

Discourse, Ideology and Context

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1. Introduction

Within the broader framework of a long-term research project on ideology and discourse, this paper focuses on the ideological nature of contextualization. The usual approach to ideology is to study its effects on discourse forms and meanings, and how discursive structures may in turn contribute to the formation and transformation of ideologies. However, ideologies are also at play when language users engage in the ongoing construction of context as subjective, as well as group-sensitive, interpretations of the social situation.

Thus, when whites speak about blacks, meanings and style of such talk may be influenced by racist or anti-racist ideologies. That is, ideologies may influence the ways social attitudes are expressed in discourse structures. The same ideology, however, may influence the way whites construct themselves and blacks as participants in conversation, how they define the interaction, and what knowledge, beliefs or aims are activated during conversation. These typical context features may in turn show up at all levels of discourse, e.g. in intonation, sentence syntax, lexical selection, topicalization or implicitness, among many other properties of talk. For instance, a racist ideology about blacks may negatively affect the contextual definition of a black interlocutor by a white speaker, and that negative impression may in turn influence mechanisms of politeness that are expressed in specific face threatening intonation or lexicalization. In other words, ideology may affect the production (or interpretation) of discourse directly, as in the first case, or this may happen indirectly through the prior formation of a biased representation of the social situation, for instance about other participants or the relations between participants, as in the second case.

This paper will develop some theoretical instruments that may disentangle these complex ideological influences on discourse. It does so by briefly summarizing my current conception of ideology, by formulating some elements

of a new theory of context, and by integrating these two approaches in a theory of the ways ideology is involved in the sociocognitive processes of discourse production and comprehension. These ideas will finally be applied in a 'contextual analysis' of fragments of a parliamentary debate in the UK on immigration. Given the vast literature on all these topics (ideology, political discourse, mental models, etc) the references are kept to a minimum.

2. Ideology

The theory of ideology that serves as the framework for the present paper is multidisciplinary. It defines ideologies as a special form of social cognition shared by social groups. Ideologies thus form the basis of the social representations and practices of group members, including their discourse, which at the same time serves as the means of ideological production, reproduction and challenge (for details, see Van Dijk, 1998).

The theoretical intricacies of this framework are considerable. So far we have more questions than answers. For instance, we have few explicit ideas about the internal structures of the mental representations of ideologies. And without such representations we are unable to detail the ways ideologies influence the underlying mental processes involved in discourse and other social practices. As for the social dimension of the theory of ideology, we still ignore—among many other things—which social collectivities, and under what conditions, develop ideologies. Thus, examining the ways ideologies influence contextualization is one of the many puzzles that we face in such a complex theory that needs to bridge the gaps between discourse, cognition and society.

Ideologies as social beliefs

Rather trivially, ideologies consist of a specific kind of 'ideas.' In somewhat more technical jargon (in social psychology and political science), we would call them belief systems or social representations of some kind (Aebischer, Deconchy & Lipiansky, 1992; Augoustinos, 1998; Farr & Moscovici, 1984; Fraser & Gasket]. 1990).

This means that they are not personal beliefs, but beliefs shared by groups, as is also the case for grammars, socioculturally shared knowledge, group attitudes or norms and values. Indeed, we assume that ideologies form the *basis* of the belief systems or social representations of specific groups (see also Scarbrough, 1990). For instance, at the basis of group knowledge and attitudes about sexual harassment, glass ceilings and abortion, we may find a feminist or anti-feminist ideology. And a neo-liberal ideology forms the basis of socially shared beliefs of specific groups (for instance corporate managers) about the freedom of the market or the intervention of the state.

The social basis of ideologies: groups

The first problem, already signalled above, is that it is not easy to formulate the independent social conditions of “groupness” without falling into the trap of circularity. Feminism may be the ideology of feminists, but if feminists are only defined by their ideology, we do not seem to have advanced very much in the social definition of ideology (Ryan, 1992; Smith, 1990). Thus, we must assume that other social factors of group membership, group organization, leadership, group practices and rituals, as well as institutions may have to be accounted for in the social component of a theory of ideology, as we know from the theory of social movements in general (Larana, Johnston & Gusfield, 1994).

In the remainder of this paper these societal dimensions of ideologies will only be considered where relevant for a theory of contextualization.

The organization of Ideologies

The second problem, also mentioned above, is the crucial question of the internal structure of ideologies. It is inconsistent with most insights of contemporary cognitive science to assume that ideologies should be unstructured “lists” of ideas. Whatever the neuro-biological basis of memory or the specific cognitive theory espoused in their description, we must assume that ideologies, just like other mental representations, are somehow structured (Bechtel & Graham, 1999). Such structure is assumed in order to be able to account for a large number of cognitive properties of ideological production, comprehension, thinking, discourse or other forms of interaction. For instance, we may assume that some ideological beliefs are more important than others, thus suggesting a hierarchical organization of ideologies. Similarly, ideologies have to be learned and changed by individuals as group members, and since persons may be members of several groups, and thus have to learn various ideologies during their life, it is plausible that they have some very basic categories or a schema that allows them to acquire and change their ideologies in an efficient way. And most importantly, in our everyday lives as group members, ideologies need to be readily accessible, retrievable and applicable in the formation or change of group based attitudes or the opinions of individual group members, and these processes can only take place when ideologies are somehow organized.

Contemporary cognitive science has provided several formats for the structure of at least one form of social representation: knowledge. “Thus, scripts, frames, scenarios, associative networks, and various kinds of schemata have been proposed to render the organized nature of belief systems (see, e.g., Schank & Abelson, 1977). For my purpose, however, these proposals do not appear to be very adequate: a feminist ideology simply cannot be compared with a restaurant script, for instance. We know, from much empirical research, also on discourse, that ideologies often appear in polarized thought, opinions,

action or discourse. This suggests that somewhere in the representation of ideology, we probably find basic categories that represent this opposition between Us and Them.

Theoretical strategies for the elaboration of formats for the structure of ideologies should be based, in my opinion, on both cognitive and social arguments, and especially at the interface of cognition and society. Thus, cognitively, ideologies are a form of self-schema of (the members of) groups, that is, a representation of themselves as a group, especially also in relation to other groups. Processes of social identification ultimately take place on the shared social representations we call ideologies. The social inspiration for a theory of ideological structure therefore must be sought in the basic properties of (social) groupness, of which the following ones have particular relevance:

1. Membership devices (gender, ethnicity, appearance, origin, etc.): Who *are* we?
2. Actions: What do we *do*?
3. Aims: *Why* do we do this?
4. Norms and Values: What is good or bad'?
5. Position: What is our position in society, and how we relate to other groups?
6. Resources: What is ours'? What do we want to have/keep at all costs?

We shall for the moment assume that these are some of the fundamental categories that define social groupness, and that also form the basic self-schema organizing ideologies. In other words, the same fundamental schema organizes group thought and group life, as may be expected from ideologies.

Ideologies are not always negative

Note that my definition of ideology is not negative, as is the case in many traditional, especially Marxist or anti-Marxist inspired concepts of ideologies as “false consciousness” (for a historical survey, see Larrain, 1979). Ideologies can be ‘good’ or ‘bad’ depending on the consequences of the social practices based on them. Thus both racism and antiracism are ideologies, and so are sexism and feminism. Ideologies may thus serve to establish or maintain social dominance, as well as to organize dissidence and opposition. Under specific conditions, they may serve to found and organize the social thoughts and practices of any social group. Of course, this ‘neutral’ definition of the concept of ideology does not at all prevent us from critically analyzing and opposing bad ideologies, in the same way as a general theory of power does not prevent us from criticizing and opposing power abuse and domination. In other words, in my view ideologies are not by definition “dominant” ideologies (for further discussion, see also Abercrombie, Hill, Turner, 1980).

