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# Structures of Discourse and Structures of Power

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This chapter examines some of the relationships between discourse and social power. After a brief theoretical analysis of these relationships, we review some of the recent work in this new area of research. Although we draw upon studies of power in several disciplines, our major perspective is found in the ways power is enacted, expressed, described, concealed, or legitimated by text and talk in the social context. We pay special attention to the role of ideology, but unlike most studies in sociology and political science, we formulate this ideological link in terms of a theory of social cognition. This formulation enables us to build the indispensable theoretical bridge between societal power of classes, groups, or institutions at the macro level of analysis and the enactment of power in interaction and discourse at the social micro level. Thus our review of other work in this field focuses on the impact of specific power structures on various discourse genres and their characteristic structures.

**T**HE discourse analytical theory that forms the background of this study presupposes, but also extends, my earlier work on discourse (e.g., van Dijk, 1977, 1980, 1981; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983), as well as other approaches of current discourse analysis (see the contributions in van Dijk, 1985a). That is, continuing my recent work on news discourse, and on racism in discourse, which will briefly be reviewed here, this chapter shows a more social approach to discourse, and bears witness to a more general development toward a critical study of text and talk in the social context.

Our discourse analytical framework and the obvious space limitations of a single chapter impose a number of restrictions. First, we presuppose but do

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not discuss or review current work on the more general relationships between power and language, which has been the focus of several recent studies (Kramarae, Shulz, & O'Barr, 1984; Mey, 1985). Our discussion focuses on discourse as a specific "textual" form of language use in the social context and only some of the sociolinguistic work that deals with the role of dominance or power in language variation and style (Scherer & Giles, 1979). Second, we must ignore much of the related field of the study of power in interpersonal communication, a field that has been aptly reviewed already by Berger (1985) (see also Seibold, Cantrill, & Meyers, 1985) as we are interested in social or societal power rather than in personal power. Third, we must regrettably limit ourselves to the role of power in "Western" cultures. Therefore, we neglect the insights into the role of power in other cultures obtained in some work in the ethnography of speaking (Bauman & Scherzer, 1974; Saville-Troike, 1982), or in the current work on intercultural communication. Fourth, feminist studies on male dominance and power in language have already been discussed (see the extensive bibliography of Kramarae, Thome, & Henley, 1983), therefore, we limit ourselves to a brief review of research focusing on gender power and discourse. To further constrain the size of our review, few references will be made to the many interesting studies on the relationships between language, discourse, power, and ideology in several European and Latin American countries.

#### THE ANALYSIS OF POWER

The analysis of power in several disciplines has created an extensive literature. Some recent work includes studies by Dahl (1957, 1961), Debnam (1984), Galbraith (1985), Lukes (1974, 1986), Milliband (1983), Mills (1956), Therborn (1980), White (1976), and Wrong (1979), among many others. Most of this work is carried out within the boundaries of sociology and political science. It cannot be our task in this chapter to review or summarize this rich tradition. Therefore, we select a number of major properties of social power and reconstruct those within our own theoretical framework. It should be understood, however, that in our opinion the complex notion of power cannot simply be accounted for in a single definition. A full-fledged, interdisciplinary theory is necessary to capture its most important implications and applications. The properties of power that are relevant for our discussion may be summarized as follows:

(1) Social power is a property of the relationship between groups, classes, or other social formations, or between persons as social members. Although we may speak of personal forms of power, this individual power is less relevant for our systematic account of the role of power in discourse as social interaction.

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(2) At an elementary but fundamental level of analysis, social power relationships are characteristically manifested in interaction. Thus we say that group A (or its members) has power over group B (or its members) when the real or potential actions of A exercise social control over B. Since the notion of action itself involves the notion of (cognitive) control by agents, the social control over B by the actions of A induces a limitation of the self-control of B. In other words, the exercise of power by A results in the limitation of B's social freedom of action.

