Chapter 4
Cognitive Situation Models in Discourse Production: The Expression of Ethnic Situations in Prejudiced Discourse

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Introduction

The impressive advances in psychology and artificial intelligence of the past decade in the field of discourse processing have, among many other findings, resulted in the important recognition that understanding discourse not only presupposes knowledge of the language, but also knowledge of the world. The understanding and cognitive representation of social situations in particular are a crucial component of the processes of discourse production and comprehension. This volume bears witness to the growing importance attached to this assumption in several disciplines. There seems to be an emerging consensus among many researchers that the construction of *models* in memory, linking situation representations to discourse processing, promises to be the most fruitful approach to this issue. Yet we still know very little about the nature and the uses of such memory models. In this chapter, we shall show how cognitive models of social situations are related to the production of discourse, and we shall illustrate the practical usefulness of this approach by analyzing a discourse domain of great social importance: everyday talk about minority groups.

Establishing an explicit relationship between social situations, cognition, and discourse requires an interdisciplinary approach. Notions from cognitive and social psychology, microsociology, and discourse analysis are needed. In particular, the theoretical background of this chapter will include the following research areas: (1) *a cognitive theory of strategic information processing*, which emphasizes the strategic nature of discourse production and comprehension as a flexible, multiple-level, and on-line process (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983); (2) *a sociocognitive theory of discourse*, which extends this strategic processing model toward an account of the role of beliefs and attitudes in discourse processing (van Dijk, 1982); (3) *social cognition and the theory of social situations*, which provides the general framework for our discussion

about the cognitive dimension of such social situations (Argyle, Furnham, & Graham, 1981; Forgas, 1979, 1981; Furnham & Argyle, 1982); and finally, current research about (4) *ethnic stereotypes in cognition and conversation* (Hamilton, 1981a; Tajfel, 1981, 1982). In earlier work we have developed, against this background, a sociocognitive theory of the representation and the structure of ethnic prejudice and its strategic expression in everyday discourse (van Dijk, 1983b, 1984a). In the present chapter we want to further develop the assumption that (ethnic) situation models play a prominent role in the memory organization of ethnic beliefs and opinions, as well as in their expression in conversation. We thus hope to be able to answer the question of how people perceive, understand, and memorize ethnic encounters, and how such information is "reproduced" in talk.

Our empirical data will be drawn from a large set of nondirected interviews with (white) Dutch people from several neighborhoods in Amsterdam. The topic of talk in these interviews was groups of people considered "foreigners" in the Netherlands, specifically, immigrant workers from Mediterranean countries (mostly Turkey and Morocco) and people from the former Dutch colony of Surinam (adjacent to Guyana). These groups form a prominent issue of thought and talk among the dominant majority, and are victims to rapidly expanding prejudice and discrimination. Although there are several sources for this ethnic prejudice, such as the subtly negative portrayal of minorities in the media (van Dijk, 1983a), many stereotypes seem to be communicated through informal everyday conversation. This study, thus, tries to probe deeper into the sociocognitive mechanisms that underlie the perception, the representation, and the attitudes about such groups, and the ways that these become strategically expressed in talk and thus shared throughout society.

Situation Models in Memory

Recent developments in psycholinguistics and in cognitive theories of discourse processing have proposed that semantic *models* in memory play an important role in understanding (Johnson-Laird, 1983; van Dijk, in press; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). This assumption has been influenced by the notion of a "model" in formal linguistics and logic, which constitutes the basis of interpretation rules. Such formal models are, so to speak, representations of fragments of the world with respect to which expressions are meaningful, or may be assigned a truth value. The psychological correlate of this notion are models in episodic memory (therefore also called "episodic models"). They function as partial, subjective, and relevant cognitive mappings of the real world, and hence also of social situations. We therefore also call such models "situation models." Instead of "real" world fragments or situations, the cognitive models provide the referential basis for the interpretation of discourse. Their localization in episodic memory suggests that models are

integrated structures of previous experiences of individuals. They represent the personal knowledge and beliefs of people about concrete events and situations. This means, also, that models are the experiential basis for more general and abstract "frames" or "scripts" in (semantic) memory, as they have been discussed in much recent work since Schank and Abelson's (1977) influential book. Our notion of a model is close to what Schank (1982) now calls a "script," but in order to avoid confusion, we will use the notion of script only in its more abstract, general, and decontextualized sense. Subjective situation models not only feature knowledge about concrete events, but also beliefs and opinions (evaluative beliefs). Finally, models may have an analogical nature, that is, embody spatial or other figural properties of events and situations.