Knowledge(s)

If ideologies control the social representations of groups, they also control the knowledge acquired and shared by a group. This is true, however, only for a specific kind of knowledge, namely what we shall call *group knowledge*. These are the social beliefs which a group holds to be true, according to its own evaluation or verification (truth) criteria, as is the case for scientists, members of a church or members of a social movement. Of course, for other groups, such beliefs may be mere opinions or false beliefs, and therefore not be called 'knowledge' at all.

The crucial, empirical and discursive, test to distinguish knowledge from other beliefs is that knowledge shared by a group tends to be presupposed by its members, and not asserted, in text and talk (except in pedagogical discourse, as well as in discourse directed at non group members). It is this group knowledge, then, that may be ideological based.

Thus, what feminists know about sexual harassment are beliefs that are based also on principles of feminist ideology, such as equality, autonomy and so on. Others (especially anti-feminists) may deem such knowledge as mere opinions or exaggerated beliefs. The same is often true for scientific knowledge, based on the specific criteria of scholarly verification and method, which may be beliefs (still) unknown outside the scientific community. Obviously, the power and prestige of each group will also carry over to the power and legitimacy of their beliefs and what beliefs count as knowledge in society at large.

This formulation suggests that we should also speak of beliefs that are generally shared in society, across (ideological) group boundaries. That is, by definition this kind of *cultural knowledge* is non-ideological: There is no difference of opinion, no ideological struggle, no opposition in this case: These are the basic beliefs Of a culture, on which all others, also the ideological beliefs of groups, are based. To stress this general, cultural basis of these beliefs, we may also call them *Cultural Common Ground*. This common ground is constantly changing: What is specific group knowledge today (e.g. within the scientific community), may be general knowledge, and hence common ground tomorrow. And vice versa, what was generally thought to be true, may now appear to be false or merely an opinion of specific groups (typically so for Christian religion, for instance). Common ground is the sociocognitive basis of Our common sense, and is generally presupposed in public discourse, by members of culturally competent members of all groups (except children and members of other cultures). Note that the notion of (cultural) Common Ground used here is more general than the notion of common ground as shared knowledge between participants in conversation, which may also include personal knowledge and group beliefs (Clark, 1996; see also Smith, 1982).

Thus, in the architecture of social cognition, we find that on the one hand (Troup ideologies need to be based on common ground knowledge, whereas on

the other hand specific group ‘knowledge’ (what group members hold to be true) may in turn be based on ideology. Indeed, despite their fundamentally opposed opinions about immigration, for instance, both racists and antiracists share at least some general knowledge about what immigrants, countries, passports, and borders are. In other words, conceptions of ideology that view ideologies as all pervasive in society are inconsistent with the basic conditions of interaction, communication and beliefs in a culture.

Attitudes

Ideologies are general and abstract. They are about general principles of the group, basic convictions, axiomatic beliefs. For various domains in society, however, groups have more specific belief systems, for which I use the traditional social psychological notion of “attitude”, though defined in a different way (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). ‘Thus, whereas feminism, sexism, racism, socialism, neoliberalism and ecologism are ideologies (among many others), people may have specific attitudes about ‘issues’, such as abortion, immigration, the death penalty, euthanasia or drugs, among many others. The beliefs of such attitudes hang together, so that we may also assume that attitudes have some fixed, categorical structure that facilitates acquisition, change and application in concrete cases. Clusters of such attitudes may be based on an ideology—for instance people’s attitudes about immigration, ethnic integration, or the role of foreigners in the labor or housing market, may be based on a racist (or anti-racist) attitude.

Thus, attitudes are also forms of social representations; they are socially shared opinions; they are general but limited to specific social domains, and they may be organized by underlying ideologies. Note that my use of the notion is different from that in much traditional social psychology, where attitudes (and especially attitude change) was also used to refer to individual opinions of persons (see also the critique of Jaspars & Fraser, 1984).

3. Mental models

For social representations such as ideologies, knowledge and attitudes to have any specific impact at all on concrete discourses and social practices, a very important cognitive interface is still missing: *mental models*. Whereas social representations are traditionally located in social memory (or semantic memory) as shared by groups, mental models constitute the personal, episodic memory of individual people. Mental models are representations in episodic memory and may simply be identified with people’s experiences. They are representations of the specific acts/events people participate in, witness or hear/read about.

Discourses may be very abstract, for instance when they are about immigration or abortion in general, as is the case in policy or scientific discourse. In

that case, we need no specific event models in order produce or understand such discourse: Social representations are the direct input into the semantic module of discourse production. However, often discourses are specific, about specific people, acts and settings, as is the case for most everyday conversation, as well as for the news. This is typically the case in the news and in various forms of everyday storytelling. The mental basis of such specific stories are the models people construct in episodic memory. Such mental models probably also have a schematic structure, namely the schematic structure of events (setting, participants, actions, etc.). The general beliefs of social representations may be “instantiated” in these mental models: Instead of thinking about immigrants in general, we are now thinking of Leila or Mohammed.

Mental models do not merely represent ‘the facts’, but typically represent the facts as people define them. Indeed, ‘defining the situation’ is what mental models do. This also means that mental models typically feature personal opinions. These opinions may be instantiations of social attitudes, which in turn may be controlled by ideologies.

This means that mental models may also be *ideologically biased*. Indeed some people may have a biased mental model about some actions of Leila or Mohammed, that is false beliefs that are partly controlled by underlying attitudes and ideologies. Ideologically biased models form the input of discourse production, and may thus give rise to biased topics, lexical items, or metaphors, among many other (especially semantic) properties of discourse.

We see that the ideological influence on discourse is often indirect: Ideologies influence social attitudes, and these may be instantiated as individual opinions of group members represented in their mental models about specific people and events, which in turn control meaning production of text and talk about such events. The same is true for ideological comprehension: Given a discourse, people may form biased models, depending on their ideologies. This is one of the reasons of the variable nature of discourse comprehension and interpretation. That is, variation of opinions between different group members does not mean that the group does not share attitudes or ideologies, but only that individual group members.

4. Context models

People not only form mental models of the events they talk *about*, but also of the events they *participate* in, including the communicative event of which their ongoing discourse is an inherent part. That is, people subjectively represent the social situation in which they now verbally participate: a chat with a family member at home, a lesson at school, reading the newspaper on the train, participating in a meeting, or in a service encounter in a shop, among many others. These subjective, mental representations of the communicative event

and the current social situation as it constrains current discourse, will be called context models, or simply ‘contexts’ (for detail, see Van Dijk, 1999).

We may conceive of context models as embodying the crucial notion of relevance: They define what for the discourse participants is now relevant in the social situation (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Without a conception of the communicative event as represented by a context model, participants are unable to adequately contribute to ongoing discourse. They would be unable to produce and understand speech acts, would be unable to adapt topics, lexical items, style and rhetoric to the current social event, and they would not even be able to tell what the recipients already know, so that they do not even know what ‘content’ to express in the first place. Indeed, without context models, adequate, contextually sensitive discourse is impossible.

