On the Political Message: Pretending to Communicate

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> "I should say "With what porpoise?"
> Don't you mean "purpose"? said Alice.
> I mean what I say, the Mock Turtle replied in an offended tone."
> Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*.

> "I take this defect among them to have risen from their ignorance; by not having hitherto reduced politicks into a science ... They are expressed in the most plain simple terms, wherein those people are not mercurial enough to discover above one interpretation."
> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels: A Voyage to Brobdingnag*.

1. *Implicating* rather than saying

Messages are *politically advantageous* if they are easy for the speaker to *deny* or difficult for the addressee to *reject*. Politicians in particular but also news reporters know they must develop strategies to avoid commitments to the truth of their expressed statements. They should make sure there are circumstances under which they will be able to *deny* their assertions or any undesired interpretations of them. The speech acts of the cautious speaker must, therefore, be so formulated as to easily allow a *denial* in the form of "I *deny* having said that". As a result, they tend to *imply* rather than state explicitly.

1.1. Pretending not to state

"Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it so that when men come to be undeceived it is too late; the jest is over, and the tale has had its effect."
Jonathan Swift, *The art of political lying*.

Implicit messages are easier to *deny* for the simple reason that they are not stated. Below I consider the linguistic devices used by a newspaper reporter to induce interpretations he presumably believed can be denied, since they are inferred rather than stated explicitly. The report is about an incident which took place a few years ago. A bus driver in West (Israeli) Jerusalem was attacked by one of the passengers. In "Davar" (2.8.86), a (left wing) Israeli daily, the headline read as follows:

(1)   "An Arab youngster from Hebron tried to take over a bus — but the driver got over him."

Most of the people (over a hundred) that I have asked as to the meaning of this headline have agreed, quite confidently, that it indicated an act of terrorism. On what ground did they generate this *implicature*? All that is stated explicitly is a mention of a violent act. Why terrorism, then: There are other alternatives. What Gricean norm (Grice 1975, 45ff) was violated here that encouraged just such a reading? Clearly, the mention of the aggressor's origin ("an Arab from Hebron") gave rise to a political interpretation. Given the hostility between the Palestinians and the Israelis, an act of violence of Palestinians against Israeli Jews is generally interpreted as a political event. This extra information — a breach of the maxim of Quantity (Grice 1975, 45ff) — triggered this *implicature*. A similar headline (2 below), which neglects to mention the aggressor's origin, was not as uniformly interpreted by readers. Rather, their responses varied as between the above reading and an alternative one — an act of a mad man:

(2)   "A youngster tried to take over a bus — but the driver got over him."

While the headline in (1) above is unambiguous, the rest of the news article wavers as between confirming and disconfirming the hypothesis raised by that headline. In the lead, the reader learns that the aggressor's motivation is unclear: It could be either a terrorist's or a mad man's act. However, in order to nevertheless sustain the terrorism hypothesis, the reporter disclosed that "in the bus there traveled girls from the religious college in Bait Vagan" (a religious neighborhood — R.G). The impression one gets is that the party violated was very vulnerable — women only. This is disconfirmed later, though — a covert breach of the *Quantity maxim*. There were male passengers on the bus as well, though this is not recoverable from the above statement.

To enhance their vulnerability, the female passengers' description overtly violates the *maxim of Quantity*. To describe them properly would be to refer to them as students, or as passengers, i. e., to assign them a functional description as required by the situation. Instead, the reporter used a sex-based description ("girls"), which also alludes to their young age. The *implicature* generated supports the terrorism hypothesis, since it is directly related to their vulnerability. Note however, that the reference to their

young age, implied by the use of "girls" (as opposed to other alternative referring expressions such as "youngsters", or "young women"), is another manipulative device. Given that they were college students, the "girls" must be over 18 — very much like the "terrorist"'s age (19). However, he was not referred to as a "boy", but rather as a "youngster" (see also Ariel to appear). In addition, the reference to their religious character also serves to intensify their vulnerability, since religious girls are supposed to be more innocent. This extra information — another breach of the maxim of Quantity — encourages a reading directly related to the Israeli-Arab conflict and further supports the terrorism hypothesis.

Only towards the middle of the news article does the reader suspect that s/he must have jumped into conclusions too fast, since now s/he is told that the driver too was an Arab. Had this information been presented in the headline, no clear-cut terrorism *implicature* could have been generated. The statement in (3) below did not generate a terrorism *implicature* exclusively. Rather, the readers' (about a hundred) responses alluded to three equally possible hypotheses: Arab inner conflict, terrorism, and mental disturbance:

(3)   An Arab youngster from Hebron tried to take over a bus — but the Arab driver got over him.

