

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (1978-1988)\***

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### *The growth of a new discipline*

The success of discourse analysis as a new cross-discipline has continued in the 1980s. Dozens of books and hundreds, if not thousands, of articles are published each year demonstrating the utility of discourse analysis in the humanities and social sciences. More and more universities are offering programs in discourse analysis, and international conferences in several disciplines now regularly feature a special session devoted to discourse studies. There are now two international journals dedicated to this field, *Discourse Processes* and *TEXT* (which I edit), and the first *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* in four volumes was published in 1985.<sup>1</sup>

These formal academic advances of the field, now nearly a quarter of a century old, have been paralleled by substantial successes in theory formation, systematic description and applications. Linguistics in general, and grammatical theories in particular, have increasingly recognized the relevance of textual or discourse analytical perspectives in describing language and language use. Phenomena such as topic-comment articulation, co-reference and coherence, topics that used to be explored in text grammars or other forms of discourse analysis, have now become objects of research in linguistics generally.<sup>2</sup> Sociolinguistics has increasingly made use of discourse analysis of language use in the social context.<sup>3</sup> Pragmatics has expanded its earlier focus on speech acts to a more general discipline of language use and largely overlaps with discourse analysis.<sup>4</sup> And, finally, conversation analysis, originating in micro-sociology, has become one of the most productive approaches to spoken discourse, as well as in linguistics?

What is true for linguistics, holds true for many other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences as well. We can safely say that the

psychology of text processing has become one of the most prominent directions of research both in psychology and in discourse analysis.<sup>6</sup> Its advances are closely linked to the study of Artificial Intelligence, and will continue to have an impact on the development of intelligent computer programs for human-machine dialogues and the simulation of language and discourse understanding. Educational research has become unthinkable without the numerous applications of cognitive theories in, for instance, the study of reading and of learning from text and dialogue.<sup>7</sup> More recently, social psychology as well has shown interest in discourse analysis, and I have found social psychology to be a particularly rewarding *new* extension of the discourse analytical enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

Anthropology and ethnography continue to be a major field of discourse analytical activity. We have shown that the 'ethnography of speaking' may be considered one of the founding disciplines of modern discourse analysis. During the last decade, ethnographic approaches to discourse in its cultural contexts have come to be regarded as a major contribution to discourse analysis and the social sciences. In the last decade, this ethnographic approach to discourse has been extended beyond the study of text and talk in non-western cultures, to include the many "sub"-cultures or ethnic groups within European and North-American societies.<sup>9</sup> Conversation analysis, whose successes have already been mentioned, has developed from its early origins in micro-sociology to encompass virtually all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. In many respects ethnography and micro-sociology have become parallel and complementary fields in the study of the everyday uses of spoken language.

A more general sociology of discourse, however, has been slow to develop, and is essentially hampered by the reluctance of macro-sociologists to deal with what they see as a typical 'micro' phenomenon. This skepticism or disinterest is also due to many conversational analysts' reluctance to deal with structural or macro phenomena of society. However, the systematic relationship of discourse, or more generally 'orders of discourse', to social or societal 'structures', also at the macro-level, is obvious, and I shall come back to this claim below.<sup>18</sup>

The same holds true for political science. Although the study of political discourse has occasionally interested scholars in the social sciences and even the humanities, there has been an unfortunate lack of interest among most political scientists in the vital role of text and

talk in politics.<sup>11</sup> As we shall see below, social and political power and ideologies are also sustained, legitimated or defended, and therefore reproduced through discourse.

Of the discourse genres that most deeply affect our daily lives, but which nevertheless have been systematically neglected by discourse analysts, we should first of all mention those of the media. Although media and communication studies have become increasingly influential, and occasional linguistic or textual approaches have inspired classical 'content analyses', the role of an autonomous discourse analytical approach to public text and talk in the mass media only recently has become more fully recognized (references are given below). It is striking, to say the least, that we know much more about poetry, drama, novels, myths, or storytelling, for instance, than about the news reports we read in our paper, or see on television, every day. The same is true for many other media genres that at times reach hundreds of millions of people. More recent social or cultural studies of such genres, however, have increasingly shown interest in the discourse dimensions of these ubiquitous forms of communication.

Besides the study of the mass media, recent developments in the more general study of communication have particularly recognized the relevance of discourse analysis.<sup>12</sup> Closely related at first to the traditional social psychological study of communicative 'behavior' and the effects and influences of persuasion, communication studies have become more autonomous during the last decade and, at the same time, are becoming increasingly inspired by discourse or conversation analytical paradigms.

Although we cannot possibly be exhaustive, we should mention two other disciplines of the humanities and social sciences that until now have only marginally been involved in discourse analysis, viz., the study of law and history. There have been several interesting studies of dialogical interaction in the court room, as well as of legal language, texts, or argumentation, but most of these studies have remained outside the scope of dominant interest in law studies, done by linguists, discourse analysts, micro-sociologists or ethnographers.<sup>13</sup> That the business of law is essentially a textual exercise, however, need not be recalled here, and we expect that in the coming decade the relevance of the study of legal discourse--as well as political discourse--will eventually get the recognition it deserves. The same is true for the discipline of history, which also largely deals with text, talk or other

discursive documents, but which does not fully realize the implications of the nature of this primary manifestation of historical structures and processes.