In other words, contexts are not ‘out there’, but ‘in here’: They are mental constructs of participants; they are individually variable interpretations of the ongoing social situation. Thus, they may be biased, feature personal opinions, and for these reasons also embody the opinions of the participants as members of groups. Indeed, a feminist and male chauvinist in conversation are likely to have pretty different context models, as do a liberal and a conservative, a professor and a student, and a doctor and a patient talking together. Indeed biased or incomplete context models are the source of profound communicative and interactional conflicts.

In other words, just like mental models of events talked about, *also context models may be ideological biased*. Thus, people not only may express biased beliefs *about* immigrants, but may also exhibit such beliefs in their interaction and discourse *with* immigrants, as much work on everyday racism has shown (Essed, 1991). The crucial question of this paper is to spell out in somewhat more detail how this happens, and what possible consequences this has for discourse.

It should be emphasized from the outset that context models are not static mental representations, but *dynamic structures*. They are ongoingly constructed and reconstructed by each participant in an event, and they change with each change in (the interpretation) of the situation, if only because of the ongoing changes of discourse itself (one of the components of context). For instance, if nothing else, the discourse will dynamically change the knowledge the participants have about the knowledge of the other. But also the ongoing action. the participant roles, aims and other beliefs may change during interaction. How exactly such ‘dynamic’ mental models should be conceived of, theoretically, as permanently changing and updated mental models in episodic memory is a problem that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we must assume that unlike more permanent social representations (such as those for cultural knowledge, social attitudes or ideologies), and unlike mental models of past

personal experiences, these active mental models are in continuous interaction with the processing going on in working memory. That is, during the comprehension or production of discourse, participants ongoingly learn things about the world (as represented by the discourse) and at the same time about the current interaction situation. Indeed, our point is that whatever language users attend to in discourse is largely dependent on their model of the communicative situation. It is this model that keeps track of what the language users finds interesting or important, or otherwise relevant for their or his current aims. This is also the reason why our theory of context models should be seen as a specific case of a more general theory of everyday experience. That is, from the moment we wake up in the morning, until we fall asleep (or lose consciousness during the day), we ongoingly construct and update mental models of the situations and events we are participating in. These models control all our actions and interpretations, and in many ways define what is usually called (higher level) ‘consciousness’: In these models we represent ourselves, other participants and our relations to them, current time frames, location and direction, ongoing social actions, and so on. Contexts as defined here are merely a special case of these ‘experience models’, namely those models in which we engage in discourse.

Earlier approaches

Linguists and discourse analyst have usually paid more attention to the role of context than psychologists, but also they hitherto failed to develop explicit theories of text-context relationships. As is the case in psychology, most sociolinguistic accounts tend to examine such relationships in terms of simple co-variation or probability, instead of analyzing the precise nature and strategies of contextual influence.

Following the early work of Dell Hymes and his SPEAKING model of context (Hymes, 1962), ethnographic approaches have so far been most interesting (Auer & Di Luzio, 1992; Duranti & Goodwin, 1992; Gumperz, 1982). The focus here is on the relevant structures of whole communicative events, and not just on the structures of text or talk as part of such events, and such events also include a setting, participants, goals, etc.

Influenced by British anthropology and linguistics (Malinowski, Firth), systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) and social semiotics show how the structures of discourse are to be defined in terms of the main dimensions of the ‘context of situation’, which they call ‘field’ (ongoing activity, subject matter), ‘tenor’ (participant relations) and ‘mood’ (the role discourse plays in the ongoing activity) (for details, see e.g., Halliday, 1978; Leckie-Tarry, 1995; and the contributions in Ghadessy, 1999). The importance of this work is not so much in the theory of context itself, but rather in the linguistic study of the

assumed influences of context on ‘register’, that is, the textual counterparts of the field, tenor, mood triple. The SFL concept of context is theoretically very simple (it exists of three general, rather vaguely defined and heterogeneous categories) and its basic features have not changed for decades, since SFL borrowed it from others (such as Spencer & Gregory, 1964; for history and comparisons, see e.g., Martin, 1992, 1999). For instance, such different situation properties as ‘activity type’ and ‘subject matter’ are part of the same ‘field’ category. And including in the context a category like ‘mode’, which is supposed to define the ‘symbolic role’ of discourse in the context, is like including the very function context has in the first place: defining the functions of language use. Also because SFL is very much restricted to itself, and uses little input both from the social sciences and psychology, there is no systematic, cumulative research into the properties of context. Most research is being done on the more exclusive linguistic properties of language use.

We shall not further detail our critique of the SFL concept of context, but only conclude that compared to other approaches, for instance in ethnography and social psychology, the notion (developed by linguists) is theoretically ad hoc and therefore unsatisfactory. An important difference with my approach is that dominant SFL, as an offspring of British empiricism is explicitly anti-mentalistic, so that not only contexts cannot be defined as (mental) constructs of participants, but also the important cognitive aspects of social situations, such as knowledge and aims of participants, cannot be defined. Indeed, also for this reason, the most crucial components of communicative situations are missing in the SFL approach. However, as suggested, the major SFL contribution is not in the theory of context, but in the theory of the linguistic dimensions involved in situational variation, that is, in the theories of register (repertoires of language use) and its typological consequences for a theory of genre.

Probably the most extensive and theoretically most interesting work on context has been carried out in the social psychology of language (Brown & Fraser, 1979; Giles & Coupland, 1991), following various approaches to the social psychology of situations (Argyle, Furnham & Graham, 1981; Furnham & Argyle, 1981; Forgas, 1979, 1985). Thus, Brown & Fraser (1979: 35) present a situation schema consisting of components such as Scene, consisting of Setting (Bystanders, Locale, Time) and Purpose (goals, tasks, topic) and Participants and their various properties and relationships. Wish & Kaplan (1977), using multidimensional scaling, identifies five basic dimensions people use in the interpretation of social situations: co-operative—competitive, intense—superficial, formal—informal, dominant—equal, and task-oriented—non-task-oriented (see also Forgas, 1985; Giles & Coupland, 1991).

Unlike linguistic approaches however, this approach does not systematically match assumed context/situation structures with language or discourse structu-

res, and that is of course the very point of a theory of context. Also, although these proposals come from psychology, they are not always related to mental representations (like models) of social situations. That is, social situations by themselves can of course not directly influence language use, but this is only possible through a cognitive interface, which spells out how the social situation is interpreted, or in fact constructed, by participants.

Structures of Context

Although these various approaches offer us various lists of possible categories for the organization of context models as subjective representations of communicative events or situations, without systematic research about text-context relations we can only guess what such models might look like. Like all episodic models they represent events, so — from a structural perspective — they most likely feature such categories as Setting (Time, Location), Event/Action, Participants, and so on. In this case, the event/action is discursive, and the participants are participants of speech. But a more articulate theory of context features more than just these categories. The point is that for each of these categories we need to show that they are *systematically relevant* for situated language use, that is, for discourse production and comprehension. For instance, we need Time and Location categories in order to describe and explain the structure of deictic expressions, and a category of Social Relations between Participants in order to explain pronoun use and other politeness forms. And once we have such a list of categories, established by theoretical speculation (e.g., on the structures of social episodes in general) in relation to systematic discourse analysis (properties that can only be described in situational terms), we need to further organize these categories in a schema that can easily be applied in everyday discursive interaction.