Placing this information so far down in the article is a breach of the *maxim of Manner*. The fact that both the aggressor and the driver were Arabs cannot be treated unevenly. Since this is not an overt violation of the norm, it generates no implicature, but simply allows the reader to entertain the terrorism hypothesis a little further. Only toward the end of the article the hypothesis that this was an act of a mentally disturbed person is allowed to take over.

Undoubtedly, the news reporter was telling the truth, even the whole truth, yet he misled his readers: He only pretended to communicate the truth, but in fact he lied, since by telling a truth he *implicated* a lie. Will he be right to defend himself by saying: "I *deny* having said that (it was an act of terrorism")?

1.2. Another way of *pretending not to state*

Implicit messages are *politically superior* to explicit messages not only because they are easier for the speaker to *deny*, but also because they are more difficult for the addressee to *reject*. Such messages abound in commercials. Commercials would rather *implicate* than state, since they too are to refrain from lying explicitly. The *implicit* message in most advertisements results from *ambiguities*. *Ambiguous messages* are difficult to process and consequently are difficult to reject.

In view of the restrictions on the capacity of working memory, understanding involves the reduction of multiple readings. The principle of cognitive economy thus explains why, where possible, a recipient would rather *disambiguate* an *equivocal message* than indulge in double meaning. Poetic texts but also commercials use *ambiguity* as a device to enforce the recipient to invest energy in processing their messages. Since commercials have only a moment of the consumer's attention, they employ messages that require extra processing. Besides, such effort consuming messages tend to spare possible controversy since controversy by itself requires extra effort.

To illustrate the processing of an *ambiguous message*, consider the commercial in (4) which represents a Marilyn Monroe type of woman whose light dress is swirled by the wind so that her legs and panties show. This picture is first made to be interpreted along the lines in the inscription : 'She has got it all', and then along the following inscription 'Delta', which is the name of the underwear brand. The viewer must be perplexed, since s/he has first assigned the girl the idea that "she has got it all" and then found out it must refer to the underwear. However, since ambiguities are hard to entertain, the recipient of this text generates an *implicature*, whereby s/he assigns the underwear the qualities of the sexy woman or associates the two in terms of cause and effect. The commercial is thus reduced to one interpretation which might be formulated as follows: if you wear Delta, you will look like Marilyn Monroe. The reason why the commercial is not explicit about its message is obvious: explicit messages can be easily *rejected*, particularly if they are untrue. *Implicit messages*, on the other hand, are much more difficult to contradict.

(4)   She has got it all.
           Delta

1.3.   *Pretending not to assert*

1.3.1. *Analogies* as statements in disguise

Another device of introducing messages into the discourse in a way that would make them difficult to *reject* is by *subordinating* them *informationally*. *Informationally subordinate material* is difficult to *reject* in the sense that it is difficult to *reject* a presupposition (see also Erteschik-Shir/Lappin 1979). Presuppositions, as is well-known, are invariant under *negation*. For example, by *rejecting* the statement that 'X is Y' (e.g., 'it is not the case that X is Y'), one willy nilly accepts the existence of X:

(5)   The king of France is bald

(5a)   which is a lie (i. e., he isn't).

(5b)   *which is a lie — (i. e., there is no king of France).

Likewise, *nonasserted material* in a discourse longer than a sentence is not *rejected* when the *main assertion* is *negated* (see also Ariel 1985). Consider, for that matter, the device of *metaphoring*, or rather, the use of *analogies* in persuasion, as a manipulative way of *subordinating information* so that it may go *unrejectable*:

(6)   "Success is feminine like a woman; if you cringe before her, she will override you. So the way to treat her is to show her the back of your hand. Then maybe she will do the crawling."
         William Faulkner (in Brown/O'Connor 1985: 241)

A straightforward *negation* of the above statement will *reject* only its *main assertion*: Success is not like a woman; it will not do the crawling if you mistreat her etc. However the assumption in the *analogue* ("if you cringe before a woman she will override you" and the conclusion thereof that "the way to treat her (the woman) is to show her the back of your hand. Then maybe she will do the crawling") is nevertheless accepted into the discourse set of presuppositions (Stalnaker 1978, 315ff). *Analogies*, then, introduce into the discourse *Given information* that cannot be easily *rejected* when contradicted. Rather, if one chooses to address *informationally subordinate material*, the cost of such a response involves the violation of the *Relevance requirement*: Discussing a topic which is neither the topic under discussion nor a potential topic for further discussion is inappropriate (Giora 1985c, 703ff, 1988, 560ff, following Grice 1975). Note the ill-formedness of addressing/rejecting the *nonasserted material* of woman's demeanor in (6b) as opposed to the well-formedness of (6a) below which addresses the main issue:

(6)   "Success is feminine like a woman; if you cringe before her, she will override you. So the way to treat her is to show her the back of your hand. Then maybe she will do the crawling."