In earlier theories of discourse understanding (e.g., Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978), it was assumed that the main aim of comprehension is the gradual construction of a *textual* representation in episodic memory. We now assume that *in addition* to such a representation, people also construct a model of what the text "is about," that is, of some situation. In fact, the model becomes the major aim of the understanding process, and the textual representation is mostly only a means toward that end. In reality, reproduction of texts often means the retrieval and reproduction of model fragments, especially if specific semantic representations of a text are no longer retrievable. In general, then, information acquisition and use involve the updating and other transformations of episodic models.

A distinction is made between *particular* and *general* models. Particular models represent unique information about one specific situation, for instance the one "now" being processed. General models may combine information from several particular models about the "same" or the same "kind" of situation. Particular models may contain the "new" information with which general models are updated. Thus, Schank's (1982) process of "reminding" may involve the retrieval of a previous particular model, or the retrieval of a general model about a situation that is "recognized."

General models that appear to be socially relevant may be transformed to *frames* or *scripts* in semantic ("social") memory, for example by further abstraction, generalization, and decontextualization. Hence, we now have a gradual transition from personal, particular models, via more general models, to socially shared general frames or scripts.

We may also have models about future situations. Planning is the construction of such models from previous model fragments, together with general information about action structures, our abilities, and our motivations and goals.

Some Characteristics of Situation Models

Once we know what models are used for, we need to attend to the question of their structural representation: What do they look like? Answers to that question must satisfy some general requirements. First, they should allow fast,

effective, and relevant representation and retrieval of information about (social) situations. Second, if models are to become the basis of frames and scripts, they should have patterns that are similar to those of scripts. Third, operations such as updating, or other transformations, must be easy to apply to models.

The structural setup of models that we propose is a *categorial* one. The skeleton of a model, then, is a schema consisting of a number of fixed categories. Such a schema will be strategically effective in our continuing task of understanding social situations. From such situations we tend to process specific "kinds" of information, and these "kinds of information" will be stored in the respective categories of the schema (see Argyle et al., 1981; Forgas, 1979; and Furnham and Argyle, 1982, for surveys about similar and other proposals for the structure of social situations). Forgas (1979) proposes that social situations are interpreted and memorized especially in terms of their affective dimensions: "pleasant," "formal," or "dangerous." Such an approach is not inconsistent with a more structural conception of models. Scalar, affective dimensions can be represented conceptually as part of models—in a Modifier category, for example, attached to each category. This may be the case for the "situation as a whole," that is, for the highest node, but also for lower-level categories (e.g., actor or event).

It follows that we distinguish between *global* and *local* levels of representation, or between *macro-* and *microstructures* (van Dijk, 1980a). Such a hierarchical organization allows fast and effective search, as well as relevant uses, which satisfies the requirements we have formulated above.

Our categorial approach is similar to the componential analysis proposed by Argyle et al. (1981). They "analyze" situations in terms of participants, goals, rules, environmental props, and actions. But, since representations of unique situations in particular models are episodic, we locate rules in semantic (social) memory, even though social participants may know and use rules when participating in a social situation. Other research focuses on specific elements of situations; Barker (1968), for instance, pays specific attention to behavior types and settings. Our concern, however, is to specify which *cognitive* categories are involved in the understanding and representation of, or the participation in, social situations. Evidence for such a cognitive representation may be drawn from various sources, ranging from direct observations, personal accounts, and interviewing, to experimentally controlled judgmental tasks (such as sorting and rating). Besides these psychological approaches, there is also evidence from the microsociological analysis of situations, such as the account of strategies of interaction by Goffman (1959, 1967).

Linguistic Evidence

There is also linguistic evidence about the hypothetical structures of models in memory. Language users produce sentences and discourse in order to describe situations. It is therefore plausible that grammatical and discourse structures

may indicate some features of models. This will also allow listeners to reconstruct effectively the contents and the organization of an "intended" model. Thus, functional grammar (Dik, 1978) assumes that sentences have semantic representations featuring a category of a central predicate (denoting an action, event, process, or state) and a number of participants that may serve in various "roles," such as Agent, Patient, Object, or Instrument. These semantic roles may be indicated by cases or word order in sentential syntax. Thus, Agents tend to be expressed as subjects, and often in early (topical) positions in the sentence.

