This paper examines the multilayeredness of computer-mediated political discourse, focussing on the interdependencies between the contextual constraints and requirements of the medium on the one hand, and contextualisation, indexicality of communicative action and conversational implicature on the other. Particular attention is given to implicit and entextualised references to differences between what is said and what is meant in the communicative act of follow-up, to the importation of context and provision of background information, to their function with respect to the interactional organisation of (non)credibility and argumentative (non)coherence, and to the co-construction of discourse common ground. Within the context of computer-mediated political discourse, these references are used strategically to accommodate the contextual constraints and requirements of a multilayered reception format and their multilayered felicity conditions, and to support speaker-intended interpretation of multilayered discourse on the production side.

**Keywords:** context, contextualisation, conversational implicature, speaker-intended meaning, discourse common ground, follow-up, political discourse

1. **Introduction**

Pragmatics is fundamentally concerned with communicative action and its felicity in context, considering not only traditional speech acts and their felicity conditions, but also larger-scale action, in particular communicative activity types and discourse genres across various discourse domains and contexts (Levinson 1979; Thibault 2003; Fetzer 2014). This also holds for the multilayered frame of refer-
ence of computer-mediated discourse, this paper claims, with medium-specific contextual constraints and requirements. Communicative action in context has been examined with respect to interdependencies between communicative action and context, with communicative action embedded in context while at the same time embedding context, assigning it the status of being *doubly contextual* (Heritage 1984:242); for discourse – in particular for computer-mediated discourse –, the status is not only ‘doubly’ but rather *multiply contextual* (Fetzer 2017).

Context has been described as multifaceted and multilayered: it has been classified as a relational construct, relating communicative actions, relating communicative actions and their surroundings, relating participants and their surroundings, and relating participants with the things they do with words in their surroundings (Fetzer and Akman 2002). Context has been referred to as a psychological construct (Sperber and Wilson 1986), as other minds (Givón 2005), and as subjective and individual context (Penco 1999); and it has been conceptualised as a holistic construct composed of interdependent cognitive context, linguistic context, social context and sociocultural context (Fetzer 2012). Interactional sociolinguistics conceives of language as a socially situated form with linguistic variation and alteration being not random or arbitrary, but communicatively functional and meaningful. Its premise of indexicality of communicative action requires a dynamic conceptualisation of context with context being both process and product, and with contextualisation having been assigned the status of a universal in human communication (Gumperz 1996). Contextualisation-as-a-process is not only related intrinsically to decontextualisation, recontextualisation and entextualisation, but it is also a necessary condition for conversational inference. In contextualisation, which may be looked upon as functionally equivalent to pragmatic enrichment, participants assign values to indexical tokens. In recontextualisation, participants adapt the values assigned to tokens in a particular context to the constraints and requirements of a different context and interpret the tokens accordingly, and in decontextualisation, participants extract indexical tokens from their embedding context and assign them a value that transcends particularised values and is expected to obtain in default contexts. Entextualisation is different from contextualisation, recontextualisation and decontextualisation. In entextualisation, participants assign some unbounded entity of context the status of a bounded object that is encoded in particular forms of language or is indexically referred to. In computer-mediated discourse, contextualisation is not only local and discourse-internal, but rather a global and multilayered activity. Participants may utilise various contextual layers which they can access through interconnected hyperlinks, indexing multimodal texts and videos, for example, which are generally furnished with more interconnected hyperlinks indexing yet further layers of context with more computer-mediated discourse.
(cf. Yus 2011), thus contributing to multilayered decontextualisation, recontextualisation and entextualisation.

The pragmatic premises of rationality and intentionality, and the interactional-sociolinguistic premise of intentionality of communicative action do not only hold for communicative-action-as-a-whole, but also for the contextualisation, recontextualisation and decontextualisation of tokens, and for the entextualisation of unbounded context (cf. Fetzer 2011). However, communication is not a one-way endeavour based on encoding and decoding mechanisms, but rather means collaboration and cooperation in line with the Gricean cooperative principle, its maxims and implicatures (Grice 1975). Participants in natural-language communication – and as this paper suggests, also in computer-mediated discourse – produce and interpret communicative actions intentionally, having one or more communicative intentions, while at the same time being accountable for their communicative actions. That is to say, they can provide accounts and reformulations for what they intend their communicative actions to count as, and they can provide further arguments to support their communicative goals – should these be queried in interaction – in the communicative act of follow-up. These follow-ups may be self-initiated or other-initiated. Analogously to the premise of intentionality of communicative action, the interactional-sociolinguistic premise of indexicality of communicative action does not only hold for the communicative-action-as-a-whole, but also for the constitutive parts of communicative action and for the delimiting frame of genre, which is referred to as speech event in interactional sociolinguistics.

Context is presupposed and brought into – or: imported into – the communication, and it is jointly constructed – or invoked – in communication. Bateson (1972) points out that context needs to be conceived of as structured – in spite of being unbounded and multilayered: “… structured context also occurs within a wider context – a metacontext if you will – and that this sequence of contexts is an open, and conceivably infinite, series” (Bateson 1972: 245). The ‘conceivably infinite’ conceptualisation of context receives yet another dimension of infiniteness if it is adapted to the contextual constraints and requirements of computer-mediated discourse, where the order of metacontexts allows for almost infinite variation.

This paper is informed by methodological compositionality, accommodating the fundamental premises of pragmatics and interactional sociolinguistics. The main bridging point between pragmatics and interactional sociolinguistics lies in the explicit accommodation of context as a complex and dynamic whole. For mediated political discourse, both the dynamics of context and the complexity of participation are of key importance. Conceiving of participants as rational agents who direct their conversational contributions intentionally towards a rati-
fied, but heterogeneous and multilayered set of addressees further refines the analytic framework by providing a set of methodological tools, which allow for the analysis of meaning production and meaning interpretation in (computer-mediated) context.