(6a)   which is a lie — success is not like a woman; it will not do the crawling if you mistreat her.

(6b)   *which is a lie — women do not override you if you cringe before them nor do they crawl if you treat them violently.

The topic under discussion in Faulkner's discourse, as manifested in the first sentence, is either the nature of success, or the similarity between success and the nature of women.[1] Addressing/*rejecting* it results in a *coherent* text (6a above). However, addressing the Given material results in an incoherent text (6b above). To address/*reject* such material appropriately,

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[1] The ambiguity of the *discourse-topic* results from the use of the *analogy* as manifested in Giora (to appear), Giora, Meiran and Oref (1992).

an explicit connector marking the digression from *Relevance* is required (Giora 1985c, 116ff):

(6c)   Regardless of what you are saying about success, I disagree with you on the question of women's nature — women do not override you if you cringe before them nor do they crawl if you treat them violently.

(6c) illustrates the difficulty and hence the extra effort needed to disagree with *nonasserted material*. Such a discoursal move is marked (as illustrated by 6b above) and requires extra signalling to compensate for the deviation from *Relevance*. *Informationally subordinate material* thus enjoys *political superiority* since it is almost *unrejectable*.

1.3.2. *Questions* as statements in disguise

         — "You weren't even listening.
         — You want to get laid!?
         — It's just a poem.
         — Just a thought."
         Alan Rudolph, Choose Me.

         — Are you a whore?
         — No.
         — I was just asking.

Asking a *question*, though primarily a request for information, is also a way to introduce a message into the discourse without stating it. "I was just asking" is a prompt reply intended to deny what has been seemingly asked but in fact meant to be stated. *Pretending* just to ask a question by using an explicit question form is a common rhetorical device practiced, for example, by *psychotherapists*. Like *politicians, psychotherapists* should also refrain from statements that are difficult for them to *deny*. Questions, on the other hand, seem a "safe" means of introducing statements in disguise. After all, any objection to the disguised statement can be easily met with an "apologetic" *denial*: I was just asking. Moreover, *unasserted statements* are easier for the patient to ponder over and adopt as hers/his. Consider the example (7, below) of a *therapist*-client exchange, where the client started out complaining about his wife, but ended realizing something about his own need. The *therapist*'s intervention, though posed as a question was meant to be a statement:

(7)   — "In what ways does Sandra fail to support you or give to you? Can you share a specific example?
         — Well, it's hard to say. She cuts me down a lot...Or, if I sit down to relax for five minutes, she is on my back to discuss

some earthshaking matter — like the garbage disposal, is broken...
— Are you saying that you need some space? I asked.
— Not exactly, replied Larry. I'm saying that Sandra is very overreactive. She is very emotional. She creates problems where they don't even exist. Everything is a major case. And, yes, I suppose I am saying that I need more space."
Harriet Goldhor Lerner, *The Dance of Anger.*

A *question* can be a *hedged statement*. Where a statement might raise a psychological antagonism, a *question* "is just a question". Its surface structure suggests that it does not voice an opinion and therefore is easier to consider, sometimes.

1.4. *Pretending to deny:* One way of using negation

"If you think it fit to refine upon him by interpreting everything he says, as we do dreams, by the contrary, you are still to seek, and will find yourself equally deceived whether you believe it or not."
Jonathan Swift, *The art of political lying.*

Another device which guarantees the circumstances under which it seems easier to *deny* an alleged claim is the use of *negation*. Apart from being an *evaluative device* (Labov 1972, 355ff) which serves to highlight important material in the text (see also Section 1.5 below for the use of *negation* in Sadat's speech), *negation* serves to bring out a point without making it. For instance, by saying 'X is not (like) Y', one is implicitly establishing a comparison which cannot be opposed (i. e., *negated* again). The speaker, accused of comparing X and Y (by means of a *negation*), can *deny* having stated that comparison, since indeed s/he did not make any explicit comparison. On the contrary, what s/he was explicit about was just the *denial* of such a comparison. Consider the way this device can be useful in a *political* context:

In an election campaign (28.6.1981), Menahem Begin, the then Israeli prime minister, a member of the right wing Likkud party, tried to denigrate the Labour (left wing) party by associating the Labour's red flag with Jewish persecution. The speech was delivered in one of the famous squares in Tel-Aviv where political gatherings usually take place:

(8)   "Last night, in this place, there were lots of red flags. Today there are lots of blue and white flags (the Likkud's colors which are also the national flag's colors. R.G). This is the moral, historical-ideological difference between us and the socialist Labour. They haven't learnt yet what the red flag symbolizes in our

time. This is the symbol of the pre-nazism period. But I will not talk about nazism tonight. I will talk about communism. This is the flag of Israel-hatred and of arming all Israeli enemies around. This is the flag of Jewish persecution and Hebrew persecution, of concentration camps and human oppression."