From this brief and general survey of the developments in discourse analysis during the last ten years we may conclude that the new discipline has met with increasing success, both in its original fields such as anthropology, linguistics, semiotics, and literary studies, as well as in several of the other social sciences. Its academic success can be seen in new programs, journals or conferences, as well as in the publication of numerous influential books and journal articles. Theories of discourse analysis have become much more sophisticated, and some have been formalized in computer programs or logical systems. Description has extended to many genres of text and talk that were neglected earlier in the relevant disciplines, as well as to language use and discourse in many different cultures, and within western societies. Experimental research into actual discourse processing has seen an explosive growth, inspiring numerous applications, especially in education. Much work is being done at the crossroads of sociolinguistics, ethnography and micro-sociology, especially on spontaneous forms of everyday talk and their socio-cultural embeddings. Finally, discourse analysis has slowly begun to inspire scholars and developments in a number of other 'text' disciplines, such as media and communication studies, political science, law and history. We expect another decade will be needed to fully integrate and establish discourse analysis as a primary direction and method of research in these disciplines. By the end of the century and the millennium, though, the field should become truly multidisciplinary, following the lead of its ancestor discipline, rhetoric, from antiquity until the 18th century.

In the remainder of this article, I will briefly discuss the developments in discourse analysis which I have found particularly interesting, and have devoted special attention to in my own recent work.

*Cognitive discourse processing: strategies and models*

The mental processes involved in understanding and producing text and talk have become a major object of research in cognitive and educational psychology. The last decade has witnessed the publication of many books and numerous journal articles on this topic, and has seen its extensive application in both educational and developmental

psychology (see note 6).

Basically speaking, text comprehension is seen as a complex information managing process, in which incoming signals are analyzed at several levels, in short term memory, and stored as different kinds of representations in the long term store of episodic memory. This process is sustained by vast amounts of effectively organized knowledge (frames, scripts), including both knowledge of the language, discourse and communication, as well as other knowledge about the 'world'.

Two important elements, however, should be added to this account of cognitive processes of understanding.<sup>14</sup> First, the early approaches to the study of understanding were so to speak 'structural' and therefore too static, a familiar problem in most forms of structuralism. Influenced by structural or generative models in linguistics and discourse analysis, the theories assumed an orderly, and level-specific process of 'structural analysis' by language users, and a description of mental representations that was close to similar accounts of verbal utterances.

However, actual discourse comprehension is much more complex, and especially more 'dynamic'. In order to account for the ongoing, "on line" processes of text production or understanding, we need a new perspective, which Walter Kintsch and I called 'strategic'. Unlike the formal and abstract rules of grammar or early discourse analysis, strategies were assumed to play a decisive role in actual understanding. Such strategies (most of which are not intentional or 'conscious' but fully automated) are flexible, goal oriented, 'on line' processes, during which language users make plausible but fast and effective guesses about the underlying structures, meanings or functions of discourse fragments. Listeners or readers do not delay their interpretation processes until a clause or sentence has been heard or read, but start interpreting with the very first words of texts or sentences. They make strategic use of many different kinds of previous knowledge, including knowledge about the context, as well as more general knowledge stored in memory.

Another difference from grammatical rules is that strategies may operate at several levels at the same time: during syntactic analysis, semantic or pragmatic information may be used, whereas phonological or syntactic cues may be needed to establish a semantic or pragmatic interpretation. Similarly, as the proverb says, good listeners or

readers need only half a word: They don't need a complete sentential structure to make a plausible guess about the meaning of a sentence in text and context, and they are even able to derive a probable macroproposition or topic for a text with the help of a single title, headline or initial sentence.

Strategies may act as mental 'experts' for each level or domain, but they do so in cooperation with those taking care of other processing tasks. Thus, we have strategies of syntactic analysis as well as strategies for establishing of local coherence, the derivation of global topics or the establishment of intended speech acts or other social functions of the utterance. For instance, during the interpretation of the first pronoun of a new sentence, language users may provisionally assume coreferential identity of this word with topical expressions in previous sentences, an assumption which may of course be corrected when further information of the sentence is processed. The same is true for the construction of macropropositions that represent the major topics of text or talk. These may *be* inferred from information in the overall goal of the speech act, from the context (e.g., gestures, facial expressions or other non-verbal information), or from the information supplied in the first, often thematic, sentences of a discourse.

The same is true for the manipulation of knowledge. No longer do we assume that vast amounts of information from knowledge frames or scripts are simply being activated and applied or inserted into textual representations in episodic memory. Rather, we assume that most knowledge is strategically activated and applied, depending on context and text features, such as overall topics or relevant goals of speech acts and interaction. Without making a full analysis of relevant knowledge, or without making use of the complete representation of the earlier parts of a text, language users may simply interpret in a more superficial or 'sloppy, but often nevertheless effective way, by checking whether a current word, sentence or proposition more or less 'fits' within the current knowledge script.

One important feature in this complex cognitive process of text analysis, representation and knowledge application is its top-down nature: People set up expectations about plausible structures or information, and may be helped to derive local details on the basis of overall structures or information, for instance by topics or the superstructures of a story or newspaper report. On the other hand, there has recently been a renewed recognition of the important role of bottom-

up processing of discourse, simply because no 'overt' or 'global' processing is possible without the analysis and interpretation of local details of text. After all, even if a title or headline helps us establish a plausible topic for a text, we still need to analyze and understand the headline or title itself.