The goal of the paper is to examine how references to the fundamental pragmatic distinction between what is said and what is meant are realised in the communicative act of follow-up in computer-mediated political discourse, and how context is imported strategically to support the interactional organisation of (non)credibility and argumentative (non)coherence. Particular attention is given to the multilayeredness of the contextual constraints and requirements of the medium and of their impact on the linguistic realisation of references to pragmatic meaning-making processes on the production side and reception side as well as on the provision of hyperlinks and other types of metadata and metarepresentation in order to import and invoke context and ensure the activation of sufficient discourse common ground for felicitous communication. On a more global level, hyperlinks contribute to the construal of interdiscursitivity, beckoning participants out of a discourse into a more or less specified prior discourse, which comes in with the presumption of being relevant to the present discourse, and beckoning participants back in again.

The paper is structured as follows: the next section examines political discourse as mediated discourse addressing the question of how the multilayeredness of context is reflected in political discourse. The third part introduces the communicative act of follow-up and the fourth part analyses one particular instance of the computer-mediated political discourse, Independent’s Voices our opinions – and yours, Philip Hammond’s Spring Budget: what he said – and what he really meant,¹ considering the linguistic realisation of metadata and metarepresentation with respect to securing discourse common ground and felicitous interpretation of producer-intended meanings. The discussion part addresses the question whether the multilayeredness of the medium requires multilayered premises, and a conclusion summarises the results obtained.

### 2. The multilayeredness of mediated political discourse

Political discourse in the media is a complex phenomenon: it is institutional discourse, it is public discourse, it is media discourse, and it is mediated and mediated discourse. As institutional discourse, it differs from everyday conversation

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in being subject to institutional constraints. As media discourse, it is different from other types of institutional discourse by being, above all, public discourse addressed to a mass media audience. As mediated and medialised political discourse, it is the outcome of the encounter of two different institutional discourses: political discourse and media discourse, feeding on the inherent constraints of mediated discourse, i.e. communication through a medium and thus the uncoupling of space and time, and the movement of meaning from one text, discourse or event to another with the constant transformation of meanings; and feeding on the inherent constraints of political discourse, i.e. the professionalisation of politics and the management of mediation of political ‘messages’ by spin doctors or political branding, among others (Fairclough 2006).

In a digital world, political discourse can no longer be conceived of only as a static notion, which has been produced at some more or less specific location and some more or less specific time. Rather, political discourse in the media – and in particular computer-mediated political discourse – needs to be looked at from a dynamic perspective that accounts for the contextual constraints and requirements in which the discourse has been produced and in which it has been communicated. The dynamisation of discourse in general and of political discourse in particular goes hand in hand with the ongoing changes in postmodern societies, especially within our mediatised society. Modern technologies enable us to transmit information instantaneously to anybody who is a member of the web-anchored community and we generally expect instantaneous replies, if only some kind of +like or –unlike. This process-orientation is reflected in the transmission of the discourse as such, for example in tweets and blogs, in parliamentary discourse and web-based commentaries and comments, such as The Independent's Voices produced by professional journalists and in discussion forums produced by ordinary people constituting some kind of participatory or citizen journalism, in panel interviews with audience participation and follow-up chat sessions with the politicians interviewed, in mediatised party-political conferences with follow-up interviews and web-based discussion forums, in live-reports of mediations concerning controversial decision-making processes, and in rather spontaneously organised – and videoed – demonstrations, marches or sit-ins (cf. Atifi and Marcoccia 2015 for an overview of different types of computer-mediated political discourse). The common mediatised reality has thus become a kind of common ground.

The process-orientation of political discourse has also become a constitutive part of political decision-making on both micro- and macro-levels of communication, regarding professional politics and grassroot politics. E-mobility has not only changed the interpersonal domains of society but has also transmitted public politics into the private domains of society, as is reflected in the participation
of larger – and often also more heterogeneous – groups of society organising successful protests against macro-political decisions, such as youth unemployment in Spain, mass demonstrations in Egypt and other countries, or the building of controversial power stations, airports or train stations in Germany.

Political discourse has been described as public discourse, institutional discourse, media discourse, and some kind of professional discourse. The latter is particularly true of institutional political discourse while grassroot-anchored political discourse may display a different kind of professionalism. Political discourse is thus constrained by its situatedness in public, institutional and media domains, as is reflected in the choice of public topics, institutional topics, media topics and professional topics, and in the choice of public, institutional and media styles and registers (Fairclough 1995; Fetzer 2000). Those macro constraints do not only constrain topic, style and register, but also the location and duration of the communicative exchange, self- and other-selection of speaker, and their institutional and interactional roles. As has already been pointed out above, the particularised constraints do not only hold for political discourse as a whole, but also for its constitutive parts, such as agent, topic, style and register.

In our digitalised and mediaised societies, political discourse has undergone important changes and that is why a felicitous analysis can no longer be based on text and talk (Chilton and Schäffner 2002) only, but rather needs to consider political discourse as a multilayered, context-dependent phenomenon with fuzzy boundaries (Fetzer 2013). This also holds for all of its constitutive parts, in particular for the discursive construction of party-political ideologies, political identities and leadership. The symbiotic relationship between political discourse and the media is interdependent on the medium-as-such in and through which political information, beliefs and opinions are transmitted, negotiated and shaped. The impact of modern mass-media culture on communicative behaviour and performance is further reflected in the conversationalisation and professionalisation of political discourse (Fairclough 1998).