Begin compared the Labor party ideology with pre-nazism ideology by *denying* such a comparison. In this way, he blocked any possible criticism accusing him of comparing the two, since he explicitly said he would not compare the two. However, a *negation* of that kind does involve a comparison — a common denominator, i. e., a set of common features which will serve as a ground against which differences can be detected.[2] *Negation* implies that the entity negated could have belonged in the same category as that entity to which it stands in some contrast. Note that where two objects are not alike, there is no point in saying they are not at all alike (e.g., a flower is not (like) a chair).

1.5. *Pretending to assert*: Another way of looking at *negation*

Negation enables the speaker to *imply* without asserting. Saying that 'it isn't the case that X' may pragmatically imply (Smith/Wilson 1979, 172) that 'it is the case that Y'.[3] Sadat's peace speech in the Israeli parliament (19.11.1977) provides an appropriate example. The question that troubled most of the interpreters was whether Sadat's expressed intentions were sincere. A check of Sadat's stylistic devices and *serial ordering of messages* (cf. Section 2) concerning his commitment to the peace process on the one hand, and to the Palestinians, on the other, reveals that Sadat was more committed to the former than to the latter.

The conditions of the peace settlement which centered in his commitment to the Palestinians were all but one implicated via the use of negation rather than stated assertively:

(9)   "As for the Palestinian cause, nobody could deny that this is the crux of the entire problem". (Implication: The Palestinian problem is the main problem)

(10)   "Nobody in the world could accept today slogans propagated here in Israel ignoring the existence of the Palestinian people and questioning even their whereabouts". (Implication: The existence of the Palestinians must be acknowledged)

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[2] Consider Clark (1970) and Shen (1987) who support the claim that opposition presupposes similarity.

[3] *Negation* seems a gradient notion. For another view of negation as at least ambiguous (for instance as *implicating* a refusal to assert, or as not asserting that P is false by asserting that not P) see Wilson (1975: 150—151), Horn (1989).

(11)   "The Palestinian people's question and their legitimate rights <u>are</u>
<u>no longer ignored or denied</u> today by anybody". (Implication:
The Palestinians' rights are acknowledged by everybody.)

(12)   "Rather, <u>nobody</u> who has the ability of judgement can <u>deny or</u>
<u>ignore it</u>". (Implication as in 9).

(13)   <u>It is of no use</u> to anybody to turn a deaf ear to its resounding
voice which is being heard day and night or to overlook its
historical reality. (Implication: The historical reality must be rec-
ognized).

(14)   "…there can be <u>no</u> peace <u>without</u> the Palestinians". (Implication:
The Palestinians are an essential party to the peace settlement).

(15)   "It is a great error of unpredictable circumstances <u>to overlook or</u>
<u>brush aside</u> this cause". (Implication: The Palestinian cause must
be recognized).

(16)   "It is <u>no use to refrain from recognizing</u> the Palestinian people
and their rights to set up a state and return to their homes".
(Implication as in 15).

(17)   "There can <u>never be any solution</u> to a problem by evading it or
turning a deaf ear to it". (Implication: The solution to the problem
will be achieved by attending to it.)

(18)   "Peace <u>cannot last</u> if attempts are made to impose fantasy concepts
on which the world has turned its back and announced its
unanimous call for the respect of rights and realities". (Implica-
tion: Peace will last if rights and realities are respected).

(19)   "There is <u>no need</u> to enter a vicious circle as to Palestinian
rights". (Implication: Ignoring the Palestinian rights will start a
vicious circle).

(20)   "It is <u>useless to create</u> obstacles; otherwise the march of peace
will be impeded or peace will be blown up". (Implication: Ig-
noring the Palestinian rights will impede the peace process).