Because the main aim of this paper is not to develop a theory of the structure of context models, but to present some ideas about the ideological basis of context models, we shall only briefly mention some further contextual categories here, and later see what their relevance is in the description of discourse. We shall begin by a brief theoretical explanation of the relevance of some categories, and then analyze a fragment of parliamentary debate in which we apply some of these categories.

Domain. Thus, we assume that people need to be aware of the global social *domain* in which they are speaking. Politicians in parliament know they are now ‘doing’ politics and hence in the domain of Politics, and teachers are aware they are in Education, as judges are aware they are in the area of Law. This general domain (as subjectively represented - and therefore sometimes misguided) will influence the contents of many of the lower level categories of the schema. Indeed, people may thus also separate their participation (and hence their

discourse) in the Private Sphere from that in the Public Sphere. Since domain applies, in an overall, global fashion, to all properties of the many types of situations of such domains, it also makes sense to speak of *global or macro* categories of context models in this case (see also Cicourel, 1992). Wodak (1996) also defines contexts in a broad way, and distinguishes between different concentric circles of contextual influence, beginning by the discourse itself, and stretching towards societal and historical contexts.

Global action. Participants in such global domains, when speaking, also engage in *global actions*, such as legislation, teaching or doing justice. *Local actions* realize these global actions (such as criticizing the government, ask students about what they have learned, etc.).

Roles. Participants as we know may have many different *roles*, and such roles may affect the production and comprehension of discourse. We assume that there are three basic types of role that are contextually relevant: communicative roles, interactional roles and social roles. Thus, participants obviously need to represent themselves and other participants as speakers/writers or recipients, as well as a complex gamut of other communicative roles, such as various production roles in institutional situations (for instance in the mass media: writers, editors, actual speakers, etc.) and recipient roles (destinatory, overhearer, etc.). Interactional roles need to be represented in order to be able to account for various situational positions, such as friends and enemies, proponents and opponents — as is the case for speakers in parliament speaking in support of, or against government proposals. Social roles account for group membership, as defined for instance by ethnicity, gender, age, political affiliation or profession. Obviously these various role types may be combined: Someone taking part in a parliamentary debate may be speaker, take a stand as opponent of the government, be an MP, a woman, a conservative, and so on — each role differentially affecting discourse structures. This may also lead, as may be expected, to conflicts and contradictions. For instance, in speeches against immigration, conservatives typically will engage in populist strategies (“follow the voice of the people”) they would most likely shun in social policy domains.

Social Relations. Vital for the definition of the context are the *relations* between the participants, as they define them (and of course the participants may have different models of these relationships, as is typically the case in relations of dominance). Again, this is a vast area of representation, running from the overall categories such as ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, to such relationships as those of power or authority. The representation of such relations in context models controls virtually all levels of discourse, and not only the typical properties of formal or informal speech, or politeness forms. Power or dominance may be

expressed or enacted virtually everywhere in intonation, syntax, lexicalization, semantics, pragmatics (like commands), and in many aspects of conversational interaction.

Cognition. Finally, contexts need to be defined in *cognitive* terms, namely in terms of the goals, knowledge and other beliefs of the participants. The goal-directedness of discourse is of course crucial to interpret the interactional functions of discourse, obvious at all levels. The knowledge component is the very basis of a host of semantic and pragmatic properties of discourse, such as implications and presuppositions: The speaker must know what the recipient already knows in order to be able to decide what propositions of a mental model or of the social representations are known to the recipients. And recipients need to know the same about the speaker or writer in order to establish what is actually intended in implicit, indirect, ironic or other non-explicit forms of talk.

It may seem theoretically strange to have a ‘cognitive’ category in (cognitive!) context models, including for instance the knowledge of the participants. For psychologists this might suggest that our (huge) socially shared memory would become part of the episodic model, thus confounding important levels or dimensions of analysis. And yet, this is precisely what happens: Part of our modeling of situations are its participants, as well as their relevant properties, and the knowledge of the participants is such a relevant property. Fortunately, this does not mean that our context model will be blown up by the very size of a complete representation of all the knowledge of the participants. The keyword again is: relevance. People only integrate relevant information (also about knowledge) in their context models. Such information may on occasion be reduced to quite restricted set of strategies or inferences, such as ‘H shares my cultural knowledge’, ‘I have not told H about p before’ (an inference drawn from my episodic memory), ‘H cannot have known p from someone else’, so ‘H does not know that p’.

So far, this is merely a tentative taxonomy of categories of contexts. Note that not all categories are always relevant: Participants in principle only construct those that are situationally relevant. Moreover, personal variation of context modeling may be a function of earlier communicative experiences. Some speakers, in some situations, may construct a rather rich and extensive context model, whereas others may be rather sloppy or general in their interpretation of the context. Some will be socially more or less ‘intelligent’ than others in interpreting non-verbal signals such as facial expressions, gestures or body posture, for instance as expressions of contextually relevant emotions, beliefs or goals.

An empirical theory of context also needs to spell out which of the categories are general and perhaps universal, and which ones are culturally varia-

ble. Thus, in many cultures gender and age will usually be relevant in the production and comprehension of several discourse forms, whereas length or hair color of speakers usually is not a relevant category. Such a theory also needs to spell out the relations between the categories: Some may be more relevant than others, thus suggesting a hierarchical structure for context models. The theory should be explicit about the actual effects of context model categories and contents on the selection of model information for meaning representations: What propositions may or must (not) be included. And finally, it should carefully specify what discourse forms, such as those of style, rhetoric, etc. are influenced by context features.

5. Ideological control of context models

The upshot of this paper is the thesis that not only event models but also context models may be ideologically controlled. In other words, underlying ideologies as well as the attitudes they organize may also impinge on the various categories — and their contents — that define the context model. Trivially, it should contextually matter whether someone is liberal or conservative, a feminist or an anti-feminist. Indeed, as we have seen, the very structure of the context model already suggests such relevance, namely in the category that embodies the cognitive aspects of the participants. That is, it is not only relevant what participants know, but also what they believe, and such beliefs may be socially shared and hence ideological. Let us examine these possible ideological influences on context more systematically.

We shall do this by simulating the context models involved in a specific discourse. Of course, these context models are merely hypotheses that are formulated in order to explain contextually sensitive variations of the discourse: other empirical (laboratory, field) work would be necessary to actually assess the presence of such context models.

Our example is taken from a debate on Asylum Seekers in the British House of Commons, held on March 5, 1997. The debate is initiated by Mrs. Teresa Gorman, Conservative MP for Billericay. Mrs. Gorman's speech has several goals. First, to bring to the attention of the House the financial problems of some London boroughs due to the costs they have to pay for asylum seekers. Another important aim is to attack the (then) Labour opposition for wanting to change the law on asylum seekers. We shall obviously focus on those properties of this debate that are occasioned by contextual structures, and indicate whether and how such context models may be ideologically biased. For other aspects of this debate, see Van Dijk (2000); for other studies on parliamentary debates on immigration, see Wodak & Reisigl (2000); Wodak & Van Dijk (2000), also for further references, not given here, on the study of parliamentary debates; the analysis below should also be understood against the background of our earlier

research on elite racism (van Dijk, 1993) and other work on discourse and racism (see review, see Wodak & Reisigl, 2000); for a discussion of the UK debates on the asylum and immigration act, see Jones (2000).