The multilayeredness of political discourse has been addressed in the analysis of media interviews by Heritage (1985) and Fetzer (2006, 2016), who have shown that the interviews between interviewer and interviewee are not actually directed towards the direct communication partner, i.e. interviewer and interviewee, but rather towards the audience. The direct face-to-face interaction, also referred to as first-frame interaction, comprises the studio setting and first-frame participants, i.e. interviewer and interviewee of the TV broadcast interview, alternatively a speech, e.g. the Budget speech, given to a face-to-face audience, e.g. members of Parliament, or if the interview or speech are part of a media website, the internet video and / or the transcript provided by the website and generally made available through one or more hyperlinks. The second-frame interaction consists of
the first frame interacting with the mediated audience, i.e. an audience watching the televised interview or speech, the computer-mediated interview or speech as a video or reading it as a transcript. The third-frame interaction comprises the users as audience, commenting on the speech or interview between the first-frame participants. The fourth-frame interaction is composed of audience members responding to the third-frame commentators commenting on the interview or speech, and the fifth-frame interaction includes those audience members referring to the fourth-frame, third, second or first-frame interactions, and so forth. The multi-frame discourse illustrates the multilayeredness of computer-mediated discourse, which goes beyond the dual frame of reference of traditional media communication, as has been shown for the frame- and medium-dependent use of quotations. Quotations in traditional media interviews are generally furnished with references to their contextual coordinates, that is explicit references to their ascribed source, local and temporal frames and verb of communication. In the context of online comments, they are generally furnished with a shell noun indexing the illocutionary force of the quoted content rather than a verb of communication encoding the illocutionary force of the quoted content. However, it was not only their medium-specific formatting, but also their communicative functions, which differ. In the online comments, quotations are used as stance objects in order to align or disalign with the ascribed source of the quoted content, while in the traditional political interviews they are generally used to deconstruct the politicians’ credibility and argumentative coherence (cf. Fetzer and Reber 2015; Fetzer 2015).

The multilayeredness of political discourse has become even more complex in the context of online newspapers that do not longer come out in print, as is the case with The Independent. The web-based digital edition provides readers not only with traditional news reports supplemented with still pictures, but also with video clips and other hyperlinks to background information in various formats, also traditional written-language and still picture-based newspaper articles, related commentaries and comments, party-political manifestos and documents, as well as audio-visual recordings and video clips documenting their various deliveries and contextual embeddedness. This also holds for the communicative action of quoting. The coordinates of a classical quotation are no longer entextualised in introductory formulae but rather presented in the format of a video clip, which documents their delivery as recorded by the media and transmitted in the media.

Online newspapers thus provide their readers with huge amounts of background information in order to support their reporting on current issues as well as their respective commentaries and opinions. Against this background, professional journalistic discourse in general, and investigative journalism in particu-
lar, have become a more multilayered and thus a more complex kind of discourse on the one hand, and a more transparent kind of discourse on the other, providing access to reports and sources, which may have previously been considered backstage, in Goffman's terms (Goffman 1986). The access to relevant background information as well as to original sources, and the making available of background information, which comes in with the presumption of being relevant, contributes to the joint construction of discourse common ground with intended recipients and readers of the computer-mediated political discourse and thus to felicitous communication and persuasive argumentation; this is supported by making transparent the relevance of the sources and by making the sources-as-a-whole or some of its excerpts explicit for the interactional organisation of argumentatively sound comments. In computer-mediated political discourse, the interactional organisation of hard news, of political information and of the credibility of political agents – both journalists and politicians – has become a multilayered endeavour, which goes beyond ‘text and talk’, utilising digitally stored multimodal information. Doing neutralism in computer-mediated political discourse seems to be based on making accessible relevant background information for an ongoing political interview, a speech or the Chief Commentator’s commentaries, for instance.

To capture the dynamics of computer-mediated political discourse, its multilayeredness and multi-frame interactions, Goffman’s concept of frame has been utilised, which may account for data, metadata, metarepresentation, and heterogeneous participation formats. Another important concept for the analysis of computer-mediated political discourse is provided by the communicative act of follow-up (Fetzer, Weizman and Berlin 2015; Weizman and Fetzer 2015), which will be introduced in the following section and illustrated with one communicative event, the Chancellor’s Budget speech, and its reception in *The Independent* in Part 4.

### 3. Follow-ups in mediated political discourse

In a narrow definition, follow-ups are a constitutive part of a three-move sequence, which may form an autonomous sequence or be a constitutive part of a larger sequence within a delimited frame of reference, for instance a discourse genre. The former comprises an initiating move, a response and another move. The third move only counts as a follow-up if it refers explicitly to either the initiating move or the response and takes up their content (or parts of it) and / or their force (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). In a wider definition, follow-ups refer anaphorically to other discourses thus importing relevant content, force and/
or context into an ongoing discourse. In the framework of argumentation theory, follow-ups are a constitutive part of argumentation (cf. Livnat 2012), and in a dynamic theory of communication, they are a constitutive part of negotiation-of-validity sequences, in particular of the ratification and negotiation of validity claims in the Habermasean paradigm (Habermas 1987) and its adaptation to a micro frame of reference distinguishing between plus-validity claims and minus-validity claims (Fetzer 2000, 2016). In speech act theory, follow-ups may be attributed to perlocutionary effects, if not to the perlocution (Searle 1969; Austin 1976).

In discourse in general and in computer-mediated discourse in particular, participants anchor their contributions to prior discourse, following up on what has been said/written and connecting it with the here-and-now. Against this background, follow-ups, viz. the communicative action used to undertake that action, is a constitutive part of discourse. For instance, in political interviews interviewers evaluate the interviewees’ responses and may request them to be more precise by elaborating on the discourse topic. In political discussion forums, speaker A posts a message which opens a discussion thread, the message is followed by reactions, and speaker A produces follow-up messages of confirmation or disagreement. Variants of prototypical third-position follow-ups include sequences where the follow-up is not performed by interlocutor A but rather by a third party, for example in comments on newspaper articles, where the article – the initiation – is commented upon by a reader B, and Reader C posts a comment on B (cf. Weizman 2015). The absence of follow-ups has also been described as a variant of the triadic follow-up, mainly when it carries an indirect meaning. For example, if in a TV interview an interviewer does not respond to an interviewee’s answer as a response to the question asked, this absence of follow-up may be interpreted as implicit consent on the side of the interviewer; it may, however, be challenged by a citizen in a discussion forum, which then counts as a delayed follow-up by a third party (cf. Atifi and Marcoccia 2015).