Only later on in his speech, when Sadat summarized the conditions for
a peace agreement, did he state his commitment to the Palestinians posi-
tively, the specific reference to the Palestinians appearing second on the
list:

(21)   "Ending the Israeli occupation of the territories occupied in 1967;
achievement of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people
and their right of self-determination, including their right to
establish their own state …"

Labov (1972, 355ff) treats *negation* as an "*evaluative*" device which, like
modality, (see also Hopper/Thompson 1980, 252ff) serves to highlight
important material: When an actual event is weighed against a possible or
unreal one, it gains in importance. Consider the following example for an
illustration of Labov's point:

(22)   "She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same,
with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at
once, with sudden wild abandonment, in her sister's arms". (Cho-
pin 1899/1976, 198.)

The actual event of weeping and accepting the truth of the story marks
the heroine of Kate Chopin as distinguished from other women, a point
of significance in the story as a whole. This ability of hers to accept the
story is highlighted by a comparison to inability, allowed by the *negation*.
Along these lines, Sadat can be taken to have highlighted his *implicated*
assertions. However, this does not seem the correct interpretation of the
function of the *negated assertions* cited above (9—20). On the contrary,
rather than "*evaluating*" i. e., upgrading the *implicated assertions*, the *negation*
serves to downgrade their importance. *Negation* as used above, compels
the hearer to make an *inference*, to generate an *implicit message* while
processing what is stated explicitly. *Implicit assertions* are less compelling,
if only because they are not explicit. *Negation*, then, can serve as a *hedge*
(see also Horn 1989, 330 ff.).

Consider the assertions Sadat chose to state in the affirmative, which
here requires no *inferencing*.

(23)   "I have come to you today on two firm feet to build a new life
and to establish peace".

(24)   "I announce before you with all truthfulness that I have the same
feelings and responsibility toward every person in the world,
particularly toward the Israeli people".

(25)   "…I decided to come to you with an open mind and with an
open heart and a conscientious will to establish a lasting peace
based on justice".

(26)   "…I come to you carrying my clear and frank answer for this
great question (how can we achieve a just and permanent peace)
in order that the people in Israel might hear it".

(27)   "I came to you so that we may build a lasting and just peace to
avoid bloodshed on either side".

(28)   "I tell you sincerely that we welcome you among us, with all
security and safety".

(29)   "…We accept living with you in a lasting and just peace…"

(30)   "Since actually we want peace, we welcome your living among us in security and peace in the full sense of the word".

Sadat chose to express in affirmative (asserted) statements his sincere intention, his commitment to achieving peace and his recognition of the state of Israel (which, for the Israelis, has been a precondition for a peace agreement). This linguistic choice rendered his commitment to his assertions much stronger than his commitment to the Palestinian cause, delivered mostly in *the negative*.[4] Note further that even in this part of his speech, which is dedicated to persuading his audiences that his peace message is sincere, the only *negative* statements are those that allude to considering the Palestinians:

(31)   "There is no alternative to the establishment of a just, permanent peace".

(32)   "I have not come to you to forge a unilateral agreement between Egypt and Israel".

(33)   "I did not come to you in order to achieve a separate reconciliation".

(34)   "This is not the radical solution that would lead us to lasting peace".

(35)   "…Without a just solution of the Palestinian problem, it would never achieve the just and lasting peace …".

Summing up Sadat's objectives in visiting Jerusalem, Altman (1977, 86) concludes: "Sadat's declared objective in visiting Jerusalem was to bring about a new dynamic in the political process. Beyond that he apparently hoped that his move would create the circumstances so novel as to facilitate a rapid conclusion of a peace agreement with Israel. Such an agreement would provide for the return of Sinai, but would also lay down agreed principles for a comprehensive settlement, so that it could not be interpreted as a separate deal" (the emphasis is mine R.G.).

Sadat's main objective — dispersing the psychological barriers of mistrust — was stated assertively. By contrast, his commitment to the Palestinian cause was stated less assertively: Most of these statements were *negatively* formulated and required extra processing for the purpose of

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[4] Note that while many of his *negative* statements use neutral or too general subjects that imply lack of commitment (e.g., "nobody", "anybody", "it", "there"), his affirmative statements are all in the first person. (Mira Ariel, personal communication).

generating *pragmatic implications*.[5] Below (Section 2) we will see that in addition to these linguistic devices, the order of presentation of messages also suggests that these *negative* statements were not intended as Sadat's *main assertion*. Rather, Sadat pretended to assert a commitment to the Palestinians, as can be also deduced form Altman's (1977) interpretation above.