Initial situation

The initial situation of this debate may be assumed to be contextually characterized as follows for all participants:

DOMAIN: Politics

GLOBAL ACTION: Legislation

SETTING:

— DATE: March 5

— TIME: 11 am

— LOCATION: House of Commons

LOCAL ACTION: speeches of MPs

PARTICIPANT ROLES:

— COMMUNICATIVE: Speakers, recipients

— INTERACTIONAL: Government vs. Opposition

— SOCIAL: MPs, Conservative vs. Labour members; British citizens.

COGNITION:

— KNOWLEDGE: Immigration and current immigration policies

— AIM: Debating asylum policy

Of course the vast presupposed knowledge base involved here not only features the more specific knowledge on immigration, asylum seekers and asylum policy, but also a vast common ground of common sense knowledge about the UK, about London, and the host of knowledge presupposed in the description of asylum seekers, MPs, etc.

First speaker

As soon as Mrs. Gorman starts her speech, this overarching context model holding for the whole debate will be locally specified and continually updated:

— For instance, the *time* clock will start to run (as evidenced by the time indications of the publication of the debate in Hansard). This element of time will be routinely attended (and explicitly referred) to by MPs, since their speaking time is monitored by the Speaker of the House.

— Current *speaker* will now be Mrs. Gorman, Conservative MP

— Other MPs *know* her, know her political allegiance, and probably know her opinions about immigration and asylum seekers.

— Most probably, depending on their political orientation, the MPs will also have positive, neutral or negative opinions about Mrs. Gorman's general opinions about immigration and refugees.

Mrs. Gorman thus initiates the debate (we follow the Hansard transcript):

(1) **Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay):** I want to bring to the attention of the House the particular difficulties faced by the London boroughs because of the problems of asylum seekers.

In this fragment, first of all the usual discursive signals of context appear in the form of deictics: “I”, referring to the current speaker (Mrs. Gorman), and ‘the House’ referring to the relevant institutional setting, as specified by the current context and the overall context, respectively. Note that this means that in order to be able to interpret deictic expressions, the context model needs to specify the relevant information. This also applies for the relevant implications of deictics: It is not merely the House of Commons that is addressed, but more specifically the currently present MPs, as specified in the overall Participant category.

However, there is more. For instance style control. The expression “I want to bring to the attention of..” belongs to a formal register, unlike for instance “Now, let me tell you this.” Such lexicalization however is not controlled by the event model (Mrs. Gorman’s representation of the current political events), but by the context model. This means that the context model should also feature the institutional information that triggers the (in)formality of specific lexical style registers.

So far, contextual analysis follows a rather familiar route, namely that of sociolinguistic analyses of style. What about the ideological nature of the context model? As we have suggested, Mrs. Gorman defines herself as Conservative, and probably as against (at least certain forms of) refugees asking asylum — a definition of the situation that will be close to that of the context model of her fellow conservative MPs. It may be assumed (and will be evidenced by their later interventions) that the context models of Labour MPs will be different on crucial points. Indeed, they will represent Mrs. Gorman not only as Conservative and as an opponent, but also as someone who is reactionary in immigration matters and prejudiced about refugees. These hypotheses about the speaker may be generalized conclusions from earlier interventions of Mrs. Gorman.

Now, how does this ideologically biased context model of Mrs. Gorman further influence her speech? An obvious candidate for such a text-context relationship is the expression “difficulties faced by the London boroughs because of the problems of asylum seekers”. That is, she defines a situation in terms of “difficulties” and “problems”, where speakers of a different ideology might have chosen another expression, such as the more neutral “consequences” and “presence of asylum seekers”. That is, beliefs of speakers influence lexical selection.

Although such an analysis would not be wrong (participant cognitions are part of the context), it would collapse two levels of analysis. Opinions about the

situation talked *about* are represented in the *event model* of the speaker. Obviously, Mrs. Gorman has a (negative) opinion about asylum seekers, and about the financial consequences of their presence, but we should represent this as part of the mental model of the event — underlying the semantics of the speech — and not as part of the context model. This may be a trivial distinction, but for theoretical reasons I prefer to carefully distinguish between event models and context models, that is, between semantics and ‘pragmatics’, even when these may sometimes overlap in their manifestation in discourse.

Now, it is an entirely different matter when we examine the beliefs of Mrs. Gorman about the beliefs of her recipients, and the consequences of such contextual beliefs. Now the beliefs are not about the events talked *about* (refugees), but about currently addressed participants. And it is likely that Mrs. Gorman carefully monitors her speech as a function of (what she believes are) the beliefs of both her Conservative and her Labour colleagues. Thus, for the first she may want to show that she is “tough” on immigration, and speak accordingly, whereas for the Labour opposition she may want to show that despite such toughness, she is not a racist. This sometimes subtle overall strategy of face keeping and impression management in discourse is controlled by the underlying information of Mrs. Gorman’s context model.

This contextually based impression management may be implemented also at the lexical level, for instance when describing the current situation, and this may involve a complex trade off between underlying event models and context models. That is, Mrs. Gorman may have very negative opinions about “bogus” asylum seekers, as also her further speech shows explicitly. If she would speak only among and to other conservatives, or in a non-institutional situation, she might express such opinions without much restraint, resulting in much more negative descriptors for asylum seekers or the current financial situation.

Because of the current context, and the presence of oppositional participants, she may want to “tone down” her discourse, and select words that are not extremely negative, such as “difficulty” and “problem” in this opening statement. Indeed, the use of “problem of is ambiguous here, and may not only refer to the problems *caused by* asylum seekers, as she obviously intends (an interpretation the analyst as well as her recipients will provide given the information of their context models of Mrs. Gorman), but also to the problems of asylum seekers. The latter meaning would be more consistent with the ideologically based event models of the Labour opposition. Later in her speech we shall find more explicit examples of this contextual influence on the discursive expression of mental models.

Let us now examine the second paragraph of Mrs. Gorman’s speech:

- (2) There are, of course, asylum seekers and asylum seekers. I entirely support the policy of the Government to help genuine asylum seekers. but to discourage the

growing number of people from abroad who come to Britain on holiday, as students or in some other capacity and, when the time comes for them to leave, declare themselves to be in need of asylum.

The first sentence here rhetorically (repetitively) expresses an opinion of an event model that embodies a more general conservative attitude about good and bad asylum seekers. That is, this first step of negative Other-presentation of refugees obeys the contextual constraint of Mrs. Gorman's self-definition (self-model) as a conservative and as opposing immigration. Again, it is the relatively downtoned style of the rhetorical expression that is directly controlled by the context model: Mrs Gorman's beliefs about the beliefs of the other MPs. Although we have no access to the phonological properties of this speech, it may also be assumed that the intonation of the second instance of 'asylum seekers' marks a contrast with the first instance, thus emphasizing the conceptual and ideological distinctions made by Mrs. Gorman (for phonological variation in parliamentary discourse, see Moosmüller, 1989).

The second sentence directly brings the context model to the surface, as is the case for deictic "I", of course, but also of the expression "entirely support the policy of the Government". That is, this part of her speech does not speak about refugees, but about the current political situation in which she is herself participating as a legislator and MP. That is, her very speech performatively accomplishes the support she refers to. This is theoretically interesting, because in such cases context model and event model intersect — she speaks both *about* and *to* the Government.