Similar observations may be made for the organization of discourse. Thus, Labov (1972) has shown that stories may exhibit conventional categories such as Setting, Complication, Resolution, Evaluation, and Coda. Some of these categories correspond to the structural features of models of situations in memory. Indeed, stories are (partial, relevant) expressions of such models, although they will specifically select "interesting" experiences and not models of any situation we have witnessed. In general, then, there are not only cognitive constraints or. sentences and discourse, but also pragmatic, contextual, communicative, or interactional ones.

In artificial-intelligence research about stories, as well as in so-called "story grammar" approaches in psychology, various cognitive correlates have been suggested for story structures and their understanding (Bruce, 1980; Wilensky, 1978; and the papers collected in van Dijk, 1980b). Essentially, stories in this work tend to be analyzed in terms of the action structures they denote: plans, goals, and their participants.

From these various sources of evidence, we may now conclude that models (1) are hierarchical, categorial structures of propositions, forming a strategically effective "schema," and (2) that the categories involve, Setting (Time, Location, Environment, Conditions), Participants in various roles, and Events or Actions, each with a possible Modifier category, specifying a subjective evaluation.

Strategic Uses of Models

Structural representations are only half of the answer to the question about the nature of situation models. We also need to specify the operations, and in particular the *strategies*, that apply to such model structures. For instance, high-level macro-organization of models allows level-dependent search. Sometimes only the most important information of a model is necessary, for instance when we summarize a situation (or a story about such a situation). The different categories, then, allow us to selectively retrieve models by specific Time, Location, or Participant cues. In addition, recent work on mood and memory (e.g., Bower, 1980) has shown that we may even selectively retrieve experiences by emotion cues: We can better recall "pleasant" events, for example, when we are in a "pleasant" mood.

Current attribution theory (e.g., Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983), following the earlier ideas of Heider (1958), also implies some suggestions

about the strategic uses of models. Thus, people may view and memorize situations either from an observer or an actor "point of view," or they may explain actions by attributing them to "internal"—motivational or personality—characteristics of the actor, or by attributing them to situational or environmental forces. Such naive analyses of action by participants is possible only when they make such differences also in their models of the situation. This also means that people not only use model schemata, but also more general action, event, and person "theories" in the understanding of situations (cf. Hastie et al., 1980). Depending on the kind of task involved (understanding an explanation, for example), people may attend to different features of models, such as the internal organization of the component categories (Setting, Participants, or Action).

Situation Models in Discourse Production

Whereas much of our earlier work on discourse processing has focused on comprehension (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983), we shall here deal with discourse *production*. We do so against the background of the framework sketched above. That is, we view production essentially as a process originating in situation models. Depending on a number of constraints, language users, so to speak, "read off" relevant propositions from their situation models, and thus construct the semantic representations, or "text base," that underlie a discourse. We ignore surface structure formation, such as processes of lexicalization and syntactic formulation (Butterworth, 1980).

   What are the major components of this theory of discourse production?

The Context Model

Of course, discourse production does not take place in a vacuum, but is an integral part of a communicative context. For speakers to be able to fit what they say into this context, they must also have a memory representation of that context, that is a *context model*. This model contains information about the speech participants and their goals, and about the type of social situation involved (e.g., breakfast, a doctor's visit, or a parliamentary debate). The context model controls style but also content, and hence *what* information may or must be retrieved from the situation model. Some topics are forbidden in some situations. Hence, context models monitor the strategic searches through episodic memory (what models are relevant?) as well as within models (what information about the situation should be mentioned?).

The Control System

This contextual information will at least partly be stored in an overall *Control System*. This system regulates the flow of information between short-term

memory and long-term memory. It specifies what kind of models and scripts must be activated and which of their fragments must actually be retrieved for production. CS will also feature the actual *topic*(s) being talked about, and these macropropositions may act as retrieval cues in the search for relevant situation models, which—as we have seen before—are also dominated by macropropositions. In addition, CS contains the kind of *speech act* and communicative goals which must be accomplished by the utterance of a discourse in a given context (e.g., assertion, threat, or accusation), both at the local level of individual speech acts, or at the global level of "macro-speech acts" that control a longer stretch of discourse (van Dijk, 1977, 1980a, 1981).

