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Contents

The Strategic Communication: A Content Analysis of Two Different Leaders' Discourses

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Abstract

Communication and interaction between Ego and Alter are fundamental processes of social action since the speaker (Ego), and the listener (Alter) refer to the same world, sharing a conventional interpretation of reality. In this respect, every communication act is defined by those linguistic interactions in which all participants pursue their actions and strategies with the use of mutual expressions. Moreover, some interactions are characterized by perlocutive purposes or by those verbal interactions that, through communication, aim to produce a change in the audience (in this regard, according to the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, actions are defined as strategic).

For this reason, going more into details into this work, the objective of our research is to carry out a comparative analysis concerning the theory of communication actions using, as an example, the texts of two different religious leaders: Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

We examined the Angelus of the two Popes through the content analysis in order to detect the styles of two different modus operandi and to understand two particular communication strategies. In this sense, the analysis of these "ecclesiastical policies" of the two Popes will take into consideration the Angelus recited in the respective first three years of the Pontificate. Therefore, it will be possible to highlight and compare the topics addressed and investigate the type of strategic actions. In this perspective, content analysis reveals its usefulness, combining two elements that are difficult to isolate in the understanding of a communication process (the source and the message transmitted) and it also reveals itself as one valuable tool for the analysis of both cultural and social messages.

Keywords: *communicative action, Habermas, T-LAB, Pope, text, leadership*

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to carry out an analysis referring to Habermas's theory of communicative action. Communicative actions are mediated by linguistic interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary objectives with their own linguistic actions (Habermas, 1981). From this point of view, communicative action, as stated by Rusconi (1980: 8), «regulates the passage between the system with its functional imperatives and the vital world, with its expressive rules». However, it is necessary to specify that, in this context, we will not deal with the communicative action in general but with the teleological-strategic one, characterized by interactions in which at least one of the participants with his linguistic actions wants to produce perlocutive effects on his audience interlocutor (Habermas, 1981).

For this reason, this research aims to highlight and investigate this particular "rationality" (Marcarino, 1988) through the study of the speeches of the two most significant leaders of the ecclesiastical world, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. The deepening of the so-called "ecclesiastical policies" will be carried out taking into consideration the Angelus in the respective first three years of the Pontificate which will allow for highlighting the issues of both Pontiffs thanks to the adoption of a purely comparative perspective capable of bringing out any similarities and/or among them.

COMMUNICATIVE ACTING AND LINGUISTIC ACT:
A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Undoubtedly, talking about communication means referring to a fundamental process of sociality: indeed, as underlined by the sociologist Max Weber (1922), it is a particular type of behavior that, according to its sense, is linked to the attitude of other individuals. From this conceptualization of the notion of communication, it is possible to underline, therefore, some peculiar aspects (Malizia, 2006): *a*) it is culturally modeled in a defined and limited context; *b*) is an interaction process that depends on the context in which it occurs; *c*) is characterized by content aspect (what to communicate) and relationship (how to communicate) that are determined on the basis of a socially shared concepts.

Summarizing with Habermas's words (1981), only the model of communicative action presupposes language as a mediation of an undisclosed agreement where the speaker and the listener, starting from the same view of the reality, refer, at the same time, to something in the objective, social world agreeing on definitions of actions. From this point of view, the German sociologist, focusing primarily on the scenario in which subjects must understand the meaning of linguistic acts and act communicatively, modifies the visual field in a way that the connecting points become evident between the theory of action and the theory of society. Then, communicative action becomes an interesting principle of socialization and social rationalization (Marcarino, 1988).

Therefore, it is possible to deduce that the social functions of communication can be the most disparate (Di Biase, 2008):

• expressive that is the explanation of the attitudes of social actors;
• persuasive, made in order to affect others' behaviors;
• informative that is the pure and simple sharing of information;
• relational, aimed at establishing and/or maintaining the relationship among social actors;
• role-played, connected to behaviors related to the others' expectations.

As a result, communicative actions are not to be considered simple interpretations of reality; on the contrary, they refer to moments of interaction as well as the integration among people. Furthermore, since the linguistic acts have different purposes according to the speaker's intentions, it is necessary to specify that they are divided into locutive, illocutive and perlocutive (Rosati, 1994): the former indicates the simple act of the speaker to express something; the latter refers to the action that the subject performs in speaking; lastly, the perlocution aims to make an impact on the audience. This is the tripartition of linguistic acts conducted by Austin in the early fifties, developed by Habermas in order to highlight the different objectives that linguistic acts can pursue.