Another fundamental feature of current theories of discourse processing is the role of *models*.<sup>15</sup> Until a decade ago, cognitive theories of understanding usually postulated that comprehension essentially resulted in a textual representation in episodic memory. Although such textual representations are still highly relevant during processing, we now assume that this is only half of the story. Language users are not primarily aiming at the construction of such a semantic representation of the text (possibly with some information about its surface structure style, when relevant), but rather try to understand what the text 'is about', for instance an action or an event. It is the representation of the situation the text 'refers to' which language users represent in a mental model, a so-called 'situation model'. Models, thus, are what people imagine to be 'the case' when they understand a text or participate in a conversation. In this way, we obtain so to speak a double representation of meaning in memory, viz., a meaning of the text, on the one hand, and a meaning of the event the text is about, a fragment of the world, on the other hand. Of course, this distinction is familiar in the philosophy of language and from logic, where model theories have long been closely associated with the account of meaning and interpretation.

Models embody not only what people understand about an event when interpreting a discourse. Rather, they feature more generally the personal knowledge and experiences people have. If I read in the paper about an event in Nicaragua, I construe a model of that event, but in so doing I will also activate, apply and update my earlier knowledge, that is, existing models, about Nicaragua and the situation in Central America. For many people this knowledge will be based on earlier media discourses, but especially for those directly involved in such events, it may also derive from personal experiences. In other words, all our (interpreted) experiences, actions, the situations in which we participate, the scenes we witness, as well as the talk we take part in or the stories we read, are thus represented in the form of a complex network of models. Unlike textual representations, these models may also embody our personal opinions about such situations. This is

crucial if we want to account for the important attitudinal and ideological dimensions of discourse processing, neglected in cognitive psychology, to which I shall return below. In other words, models are much richer in information than texts or textual representations, which are no more than the tip of the iceberg of underlying models.

What do models look like? Since models are pervasive in all forms of information processing, we assume that they have an effective form or schema, a model schema, in which the various information units we process can be quickly inserted. This schema is a hierarchical network of categories familiar from the description of semantic structures or stories: a Setting (Place and Time), Circumstances, Participants with different roles (Agents, Patients, Objects, etc.), Events or Actions, and their respective evaluative modifiers (Good, Bad, Pleasant, etc.). That sentences and stories were earlier supposed to have similar structural features is not surprising: they are routinely used to describe the situations represented in models, and therefore may be assumed to have analogous structural dimensions or categories. In fact, we now have a convincing cognitive explanation of many types of grammatical or textual structure.

Since models are the cognitive counterpart of what people refer to in their utterances, we finally have a reasonable theoretical basis for explaining co-reference and coherence in discourse. Recall that coherence was defined in terms of conditional (e.g., causal) and functional relationships between propositions in a text, or rather on the basis of the facts referred to by the sentences that express such propositions. However, in cognitive theories there was no way to account for reference and referents. Models are ideal for such an account: the facts assumed to sustain coherence are simply the events represented in a model. This also explains why coherence may subjectively depend on the personal or shared social models of the language users, and why we are able to tell coherent stories about fictitious events. Hence, coherence is not based on 'real' or 'objective' facts, but on facts as people represent them in their models. Similarly, planning actions as well as speech acts, can now simply be accounted for in terms of the models of future actions or events we are able to construe, usually out of fragments of 'old' models.

Finally, models also provide the important missing link between textual representations and interpretation and more general, socially shared, knowledge scripts. It was suggested that language users do not



normally need to activate vast knowledge scripts to understand a single word or sentence, let alone apply all that *knowledge* in their textual representations. On the contrary, what knowledge people need is embodied in the much more specific and context dependent models in episodic memory. During their construction of these models, people obviously make use of more general, script knowledge, but will do so in a strategic way. They select, possibly from different scripts, all the information that is needed to understand, or participate in, the actual situation. That is, instead of scripts, people rather make use of instantiated scripts--concrete examples, so to speak--in the form of an imaginable model. In logical terms, we would say that people replace the variables of the script by the concrete constants or names of the model: The stereotypical waitress in a restaurant script may be instantiated as "Dolores" or as "the woman with the roce in her hair" in the actual model we have of our dinner in this restaurant tonight.

Conversely, on the basis of the many models we build during our lives, we are also able to make abstractions, generalizations and decontextualizations, in such a way that general frames and scripts are formed. Therefore, we also make a distinction between specific, ad hoc, models built for one single situation, for instance for my understanding of this particular story about a single event, and more generalized models, such as my general knowledge about the situation in Lebanon or Nicaragua, inferred from many earlier interpretations of previous newspaper stories. My shopping today is represented in a particular model, whereas my daily or weekly shopping may be represented in a more general model of this activity. Note that this general model is still personal: It still features my shopping, in specific shops, although specific time dimensions may no longer be represented in such a general model.

Once we have postulated such general models, we can understand why there is a close interplay between models and scripts. Once formed, scripts help us to build new models, and on the other hand, we need the models of our daily experiences to derive the more general, context independent scripts. Thus, we are now able to explain how people learn from discourse, that is, how knowledge in semantic--or rather social--memory may be derived from text and talk, a process which is necessarily mediated by models. (In some situations and forms of communication, however, people may also directly access and express more general script or frame information, for instance in

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128 Teun A. van Dijk *JILS/CIEL* 1(1989)

scientific or ideological discourse, or when people express general prejudices or stereotypes without the 'empirical' basis of the experiences that are represented in models.)