Finally, the Control System features information about the *type of text* to be produced. Depending on context and communicative goals, we may want to produce a story or a police report about a situation, a news story, or a scientific report. Obviously, text type will control the style and the overall organization, but also the possible contents of a discourse, and hence the information to be drawn from the model about a situation. A story about a theft may focus on my personal predicament and evaluations, whereas a police report may focus on the identity (appearance) of the thief or on particulars of the stolen goods. In other words, search, activation, use, and semantic (re)construction of model information are all strategically monitored by the overall control of the Control System.

Semantic Production

The semantic production of discourse takes place under the constraints formulated above and involves the construction of a semantic representation for a discourse, that is, of a "text base." The information included in such a text base is mostly drawn from situation models, although in addition, more general knowledge, as well as information about the context, may be included (as in metacommunicative statements, which specify fragments of the context model). Text-base production is a strategic process. It takes place on-line, with continuous input from activated and retrieved situation models, but under top-down control from Control System information, such as actual or general topics of a discourse. Given a context and text type dependent topic (e.g., after a question of a previous speaker), the actual speaker will use the topic as a search cue to look for relevant models that are subsumed under such a topic. Activation may be partial, because only part of a model may be relevant. In a conversation about holiday experiences, for instance, the topic "I was in Spain last year" may activate only specific models or model fragments (e.g., "It was nice at the beach"), whereas in the context of a business talk or a job interview, one would be more likely to address his or her professional experiences in Spain. Hence, a contextually relevant (sub)topic may be chosen or constructed, and that will act as the topic of discourse, which is the macroproposition that guides semantic production.

Another important feature of the semantic production process is that the semantic text base need not be as complete as the model. In principle, each proposition that can be inferred by the hearer from other (model or script) information can be "deleted." The text base will therefore include only the information that is necessary and *relevant* in the actual context (van Dijk, 1979), although, of course, spontaneous talk may include apparently "superfluous" (repeated, inferrable) information. There are, however, strategic boundaries to this form of "overcompleteness." In a story about a restaurant, for instance, it would be strange in most cases if the speaker would express the presupposed knowledge that there was a waiter/waitress working there. Designation by definite description is enough, given model and script knowledge (Schank & Abelson, 1977).

Macroproduction

Thematical macropropositions, we suggested, may be "read off" the top of situation models, but we also assumed that specific text and context constraints can modify such topics. That is, topics may actually need to be constructed. Indeed, in telling a story about a theft to our friends, we may focus on different aspects of the situation than what was given in a report to the police about "the same events." The same will hold for the police report production itself. These constraints may also influence the (1) hierarchical organization of topics (some information may be "upgraded" in relevance during production), and (2) the linear ordering—sometimes thematic "causes" may be expressed later than they figure in a model, for example, in explanations. Thus, in crime stories the identity of a murderer may only be revealed at the end, and similar suspense-enhancing production strategies exist in everyday stories as well.

In much the same way, macropropositions must fill *schematic categories*, for example, of a narrative or an argument. This means that text type may determine which topical information must come "first," as with Setting information in a story.

Microproduction

The production of the actual sequence of (micro)propositions of a text base takes place under the overall control of topical (macro)propositions. This process is also on-line, generally speaking, although some local reordering is possible. A first principle (and problem) is linearization (Levelt, 1982): Which information should came first? We assume that the model may guide the strategic moves in local semantic production, in that first propositions in the model will become first propositions in the text base. This is a case of "normal ordering." Yet transformations may be called for under various—pragmatic, cognitive, rhetorical, communicative—constraints (mentioning B before A may be more effective, relevant, elegant, subtle, polite, etc.). Next, propositions

in a sequence must be linearly coherent (van Dijk, 1977). This means that they should denote related "facts" as represented in the model, such as relations of condition/cause and consequence. Besides this conditional coherence, however, "functional" coherence may also be established. This is the case if two subsequent propositions A and B are related by "generalization," "contrast," "example," "repetition," and so on. Finally, the now locally and globally coherent sequence of propositions may be partially reordered due to local differences in relevance, presupposition, topic/comment, or focusing (foreground/background) operations. The actual expression in clauses, complex sentences, or sentence sequences is a function of these local semantic constraints (van Dijk, 1981). Also, the surface syntax (word order, cases, etc.) and intonation, which we don't analyze here, will further signal these operations (Givón, 1979). This means, indirectly, that surface structures also depend on the strategies that transform model information into a semantic text base.