Our analysis focuses more on the perlocutionary act since the corpora that will be examined in the next paragraph can fully be considered an example of communication where linguistic action aims to achieve a purpose and to optimize the consensus of an audience (Malizia, 2006). In fact, as stated by Austin (1962: 101), «saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either, only obliquely, or even, not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a perlocutionary act or perlocution».

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE:
EXPLORING THE STRATEGIC ACTS STARTING FROM THE ANALYSIS OF WORDS

As previously specified, we mapped and analyzed the perlocutionary effects of the corpora of two particular contemporary leaders (Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis), by using the software T-LAB. Thanks to this analysis is it possible to deepen the Popes' issues and the characteristics of their *modus operandi* over the last years. In our case, taking into account the large amount of messages available, the content analysis proves to be a useful research method capable of systematically describing the peculiarities of the texts: not surprisingly, the content analysis was created after the 1990s with the aim of analyzing, through computerized quantitative semantics, the content of particularly significant messages from a cultural, political and social point of view. Thus, proving to be an adequate strategy for identifying the type of relationship established between the speaker and the audience, the Pope and his faithful people. It grasps the link existing between the personality, the social role, the intentions of the person who communicates and the type of symbols or key-ideas recurring in his messages (Losito, 2002). Messages, those of the Popes, whose contents can be viewed as indicators of a more general social trend and, for this reason, they can be fully understood only if inserted in their context: indeed, socio-cultural events influence the interlocutors, shaping their speeches.

However, the focus of the entire work is on the examination of "what was communicated", which is the reason why we carried out the content analysis. Although, it is considered as a purely quantitative technique (aimed at measuring and counting textual data), in this context, it becomes a technique of understanding social phenomena (Nobile, 1997) since it allows an evaluation of the characteristics of the messages (ibidem).

The thematic analysis of elementary contexts in Pope Benedict XVI' Angelus

In this paragraph, we illustrate the results of the research carried out on the Angelus of Pope Benedict XVI[16] from a sociological point of view. We have selected 153 Angelus (from 22 May 2005 to 25 May 2008) as communication units, trying to highlight not only the terms most present in the text but also the strength of the associations between the different words used. Therefore, firstly, we implemented a purely descriptive procedure which offered us an overview of the vocabulary used by the Pope, emphazing the terms with the greatest occurrences (Table 1):

Table 1. Words with the highest number of occurrences

Lemmas	Occurrences
God	487
Lige	289
Christ	287
Jesus	280
Love	279
Our	243
Mary	209
Church	186
World	185
Catholic	172

Source: Author's own elaboration

The table below shows that the lemmas most present in the corpus analyzed refer to a spiritual sphere: for this reason, it was decided to carry out a deeper analysis to stress the aspects touched by the Pope in his speeches. Therefore, we implemented a thematic analysis of the elementary contexts, a tool that made it possible to construct a representation of the contents of the corpus by composing clusters, each of which is charactarized by a set of keywords closely related each other.

The software provided a four-cluster solution (Figure 1):
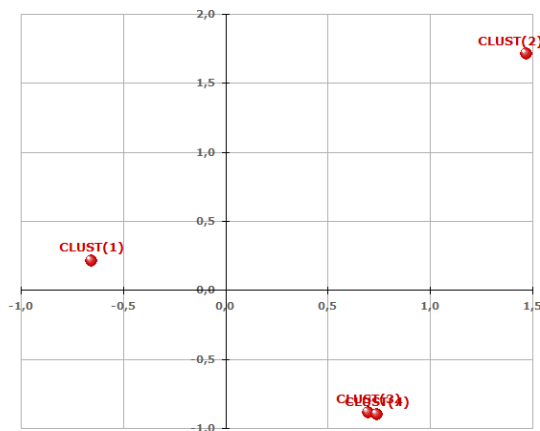
Figure 1. Distribution of clusters on the Cartesian plane

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[16] The text analyzed is composed by 67.122 occurrences, 8.594 forms, 3.767 lemmas, 4.472 hapax and 1.385 elementary contexts. All keywords with an occurrence value greater or equal to the minimum threshold of 10 have been used.

Figure 1 shows that, within the Cartesian plane, there are two clusters (the third and fourth) which, probably due to the equality of the contents, are semantically very close; on the contrary, the distance between the first and second clusters suggests that these are characterized by different themes. Going into more detail we note, in fact, that the third and the fourth clusters refer to the same dimension: the third cluster is characterized by the terms such as "cardinal", "Mary" and "sanctuary" while the fourth cluster is charactarized by words like "Vatican", "Pope" and "Bishop". The breakdown of these clusters and the analysis of the words that make them up clearly shows how they refer to an organizational sphere of Catholic life (together they explain 33.21% of elementary contexts). Otherwise, the first cluster (that alone explains 53.34% of the elementary contexts) refers to more spiritual themes since in it we find terms such as "Jesus", "God" and "love"; finally, the second cluster is characterized by words like "victim", "international" and "solidarity" which brings out a new focus of the Pope's speeches, the attention to national and international social issues.

