" occurring in the fourth paragraph. The connection establishes a level of text coherence through the conceptual links with such words as *recovery, suffering, depressed ,to be in the grips of , inject, aggressive operation, responsiveness, removal, dampening.* These terms all suggest the idea that Japanese economy is ill. Notice however, that "the gloom", the term that selects the depression reading of the "blues" via backward inference, is attributed to Japanese economists. This is a fundamental issue.

If we ideally follow the lines of comments about Japanese economy on one side and Japanese economists on the other side, we see that the really negative attitude of the editorialist concerns the latter. Since the very beginning of the article, their incapability or unwillingness to find a way out is said to be "worse" than the crisis itself. The comparative is semantically ambiguous and pragmatically misleading: it semantically presupposes the contrast between two entities - the crisis is negative but what is more negative is the way Japanese authorities face it - but in fact the two entities are not placed on the same level. The Japanese economy is the object of the Japanese economists's attitude , and the latter is in turn the object of the editorialist's negative judgment, from which it does not necessarily follow that the editorialist's judgment extends to Japanese economy. As a matter of fact, the editorialist grants that Japanese economy is not as dynamic as it used to be, but he suggests some effective remedies for it , which implies that his/her attitude towards the crisis is not entirely negative : the possibility of a solution is envisaged. On the contrary, his/her attitude towards the Japanese authorities is reproachful, and this is expressed through the comments upon the words of the governor of Japan central bank - "This is slight comfort" and "This is an unpersuasive excuse", through the final blame implicit in the rhetoric question and in the concluding remark expressed by the conditional clause implying that the real solution is a matter of willingness.

If considered from this perspective, the reference to the blue chips sounds clearly ironical - a depressive attitude is not a good investment for economy.

5. CONCLUSION

As we have tried to show , there are many ways to implicitly convey attitudes in a text, both at micro- and macrolevels. Lexical and syntactical choices interact with the distribution of information, and with rhetorical patterns of argumentation to create a tight set of interconnections from which a multifaceted speaker meaning follows. In our opinion, the role of attitudes in the construction of such meaning is crucial, even in texts that exhibit lower degrees of transparency under this respect.

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