The Expression of Ethnic Prejudice

To illustrate the theoretical assumptions made in the previous sections, we shall analyze in somewhat more detail a specific type of social situation and a specific type of discourse: ethnic encounters and everyday talk about ethnic minorities. This analysis takes place within the framework of an ongoing, interdisciplinary project at the University of Amsterdam. Research in this project has two major aims: to develop an explicit cognitive theory of ethnic attitudes (and of prejudice in particular), and to empirically analyze the ways that people talk about ethnic groups and may thus express such prejudice in everyday conversation. Unlike the prevailing experimental approaches to ethnic stereotypes, we obtain our data from informal interviews with (white) majority members. In this final section we want to account for some properties of these data in terms of the cognitive notion of a situation model. If situations in general are perceived, understood, and represented as episodic models, we may assume that this is also the case for the kind of situations we here call "ethnic encounters." People will routinely engage in talk about such encounters. And by analyzing, for instance, their stories about their experiences with ethnic minority members, we at the same time may get more insight into the representation of social situations in general, and into the—possibly prejudiced-representation of ethnic encounters in particular.

   Our discussion in this section will focus on these cognitive representations and the strategies operating in them. Less attention will be paid to the discourse characteristics of prejudiced talk, which have been reported elsewhere (van Dijk, 1983b, 1984a). Discourse about minorities is influenced not only by underlying cognitive attitudes, but also by communicative and interactional strategies. We have found, for instance, that talk about minorities is highly strategic: On the one hand people want to express possibly

negative experiences or evaluations, but on the other hand social norms force them to make a good impression, and not appear as racists. These sometimes conflicting strategies of self-expression and positive self-presentation (face-keeping) can be witnessed in many semantic moves, stylistic choices, rhetorical devices, and conversational elements (such as pauses, repairs, corrections, or false starts). Part of the properties of talk on the other hand may be interpreted as observable "signals" of ongoing cognitive strategies for the management of "delicate" beliefs and opinions.

Ethnic Attitudes

Ethnic prejudice is considered here to be a predominantly negative social attitude about ethnic minority groups and their members. Although this characterization has a cognitivistic flavor, it should be emphasized that such prejudices are not just personal or individual beliefs, but shared attitudes of a (dominant) social group, and embedded in historical, economic, or socio-cultural frameworks as they characterize our "north-western" societies. Although we are not concerned here with these social or societal constraints on ethnic attitudes, it should be borne in mind that the acquisition, the "uses" or the enactment of prejudice, and therefore also their cognitive organization and strategic management, are a function of group interactions within a social context. This means that we try to combine and further develop research results from both the American and the European paradigms in research about ethnic stereotypes and intergroup relations, as they are represented, for example, by the work of Hamilton et al. (Hamilton, 1981 a), and Tajfel and his associates (cf. Tajfel, 1978, 1981, 1982), respectively. Earlier definitions and research about ethnic prejudice cannot be gone into here, but serve as historical background (Allport, 1954; Ehrlich, 1973; Katz, 1976; among many other publications). Although our own perspective on prejudice may be localized in the new area of "social cognition" (Forgas, 1981 ; Higgins, Herman, & Zanna, 1981), our overall impression of this line of research is that on the one hand it is not cognitive enough, and on the other hand it is not social enough—a well-known predicament of social psychology, which also extends into research about ethnic prejudice.