2. *Pretending to assert* — a text structuring perspective

Previous research (e. g., Perry 1979, Kieras 1980, Giora 1983a,b, 1985a,b,c, 1988) evinced that *order of presentation* is functional in constructing meaning and *importance hierarchy*. Specifically, it has been shown that the beginning and end of a text mark information of some "*importance*" relative to the other *serial positions* in the text. First, as shown for unrelated words (e.g., Asch 1946, Luchins 1957, Murdock 1962), text initial position was shown to enjoy "*primacy effect*" i. e., enhanced recall for information in the beginning of lists, (e.g., Deese/Kaufman 1957, Mandler 1978, Freebody/Anderson 1986). Perry (1979), for example, showed that writers take advantage of the impression formed in the beginning of texts to manipulate readers' interpretations and enforce them to shift from one hypothesis to another while reading a text. Kieras (1980) and Giora (1985a,c) have shown that writers use such a highly recalled position for the introduction of the *topic of the discourse*.

Second, "*recency effect*", i. e., enhanced recall for information in final position, has also been proved for texts (Deese/Kaufman 1957, Rubin 1977, Freebody/Anderson 1986). Giora (1983b) has shown that writers utilize segment (paragraph, chapter, text) final position to introduce important information which is a potential topic of the following discourse.

Storage mechanisms have been further shown to effect text structuring. Previous studies (Giora 1985a, 1988) have argued that the *ordering of informative texts* reflects *categorial organization* in memory. *Informative texts* are structured like *Roschian categories* (e.g., Rosch 1973) from the least to the most *informative* proposition. Texts thus begin with a generalization — its prototypical member reflecting the redundancy structure of the text. This information functions as the discourse reference point relative to which oncoming information gets assessed and stored. The text then proceeds gradually along the *informativeness* axis until the most marginal member in the set which still shares properties with the generalization placed in the beginning. Texts thus get segmented at

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[5] Note further that Sadat never mentioned the PLO.

peaks of *informativeness*. In addition to *serial position*, then, *categorial organization* too explains the relative prominence of initial and final positions in *informative texts*.

Text *linear ordering*, thus, signals an *importance hierarchy*. It highlights information in boundary positions. Initial position is reserved for the *topic of the discourse*, and final position is reserved for the most *informative* message in that discourse. Such information enjoys enhanced recall and can therefore be easily accessed. Information in midtext, though available for the reader, is hardly accessible (Giora 1988, 560ff).

This relation of structure to signification can be a clue to what a speaker considers *important* i. e., her *main assertion*. Sadat's peace speech in the Israeli parliament provides such an example. The first part of the speech was dedicated to convincing his audiences that he meant peace. Sadat used text initial position to form the impression that his peace pursuit is sincere. Once again Sadat asserted this same message in the end of his talk: he used the text final position to emphasize that his sole purpose was delivering the message of peace. This was, then, Sadat's main assertion.[6] He used preferred *serial positions* to emphasize what he considered his most important message. The peace conditions, particularly the commitment to the Palestinians and to a comprehensive peace process, was placed in a nondominant position — in midtext — which does not enjoy recall and is less accessible than either initial or final positions. Though Sadat expressed commitment to solving the Palestinian problem, he embedded it in a nonprominent position in the text, thereby only *pretending to assert* it as a primary goal of his. Recall that this *pretense to assert* is further manifested in the mode of *negated* propositions he employed to "assert" his commitment to the Palestinians. As shown above (Section 1.5), Sadat's *negative assertions* weakened his commitment to the Palestinians. Embedding them in a hardly accessible position in the text renders his commitment into mere appearances.

3. *Pretending to apologize*

Apologizing is a more explicit way of *rejecting* one's own statement. When *denials* are unacceptable, *politicians* sometimes must give way to apologies.

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[6] That this was really his *main assertion* may be also deduced from the various reactions of the Israeli public to the speech. Most of the interpretations of Sadat's speech tended to doubt his sincerity and his commitment to the peace process. Though I would rather consider this an appropriate response to a *main assertion* — that part of a speech one can disagree with (cf. Erteschik-Shir and Lappin 1979 and the negation test used thereof), this could also be a result of the long term hostility between the two countries which, at that time, made the idea of peacemaking hardly conceivable.

However, it is hardly conceivable that *politicians* would withdraw their beliefs. In this section I will examine an apology in disguise.

After an attack in a synagogue on Istanbul Jews (7.9.86), Ariel Sharon (a member of the right wing Likkud party), then a minister in a joint government (of the two biggest but conflicting parties in Israel, Labour and Likkud), blamed the terrorists' act on the Israeli government. His statement read as follows:

(36)   "The terrible pogrom against the Jews at praying time in the synagogue in Istanbul is the only terrible response of the Palestinians and their supporters ... to the Israeli beggings for peace, to the concessions to the PLO., to King Husayn, to King Hassan, and to the concessions made in Taba. These concessions were interpreted as weakness on the part of Israel, and induced acts of Palestinian terrorism... The incessant pursuit of dubious and baseless peace projects ... contributed to the undermining of the Israeli defense ... and turned the Jews here and abroad more exposed to the Palestinian terrorism."