We see that models are an attractive theoretical concept in the account of discourse processing. However, psychologists usually need empirical 'proof', and will try to set up experiments that must show that models are 'really' there, cognitively speaking, and not just a theoretical construct. Also, models must be shown to be different from textual representations or scripts. Fortunately, many recent experiments have demonstrated that models indeed 'exist'. For instance, it can be shown that people are able to focus on actual descriptions of a town or a house, or on the internal mental model they have about the town or the house, when listening to a text about them. Such a different focus will also result in different recall about the house or town. Similarly, it may even be the case that concepts for persons that are 'close' in the text, for instance a few sentences back, may be 'far' in the model. It has been shown that such distant actors in the model are more difficult to access than their 'close' concepts in textual representations—for instance if it has just been affirmed that a person has left. The same is true for the perspective or point of view people have in understanding discourse, a crucial notion—also in narrative analysis—which we are finally able to account for in a theoretically elegant way.

In other words, models allow us to explain many important aspects of discourse processing that would be difficult or impossible to explain with a single representation theory, that is, in terms of textual representations alone. The notion of a model, thus, has become a central, unifying concept in complex information processing, as was earlier the case for the notion of a frame or script. Its usefulness and practical applications, as we shall see shortly, are immense, and much further research needs to be done to assess its precise structures and the detened strategies of its formation, activation, updating and application.

Besides particular or general models of situations, we also distinguish a special kind of models, viz., *context models* or models of the communicative situation. That is, while speaking, listening or reading, language users also have a representation of the actual situation they are participating in. This context model obviously features a model of self, as well as a model of the other speaker or listener, as well as a representation of the current speech acts, or other social activities, and

their goals. These context models monitor what we (can) say, our interaction strategies in conversation, the style of the utterance (formal, informal), and many other properties of discourse.

Finally, in order to monitor the complex information flow between short term and long term memory, between models and scripts, between models and text representations, and so on, we finally postulate a powerful *Control System*. This central monitoring device keeps track of the active models or scripts, the current macropropositions and speech acts, and send internal and external information where it is needed during discourse comprehension. It automatically deactivates models or scripts, guides information searches, prompts the language user to search for more information when needed, and generally allows the strategic process of understanding to proceed smoothly and effectively or to resolve problems when they occur. The Control System also explains why we need not keep all this monitoring information, for instance about the current topic, in short term memory--as we had assumed before--leaving much needed processing space and resources to actual, local, on line understanding. That is, the Control System works so to speak in the background, and will be made 'conscious' only when difficulties present themselves (What was I doing? What was I talking about?).

#### *Social cognition and discourse*

Despite the success of cognitive theories of text processing, one of the major shortcomings of such theories is their lack of a social dimension. It may of course be argued that it is not the business of cognitive psychology to deal with social aspects of language use or information processing. However, this would show a narrow conception of processes of understanding. Understanding and producing discourse does not merely take place in the laboratory (which incidentally is also a social context!), but in *concrete* social situations, and it is therefore essential to study the interplay between cognitive and social structures and processes. At the same time, several well-known cognitive notions should also be analyzed in social terms. Scripts, for instance, are not just personal representations of knowledge, as are models, but socially shared, representations of stereotypical, social events or activities. They are socially acquired and changed, e.g., through social discourse, and may be typical for a social group or

culture. It even seems plausible that the many cognitive processes or representations we have so far distinguished may derive their particular structures or strategies from their daily uses in the social context. Therefore, instead of 'semantic memory', we have also used the term 'social memory', also in order to distinguish it from the more personal, biographic nature of episodic memory (which of course also has shared, social dimensions, but which as a whole is by definition unique for each person, given the unique combination of experiences of each person).

This unhappy limitation of cognitive psychology is partly resolved of course in social psychology, which is specifically geared to the study of the interface of cognition and the social context. Recent developments have shown that social psychology, thus understood, may contribute much to our insight into discourse and communication. Traditional areas of social psychology, such as the study of socialization, communication, interaction, persuasion, prejudice and stereotypes, as well as more recent ones, such as the study of attribution, all have an important discursive dimension. That is, discourse analysis may contribute to our insight into the interplay between mind or personality on the one hand and social situations and society, on the other hand. And social psychological developments will undoubtedly allow us to solve many of the theoretical and empirical puzzles of discourse analysis.

One crucial notion that has heavily influenced current social psychology is that of *social cognition*.<sup>16</sup> Social cognition may be variously described as the sorts of cognitions people have and share as social members, or as cognitions about social situations, society or social groups. Thus, representations people make about each other, about the groups they belong to--women, men, Blacks, Whites, Dutch or Mexicans, old or young people--are characteristic examples of such social cognitions. Much recent work, therefore, has focused on new ways to account for stereotypes or prototypes, or on the ways people process information under the influence of such prototypical representations about other people. The influence of cognitive psychology has been striking in this area of social cognition: Many of the relevant notions, for instance, have been framed in terms of 'schemata'. Unfortunately, such applications of typical cognitive terms have occasionally been rather superficial. Despite the many references to the notion of group schemata, for instance, such schemata are rarely specified in

detail.

The relevance of theories of social cognition for discourse analysis is considerable. Like discourse itself, social cognition has both cognitive and social dimensions. The latter tend to be neglected in much social cognition research, however, because most research in this area is being done by psychologists. It should be stressed though that social cognitions are not simply 'social' because they are *about* social groups or events, but also because they are being formed, used and changed by people *as* social group members, and in social situations. Discourse plays a crucial role in these processes of the reproduction of social cognitions. Although social cognitions may be derived from the observation of other people and their actions, their contents, general rules, principles or strategies, are often conveyed through text and talk. Conversely, discourse itself is crucially monitored by underlying social cognitions, such as social opinions, attitudes, representations or ideologies. The detailed analysis of this inter-dependence of social discourse and social cognition is a major task for both social psychology and discourse analysis.