In line with Weizman and Fetzer (2015) and Fetzer, Weizman and Berlin (2015), this paper adopts a broader conceptualisation of follow-up as a communicative act that counts as a non-initiative component of discursive negotiations. A sufficient condition for a communicative act to count as follow-up is its being initiated by a previous stretch of discourse or by a previous discourse. For this reason, follow-ups need to contain responsive properties, but in sequential chains they may also contain initiative features. As responses, “they show how prior contributions are understood” (Linell 2009:179). As initiatives, they “introduce new material and project next contributions” (Linell 2009:179). The complexity embedded in chains of follow-ups is even accelerated in participatory multi-party interactions, such as discussion forums, blogs and twitters. Whatever their position in the exchange is, follow-ups necessarily “involve recontextualization of an
object of discourse (or parts of it) from another context, stance-taking, and the negotiation of new meaning” (Linell 1998:154). Follow-ups contain metadata and metarepresentations: the former are obligatory in computer-mediated discourse and frequently encoded by the website’s software and its provision of a reply frame, while the latter tend to be optional. As regards their validity in context, the metadata encountered in computer-mediated discourse may come in with the presumption of being truthful and valid, but they are open to manipulation as regards relevant contextual coordinates, such as source and temporal and local embeddedness – they do come in with the expectation of consistent variables, though.

The macro contextual constraints for computer-mediated political discourse do not only constrain the production and interpretation of discursive meaning in the meso domain of discourse genre, but also in the micro domain of conversational contribution. This is particularly true of the use of follow-ups. Conversational contributions are generally not followed up out of context, especially if there is discursive delay in the follow-up. In that case, the communication of discursive coordinates, including temporal and spatial information, is necessary for the participants’ co-construction of discourse common ground and thus for felicitous communication. This furnishing of follow-ups is generally done with referring to and / or entextualising the embedding context and thus with metarepresenting what is intended to be followed up. The higher degree of explicitness of the metarepresentation may pre-empt challenges about the truthfulness and validity of what-is-intended-to-be-followed up and thus support the interactional organisation of the credibility and argumentative coherence of the production format of the follow-up, making the producers appear more professional. It may also be viewed as making the practice of following up more transparent.

Metadata and metarepresentation are related to – if not the results of – multilayered and multiframed interactions. The following section examines the contextual constraints and requirements of computer-mediated discourse in one particular case study: the Chancellor's Budget speech delivered on 8 March 2017 in the House of Commons by the Chancellor Philip Hammond. The data, that is excerpts of Hammond’s speech, is available online on The Independent's website, embedded in data, metadata and metarepresentations, that is The Independent's live blog, an analysis of the Chancellor’s speech and the socio-political context by Ashley Cowburn, John Rentoul’s analysis of the Chancellor’s speech with regard to the pragmatics-adapted dichotomy of what the Chancellor said and what he really

meant, and comments by ordinary citizens. The transcript of the entire Budget speech is available in the Hansard.³

4. The Budget speech

The aim of this section is not to present a full analysis of the Budget speech with respect to its content, rhetorical structure and argumentation. Rather, the focus is on the analysis of the relationship between data, metadata and metarepresentations, which supplement the communicative event of the Chancellor’s speech, and on their impact on the contextualisation and recontextualisation of the speech (72,000 words) as transmitted in the House of Commons, 8 March 2017, 12.35pm. Excerpts of the speech as delivered in the House of Commons and of its reception by members of the House of Commons are made available as video clips on The Independent’s website. The website of the online quality newspaper under investigation, Independent’s Voices our opinions – and yours, Philip Hammond’s Spring Budget: what he said – and what he really meant, contains a still picture of the Chancellor and his red case with the captions ‘The no-spin Chancellor strikes again’, three still pictures, one with the Union Jack and FTSE 100 with the captions ‘Stock markets and pound sterling to react to UK budget statement’ with the hyperlink invitation ‘read more’, another with the captions ‘Theresa May interrupts Hammond’s Budget to remind him it’s Women’s Day’ with the hyperlink invitation ‘read more’, another showing the Chancellor’s lower part of the arm holding the red case with the captions ‘The 6 most important things you need to know about the Budget’ with the hyperlink invitation ‘read more’, and a still picture of the Chancellor indexing a hyperlink to an excerpt of his speech (2 minutes) in the House of Commons with the captions ‘Philip Hammonds made a litany of gags in his Budget 2017’. The captions invite a contextualisation of the Chancellor as ‘no-spin’ and at the same time as ‘witty and humorous’. The website also contains a ‘Spring Budget 2017 Tax Calculator’, which is positioned at the end of the website. It allows users to calculate the impact of the Spring Budget on their financial situation. There is no direct hyperlink connecting the comments on the Budget speech and the background information provided with the actual delivery of the entire speech or with its full transcript. The Budget speech as data is thus backgrounded while the metadata and metarepresentations on the Budget speech are foregrounded. The most prominent metadata comprise a Live Blog, which contains relevant background information on the speech, such as the Manifesto of

³ https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-08/debates/9128238B-4A1C-4EEA-A6Fo-6FEB0B5024D8/FinancialStatement.
the Conservative Party and their pledge not to raise National Insurance contributions. *The Independent’s* website also invites users explicitly to “Follow all the latest updates and reaction after Philip Hammond’s first Budget” with “all the latest lines and reaction from the Chancellor’s 2017 Budget”.

The website *Independent’s Voices our opinions – and yours, Philip Hammond’s Spring Budget: what he said – and what he really meant*, contains multimodal data, metadata and metarepresentations of what the Chancellor had said in his speech supplemented by multimodal background information produced by professional journalists, and comments by ordinary citizens furnished with metadata as constitutive parts of the comment frame and metarepresentations.