Given the current state of this theoretical analysis, it is now nearly trivial to observe that the use of "entirely support the policy of the Government" is contextually consistent with the model information about Mrs. Gorman being a Conservative MP, and the information that the (then current) Government is also conservative. That is, given the context model as defined, we may expect that each move of her speech is fundamentally controlled by the overall interactional strategy of politically supporting her own government and party, on the one hand, and maybe partly by the wish to persuade the opposition, on the other hand. This again explains (as before) the negative, but non-radical style of the rest of this example, where an ironical description is given of "bogus" refugees. Note that positive self-presentation also extends to that of her party and government, e.g., when she describes the (sometimes harsh removal) policies of the government in terms of "discourage". That is, possibly negative acts of the government are defined in the much softer term "discourage".

Her discourse becomes more ideologically explicit when she describes refugees as follows:

(3) (...) those people, many of whom could reasonably be called economic migrants and some of whom are just benefit seekers on holiday (...).

Again, we assume on the one hand that these opinions (“economic migrants”, “benefit seekers”) about refugees are represented in the mental model Ms. Gorman has about the current events. On the other hand, this is not exactly only a personal opinion, but a part of an attitude she shares with many conservatives and others opposing immigration - an attitude in turn based on a racist or xenophobic ideology.

However, the words of her speech not only express these ideological opinions of the event model, but are also contextually controlled. Thus, the deictic expression “those people” presupposes identification of the speaker with a group (Us, our people) that distantiates itself from the Others: demonstrative pronouns of this kind, especially in discourse about Others, also signal ideological or social distance between the speaker and the Others. Similarly, the use of the meta-linguistic expression “could reasonably be called”, is not based on an event model, but says something about the reasonableness of the speaker, and thus contributes to her positive self-image, or to the avoidance of a bad image as someone who describes refugees in negative terms. Moreover, these expressions not only signal properties of contextual interaction strategies, but also about the ideologically based identification of the speaker.

The political conclusions of this way of describing refugees are clear, and follow immediately, thus summarizing one of the main goals of her speech:

- (4) It is wrong that ratepayers in the London area should bear an undue proportion of the burden of expenditure that those people are causing.

Obviously, an ideologically based attitude about socially motivated taxation and a negative attitude about refugees underpins this specific opinion. But why would Mrs. Gorman focus on “ratepayers in the London area” in the first place? That specific aspect of the main topic of her speech is not an arbitrary selection of one of the consequences of immigration, but a politically relevant choice within a general strategy of populist argumentation. That is, this choice is a function of the contextual category of Mrs. Gorman being an MP (and hence representing citizens), and a Conservative (and hence being opposed to financing refugees). That is, the very acts constituted by this utterance are political acts, part of the overall action of legislation, such as (i) representing ratepayers, (ii) supporting her government, (iii) implementing the policies of her party, (iv) opposing Labour policies, and so on. All these forms of interaction, interpreted as political practices, are controlled by various underlying ideologies. We see that beyond the mere expression of an opinion about the consequences of financing refugees, a host a political acts are being accomplished here, and these can only be understood and explained within a theory of contextualization.

Within the same ideological context we encounter the strategy of impression management, according to which negative opinions about refugees are coin-

bined with various disclaimers, as is the case for the following move of -what we call — ‘Apparent Empathy’:

(5) I understand that many people want to come to Britain to work, but there is a procedure whereby people can legitimately become part of our community. People who come as economic migrants are sidestepping that.

The expression of empathy (“I understand...”) is called “apparent” because it is immediately followed by a retraction (“but...”) and negative qualification of the refugees, as they dominate her speech. Note again that an expression such as “I understand” does not refer to elements of an event model (she is not topically speaking about her understanding), but merely has the contextual function of presenting herself as an “understanding” person, thus trying to avoid the contextual interpretation of her (e.g., by the Labour opposition) as an inveterate racist. This very strategy only makes sense in an ideologically based construction of her context model. Of course, also the focus on, and specific formal lexicalization of “procedure..legitimately...” signals her formal role as a legislator and MP. In other words: in other contexts, for instance in informal talks among friends or family members, the same beliefs would be expressed in very different terms (for the use of political jargon, see e.g., Wodak, 1989).

Mrs. Gorman continues her speech as follows:

(6) The Government, with cross-party backing, decided to do something about the matter. The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 stated that people whose application to remain in Britain had been turned down could no longer receive the social security and housing benefit that they had previously enjoyed. That is estimated to have cut the number of bogus asylum seekers by about a half.

Given our theoretical analysis so far, it is now easy to see which expressions of this fragment signal or enact properties of the (ideologically based) context model of Mrs. Gorman. Given the meanings of this fragment, she obviously speaks as a legislator when referring to the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1996, and the positive way she refers to the Government contextually implies that it is the government constituted by her own party, and that she is supporting this government's policies. The formal terminology of her speech also signals the formality of the occasion.

Interestingly, however, amidst such formal talk, she then uses the popular negative term of economic refugees: “bogus”. This breach of stylistic coherence may be explained ideologically in terms of a context in which she enacts the populist strategy of speaking for the British taxpayer.

So far, Mrs. Gorman's speech focuses only on refugees and the British taxpayer. Contextually, of course, she is not only supporting her Government's policy, but implicitly also criticizing the Labour opposition. Sometimes this contextual aspect surfaces:

(7) It is a great worry to me and many others that the Opposition spokesman for home affairs seems to want to scrap the legislation and return to the previous situation. I would consider that extremely irresponsible. It would open the floodgates again, and presumably the 200 million a year cost that was estimated when the legislation was introduced would again become part of the charge on the British taxpayer.

Here the core of the argument of her speech (defending current legislation) is formulated in terms of explicit “worries” about the objectives of the Labour opposition. Again, this is not directly about refugees or costs, but about Us (Conservatives) and Them/You (Labour), that is, about the political conflict that underlies the context models of all participants in this debate, as indicated above. The deictic expression “to me and many others” not only presupposes herself as the speaker of the context model, but also an ingroup of people who have the same opinion — a contextual definition that obviously has an ideological basis. Similarly, only when given a relevant context model, featuring shared knowledge about who is who in parliament allows the participants to understand who the Opposition spokesman for home affairs is. The repeated reference to the British taxpayer at the end of this fragment is another installment of the populist strategy characterizing her discourse as well as the political acts being accomplished by it, as represented in the current context model. Notice that the expressions “great worry” and “extremely irresponsible” are similarly predicated upon the same political conflict between Conservative and Labour. Indeed, such expressions may at the same time be interpreted as an accusation speech act, addressed at the Labour opposition.

It is in this way that Mrs. Gorman continues to speak about refugees, often in harshly negative terms, as well as about their costs for the British taxpayer. We have seen that these opinions about refugees, as formulated in her speech, may be explained in terms of ideologically inspired mental models of the current immigration situation. But these mental models do not account for many other aspects of her speech, such as its formal style, its populist strategies, its disclaimers, its positive self-presentation, the political acts accomplished, the conflict with the opposition, and so on. These properties of the speech require explanation in underlying context models, featuring Mrs. Gorman’s subjective representation of setting, ongoing actions, various types of participant and their roles (including her own role as MP, conservative, etc.), and their beliefs. And the point of this paper is that not only the event models about the topic talked about (costs of refugees) but also the context model representing the ongoing communicative situation may be ideologically controlled. For instance, her focus on the “taxpayer” should not merely be understood in terms of conservative concerns about limiting state budgets, or in terms of populist strategies to win votes, but also as a move to politically defy the Labour opposition in terms of its traditional popular support.