(3) Except in the case of bodily force, power of A over B's actual or possible actions presupposes that A must have control over the cognitive conditions of actions of B, such as desires, wishes, plans, and beliefs. For whatever reasons, B may accept or agree to do as A wishes, or to follow the law, rules, or consensus to act in agreement with (the interests of) A. In other words, social power is usually indirect and operates through the "minds" of people, for instance by managing the necessary information or opinions they need to plan and execute their actions. Most forms of social power in our society imply this kind of "mental control," typically exercised through persuasion or other forms of discursive communication, or resulting from fear of sanctions by A in case of noncompliance by B with A's wishes. It is at this point that our analysis of the role of discourse in the exercise, maintenance, or legitimation of power becomes relevant. Note, however, that this "mental mediation" of power also leaves room for variable degrees of freedom and resistance of those who are subjected to the exercise of power.

(4) A's power needs a basis, that is, resources that socially enable the exercise of power, or the application of sanctions in case of noncompliance. These resources usually consist of socially valued, but unequally distributed attributes or possessions, such as wealth, position, rank, status, authority, knowledge, expertise, or privileges, or even mere membership in a dominant or majority group. Power is a form of social control if its basis consists of socially relevant resources. Generally, power is intentionally or unwittingly exercised by A in order to maintain or enlarge this power basis of A, or to prevent B from acquiring it. In other words, the exercise of power by A is usually in A's interest.

(5) Crucial in the exercise or the maintenance of power is the fact that for A to exert mental control over B, B must know about A's wishes, wants, preferences, or intentions. Apart from direct communication, for instance in speech acts such as commands, request, or threats, this knowledge may be inferred from cultural beliefs, norms, or values; through a shared (or contested) consensus within an ideological framework; or from the observation and interpretation of A's social actions.

(6) Total social control in contemporary Western societies is further limited by the field and the scope of power of power agents. That is, power agents may be powerful in only one social domain—politics, the economy, or education—or in specific social situations as in the classroom or in court. Similarly, the

scope of their actions may be limited to a few people or extend to a whole class or group of people or to specific actions. And finally, the powerful may be assigned special responsibilities in their exercise of power. Besides this form of power distribution, which also involves various forms of power sharing, there is the important dimension of resistance: Dominated groups and their members are seldom completely powerless. Under specific socioeconomic, historical, or cultural conditions, such groups may engage in various forms of resistance, that is, in the enactment of counterpower, which in turn may make the powerful less powerful, or even vulnerable, typically so in revolutions. Therefore, the enactment of power is not simply a form of a action, but a form of social interaction.

(7) The exercise and maintenance of social power presupposes an ideological framework. This framework, which consists of socially shared, interest-related fundamental cognitions of a group and its members, is mainly acquired, confirmed, or changed through communication and discourse.

(8) It should be repeated that power must be analyzed in relation to various forms of counterpower or resistance by dominated groups (or by action groups that represent such groups), which also is a condition for the analysis of social and historical challenge and change.

#### DISCOURSE CONTROL AND THE MODES OF DISCURSIVE REPRODUCTION

One important condition for the exercise of social control through discourse is the control of discourse and discourse production itself. Therefore, the central questions are: Who can say or write what to whom in what situations? Who has access to the various forms or genres of discourse or to the means of its reproduction? The less powerful people are, the less they have access to various forms of text or talk. Ultimately, the powerless have literally "nothing to say," nobody to talk to, or must remain silent when more powerful people are speaking, as is the case for children, prisoners, defendants, and (in some cultures, including sometimes our own) women. In everyday life, most people have active access as speakers only to conversation with family members, friends, or colleagues on the job. Occasionally, in more formal dialogues, they may speak to institutional representatives, or with job superiors, but in that case they have a more passive and reactive role. At the police station, in the courtroom, at the welfare agency, in the classroom, or in other institutions of the social bureaucracy, they are expected to speak, or to give information, only when requested or ordered to do so. For most formal, public, or printed discourse types (including those of the mass media) the less powerful are usually only recipients.