Continuing with a factor analysis, we observe that the corpus of this Pope can be summarized by two factors which, overall, explain 66.34% of the total variance.

Table 2. Test[17] Values on factors

First factor				Second factor			
Negative axis		**Positive axis**		**Negative axis**		**Positive axis**	
Lemmas	**Test Values**	**Lemmas**	**Test Values**	**Lemmas**	**Test Values**	**Lemmas**	**Test Values**
Jesus	-11,53	Cardinal	12,03	Paul	-10,2	Violence	13,24
God	-8,28	Archbishop	11,97	Bishop	-9,84	Victim	12,22
Sin	-7,45	Victim	11,25	John	-9,23	Iraq	10,77
Son	-7,42	Bishop	9,97	Peter	-8,54	Region	10,11
Father	-7,36	Day	9,91	Vatican	-8,05	Peace	9,68
Love	-7,23	Thank	9,18	Assembly	-7,8	Conflict	9,02
Christus	-6,35	Country	8,97	Rome	-7,76	State	8,82
Human	-6,09	Thought	8,6	Celebration	-7,59	Hurt	8,66
Death	-5,41	Hope	8,56	Day	-7,1	Express	8,6
Reign	-5,04	International	8,52	Cathedral	-6,66	Closeness	8,58

Source: Author's own elaboration

Analyzing both the negative and the positive axis of the two factors, it is possible to distinguish the lexical units that compose them with their respective test values.

As far as the first factor is concerned, it is linked to the religious dimension: the negative semiaxis is represented by the lemmas that refer to spirituality while the positive semiaxis, with the presence of words such as "cardinal" and "archbishop", recalls the organizational dimension of the religious structure, as it was already highlighted by the previous cluster analysis (Figure 1). For this reason, we decided to call this factor "Religiosity/Church". On the other hand, the second factor (defined "Spiritual life/Social life") presents in the negative semi-axis words that refer to the Scriptures and to the symbolic

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[17] It is a statistical measure that T-LAB uses in order to measure and characterize the association among the factors extracted through the correspondence analysis.

strength of the liturgies and their teaching, and, on the positve axis, it relates more to everyday life and social reality (we can find words that concern events of war and conflict that took place during these years of Pontificate, "violence", "victim", "Iraq").

Table 3. Poles of the first and the second factors

	Negative axis	Positive axis
First factor	*Religiosity*	*Church*
Second factor	*Spiritual life*	*Social life*

Source: Author's own elaboration

The thematic analysis of elementary contexts in Pope Francis' Angelus

Whereas, in this paragraph, we analyze Pope Francis' Angelus corpus. Precisely, these are 158 messages from 17 March 2013 to 13 March 2016[18]. Before proceeding with the factor analysis, we thought useful to carry out a descriptive analysis aimed at identifying the words that recur most in Pope Francis' speeches (Table 4).

Table 4. Words with the highest number of occurrences

Lemmas	Occurrences
Jesus	999
God	860
Our	629
Life	471
Trinity	372
Love	362
Bible	359
Faith	342
Heart	295
World	268

Source: Author's own elaboration

Also, in this case, as seen previously for Pope Benedict's Angelus (Table 1), the greatest occurrences occur for those terms strictly connected to a religious sphere. For this reason, we proceeded to analyse the elementary contexts to identify and show, through the composition of clusters, further matters taken into consideration by the Pontiff. Again, the software provided a four-cluster solution (Figure 2):

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[18] The text analyzed is composed by 42.423 occurrences, 8.092 forms, 3.258 lemmas, 4.219 hapax and 1.885 elementary contexts. All keywords with an occurrence value greater or equal to the minimum threshold of 10 have been used.
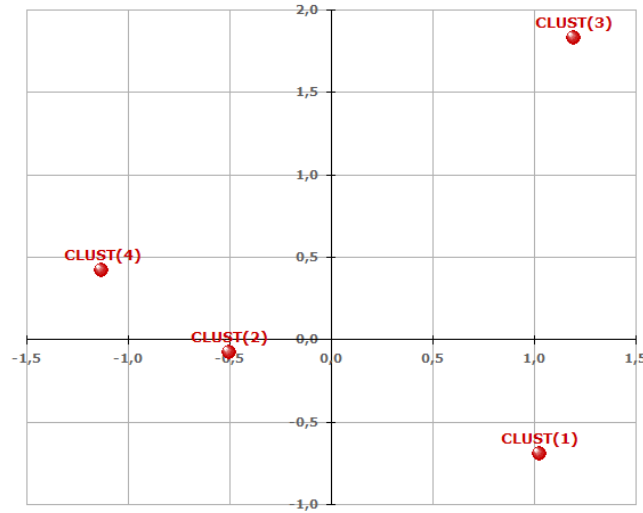
Figure 2. Distribution of clusters on the Cartesian plane