Unfortunately, we do not yet know exactly what social cognitions look like. We may assume that, not unlike knowledge, extensively studied in cognitive psychology and Artificial Intelligence (but itself also a form of social cognition of course), social cognitions have a hierarchical nature, or that they have the form of schemata. This means that there are different levels of generality and specificity. Also, social cognitions may be construed from different categories or dimensions, such as Appearance, Origin, Character, or Cultural habits, when people think or talk about other groups. Some properties thus attributed to other people may be more central or prominent, whereas others may be peripheral or marginal. Instead of discussing such general structural properties of social cognitions, it may be more effective to make distinctions between various types of social cognitions. In this way, we may make explicit traditional terms such as norms, values, goals, opinions, attitudes or ideologies, along different dimensions of complexity or generality. Also, we should not merely analyze social cognitions in terms of their structures or representations, but also in terms of the dynamic strategies we already encountered in our brief account of the psychology of discourse processing.

The structures, strategies and interplay of social cognition and discourse may be illustrated in the analysis of ethnic prejudice and racism,

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132 Teun A. van Dijk *JILS/CIEL* 1(1989)

as I have tried to do in several research projects during the 1980s. These projects all try to answer the question in which ways discourse plays a role in the reproduction of ethnocentrism or racism in (Western) societies. Through a systematic analysis of everyday conversations, textbooks and news in the press, I examined how members of dominant (White) groups talk and write about ethnic minority groups, or about people from Third World countries.<sup>17</sup>

It was shown that the topics, the narrative or argumentative structures and strategies, the style and rhetorical operations, as well as many features of local semantics or conversational interaction, may be described and explained in this socio-cognitive framework. On the one hand, these properties of discourse are heavily controlled by underlying social cognitions, such as the (prejudiced) representations dominant group members may have about minorities, or the strategies dominant (in)group members use when thinking about the actions or assumed characteristics of minority group members. For instance, social representations about minorities may focus on their Appearance (Whitevs. Black, or Whitevs. Non-White), their Origin (Nationals vs. Foreigners), their Economic Goals ("They come here to live off our pocketbook"), their Culture ("They do not even speak our language"), or their Personal Characteristics ("They are criminals", "They are aggressive", "You cannot trust them", etc.). In this way, and along several dimensions, majority group members may focus on Differences if not on Deviance, for instance with respect to "Our" rules, habits, norms or laws, or on the perceived threat such minority or immigrant groups are supposed to be to our Space, Housing, Employment, Culture (Education, Language, Religion, etc.), or general Welfare.

These underlying representations, as well as the strategies applied in the interpretation of 'ethnic events' may become apparent in the various properties of texts and talk, for instance in storytelling or argumentation about "those foreigners". This is the case in much White ingroup discourse in Western Europe about migrant workers from Mediterranean countries such as Turkey or North Africa, or about people who carne from the former colonies in the Caribbean, Africa or Asia. Especially from the discourse structures that are less under the speaker's control, such as non-verbal signals, style, conversational features such as pauses, hesitations or repairs, we may thus try to infer the underlying social cognitions of a dominant group.

That such representations are not merely cognitive, but also social and political, may be concluded from the prominent social functions of these cognitions in the maintenance, the legitimation or the explanation of the socio-political status quo. That is, ultimately these social cognitions, as well as the discourse that express, enact and reproduce them, are inherently tied to group dominance and power. This is not only obvious in everyday conversations, among any subgroup or class of the white dominant group, but also, though often more indirectly and subtly, in textbooks and in news media. Here, minority groups are primarily defined as "Them" (vs. "Us"), as having or causing problems, as deviant (hence the special focus on crime or drug abuse among minority groups), and at least as essentially different (hence the special focus on--mostly stereotypical--social or cultural characteristics).

Thus (White, Western) discourse about outgroups in general, and minorities or Third World peoples in particular, may be analyzed within a double cognitive and social perspective. At the more abstract, structural level, such social cognitions are developed, legitimated and reproduced in order to maintain power or to protect ingroup interests and goals. At the more local level of the interaction of everyday talk, there are many different strategies involved in the realization of these overall group goals and interests. Negative stories about "stupid", "clumsy" or "dirty" foreigners, for instance, may contribute to the overall representation of "those people" as being socially inferior or as not belonging here. This attitude may again be used to legitimate the discrimination of minorities in employment, housing, health care or education, to defend harsh restrictions on immigration, or even to send "them" back to their home countries.

At the same time, however, there are norms and values of tolerance. Therefore, dominant group members will usually combine their negative stories or racist generalizations with strategic disclaimers, such as "I am not a racist, but...", "I have nothing against them, but...", "There are also good ones among them, but...". Thus, they engage in the familiar strategy of face keeping and positive self presentation, viz., by attempting to avoid with the listener the possibly damaging impression that the speaker is a racist, prejudiced or intolerant and therefore not a "good" citizen. Hence, overall, prejudiced talk may be characterized by a double strategy of impression formation, namely negative Other-presentation and positive Self-presentation, where Self is not only the individual person or subject, but also the social self, the

member of the dominant group ("Us"). From the overall topics of stories to the most subtle properties of style and conversational management, thus, we witness the expression and the enactment of the overall cognitive and social distinction between Us and Them.

With this socially and politically relevant example of biased discourse, we see that there is a close relationship between the practice and the analysis of social cognition, discourse, social interaction and social structure. At each point in the analysis of such discourse, we find manifestations, signals or enactments of these other dimensions of social life. However, discourse analysis is not merely a powerful method of social analysis. Since such discourse is itself inherently part of the cognitive and social processes involved, it should also be the object of cognitive, socio-cognitive, social and political analyses.