   If we take ethnic prejudice as a specific kind of social attitude, we need a sound theory of attitudes as a starting point. Disregarding for a moment the vast social psychological literature about attitudes of the past fifty years or so, we essentially view attitudes as complex cognitive frameworks of socially relevant beliefs and opinions (Abelson, 1976; van Dijk, 1982). Just like frames or scripts, they have a schematic organization, and are located in semantic (or rather, "social") memory. Opinions are taken to be evaluative beliefs, and an attitude basically consists of a hierarchical configuration of general opinions. Particular or personal opinions characterize episodic memory structures, such as situation models. Indeed, both our theory and our data suggest that opinions expressed in talk about ethnic minorities may find their origin either

in general attitude schemata or in episodic situation models. Obviously, much of the information that is absent in situation models (due, for instance, to a lack of personal experiences with ethnic minority group members) may be tilled in by instantiation from the general, socially shared attitudes. This is precisely what happens, and we here witness one of the *strategies* that define ethnic prejudice. In other words, prejudice should not only be explained in terms of the representations (schematic structures, categories, and contents) of attitudes and situation models, but also by the dynamic processes operating in the actual use of such information in concrete processes of talk and interaction in the social context.

Ethnic attitudes are organized by a number of fundamental categories, defining the *attitude schema*. Such a schema will be used in the acquisition or transformation of new attitudes. The categories involve the origin or appearance of ethnic groups or group members, their socioeconomic position, their sociocultural characteristics, and their attributed personal properties. These categories are not arbitrary, but derive from social interaction and perception among groups, and represent those central information "organizers" that are relevant for a dominant group. Crucially, ethnic prejudice is represented in "negative" attitudes. This means that negative opinions dominate the higher levels of an attitude. Obviously, ethnic attitudes are not only inferred from other attitudes or from meta-attitude schemata, but also from concrete experiences, that is, from the subjective representation of such experiences in ethnic situation models, on which we shall focus in the remainder of this chapter.

Ethnic Situation Models

Episodic models of ethnic situations embody the subjective experiences of social members in interethnic encounters. They represent both the understanding and the evaluation of such encounters. We use the term "interpretation" to denote the integrated process of subjective understanding and evaluation. New situations will be interpreted as a function of both general situation models, construed on the basis of previous experiences, as well as under the influence of general, stereotypical attitudes. For prejudiced social members, the overall evaluation of such new, particular situations typically will be negative, due to the prevailing negative content of the general models and attitudes. And if the new ethnic situation is also negatively represented in episodic memory, it will confirm previous knowledge, beliefs, and opinions. There is substantial experimental evidence for this kind of "biased" social perception (see Hamilton, 1981a, for surveys). Acts of ethnic minority members are "seen" as more negative (Duncan, 1976), and people also tend to have better memory for negative acts of minority members. In general, majority members establish "illusory correlations" when interpreting ethnic social situations (Hamilton, 1979, 1981 b; Hamilton & Rose, 1980). Our own data bear witness and specify details about such processes. For instance,

negative properties of one aspect of the social situation, such as the neighborhood or poor housing, will be transferred to a prominent minority group in that situation. Of course, this is only one strategy of prejudiced information processing (intuitively known also as "scapegoating"), and in order to get an explicit picture, the full structures and cognitive operations involved must be made explicit. Situation models are crucial in such an account, and not (only) stereotypical schemata (attitudes). If people use information about a concrete event for talk or further action, they will draw upon their models of such an event. The presence of, for instance, negative opinions as macropropositions in the hierarchy of a situation model, then, explains why recall of negative aspects of a situation may be better, or why negative concepts are more easily "available."

The strategies involved in ethnic model building by prejudiced social members are geared toward such a negative organization of situation models in memory. The strategy of "transfer" has been mentioned as an example above: a negative evaluation of the setting, the environment, events, or actions in a situation may be transferred to minority participants in the situation. Similarly, top-down and bottom-up strategies may "spread" overall negative situations downward to specific participants, or specific negative dimensions assigned to an action property may be "pushed up" to characterize the participant from an ethnic group. "Missing actors," as in representations of criminal events, may be inserted (with minority participants), given the instantiations of the ethnic attitude.

Storytelling About Ethnic Groups

Majority group members regularly engage in storytelling about minorities and ethnic encounters. This also was the case in our informal interview data. In a selected 50 interviews (from a total of about 130 interviews), we found 133 stories about "foreigners." These stories are interesting for our discussion, because we define a story simply as a discourse expression of a situation model, that is, of a situation model featuring events and actions of the storyteller that for any reason are "interesting" for the listener (see Ehlich, 1980; Labov, 1972; Polanyi, 1985; Quasthoff, 1980, for various discourse characteristics of such everyday stories). Hence, stories about minorities may reveal properties of ethnic situation models in memory. Other elements of stories are, of course, geared toward the accomplishment of social goals, such as effective performance, interesting the listener, self-presentation, or persuasion (see van Dijk, 1983b and 1984, for detail).