Note finally that the text-context relations run both ways. Not only does the context model influence many properties of Mrs. Gorman's speech, but her speech at the same time dynamically changes the context models of the participants. Not only in the sense that the other MPs continuously update their knowledge about what she has said, and not even update or simply confirm their opinions about her. Rather, her speech also continually acts in and upon the political situation. We have seen that it accomplishes many political acts. And as such she not only expresses or enacts the Conservative Party's support of the current Government's immigration policies, but also ongoingly contributes to, and hence changes the ideological struggle with the Labour Party. Each move in her speech thus has political-contextual conditions as well as consequences. And the final state of the dynamically changing context models that are brought to bear by all MPs during her speech will thus be the initial state of the context model of next speakers.

In sum, to profoundly understand Mrs. Gorman's speech, as undoubtedly most present MPs do, is to spell out not only her beliefs about refugees (event model, social cognitions), but also the complex structure of the communicative and political situation as represented in the context models of Mrs. Gorman and the other MPs.

Second speaker

Following the logic of the context model approach to ideological discourse analysis, let us next look at some contributions of Mrs. Gorman's main opponent in this debate, Labour MP for Islington North, Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, who continues to be MP under the present Labour government of Tony Blair.

In the same way as Mrs. Gorman is known for her conservative views on immigration, Jeremy Corbyn is known for his progressive stand on social issues, and his anti-racist positions on minorities and immigration. That is, such "general political knowledge" about MPs is most likely part of the context models of all participants when he takes the floor, together with knowledge about his party membership, opposition against current immigration policies, and so on. To understand what he has to say presupposes such context models.

Similarly, as suggested above, Corbyn is not the first speaker. This means that the initial state of the context model that underpins his speech should also be defined in terms of the context model he (and other MPs) construed for the previous Conservative speakers, especially Mrs. Gorman. In other words, the interactional nature of his "response" not only exhibits itself in his speech, but can only be truly understood in terms of the context models accompanying it. Jeremy Corbyn begins his speech as follows:

(8) Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): This debate is welcome in the sense that it provides an opportunity to talk about the problem of asylum seekers and the

situation facing local authorities. However, I think that the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) — who, today, appears to be battling for Westminster council — should pause for a moment to think about why people seek asylum. Britain is a signatory of the 1951 Geneva convention, which requires that if someone is genuinely and legitimately in fear of persecution for political, religious or social reasons, they should be guaranteed a place of safety in the country to which they flee. That principle should be adhered to.

Semantic coherence of the debate is guaranteed by Corbyn's continued reference to asylum seekers. He even also refers to "problems" but this time less ambiguously than Mrs. Gorman: Corbyn refers to the problems *of* asylum seekers, thus obviously focussing more on the plights of the Others than those of the British taxpayer. We hardly need to spell out that this reference presupposes a mental model of the current situation that is consistent with an anti-racist ideology. Indeed, instead of disclaimers that express false empathy with refugees, Mr. Corbyn throughout his speech will show consistent, genuine empathy, e.g., by detailing the miserable situation of refugees in their home Countries as well as their treatment in the UK. In this particular fragment he defends a generous immigration policy by referring to the Geneva convention, a well-known argumentative strategy — invoking (international) authority and legal necessity. All this, and much more, constitutes the anti-racist mental model Corbyn has of the current events, a model that largely explains the topics, lexical choices, arguments, examples, and other Ideological features of his speech.

Our point however is that his speech is ideological also for contextual reasons, thus explaining properties of the discourse that cannot simply be accounted for in terms of biased models of the current refugee situation. Also Corbyn is speaking in parliament, responding to a conservative speaker, while at the same time attacking current government policy and the Conservative Party. In other words, while speaking, Corbyn is "doing opposition". He also speaks "for" people, he also is a representative, and he is thus also engaged in "being an MP". These and many other properties of the ongoing communicative situation need to be Spelled out in his (and others') context models. And to show the actual (and theoretical) relevance of such context models, we also must show how properties of these models affect properties of his discourse.

Thus, his opening words include the meta-discursive deictic expression "this debate". This presupposes that he (as other speakers) are aware of the type of the ongoing discursive interaction, namely as the genre of a (parliamentary) debate. In other words, "ongoing genre" is probably a useful category in the context models of participants — because they will relevantly attend to it (and implicitly to its underlying rules) and even may explicitly refer to it.

Politically speaking, Corbyn may not welcome what Mrs. Gorman has said, but through a rhetorical paradox he does welcome the debate, because it gives him the opportunity to redefine the situation, and thus to attack the Conservative

Government. Indeed, by referring to the Geneva Convention, he implicitly criticizes the Government for *not* adhering to it. Thus, by accepting an imposed topic, he is able to take political advantage of it, a familiar strategy of Opposition speakers.

Whereas this is the overall contextual and political upshot of his intervention, he also criticizes, more locally, Mrs. Gorman, whom he avoids to name in person (the addition between parenthesis in the transcript is made by the editors of Hansard), by referring to her in terms of her constituency. The recommendation that Mrs. Gorman should think about the reasons people have to seek asylum, presupposes that she has not done so, which in turn implies — not only semantically, but also politically and hence contextually — that she (as a member of the Conservative party) is insensitive to the plight of refugees. Even more locally, Corbyn ironically accuses her of political inappropriateness by speaking not for her own constituents but those of the London borough of Westminster. In other words. Corbyn’s opening statement semantically continues the debate on refugees, but politically-contextually and pragmatically coheres with the first part by engaging in critique of the previous speaker as well as of the government she defends. To understand the details of the political moves of his speech, one needs to construct the appropriate context models that undergirds its production and understanding.

Another contextually interesting feature of this first statement is Corbyn’s reference to what he calls “the situation facing local authorities”, where Mrs. Gorman talked about “difficulties”. As an anti-racist, Mr. Corbyn cannot possibly refer, as she does, to the problems or difficulties *caused by* asylum seekers. Hence he very vaguely and generally refers to the “situation”. While being politically correct on the one hand, however, he cannot possibly ignore the (financial) problems of the local authorities, because that would mark Labour as being insensitive to local issues. We here witness the well-known dilemma of progressive, and especially anti-racist policies and discourse: the double allegiance to both Us and Them, that is to our own people, as well as to the Others, the refugees. Especially in times of rampant popular racism, positive reference to refugees and immigration, and ignoring complaints, especially of local councils, could mean political suicide. Hence the discourse of open sympathy and defense for the refugees in combination with quite delicate acknowledgement of the financial troubles of local councils. The very choice of the vague term “situation” is the outcome of this fundamental political dilemma probably characterizing the context model of Mr. Corbyn. And while this dilemma of expressing sympathy with Us vs. Them, is obviously ideologically based, also the context model thus becomes profoundly ideological at all its levels: the definition of the ongoing global and local acts involved, the evaluation of the previous speaker, and of Course his own conception of an MP, an anti-racist, and a member of the Opposition.

Let us consider some other contributions Corbyn makes to this debate. His next move is to counter the argument that Britain is flooded by refugees, e.g., by stating that the UK receives many refugees less than other countries. That is, Mr. Corbyn has a different definition of the current refugee situation — that is, a different mental model. But at the same time, We should understand such an argument (that is, the discourse expressing it) as a contextually and politically based move, namely to counter claims of the Government, and thus to challenge the very basis of the Government’s policies. Again, such a critique is not merely inspired by the contextual role of Mr. Corbyn as a member of the Opposition, but also ideologically in terms of an anti-racist critique of the anti-immigrant panics propagated by the Conservatives. Clashing opinions about refugees (represented in conservative vs. progressive mental models) thus also imply clashing political acts and policies, and clashing conceptions about what Governments and MPs should do — that is, clashing context models.