*Media discourse*

The same is true for the media. We have seen that ethnic prejudice and social representations in general are systematically conveyed both through everyday conversation and through various forms of public discourse, especially those in the mass media. In contemporary information societies the role of the media and their discourses has become crucial. Despite the vast amount of work in the field of mass communication, and the increasing interest in the media in other disciplines, we strictly speaking know very little about the very core of mass communication: their discourses.<sup>18</sup> I already suggested that we know more—in the scholarly realm—about poems, drama, novels, stories and everyday conversation than about the myriad kinds of media discourse that have such a tremendous impact on our daily lives.

Whether through the newspaper or through television, news discourse influences the fundamental contents and principles of our knowledge and (other) social representations. True, we may not believe everything we read in the paper, nor do we necessarily feel influenced by the reported speech of our president, but the news nevertheless will influence what we actually think about (even critically), what we find relevant or irrelevant, which people are found prominent or marginal, which events deemed interesting or uninteresting. In sum, news discourse has an impact on social knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, despite the social or political differences of the readers. If it does not always directly influence our opinions, it may



partly determine the principles and strategies of our social information processing, that is the interpretation frameworks we apply in the understanding of social and political events.

Implicitly and in a very complex way, norms and values are conveyed, for instance by the ways individuals, groups, events and actions are described. Similarly, at deeper levels, ideologies are constructed or legitimated through media discourse, both through news reports and through movies or other television programs. The question, then, is: How does this happen?

We see that mass communication research and discourse analysis have important overlapping concerns and common research interests. In my recent work I have tried to contribute to this interdisciplinary research program. A first problem dealt with in that program is rather straightforward and reminds us of early structuralist concerns: What are the structural characteristics of media discourse in general, and of news reports in the press, in particular? What specific genre characteristics may be distinguished, and how are these produced by media workers, or perceived by readers of the press? I have found that, much like stories or scholarly papers, news reports have a schematic superstructure, consisting of a number of conventional categories, such as Summary (Headlines and Lead), Current Events, Circumstances (Actual Context, Previous Events), Backgrounds (History, Structural Context), Consequences, Verbal Reactions, and finally Comments (Evaluation, Prediction). Some of these categories are obligatory for any news report, whereas others are optional.

These categories defining the 'news schema' organize the topical macrostructure of the news report. They are part of the professional competence of journalists, and these may explicitly or implicitly organize their newsgathering activities in such a way that they obtain or manufacture information that will fit these categories. For instance, reporters interview important news actors in order to fill the Verbal Reactions category, or consult historical documents or encyclopedias to fill in the historical Background category. Summaries, that is, both the headline and the lead, are crucial for the processing of complex information, to handle information from many different sources, to provide the main information of the news report first, and to guide reading strategies of the reader (who may only read the headlines).

Besides these conventional news schema categories, which appear to be rather generally adopted in the news media of most cultures and

countries, we must distinguish different strategies for their effective use in the actual news report. Thus, both topical macrostructures and schematic superstructures are not realized linearly in a continuous way. Rather, the structure of news reports is discontinuous, and operates by "installments" of different categories or levels of information. Thus, of each category, we first read the most important (top level) information, then, in a next 'round', the less prominent information, and finally the details. In other words, the overall strategy of news report structuration is one of relevance: Whatever the macrostructural or superstructural organization, the most important or most interesting information will tend to come first.

Obviously, this is a highly subjective strategy, because what may be important for one journalist or newspaper, may not be the case for others, let alone for (all) readers. Thus, news report structure, and not only its contents, may influence the ways readers are presented with a structure of world events. Relevance structures in the press, thus, signal social relevance structures, and at the same time may legitimate and thus reproduce such structures. This brings us back to the important interplay between discourse structures and strategies and those of social representations. If readers have no alternative information, no social representations that may provide the necessary information for counter-argumentation, rejection or resistance, the structures of news reports may have a complex effect on their social cognitions, if only, for instance, in the construction of their models of news events.

News structures are themselves not fully autonomous, however. They are not simply generally accepted, conventional or even consensual genres of public discourse, independent of social, political and ideological forces. On the contrary, they will signal the social position of the journalist, or the institutional and economic conditions of newspapers or other media. News schemata, news topics, news actors and their style of representation or quotation, thus, are all closely related to the means and the strategies of production. Newsgathering routines are closely dependent on available sources, institutional arrangements like press agencies, press releases and press conferences. The selection of relevant news actors depends on their political or social power, on their accessibility or on many other socio-political conditions. Thus, each step in the production of news discourse is a manifestation of the ideological practices in which journalists and newspaper institutions are multiply embedded.

Notice also that news production itself is also largely a form of text processing. Reporters do not usually "go out" into the world to see things "happen". Although this may occasionally be the case for some local events, such as a fire or a demonstration, more often than not the reporter learns about news events through other types of discourse, which we may call "source texts", such as reports in other media, wires from press agencies, fax messages, press releases, press conferences, documents, publications, telephone conversations, interviews, and so on. In fact, the news events themselves are often of a textual nature, such as declarations by the president or prime minister, new laws, debates in parliament or congress, summit talks, letters, or any other form of public discourse of important people, organizations or countries.