From the above figure it is possible to note how the association between the clusters have a strong impact on the organization of the factorial space: specifically, the decentralized positions of cluster 1 and cluster 3 indicate that their contents are different from clusters 2 and 4 which, being close to each other, denote a similarity in terms of contents.

Exploring the characteristics of the clusters and showing the lexical units that compose them, we immediately notice that the second and the fourth clusters confirm what had already emerged from the previous analysis: in fact, the words that compose these two clusters are those that previously had the greatest number of occurrences (for example, in the second cluster we find out terms such as "God", "love" and "life" while, within the fourth cluster, we find out terms like "disciple" and "Jesus"). Consequently, these two thematic groups refer to the same dimension, identified as "spiritual", since most of the Pope's Angelus are linked to it (together they explain 67.2% of classified elementary contexts).

A different explanation, however, must be made with regard to the remaining two clusters, the first and the third, which respectively explain 21.02% and 11.78% of the elementary contexts. The first cluster is characterized by the association of terms that refer to direct contact between the Pope and his audience (it is characterized by terms such as "healthy", "Rome", "thank"); instead, analyzing the lemmas that create the third cluster, we notice that it refers to a "social" dimension since the lemmas related to the events and situations of our days occur. In this regard, we find these keywords: "war", "peace", "violence", "victim" and "conflict".

Summing up the statistical elaborations carried out so far, it is possible to state that Pope Francis's speeches focus on three particular thematic areas: the spiritual, the human and the social one. However, beyond their specificities, we have tried to deepen the whole of their associations through the factor analysis which, overall, explain 73.87% of the total variance.

Table 5. Test Values on factors

First factor				Second factor			
Negative axis		**Positive axis**		**Negative axis**		**Positive axis**	
Lemmas	**Test Values**	**Lemmas**	**Test Values**	**Lemmas**	**Test Values**	**Lemmas**	**Test Values**
Jesus	-17,45	Greet	18,06	Mary	-11,27	War	18,35
God	-10,01	Country	14,21	Virgin	-8,98	Violence	13,38
Father	-9,07	Dear	13,71	Mother	-8,25	Conflict	11,51
Disciple	-8,51	Pray	13,71	Celebration	-7,31	Nation	11,4
Word	-8,39	Rome	12,54	Celebrate	-7,06	International	11,16
Bread	-7,94	Church	12,53	Christmas	-7,03	Victim	11,15
Crowd	-7,51	Italy	12,42	Greet	-6,97	Dialogue	10,99
Answer	-7,38	Family	12,1	Joy	-6,75	Peace	10,89
Scriptures	-7,23	Association	12,06	Grace	-6,7	Ensure	9,69
See	-6,93	Sister	11,65	Church	-6,51	Build	9,26

Source: Author's own elaboration

Once identified the number of relevant factors in terms of reproduced variance, the list of lexical units and related test values was analyzed for each factor (Table 5): therefore, each axis can be distinguished in two half-axes, one positive and the other negative, which represent the semantic poles of the continuum.

Observing the substantial oppositions of the factorial plane, we note that, as regards to the first factor, which we define "Relationship between the Pope and God/Relationship between the Pope and Man", the negative semi-axis is characterized by the presence of all those lemmas that refer to the individual religious sphere (for example, the words with the most significant test values are "Jesus", "God", "Father", "disciple", "word"); in the positive axis we find the presence of some words which, as already noted above, are related to the direct interaction between Pope Francis and his audience: in fact, the terms that recur most refer to a community dimension ("greet", "Country", "dear", "pray", "Rome").

From a sociological point of view, we could argue that the intent of Pope Francis is to constitute a new group identity whose behaviors are based on a structured interaction in order to ensure a stronger sense of belonging: in this respect, if it is true that «being a member of a group is more than being part of a group of people» (Smelser, 1987: 135), Pope Francis can be viewed as an excellent expressive leader, a best liked man to put it in the words of Bales and Slater (1957).