Basically, stories are composed of a Setting and an Episode. This Episode usually consists of some kind of Complication and a Resolution. In addition, a (mostly) discontinuous Evaluation will accompany the description of events and actions, featuring the personal evaluations of the storyteller concerning the events or participants. Stories about minorities, however, seem to have a rather remarkable feature. As shown in Table 4-1, the more or less obligatory

Table 4-1. Narrative Categories and Their Frequencies in Stories About Minorities

Inter-views	N story-tellers	N stories	Occa-sioning	Sum-mary	Setting	Orien-tation	Compli cation
Group I	20	50	22 (44%)	6 (12%)	50 (100%)	21 (42%)	50 (100%)
Group II	30	83	22 (27%)	9 (11%)	81 (98%)	45 (54%)	81 (98%)
Total	50	133	44 (33%)	15 (11.3%)	131 (98.5%)	66 (49.6%)	131 (98.5%)

Inter-views	Reso-lution	Evalu-ation	Expli-cation	Conclu-sion	Stories/teller	N of cate-gories/story
Group I	24(48%)	33(66%)	13(26%)	17(34%)	$2^1/2$	4.7
Group II	48(58%)	49(59%)	20(24%)	27(32%)	$2^3/4$	4.6
Total	72 (54.1%)	82 (61.6%)	33 (24.8%)	44 (33.0%)	$2^2/3$	4.7

Note: Stories in interviews of Group II were explicitly elicited.

category of the Resolution is absent in nearly half of the stories. This means that in the model of situations told about, people have stored some (mostly negative) event or action by minority members, but not "what they have done about it." That is, people see ethnic situations as a narratable kind of event— not in order to account for their own positive actions (there are few "hero stories"), but rather to complain about the actions of the outgroup. Resolution actions mostly are about efforts to deal with the "predicament," such as protests or complaints, but they often fail. Institutional agents, such as the government or the police, are usually represented as ineffective: "They don't/ can't do anything about that." The resulting "picture," that is, the situation model, is clear: Minority members are represented—across situations—as threats to our norms, values, economic interests, or personal safety and well-being. The ingroup members are represented as victims. Indeed, storytellers will strategically make sure that the correct interpretation (hence the desired model) is conveyed to the listener, by emphasizing that they themselves cannot possibly be blamed for the negative events or actions of others. The Evaluation and Conclusion categories will guarantee not only that the events are portrayed as they see them, but also that they are evaluated according to shared and accepted norms ("We are not used to that kind of thing" or "we don't do such things"). The macro-topics in stories about minorities, then, can be summarized as aggression (crime, fights, violence), everday harassment (smells, noise, dirt), and strange habits (clothing, cooking, living, family structure, and behavior). Such stories are told especially in neighborhoods where everyday contacts with minority members take place. In other neighborhoods people will predominantly give more general opinions. Thus,

stories can be differentiated according to their model-based or their attitude-based nature.

From these few observations we may conclude first that ethnic situation models are organized by high-level negative (macro-)opinions. Second, these evaluations will focus on the ethnic minority participants. Third, due to the attitude, a selected number of relevant topics are chosen: aggression, harassment, and cultural differences. Fourth, evaluations pertain to the general "difference" or "threat" that minorities are perceived to represent for the ingroups's norms, values, habits, or beliefs. Fifth, ingroup members tend to be represented as victims.

This kind of model may become standardized. It is not only reproduced in stereotypical stories, but also in reports in the media about prejudices and "experiences" of ingroup members. This generalization of very specific models in turn may "confirm" the ethnic attitude, and will monitor the interpretation of new situations.

Some of these features of ethnic situation models may be observed in two sample stories from our data (see Appendix). Both are about a central feature of ethnic situation models. In the first story, black neighbors (from Surinam) are represented as violent and as deviant in other respects (as regarding noise). There is no successful Resolution in this story, and while the second story has a Resolution episode (help is supplied by the storyteller and her husband for a black neighbor's wife), it also conveys negative reactions on the part of the neighbor and the lack of help from the authorities. Notice that both stories feature the elements of social situations discussed above: *Time* (weekend, New Year's Eve), *Location* (house of storyteller), *Circumstances* (routine activities of storyteller), special ("complicating") *Events*, and *Participants* and their local or overall evaluations as *Modifiers*.