More powerful groups and their members control or have access to an increasingly wide and varied range of discourse roles, genres, occasions, and

styles. They control formal dialogues with subordinates, chair meetings, issue commands or laws, write (or have written) many types of reports, books, instructions, stories, or various mass media discourses.. They are not only active speakers in most situations, but they may take the initiative in verbal encounters or public discourses, set the "tone" or style of text or talk, determine its topics, and decide who will be participant or recipient of their discourses. It is important to stress that power not only shows "in" or "through" discourse, but is relevant as a societal force "behind" discourse. At this point, the relation between discourse and power is close, and a rather direct manifestation of the power of class, group, or institution, and of the relative position or status of their members (Bernstein, 1971-1975; Mueller, 1973; Schatzman & Strauss, 1972).

Power is directly exercised and expressed through differential access to various genres, contents, and styles of discourse. This control may be analyzed more systematically in terms of the forms of (re)production of discourse, namely, those of material production, articulation, distribution, and influence. Thus mass media organizations and their (often international) corporate owners control both the financial and the technological production conditions of discourse, for instance those of the newspaper, television, printing business, as well as the telecommunication and computer industries (Becker, Hedebro, & Paldán, 1986; Mattelart, 1979; Schiller, 1973). Through selective investments, budget control, hiring (and firing), and sometimes through direct editorial influence or directives, they may also partly control the contents or at least the latitude of consensus and dissent of most forms of public discourse. For the privately operated media that depend on advertising, this indirect control may also be exercised by large corporate clients and even by prominent (mostly institutional) news actors that regularly supply information on which the media depend. These same power groups also control the various modes of distribution, especially of mass media discourse, and therefore also partly control the modes of influence of public text and talk.

The production mode of articulation is controlled by what may be called the "symbolic elites," such as journalists, writers, artists, directors, academics, and other groups that exercise power on the basis of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). They have relative freedom, and hence relative power, in deciding about the discourse genres within their domain of power and determine topics, style, or presentation of discourse. This symbolic power is not limited to articulation per se, but also extends to the mode of influence: They may set the agendas of public discussion, influence topical relevance, manage the amount and type of information, especially who is being publicly portrayed and in what way. They are the manufacturers of public knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, norms, values, morals, and ideologies. Hence their symbolic power is also a form of ideological power. Despite the problems with the notion of "elite" (Domhoff & Ballard, 1968), we maintain this term to denote an extended concept

(contrasted with Milis, 1956, for example) involving exclusive social control by a small group. That is, we claim that besides the political, military, and economic elites, the symbolic elites play an essential role in the ideological supporting framework for the exercise or maintenance of power in our modern, information and communication societies.

Because, however, most of these elites are managed by the state or private corporations, they too have constraints on their freedom of articulation that emerge in various properties of their discourse. The voice of the elite is often the voice of the corporate or institutional master. The interests and ideologies of the elites are usually not fundamentally different from those who pay or support them. Only a few groups (e.g., novelists and some academics) have the possibility to exercise counterpower, which still must be expressed within the constraints of publication. The dependence of the elite is typically ideologically concealed by various professional norms, values, or codes, for instance, by the widespread belief in "freedom of expression" in the mass media (Altheide, 1985; Boyd-Barrett & Braham, 1987; Davis & Walton, 1983; Downing, 1980; Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979; Golding & Murdock, 1979; Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 1980).

#### STRATEGIES OF COGNITIVE CONTROL AND IDEOLOGICAL REPRODUCTION

If most forms of discursive power in our society are of the persuasive type as claimed earlier, then, despite the essential and often ultimate control of the modes of production and distribution (especially for mass mediated discourse) the decisive influence on the "minds" of the people is symbolically rather than economically controlled. Similarly, recognizing the control expressed over the less powerful in the socioeconomic domain (money, jobs, welfare), a major component in the exercise and maintenance of power is ideological, and is based on various types of acceptance, negotiation, and challenge, and consensus. It is, therefore, crucial to analyze the strategic role of discourse and its agents (speakers, writers, editors, and so on) in the reproduction of this form of sociocultural hegemony. Given that the symbolic elites have major control over this mode of influence through the genres, topics, argumentation, style, rhetoric, or presentation of public text and talk, their symbolic power is considerable, albeit exercised within a set of constraints.