4.1 Data and metadata

The multilayered provision of political information has been addressed above and is now going to be examined in detail. As for the production side, the journalists are identified with entextualised metadata, that is full name, position, email and temporal coordinates: John Rentoul, chief political commentator, @JohnRentoul, Wednesday 8 March 2017, 15:00 GMT, and Ashley Cowburn, political correspondent, @ashcowburn, Wednesday 8 March 2017, 09:38 GMT. The provision of full names and positions are relevant contextualisation devices for what the information provided by the particular website, the data, metadata and metarepresentation counts as: subjectively coloured political analyses on the side of the chief political commentator and background information and analyses on the side of the political correspondent. The temporal metadata identify their time of production and of going online, and assign the information the status of being relevant to ‘then’, and possibly also to ‘here-and-now’, that is the brief period before the Budget speech is to be delivered. The comments-based website anchor the content to the period briefly after the delivery of the Budget speech. The comments by ordinary citizens, which may be interpreted as instances of participatory journalism are also furnished with metadata; they are less explicit than those of the professional journalists. Ordinary citizens are identified by nicknames – or “translucent filters” (Yus 2011: 42) – and the frames their posts are realised in provide information about temporal embeddedness and possible follow-ups, such as +likes, −unlikes and further comments. On some websites, ordinary users also have the possibility to upload material or provide hyperlinks making available background information.

The entextualisation of metadata supports the website’s intended readers’ construal of discourse common ground and the contextualisation and interpretation of the production-side intended communicative meaning and perlocutionary effects. As regards the political-correspondence side, the information is intended
to be interpreted as fact-based information, which can be accounted for by fact-based background information made available through the hyperlinks, while the political-commentator anchored information is intended to be interpreted as subjectively coloured argumentation which is, however, also supported by evidence, that is fact-based background information made available through hyperlinks. The fact-based backup for the chief commentator’s contextualisation of the communicative event is intended to support the interactional organisation of credibility and argumentative coherence, giving the pragmatics-based differentiation between what is said and what is meant a subjectively coloured interpretation, which is indexically referred by the modifier ‘really’ in ‘what is really meant’, signifying some hidden communicative intention on the side of the ‘non-spin’ Chancellor, which is to be made explicit by the commentator.

In the following the background information made available through a hyperlink anchored to the first mention of What Philip Hammond said in the chief political commentator’s analysis of what the Chancellor said and what he meant is examined in detail, considering in particular conversational implicatures and contextualisation. After the analysis of the political-correspondent-anchored information, the Chief Editor’s commentaries are investigated. This is in line with the chronology of their production, but differs from their accessibility because the primary-frame based commentary embeds the secondary frame containing the fact-based information.

The website (cf. footnote 2) reads as follows: “Budget 2017 live: Chancellor breaks Tory manifesto pledge with tax rises. Live blog Follow all the latest updates and reaction after Philipp Hammond’s first Budget.” It contains a still picture with the Chancellor, presumably delivering his speech. The picture is hyperlinked with a video clip (46 seconds), inviting viewers to watch the clip and listen to the Chancellor; the wording of the speech is adopted from the Hansard (cf. footnote 3):

I report today on an economy that has continued to confound the commentators with robust growth, a labour market delivering record employment and a deficit down by over two thirds. As we start our negotiations to exit the European Union, this Budget takes forward our plan to prepare Britain for a brighter future. It provides a strong and stable platform for those negotiations; it extends opportunity to all our young people; it delivers further investment in our public services; and it continues the task of getting Britain back to living within its means. We are building the foundations of a stronger, fairer, more global Britain.

4. Printed bold and coloured red in the original; the red coloured excerpts provide hyperlinks.
Below the still picture there is the following fact-based text with hyperlinked red coloured parts inviting users to access background information in order to verify the content of the journalist’s reports and analyses:

Welcome to *The Independent*'s liveblog with all the latest lines and reaction from the Chancellor’s 2017 Budget.

Philip Hammond broke a Conservative manifesto pledge not to raise National Insurance contributions.

The claim that the Chancellor had broken a Conservative manifesto pledge is supported by a report from the political correspondent Jon Stone with a number of hyperlinks, one inviting users to access *The Independent*'s website from 22 April 2015 covering the General Election and the Conservative Manifesto 2015 (‘Key Tory policies explained in a minute’) supplemented with more metadata and further hyperlinked background information, another summary of the Conservatives manifesto with the key options of strong leadership, a clear economic plan, a brighter, more secure future. In his Budget speech, Philip Hammond repeats key themes from the Manifesto, such as “this Budget takes forward our plan to prepare Britain for a brighter future” or “We will meet our manifesto commitment to increasing the thresholds to £12,500 and £50,000 respectively by the end of this Parliament” (adopted from the Hansard). In the speech, the Chancellor does not only entextualise the results of quantitative analyses, but also refers to the OBR (Office for Budget Responsibility), thus signifying a quantity-based ‘clear economic plan’.

As above, the metadata support the users’ contextualisation and interpretation of the information provided as fact-based. The text continues as follows:

He also announced £2bn over three years for social care, cut growth forecasts from next year and introduced a sugar tax.

He cracked a string of jokes throughout the speech – but not everyone was amused.

The first two hyperlinked excerpts invite users to access a report by the Health correspondent Katie Forster, which is furnished with further hyperlinks making available fact-based information on health issues and on social care. The entextualised metadata (‘Health correspondent’) assign the author the status of an expert on social care and on health. Analogously to the embedded – fact-based – website analysed above, Katie Forster’s report is furnished with fact-based information, also with information provided by the Conservative government.