As a result, the then prime minister, Shimon Peres (a member of the left wing Labour party), demanded that Sharon apologize for blaming the terrorist attack on the government. Sharon, obviously, was reluctant. On the other hand, he could not afford to lose his job in the government. The following is the version of an apology he issued (8.9.86), which was accepted by Peres:

(37)   "I take back what I said on Saturday night. I did not accuse the government and its leader. It is a fact that I never mentioned, not in a word, the prime minister, and the government and its decisions to which I am a party. If it was interpreted that way, I take it back.

   Upon your request, I hereby clarify: there is no connection between the government decisions and what happened in Istanbul. There is no connection between our general and sincere wish for peace and Jews' homicide. I never thought, not even for a moment, that this should be the response of the terrorists' organizations of the PLO to the wish of the Israeli government for peace, as they try to attribute to me. They, because of their murderous nature, chose this terrible way, which shocks us all.

   We have to be strong while confronting the terrorism of the PLO ... If we are not united, we will cause an acceleration of their criminal acts..."

What was Sharon doing with his words? Did he apologize? Given the felicity conditions on *speech-acts*[7], a check of Sharon's "apology" reveals that he did not apologize, but rather pretended to: Though he started by "apologizing" ("I take back what I said"), he did not accomplish it. Rather, he embarked on another *speech-act*, that of denial ("I did not blame the government ..."). To validate his denial, he provided "evidence" (as required by the preparatory condition) that he did not blame the government ("It is a fact that ..."). But in fact he lied: He did blame the government — who else is "Israel" but the government of Israel (cf. (35)). By breaching the sincerity condition, he rendered his "denial" infelicitous. He then proceeded to conclude his "apology" by repeating the jargon appropriate for apologies ("I take it back"). However, he "apologized" for the wrong reason, for something he did not do, but rather for something others did while misinterpreting his words ("if it was interpreted that way"). Here Sharon violated the propositional content condition.

The rest of the "apology" "denies" unclaimed claims (violation of the preparatory condition), while at the same time repeating the statement he was asked to disclaim or withdraw by apologizing ("We have to be strong while confronting the terrorism of the PLO ... If we are not united, we will cause an acceleration of their criminal acts..."). Sharon *pretended to apologize* by faking a denial. That his "apology" was accepted shows that he is a highly competent speaker and a shrewd *politician*.[8]

4. *Pretending to communicate*

In this section I would like to consider a variety of linguistic devices employed by one speaker in one speech while conveying a *political message*. I have chosen to discuss King Husayn's speech on 'Separation' from the

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[7] Consider the felicity conditions for Apology and Denial (according to Searle 1969, Levinson 1983, 238—240):
Felicity conditions on Apology
Propositional content: Past Act of Speaker
Preparatory: Act negative to Hearer
Sincerity: Speaker regrets doing Act
Essential: Counts as an expression of the Hearer's regret
Felicity conditions on Denial
Propositional content: Past Act
Preparatory: It is claimed that Act was done.
    Speaker has evidence that Act was not performed.
Sincerity: Speaker believes that Act was not done.
Essential: Counts as a commitment to the truth of the expressed proposition.
[8] Note the way Sharon (37 above) utilizes the prominence of initial and final positions: To form the impression of an apology he begins with apologetic notes. He repeats apologetic wordings twice, in the beginning and in the end of the first paragraph. However, the end of the "apologetic" text discloses his real stance.

West Bank (31.7.1988), in an attempt to distinguish between what Husayn really asserted and what he *pretended to assert*. Note that Husayn chose to "announce" this separation some time before the elections in Israel (November 1989). Given also was the secret Peres[9]-Husayn agreement signed in London, in which the two leaders agreed on the so called Jordanian option,[10] which regards the King as the sole representative of the Palestinians.

Husayn's decision to secede from the West Bank was variously interpreted. The analysis proposed below supports the view, voiced for instance by Akiva Eldar (Haaretz 5.8.88, 38 below), that, contrary to appearances, the Jordanian Option was still alive:

(38)   "Though it looks odd, Peres' success in the elections, like the success of Husayn's maneuver, depends a great deal on Yasser Arafat's acts. If, indeed, as Husayn had assumed while preparing his speech, the PLO leader will crawl "on four" to Rabat Amon and will ask him to stop and avoid a real separation from the territories, Arafat will have to pay the price of acknowledging the 242 resolution, of allowing the Palestinian to participate in a common delegation with Jordan and of giving up the demand for an independent Palestinian state."