This discursive nature of news events and source texts about such events implies that newsmaking is primarily a discursive practice, a form of text management. In each stage of this textual chain, events are coded and recoded, thereby embodying the social cognitions of each writer, speaker or institution. The transformations of input texts show some of these social and cognitive constraints in newsmaking. Thus, summarization not only has the important function of condensing large amounts of information from different or long source texts, but also involves selection, deletion and especially hierarchization: Summaries essentially tell us what is relevant, important or interesting about some event.

The same is true for the complex processes of quotation. Large sections of news reports are about people making declarations, accusations or similar speech acts. The question then is not only who is being quoted, and what will be quoted and what not, but also how such speech acts are reported, which forms of indirect discourse are employed, and what the attitude is of the newspaper or journalist towards such speech. Thus, when minority individuals or organizations accuse the police, an employer or a state institution of racism, the notion of 'racism', when used in the news report at all, will nearly always be placed between quotation marks, or preceded by distance markers such as "supposed" or "alleged". Accusations of the authorities, the police or other institutions of the state or the dominant order, will tend to be reported more often as declarations about 'facts'. They also will get more attention and more space, they will be put in a more prominent position, or otherwise will be textually marked as more

important, more credible and more newsworthy.

We see how societal structures, the position of news institutions within the dominant order, as well as journalistic practices of news-making are intricately interwoven, and that these complex production conditions of news also manifest themselves in textual structures of news reports. Thus, headlines, leads, topical structures, schematic organization, quotation patterns, style, rhetorical operations, actor description, evaluations, and many other features of news reports--sometimes subtly--contribute to the reproduction of power in society.

Obviously, this reproduction process is not limited to news institutions, journalists and news reports, but eventually also affects the readers or the viewers. Our insights into the processes of text comprehension and representation now allow us to make news understanding by the public more explicit. We now know somewhat more about the links between text structure and its comprehension, on the one hand, and the construction of models of the situation and the application of knowledge and other social cognitions, on the other hand. It was suggested above that this influence is seldom direct: Opinions expressed or implied by news reports or background features are not necessarily adopted by all readers. In fact, some readers may use the same information to support the development of their own counter-opinions and counter-ideologies. However, we also know that such reactions are exceptional, and that the majority of the readers, lacking alternative information, for instance from other sources, are not in a position to develop alternative interpretation frameworks. Differences of opinion, and some dissent may well be possible within the boundaries of a broad consensus, and some news media, especially those of the opposition (if any), may organize some of this dissent within the consensus. Fundamental challenges, however, are rare, and news discourse in many ways therefore marks precisely the boundaries of this consensus in the interpretation and evaluation framework of world events. In other words, we may say that the influence of news discourse is of a structural nature: Besides the important contents of our knowledge and attitudes, it especially influences the overall structures, the relevance hierarchies, and the evaluation procedures of social cognition, as well as the terms of public argumentation and debate based on these cognitions.

*Power, discourse and ideology*

As this summary of recent developments in discourse analysis in the last decade shows, it is a new discipline moving slowly towards becoming a full-fledged interdisciplinary, socially-oriented scholarly practice. The classical core of discourse analysis, viz., structural analyses of linguistic, stylistic, rhetorical or pragmatic properties of texts and speech, has been advanced by various methods of formal or empirical analysis. Genres such as everyday conversation, institutional dialogues, as well as stories, have received extensive and detailed attention during the last decade. The insights gained in these studies are of immense value for the further analysis of other genres of discourse, such as news reports in the press, or courtroom or legislative dialogue. Such descriptive efforts remain as one of the central tasks of discourse analysis in the narrow sense.

On the other hand, discourse analysis has witnessed an impressive extension of its domain into areas that were traditionally studied by other disciplines, such as law, history, mass communication and, in particular, sociology, psychology and ethnography. We have seen how the cognitive psychology of text processing has made significant contributions to our insight into the empirical processes of understanding and interpretation. We now know more or less how discourses and their structures are related to strategic processes of analysis, textual representations, situational models, and scripts. Social cognition research is now beginning to show how both discourse and cognitive representations are tied to language users' group membership, as well as to more structural features of society. This is seen most clearly in the production processes, the structures and the reception of media messages.

Theoretical developments in discourse analysis have finally reached a point where the critical analyses of language and discourse may be considered to have a solid foundation.<sup>19</sup> Socio-political studies of language use are not new, but they have seldom influenced the dominant core of linguistics and discourse analysis. There are obvious political reasons for the lack of impact of critical studies in this field: Most scholars, including those in the studies of language and communication, are members of a power elite. They belong to the (Western, white, male) groups that dominate these disciplines. The rare political and ideological challenges have so far come from some of the most

**140 Teun A. van Dijk JILS/CIEL 1(1989)**

conspicuous dominated groups, as is the case, for instance, in feminist contributions to linguistics and discourse analysis. The same is true, especially in the social sciences, for ethnic minority groups and contributions from Third World scholars, who plead for a fundamentally different perspective in scholarly analysis. My own work on the reproduction of racism in Western societies is intended as a contribution to this form of scholarly practice understood as a form of socio-political action.

I suggest that with its extension towards social cognition and the social and political sciences in general, discourse analysis has finally reached a point in its development where it may begin to make serious contributions to the analysis of complex social structures, conflicts and problems, e.g., those of power, dominance, inequality, exploitation and oppression of many sorts. Note that the structural analysis of news or conversations does not itself provide the necessary linkage between textual structures and these (macro-)social relationships and

and social interaction, to show how power structures can be related to social representations of people and groups involved in such power relationships, and how such representations in turn may be expressed, signalled, enacted or otherwise manifested in discourse and (other forms of) interaction. Group interests and goals, thus, may be translated into the relevant hierarchies in social representations about their own (in-)group and the threatening (out-)groups, and in the management of systems of norms and values that underpin fundamental notions of social representations. These socio-cognitive structures will necessarily show up in text and speech, simply because it is through discourse that they are shared and legitimated throughout the group.