In the same way Mrs. Gorman appeals to the emotions of her recipients or constituents by telling stories about “able-bodied” refugees who get lavish benefits, Mr. Corbyn tells heart-breaking stories about the plight of refugees -a well-known argumentative move. Apart from the obvious contextual conditions and implications of such a move (We, Labour care for refugees; You Conservatives are heartless, etc.). Corbyn also makes use of what we could call “contextual counterfactuals”, that is, portraying his recipients in such a situation:

(9) So far as I am aware, no hon. Member has been woken up by the police at 4 am, taken into custody with no rights of access to a judicial system, and, with his or her family, forced to flee into exile for their own safety.

This example nicely shows the close interplay of the semantics and pragmatics of discourse. The main (semantic) topic of his speech is the plight of refugees in their home countries, and hence the justification of their asking for refuge in the UK. But this may not be enough as an argument, so that he indirectly (by negation) involves the other MPs in such a hypothetical Situation — a powerful argumentative move, because it forces the recipients to construct a mental model in which they experience concrete oppression. And the construction of Such a mental model is precisely what empathy is all about. That is, persuasion may operate at the semantic level of arguments, but also may directly involve co-participants as actors in stories, thus combining semantic and contextual categories. Event models and context models may thus momentarily overlap. Again, also in this example there is no doubt about the ideological nature of this hypothetical event-as expressed by the description of the action of the policy and the absence of legal protection and human rights.

Although Corbyn mainly focuses on the plight of refugees abroad as well as in the UK, he thus often connects to the ongoing social and political situation in the UK, and especially to the context of his very speech in parliament:

(10) In the United Kingdom there has been a systemic erosion of peoples' ability to seek asylum and to have their cases properly determined. There has also been a vindictiveness against asylum seekers — it has been parroted in this debate by some Conservative Members which has been promoted by some newspapers, particularly the Daily Mail. For very many Nears, that newspaper has had a long and dishonourable record on this issue.

The location expression “In the United Kingdom” is contextually to be interpreted as “here, in this country”, and initiates for the first time the explicit anti-racist critique of the treatment of, and opinions about asylum seekers. Corbyn does so in more general terms (referring especially to the tabloid press), but also, in a brief phrase, applies the critique to the current debate, and tacitly to Mrs. Gorman. That is, the ideological based attitude that Conservatives have prejudices about immigration here influences the content of Corbyn's context model category of Participants: This is how he represents Mrs. Gorman. This anti-racist aspect of his context model controls many of the properties of his speech — and not only the current speech act of an implicit accusation of Mrs. Gorman or other previous conservative speakers.

At this point, Corbyn is challenged by a conservative interruption, which he deals with immediately, before continuing his speech:

(11) **Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow):** I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman will tell the House what mandate he has From the British people to share their citizenship with foreigners?

Mr. Corbyn: I am unsure how one answers such a totally ludicrous question. If someone has a legitimate fear of persecution, they flee abroad and try to seek asylum. Many people sought asylum from Nazi Germany. Presumably the hon. Gentleman, oil the basis of his Comment, believes that they should not have been admitted to the UK, and that people fleeing from oppression in any regime should not be admitted. He talks utter nonsense. I suggest that he start to think more seriously about human rights issues. Suppose he had to flee this country because an oppressive regime had taken over. Where would he go? Presumably he would not want help from anyone else, because he does not believe that help should be given to anyone else.

Of course, as soon as we are confronted with this kind of ideologically controlled dialogue, the topic talked about, and hence the mental model of the refugee situation, becomes secondary, and the current context model takes front stage. Corbyn is thus represented and criticized by Mr. Gill as someone who not only gives away U.K. citizenship at will, but especially as abusing of his rights as an MP. That is, Mr. Gill thus tries to redefine the context, by accusing Mr. Corbyn's role conception as he (Gill) sees it (that is, as Gill represents Corbyn in his context model).

Corbyn's reaction is similarly critical — and expresses the very negative evaluation of the previous speaker's discourse in his own (Corbyn's) context model. For our theory this means that context models also need a category of

the current or previous (part of) speech, so as to meta-linguistically speak about it and evaluate it. The further critique of the previous speaker, however, is not directly contextual (in terms of criticizing the nationalist or racist opinions of the previous speaker), but does so indirectly by again referring to the rights of refugees, this time those of the Nazi regime — whose victims cannot as easily be discounted as the victims of current regimes. However, as he did before, he then engages his opponent in a hypothetical argument, challenging him to respond to an indefensible opinion (not to have admitted the victims of the Nazi regime). This argument is that followed by a much more explicit evaluation of the previous speech as “utter nonsense”.

Little further analysis is necessary to draw the contextual consequences of this particular exchange. Corbyn defines himself as a valiant defender of the victims of oppressive regimes, defines the Conservatives as heartless, and his local opponent not only as totally heartless but also as an idiot. Similarly, he thus strengthens Labour’s position as the party that defends human rights. Interactively, he manages the debate by persuasively constructing his opponents as enemies of refugees, and as ignoring human rights. He thus not only draws on an overall context model at least the Labour MPs may have about the Government and the conservatives anyway, but contributes to its extension and confirmation by showing how previous conservative speakers in this debate precisely act and speak to confirm the validity of this context model.

Fully spelling out all political conditions and consequences of the current context models of both Conservative and Labour MPs would carry us too far, but we here get a glimpse of the way how participants manage their talk as a function of such underlying models.

6. Conclusion

In this paper we have shown that not only event models but also context models may be ideologically biased. That is, the interpretation participants make of the current communicative situation subjectively brings to bear their group membership, as well as the social or political relation to other participants. Since context models control much of the stylistic and pragmatic properties of discourse, this ideological control of context models may also affect discourse at many levels. In examples taken from a debate on refugees in the British House of Commons, we have seen how pervasive the ideological control of context models is, and how many properties of discourse may thus be affected by such control.

The specific argument of this paper is intended as a contribution to a more general, multidisciplinary theory of ideology and the way ideology is expressed by, as well as formed and confirmed by, discourse. In this paper, this argument especially takes a cognitive slant, by defining contexts and contextualization in

terms of mental models and their role in discourse production and comprehension. The advantage of such an approach is that it accounts not only for the role of social representations — such as attitudes and ideologies — in discourse processing, but also allows a more subjective explanation of discourse and its variation in terms of personal mental models. And since contexts are by definition unique and personal, context models precisely allow us to combine such an individual approach to contextualization with a more social one, in which shared representations, groups, and other societal aspects play a prominent role.

At this stage of theory formation, we are not yet able to fully spell out the explicit structures and strategies involved in the formation, change, and updating of context models, and the way they influence discourse production or comprehension. It was shown though that they also act as an interface between event models and discourse: Indeed, context models define what is relevant information of the event model, and what information should therefore (not) be included in the semantic representation of a discourse. But context models do much more, and also define the conditions that control speech acts, style registers, interactive strategies (such as those of self-presentation), and a host of other discourse properties. By showing that such context models may be ideologically biased, we have found another way to (better) explain how discourses come to be ideological --- or can be interpreted that way.

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