To be able to assess Husayn's intentions, we will consider, first, the way he "announced" the separation. Note that such an announcement is expected to be foregrounded, i. e., to be treated as a piece of new information — as a *main assertion*. Instead, Husayn referred to it as a piece of common knowledge. After a ceremonial opening, Husayn told his audiences:

(39)   "We have initiated a series of measures to enhance Palestinian national orientation and highlight Palestinian identity; our goal is the benefit of the Palestinian cause and the Arab Palestinian people. Our decision, as you know, comes after 38 years of the unity of the two banks and 14 years after Rabat summit resolution ... we are certain that our decision to initiate these measures does not come as a surprise ... the PLO raised and worked to gain Arab and international support for .. the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. This meant ... the separation of the West Bank from Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan."

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[9] Peres was then the head of the Labour party and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
[10] The "Jordanian Option" is the option envisaged dead by Israelis at that time, that the Palestinian problem would be solved not through direct negotiations with the Palestinians, but through a peace settlement to be achieved with Jordan.

Husayn seemingly started by introducing *new information* ("a series of measures"), but "measures" is not informative enough. However, on continuing, instead of specifying what these measures meant, he treated them as *Given* and as accessible (Ariel 1990) to his audiences ("our decision"). The specific reference to "the separation" from the West Bank, which is the *new information*, came rather late and was introduced, once again, as *Given*. Husayn thus marked the "announcement" as *"old"* information, thereby *subordinating it informationally* (cf. Section 1. and for instance, Ariel 1985).

Furthermore, Husayn bestowed responsibility for the separation on the Arab leadership, particularly on the PLO. The separation, thus, was not an asserted measure of Jordan, but a move taken from the point of view of the Palestinians, to allow the PLO to act as their "sole and legitimate representative." Note further that the decision to see in the PLO the sole representative of the Palestinians was another move which was not presented as a Jordanian initiative, but as an acceptance of the decision of the Arab leadership made in Rabat and Fes.

In terms of *serial ordering*, the message repeated in midtext position concerned the commitment of Jordan to the Palestinian cause, the act of separation being only a step towards making the PLO the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." Of particular interest is the fact that out of the 8 times Husayn mentioned the PLO, 4 mentions repeated this recognition of their role as the "sole and legitimate representative etc.". The redundancy of this information renders it almost ironical.

The speech, however, ended with information not mentioned before — the interest Jordan, as a confrontation state, had in the peace process and its effect on Jordan's political preferences:

(40)   "Brothers, Jordan has not relinquished and will not relinquish its support for the Palestinian people until they achieve their national objectives, God willing ... This is on the one hand. On the other hand, Jordan is a confrontation state, and its border with Israel is longer than that of any Arab state.

In fact, Jordan's border with Israel is longer than the borders of the West bank and the Gaza Strip together with it. Jordan will not relinquish its commitment to participation in the peace process. We contributed to the efforts to achieve an international conference for peace in the Middle East to reach a just and comprehensive peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict ... Jordan, brethren, is a basic party to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process. It shoulders its national and pan-Arab responsibilities accordingly."

In other words, Jordan will not relinquish its commitments to the Palestinians, but Jordan is more committed to looking after its own interests first. As a confrontation state it is actually more interested in the role it plays in a peace process than in worrying about the Palestinians. In the most prominent position in the text, in final position, Husayn introduced information that is of vital *importance*. All that has been mentioned previously seems more like lip-service.[11]

Some facts are certain: Husayn did not assert the "announcement" of the separation, but marked it as *Given*. On the other hand, he did assert an interest in Jordan-Israeli relations. The resultant interpretation that these might indicate that Husayn did not abandon the Jordanian option is only a possibility.

5. Wrap up — the *implicit message* as a *powerful strategy*

The linguistic strategies pointed out here of communicating *unasserted messages* have the advantage of subliminal effects: They are contradiction resistant. Though *powerfulness of speech* is usually attributed to expressed assertions, *implicit message* have a power too, albeit manipulative: They block disapproval and are, therefore, almost immune to criticism. Note that most of the examples treated here suggest that the *implicit message* reflects dominant or *unmarked ideologies*. However, *subversive ideologies*, particularly in punitive societies, tend to employ the same techniques. Nevertheless, these will not fall under the category of *pretense to communicate*. Powerless groups hardly have a choice. Reading between their lines is not unmasking deception, but acting as a cooperative recipient.

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[11] Note, by contrast, Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, in which the declaration of independence, i. e., the announcement on the separation of the United States from Britain was placed in the end of the text (immediately before the coda).

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