Apart from the specific contents of ethnic situation models (negative actions and evaluations of minority members), there is also a specific structural dimension that characterizes such models: the opposition of WE-group and THEY-group members. This organization reflects the intergroup conflict as experienced by WE-group members, and at the same time represents the different *perspective* on ethnic situations. Style, pronouns, rhetorical devices, and story structures express this group opposition and perspective, as is evident in the first story: WE had to get up early, while THEY could throw parties late at night. An example of a situation model embodying this kind of "biased" information is given in Figure 4-1.

Stories also suggest how ethnic situation models are accessed. Often, a story is told as "evidence" after a general, negative statement is made about minorities. Apparently, the general statement serves as a topical search cue for relevant situation models. The topic of the story itself, then, may be expressed in an initial Summary, which also may contain an overall Evaluation. This suggests that an evaluative category is present high in the ethnic situation model, as is also suggested by Forgas (1979) for situation interpretations and memory in general. Next, model actualization in the story follows the

Figure 4-1. Example of a typical ethnic situation model in memory. Each category dominates sequences of macropropositions that dominate sequences of (detailed) micropropositions. At each node, modifiers may also dominate evaluative propositions (personal opinions). The situational model is organized both by the model schema and its categories, by hierarchical macro-micro ordering of propositions, and by local (temporal, conditional) ordering at each propositional level.

principles outlined before: from top to bottom and from left to right, although special-effort reorderings are possible. In other words, model expression in narrative is an interplay between model structures and strategies, and between narrative and conversational constraints.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have first argued that social situations are represented in episodic memory as models. These models are construed as the result of understanding and evaluating events in social situations. They act as the personal, experiential basis for the formation of frames, scripts, or attitudes. Models embody the knowledge and beliefs of language users, which underlie their understanding and production of discourse. They are the "starting point" for the production of discourse, and thus provide the information that may be used (or must remain implicit) in the generation of the semantic text base of a discourse. Strategies are used for the search, retrieval, and selection of information from situation models. Evidence from various sources has been considered about the structural organization of situation models. This structure is hierarchical and categorical, and features such elements as Setting, Circumstances, Participants, and Event or Action. The process of model formation and use is monitored by the Control System, which among other "central" information contains macropropositions (topics), and a Context Model, representing the major dimensions of the communicative context.

Second, we have applied this theoretical framework to an account of ethnic prejudice and its expression in discourse. Thus, we are able to link ethnic encounters, via subjective (and biased) representations in models, to general ethnic attitudes. Evidence from natural storytelling about minorities was used to speculate about the specific nature of "ethnic situation models" and the strategies for their use in intergroup (WE vs. THEY) encounters or the intragroup diffusion of prejudice through everyday conversation.

Appendix

(1) (D2) (About Surinamese Neighbors)

> Well, look when we have to get up Monday morning at seven to go to work, and they are still having parties Sunday morning at five, then that is not exactly nice, you see, and that was not just once, and not twice, that happened all the time, and when one went upstairs to ask politely, if they could be somewhat more quiet, one could get a knife in one's back ... that is, my husband, I wouldn't go upstairs for all the gold in the world ... I was sitting with my children in the middle of the night in the living room, because we couldn't sleep, and *my* husband works and my neighbors did not work, so they could have parties ...

(2) (D4) (About Surinamese Neighbors)

> That Surinamese women who lives downstairs, she was nice and he too in a way, but well, look to have yourself beaten up ... It was New Year's Eve and they had a party and I don't know what happened but she wanted to do something he didn't like, changing a record or something like that, and then a bottle of gin was thrown at her head, one of those stone bottles, she had quite a gash in her forehead, and then we came home in the middle of the night and then she showed it to my husband and says I am not allowed to go to the police, and I am not allowed to go the hospital, nothing, otherwise he beats me up again, and so in the morning my husband took her to the police station, and he said they should come back in the afternoon, he couldn't make even a report, so that she could file a complaint, and in the hospital it was too late to put stitches in her head, so now she has this dent in her head. Well, such small things ...

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