The other hyperlinks of the text refer to websites designed in a similar fashion making available a two-minute video clip of the Chancellor telling jokes and further links providing background information of the ‘victims’ of the jokes, entex-
tualising necessary background information to secure felicitous communication. This is furnished with the online newspaper’s rating (Indy rating) supported by brief arguments. The hyperlink indexing the non-amused targets makes available the reactions of Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Labour Party leader. There is a still picture with the leader of the opposition, further fact-based reports and metarepresented quotations (cf. Fetzer 2015). As for their formatting, they are generally realised as direct quotation, displaying the highest degree of objectivity, but there are also mixed quotations, that is text produced by the political correspondent which contains quoted material from Corbyn, for instance “He accused Mr Hammond of handing £70bn of tax giveaways over the next five years ‘to those who need it least’ – big companies and the wealthy.”

The website summarises the most important issues raised in the Budget speech in the format of a bullet list, which is – analogously to the political information provided above – furnished with hyperlinks, which lead to further websites containing reports, video clips, transcripts of speeches, fact-based background information by experts of the online newspaper, and hyperlinked invitations to read more, all leading to fact-based sites authored by experts of the online newspaper. The last bullet point provides a link with the most important information about the Budget (‘everything you need to know’):

– Hammond breaks manifesto pledge with National Insurance rise
– Hammond insists ‘we are party of NHS’ with £2bn for social care
– Corbyn attacks ‘too little, too late’ on social care crisis
– Growth forecasts slashed for Budget years
– New sugar tax confirmed to fight obesity
– Extra 20% tax slapped on using your phone abroad
– Three measures to ease business rate burden – amounting to cuts of £435m
– Stock markets and pound take Budget in their stride
– Usually grey Chancellor wisecracks his way through speech
– Budget at a glance: Everything you need to know

Below the reactions to the Budget just analysed, there is chronologically prior information (Mar 8 2017 10:47AM), which was produced before the delivery of the speech. The organisation of the website as it stands is guided by the contextual constraints and requirements of its users. The information about the reactions to the Budget is more relevant to the current readers of the online newspaper, because the Budget speech was delivered and some of the contents of the Bud-

5. The experts are: Jon Stone (political correspondent – 1, 4, 6, 9), Katie Forster (health correspondent – 2, 5), Rob Merrick (deputy political editor – 3, 4), Josie Cox (business editor – 7, 8) and Zlata Rodionova (7, 10).
get – the intended increase of taxes for self-employed – had been withdrawn by the Government shortly after its delivery because of a Tory backbench rebellion.6

The information provided in the website contains information about the contextual coordinates of the speech (‘around 12.30’) its embeddedness as taking place after a sequence of PMQs, and in the socio-historic context of Brexit:

Welcome to The Independent’s liveblog of today’s Prime Minister’s Questions and the Chancellor’s 2017 Budget:
Before the Budget gets underway – around 12.30 – Theresa May will face Jeremy Corbyn in the Commons for the weekly session of Prime Minister’s Questions.
(…)
Shortly after PMQ’s the Chancellor is expected to deliver an “upbeat” Budget and is likely to allocate extra money for social care, free schools and relieve some of the pressure on those faced with increasing business rates. Domestic violence organisations are set to receive around £20m while a new £5m fund will be created to aid mothers return to work after a long career break.
(…)
The Budget comes as Theresa May prepares to trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty by the end of March and begin the two-year long divorce proceedings with the European Union.

The website provides further background information on the Budget speech with further hyperlinks to video clips and READ MORE buttons.

In the following section, the linguistic realisation of metarepresentation is examined, paying particular attention to the contextual constraints and requirements of the medium with respect to the dichotomy between what is said and what is meant, or rather what the Chancellor said, what he meant, and what he really meant, from the chief political commentator’s perspective.

4.2 Data and metarepresentation

The website under investigation is framed under the heading Voices, our opinions – and yours, assigning it the status of an opinion-based site with opinion-based analyses from experts, that is journalists affiliated with The Independent, and ordinary citizens engaging in some kind of participatory journalism. The author of the commentary site under investigation is John Rentoul; his entextualised metadata as chief political commentator and visiting professor at King’s College London as well as other credentials are made available through a hyperlink. The website framed by commentary-identifying Voices is designed analogously to the previously analysed site. The heading provides the leitmotif of the

6. See website.
analysis: ” Philip Hammond’s Spring Budget: what he said – and what he really meant. Our Chief Political Commentator reads between the lines of the Chancellor’s Budget speech.” Under the heading the contextual coordinates of the author (name and email) and temporal embeddedness (Wednesday 8 March 2017 14:59 GMT) as well as the number of ordinary-citizen comments (22) are entextualised, followed by a still picture of the Chancellor and his red case furnished with the caption “The non-spin Chancellor strikes again’. Getty’. The commentator’s analysis contains hyperlinked invitations to read more, as has been described above in detail, and a video clip with excerpts of the speech with the caption “Philip Hammond made a litany of gags in his Budget 2017”; the data presented below are adopted from the Hansard (see footnote 3). Background information on the jokes is not directly available on the website but is made available through the ‘What Philip Hammond said’-link analysed above providing all the necessary metadata for a felicitous interpretation of the jokes with the following ‘victims’: the Labour Party and their leader Jeremy Corbyn, and two self-ironic small stories targeting the speaker himself. The small story about the spreadsheet is analysed in the commentator’s juxtaposition of what he [the Chancellor] said, and what he meant below:

A well-functioning market economy is the best way to deliver prosperity and security to working families, and the litany of failed attempts at state control of industry by Labour leaves no one in any doubt about that – except, apparently, the right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn), who is now so far down a black hole that even Stephen Hawking has disowned him.

(…)

£270 million to keep the UK at the forefront of disruptive technologies such as biotech, robotic systems and driverless vehicles – a technology that I believe the Labour party knows something about.

(…)

Under the last Labour Government, corporation tax was 28%. By the way, they don’t call it the “last” Labour Government for nothing.

(…)

I turn now, Mr Deputy Speaker, to the OBR forecasts. This is the spreadsheet bit, but bear with me because I have a reputation to defend.