Continuing our analysis, we note that the second factor refers to man's more general relationship with suffering: on the one hand, the negative axis is characterized by the presence of some keywords that identify the dimension of prayer; on the other hand, on the positive axis, the theme of suffering is more explicit since it is characterized by terms such as "war", "violence" and "conflict" which already compone the third cluster.

Summarizing our textual data, the analysis offers a clear and complete overview of the issues addressed by the Pope in his Angelus in the first three years of his Pontificate (Table 6): indeed, the Pope, demonstrating to take care of both religious and social issues, wanted to build a more united and enlarged Catholic community and a Church more protected from external influences and corruption.

Table 6. Poles of the first and the second factors

	Negative axis	Positive axis
First factor	*Relationship Pope and God*	*Relationship Pope and Man*
Second factor	*Pray*	*Suffer*

Source: Author's own elaboration

CONCLUSION

In order to investigate the different contents of the messages of the two different Pontiffs, the content analysis here applied proved to be a useful tool capable of responding to our cognitive goal (Rositi, 2000). The research carried out tried to combine two elements that are difficult to isolate in the understanding of a communication process, "what to say" and "who speaks", that is the message and the source: as a matter of fact, more the latter is known and authoritative, more the message is qualified and recognized.

Furthermore, considering that the senders of the messages are leaders *par excellence* of the Catholic world, a third element that must be taken into account is the social-historical context in which the secularization process is taking place, accelerated or amplified by economic and political modernization. Indeed, given a society increasingly globalized, the goal of both corpora analyzed seems to be, first of all, to counter the decline of the Christian faith and to overcome all those dimensions deemed central in the formation of the concept of "secularization", around which the sociological attention has focused (Vitiello, 2005):

• the "strong" idea of secularization as an eclipse of the sacred and as a consequent loss of both social and individual relevance of religion;

• secularization as a decline of religions and churches as institutions with the consequent retreat of religious research into the personal sphere;

• lastly, secularization as the transposition of beliefs, rites and needs from the religious to the profane sphere (creation of alternative religions).

It would seem, therefore, that religion, in this particular context, is now a weakened and marginal power and this would justify the actions that both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have put in place, over the years, in order to rebuild a collective religious feeling. From this point of view, a point of contact emerges between the words of both Pontiffs. Summing up the contents of the Angelus, we note that the focal point of all the discourses is the reconstruction of religiosity understood as a having an intimacy dimension and solidity of the inner relationship, a disposition of the subject within a higher order which he perceives as something intimate and personal at the same time (Simmel, 1989). More than speaking of religion as a unitary social and cultural system, the keywords emerged from our analysis aim at a religious rebirth made possible only through the reciprocity among people: in fact, religious representations come from inter-human interactions. The invitation to a practical faith, based on dialogue and social relation, is an element present in both textual corpora and underlines the strategic actions of the both Pontiffs. Not only that: as observed, also by the association of lemmas, social

interaction is the effective tool capable of generating the encounter and civil coexistence in today's society and within the Church, understood as a kind of bureaucracy of ordinary human beings (McLuhan, 1989).

Nonetheless, the corpora analyzed differ from a fundamental point of view: in fact, wanting to summarize the results obtained by classifying them in the so-called substantial dimensions of religion proposed by Aldridge (2000), we note that if on the one hand the speeches of Pope Benedict XVI fit into a more ethical framing (as regards the acceptance of the values of a particular tradition, in this case of the Catholic tradition) and cultural (which includes the inheritance of documents, doctrines and sacred texts), on the other, the speeches of Pope Francis can be included in the community dimension (with reference to the symbolic elements of belonging to a community) and in the emotional dimension (in relation to the intense and numerous experiences of meeting between the Pope and his assembly). If, therefore, the symbolic expressiveness of Pope Benedict is especially linked to the liturgies celebrated making him appear a minimalist, this cannot be said for Pope Francis who, making use of a more direct and simple language, wanted to build a "new Church", far-off from the administrative problems and more in line with today's social changes.

Finally, from the Angelus analyzed we figure out the qualities of two different personalities (an instrumental leader and an expressive leader) capable of directing and orienting the faithful crowd, through a different *modus operandi*. However, they are both spiritual leaders and reference points for collective and individual identities. They have shown a strong sensitivity in understanding the spirit of the time and in thinking of a new way of defining the concept of religion in a contemporary society. Returning to our original question, it is therefore possible to recognize how communication is a mechanism of coordination and cooperation between participants and, even more, how the perlocutive effect can impact and determine others' attitudes and behaviors (Habermas, 1981).

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