The crucial notion linking these discursive and socio-cognitive practices as social practices within a societal configuration is *ideology*. After the many studies of ideology in the social sciences, a more explicit theory of the links between discourse, social cognition and social structures finally allows us to make the rather vague or ambiguous notion of ideology more explicit or more transparent. Thus, in my recent work on the links between discourse and power, I have tried to show how ideology can be conceptualized as the basic framework underlying the social cognitions of a social group. Such an ideology monitors not only the preferred contents of knowledge and attitudes, but also establishes (cognitive and social) coherence between differ-

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## New Developments in Discourse Analysis (1978-1988)

ent attitudes and goals. Ideologies similarly control the fundamental strategies for the defense, legitimation, and enactment of social attitudes in speech, text and action. They provide the general interpretive frameworks for social and political events in the everyday lives of people, and thus define the consensos upon which communication and interaction of (in-)group members is based. They are, in other words, the socio-cognitive translation of the goals and interests of the group. Discourse analysis is now able to make systematic and relatively explicit studies of these ideological frameworks, as well as of their contents and strategies. That is, we no longer simply 'read' an ideological text by superficially and directly relating its properties to group interests, to a dominant elite or a power relationship. These relationships are much more complex, more variable (also among individuals of a group), and more indirect, involving intricate cognitive processes of understanding, model structures, knowledge scripts, attitude schemata, and other forms of social cognition. The complexity of these relationships explains why there is no (full) determinism, but rather unstable boundaries of autonomy and variation, and why ideologies may appear to be forms of "false consciousness". On the other hand, this approach also shows how the discourse and other social practices of group members tend to be constrained by shared social cognitions that seem to subject social members to the ideological coordinates of their social position.

The interdisciplinary and critical analysis of the relationships between the structures and strategies of discourse, social cognition, interaction and societal relationships will be a major task for discourse analysis in the next decade. Only then will the new discipline, in my view, become a mature form of scholarly practice, that is, a practice that allows **us** to critically examine some of the social problems mentioned above, and to contribute to the development of alternative ideologies and practices that define effective resistance.

### NOTES

• A Spanish version of this article will be published as a new chapter in my book *Estructuras y funciones del discurso* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1980), 6th edition (1989).

1. For details about the field and advances of discourse analysis, the

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## 142 Teun A. van Dijk JILS/CIEL 1(1989)

reader is referred to this Handbook (van Dijk, 1985a). Other introductions to discourse analysis that have appeared during the last decade include, among others: de Beaugrande (1980); de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981); Brown & Yule (1983); Stubbs (1983); van Dijk (1983).

2. Besides the studies mentioned in note 1, grammatical analyses of discourse have been published in numerous books, such as Benson & Greaves (1985); Fox (1987); Givón (1979, 1983); Polanyi (1989); Tannen (1981); Tomlin (1987).

3. See Downes (1984) and Lavandera (1984) among many other publications in sociolinguistics.

4. See Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983).

5. Among the many current publications on conversational analysis, see Atkinson & Heritage (1984); Coulthard & Montgomery (1981); McLaughlin (1984) and van Dijk (1985a, vol3).

6. Several books have been published on the cognitive psychology of text processing, e.g.: Flammer & Kintsch (1982); Graesser (1981); Sanford & Garrod (1981); van Dijk & Kintsch (1983).

7. See e.g., Mandl, Stein & Trabasso (1984); Kieras & Just (1984).

8. Until now, only one book has been published on the social psychology of discourse: Potter & Wetherell (1987). See also the references given below.

9. See Gumperz (1982a, 1982b) and Saviile-Troike (1982)

10. See especially the work by Pierre Bourdieu, e.g., Bourdieu, 1982, 1987.

11. Most work in this area is devoted to language and politics. See e.g., Shapiro (1984) and Geis (1987). For more specific studies, e.g., of power and discourse, see below.

12. See Haslett (1987) and some of the contributions to Berger & Chaffee (1987).

13. See Atkinson & Drew (1979) and the triple issue of *TEXT* edited by Danet (1984).

14. For details of the theories summarized in this section, see van Dijk & Kintsch (1983) and further references given there. For more recent studies, consult the *Journal for Memory and Language*.

15. See also the book by Johnson-Laird (1983), who has been the first to discuss the notion of models in psycholinguistics.

16. For an excellent introduction to this new area of social cognition, see Fiske & Taylor (1985). See also the contributions in Wyer & Srull (1985).

17. See van Dijk (1984, 1987). An extensive study (in English) on racism and the press (a modest Dutch book was published in 1983) is in preparation. See also Smitherman-Donaldson & van Dijk (1988).

18. For my recent studies on media discourse, see van Dijk (1985b, 1988a, 1988b).

19. Critical, political or ideological studies of discourse are being done in several research directions. See e.g., Chilton (1985); Fowler, Hodge, Kress &



Trew (1979); Kramarae, Schulz & O'Barr (1984); Kress & Hodge (1979); Mey (1985); Seidel (1988). See also the important work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, founded by Stuart Hall. Work from this center combines linguistic, feminist, and generally socio-cultural analyses, especially of the media, with a systematic critical study of ideologies. See e.g. Hall, et al. (1980).

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