(…)

The Treasury has helpfully reminded me that I am not the first Chancellor to announce the “last spring Budget”. Twenty-four years ago Norman Lamont also presented what was billed then as “the last spring Budget”. He reported on an economy that was growing faster than any other in the G7, and he committed to continued restraint in public spending. The then Prime Minister described it as the “right Budget, at the right time, from the right Chancellor”.

“Our Chief Political Editor reads between the lines of the Chancellor’s Budget speech”
What he said: What he meant: What the Treasury failed to remind me was that 10 weeks later the Chancellor was sacked. So, wish me luck today!

The chief political commentator presents his analysis of the selected excerpts of the Budget speech below the ‘litany-of-gags’-data, and the analysis is very much in line with the ‘litany-of-gags’-frame. The selected data are metarepresented as focussing quotations; the only metadata entextualised are indexical references to the Chancellor (‘he’) while the temporal and local contextual coordinates are left implicit as they have been mentioned at a different stage in the discourse and can easily be retrieved from there. This omitting of temporal and local metadata also signal that the chief political commentator’s commentary on the difference between saying and meaning is detached from the original quotation, thereby deflecting responsibility for providing verbatim – and thus truthful – representations of what the Chancellor had actually said.

The commentator analyses the self-ironic extracts and entextualises one of the Chancellor’s perlocutionary effects as ‘Mr Competent’; this is supported by the evidentiality-anchored tail: ‘you’re looking at him’. Not all of the metarepresented data in the excerpt ‘what he said’ are a verbatim quotation of what the Chancellor had said. In the opinion-based analysis the original excerpt ‘I have a reputation to defend’ is metarepresented as ‘I’ve got a reputation to uphold’:

**What he said:** I turn now to the OBR forecasts. This is the spreadsheet bit but bear with me because I’ve got a reputation to uphold [Hansard: I have a reputation to defend].

**What he meant:** I used to run businesses you know. I understand spreadsheets. I am even capable of filling in my own tax return, putting the extra salary I get as a cabinet minister in the right box. Mr Competent? You’re looking at him.

All of metarepresentations are introduced with the formula ‘**What Philip Hammond said**’ – the first token is hyperlinked with background information and analysed above in Section 4.1, and the chief commentator’s interpretation of this particular instance is introduced by the singly modified formula with the adverbial really, i.e. ‘**What he** [the Chancellor] **really meant**, triggering a conversational implicature with the implicatum that the Chancellor is not a no-spin chancellor. All of the quotations are juxtaposed with the commentator’s interpretation and

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7. Fetzer (2015) refers to the particular formatting of quotation as parasitic quotation, and later as focussing quotation. In focussing quotations, a direct quotation is foregrounded and assigned relevance by the proximal demonstrative “this” and a pronoun pre-empting the content of the quoted, for instance, “this is what he said”. The demonstrative can also be omitted. As with the other types of quotation in political discourse, the source is named and the quotative is made explicit.
entextualisation of the speaker-intended meaning introduced with formula ‘What he [the Chancellor] meant’ with the commentator-interpreted meanings printed in italics distinguishing them from the normal-font quoted of what the Chancellor said. It is at this particular stage in the computer-mediated discourse where multimodality interfaces with the multilayeredness of computer-mediated discourse in general, as well as with the multilayeredness of the fundamental pragmatic differentiation between what is said and what is meant, that is literal meaning and speaker-intended meaning in particular. Not only is the difference between data and metarepresentation marked explicitly by different fonts, but the background information required for calculating the speaker-intended meaning is made available via hyperlinks – as is the background information for the commentator’s subjectively coloured interpretation and entextualisation of what the Chancellor had said. What is more, while the calculation of speaker-intended meaning in ordinary conversation is generally a local endeavour utilising local linguistic context and social context, the calculation of speaker-intended meaning in computer-mediated discourse by the commentator and its entextualisation goes beyond what Hammond meant at those particular stages in the discourse and thus exemplifies – not only at this stage – the interactional-sociolinguistic premise of indexicality of communicative action and its recontextualisation at various stages in the discourse. Rather, the commentator’s calculation of ‘what he really meant’ is not only calculated with respect to the discourse-as-a-whole and with respect to prior political discourse of the Tories, but also with respect to the commentator’s – subjective – calculation of the speaker’s intended perlocutionary effects in accordance with the ‘litany-of-gags’ frame. These also go beyond the local stage in the discourse and are aimed at potential viewers and readers – and their expectations of a liberal newspaper – and their role as potential voters, as is going to be examined in more detail below with the beginning of the speech, made available through a video clip on the website with the fact-based background information:

**What Philip Hammond said:** I report today on an economy that has continued to confound the commentators with robust growth.

**What he really meant:** Sorry commentariat, I am going to rub your noses in all your wrong predictions.

The focussed quotation with the source of Philip Hammond contains a reference to the economy – with the implication: the British economy – which has grown robustly, and another implication: the Conservative government(s) have contributed to that success. The commentator’s analysis of what the Chancellor meant is different: He entextualises the intended target of the Chancellor’s statement, that is the particularised group of commentariat, who seem to have – deliberately – made the wrong predictions by not reporting on the success of the British econ-
The subjectively coloured interpretation of the Chancellor’s statement is not only reflected in the collective term of address, ‘commentariat’, furnished with redressive action (‘sorry’), informing the recipients of forthcoming criticism (Brown and Levinson 1987), but also in the rather colloquial expression ‘rub your nose in’. The chief commentator uses the same introductory formula in his entextualisation of the Chancellor’s fact-based statement referring to the OBR [Office of Budget Responsibility, A.F.] forecast ‘sorry commentariat’, but then continues to deconstruct Hammond’s argument and by referring to it as ‘spin from the no-spin Chancellor’ and the leading astray of the media addressed by ‘you all’ with an embedded mixed quotation (‘you all fell for the “£12bn better than forecast” spin) and not considering that it is ‘much better than that’:

**What he said:** The OBR now forecasts borrowing in 2016–17 to be £16.4bn lower than forecast in the autumn.

**What he meant:** Sorry commentariat: you all fell for the “£12bn better than forecast” spin from the no-spin Chancellor. It is much better than that.

The same line of reasoning holds for the following extract, in which the Chancellor refers to a prediction by the OBR about falling debts which is deconstructed in the commentator’s interpretation and entextualisation of the non-materialisation of prior OBR predictions:

**What he said:** The OBR now forecast that debt...falls in 2018–19, for the first time since 2001–02.

**What he meant:** Just as the total debt has been predicted to start falling many times before.

The multilayeredness of computer-mediated discourse is reflected in the core-pragmatics-based differentiation between ‘what is said’ and ‘what is meant’, constraining possible calculations of implicatures accordingly. This holds for multiple sets of addressees, such as professional journalists and ordinary people with different background knowledge, who will draw different inferences and calculate speaker-intended meanings accordingly, as is exemplified in the analysis of the following extract. Supporters of the government will interpret it as the Budget being in line with the programme of the Conservatives, and non-supporters, possibly the commentariat, as non-innovative:

**What he said:** We are building the foundations of a stronger, fairer, more global Britain.

**What he meant:** Boring is good.
All of the other extracts are juxtaposed and interpreted accordingly, not only targeting the content of the Budget but also, if not primarily its connectedness with the manifesto of Conservatives, and with the Chancellor’s relationship with the Prime Minister entextualised by the commentator as repeat[ing] the Prime Minister’s soundbites, deconstructing the no-spin Chancellor as ‘parroting’ the PM’s formulations, which are not intended for the context of fact-based politics, but rather as performance-based mediatised ‘soundbites’:

**What he said:** Our task today is…to help ordinary working families as we build an economy that works for everyone.

**What he meant:** Our task today is to repeat the Prime Minister’s soundbites as often as I possibly can.

The analysis of data, metadata and metarepresentation in computer-mediated political discourse in the context of the online newspaper *The Independent* and its representation of the Chancellor’s Budget speech has revealed interesting results for the multilayered design of the websites with their frame headings functioning as contextualisation devices in the contextualisation and interpretation of data, metadata and metarepresentations, and their hyperlinks with the status of follow-ups, inviting recipients to consider the background information made available with other hyperlinks and other layers of background information. The design of the websites and the strategic use of hyperlinks and hyperlinked background information does not only exemplify the interactional-sociolinguistic premise of indexicality of communicative action and the potentially unbounded nature of computer-mediated discourse and context, but also the possibility to provide a more neutral and more transparent mode of political discourse.

5. **Discussion**

Computer-mediated political discourse is a multilayered phenomenon, which is reflected in multilayered, multiframed and multimodal websites, which allow for multilayered, multiframed and multimodal interactions with multilayered participation frameworks and participants with multilayered communicative intentions, multilayered contextualisations and multilayered conversational implications. This is because data always co-occur with metadata, and representations co-occur with metarepresentations. Context-anchored metadata support the interactional organisation of transparency, neutrality and credibility on the side of the production format as regards investigative journalism. The construction of that kind of neutrality is different to ‘doing neutrality’ in political interviews (cf. Greatbatch 1988; Clayman and Heritage 2002). In conversation-analytic-based analy-
ses of political interviews, neutralisms is done by adhering to the genre’s inherent question-and-answer format, and by withholding backchannels, for instance. In the Voices section of The Independent neutralism is done by the explicit accommodation of metadata entextualising the data’s contextual coordinates, by metarepresentations, providing discourses, discursive extracts and background information. All of this is intended to provide evidence for the argumentative coherence on the side of the media producers, and possible non-coherence on the side of politicians, political parties and governments.

Pragmatic premises have generally been assigned the status of universals. This paper agrees with that claim but argues that the universals may undergo context-and media-specific particularisation. In the context of computer-mediated political discourse, the multilayeredness of the fundamental differentiation between what-is-said and what-is-meant may undergo multilayered particularisation with respect to the communicative intentions attributed to the producer of what-is-said, and what he or she meant at a particular stage in discourse. In that context, speaker-intended meaning is not calculated locally any longer, but the recipients’ calculation of speaker-intended meaning utilises various frames and layers of context as well as multimodality. And frequently, what a particular politician may have meant is entextualised in follow-up discourses and generally supported by a journalist’s argumentation made available through selected extracts of data, metadata and metarepresentations.

Hyperlinks have been compared with paper-based quotations. However, “[p]aper-based citations attempt to keep the reader within the article, while providing the address of where the source material resides for the highly motivated researcher. On the net, hyperlinks are less nails than invitations. (...) They beckon the reader out of the article” (Weinberger 2011:113). Hyperlinks thus invite recipients to check and update their discourse common grounds with respect to the processing of that particular discourse, and possibly restructure their more generalised discourse common grounds.

6. Conclusion

This paper has argued for the adaptation of pragmatic premises to an analysis of computer-mediated discourse within a case study of political online news discourse. The multilayeredness of computer-mediated political discourse is not only reflected in the design of website, but also in the contextual constraints and requirements leading to multilayered pragmatic premises, in particular the differentiation between what-is-said and what-is-meant with respect to producers and recipients – and ordinary citizens as participants in comment sites and other
discussion forums – and the entextualisation of speaker-intended perlocutionary effects. The multilayeredness of the context and the medium go beyond the calculation of conversational implicatures and their implicata at a particular stage in the discourse, that is what the speaker intended to get in with his flouting one or more conversational maxims. Rather, the entextualisation of what the politician meant, if not really meant is concerned with ascribed perlocutionary effects targeting argumentative and ideological coherence and thus credibility, as well as individual and collective face for the presentation of self – not only – in everyday life but also, if not primarily, in computer-mediated discourse.

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