#### A New Approach to Ideology

Because the notion of ideology is crucial for our argument about the role of discourse in the enactment or legitimation of power, it deserves a few remarks, although it is impossible even to summarize the classical proposals and the current discussions on the subject (see Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1980; Barrett, Corrigan, Kuhn, & Wolf, 1979; Brown, 1973; Centre for Con-

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temporary Cultural Studies [CCCS], 1978; Donald & Hall, 1986; Kinloch, 1981; Manning, 1980). Despite the variety of approaches to the concept of ideology, it is generally assumed that the term refers to group or class "consciousness," whether or not explicitly elaborated in an ideological system, which underlies the socioeconomic, political, and cultural practices of group members in such a way that their (group or class) interests are (in principle, optimally) realized. Both the ideology itself and the ideological practices derived from it are often acquired, enacted, or organized through various institutions, such as the state, the media, education, or the church, as well as in informal institutions such as the family. Classical Marxist analyses suggest, more specifically, that the dominant ideology in a given period is usually the ideology of those who control the means of ideological reproduction, namely, the ruling class. This may imply that certain dominated groups or classes may develop biased conceptions of their socioeconomic position ("false consciousness"), which in turn may lead them to act against their own basic interests. Conversely, the dominant groups or classes tend to conceal their ideology (and hence their interests), and will aim to get their ideology generally accepted as a "general" or "natural" system of values, norms, and goals. In that case, ideological reproduction assumes the nature of consensus formation, and the power derived from it takes on a hegemonic form.

Ignoring many details and complexities, our analysis of ideology takes a somewhat different and more specific direction than traditionally crafted (see also van Dijk, 1987). Although there are undeniably social practices and institutions that play an important role in the expression, enactment, or reproduction of ideology, we first assume that ideology "itself" is not the same as these practices and institutions. Rather, we assume that ideology is a form of social cognition, shared by the members of a group, class, or other social formation (see, for example, Fiske & Taylor, 1984, for a more general introduction to the study of social cognition). This assumption does not mean that ideology is simply a set of beliefs or attitudes. Their sociocognitive nature is more elemental. An ideology according to this analysis is a complex cognitive framework that controls the formation, transformation, and application of other social cognitions, such as knowledge, opinions, and attitudes, and social representations, including social prejudices. This ideological framework itself consists of socially relevant norms, values, goals, and principles, which are selected, combined, and applied in such a way that they favor perception, interpretation, and action in social practices that are in the overall interest of the group. In this way, an ideology assigns coherence among social attitudes, which in turn codetermine social practices. It should be stressed that ideological social cognitions are not systems of individual beliefs or opinions, but essentially those of members of social formations or institutions. Similarly, according to this analysis, we do not use terms such as "false" in order to denote specific "biased" ideologies. All ideologies (including scientific ones) embody an interest-dependent (re)construction of

social reality. (One appropriate criterion for the evaluation of such a construction would be its relevance or effectiveness for the social practices of social formations and their members in the realization of their goals or interests.)

The acquisition of an ideology, however, is not just guided by the "objective interests" of each group or class; although on many occasions, and historically, these interests may eventually override other conditions of ideological (re)production. Therefore, discourse and communication, we suggested, play a central role in the (trans)formation of ideology. In that perspective, it is indeed crucial to examine who, and by what processes, controls the means or institutions of ideological (re)production, such as the media or education. Although the formation of the fundamental sociocognitive framework of ideology is a very complex process, it at least needs a basis of (true or false) beliefs. This chapter tries to show that discourse, and in particular discourse of powerful institutions and groups, is the essential social practice that mediates and manages these beliefs (Roloff & Berger, 1982). Contrary to most approaches to ideology in the social and political sciences, we aim at a more systematic sociocognitive analysis of ideological frameworks, and of the processes involved in their (trans)formation and application. This goal means that ideologies need to be spelled out in detail, and that it should be shown how such group cognitions influence social constructions of reality, social practices, and hence, the (trans)formation of societal structures. Similarly, we need an explicit analysis of the structures, strategies, and processes of discourse and its specific role in the reproduction of ideologies. In other words, much classical work on ideology derives from typical macroanalyses of society to the neglect of the actual structures and processes at the micro level of the operation of ideology. This global and superficial approach also prevents the establishment of the link between societal or group ideologies (and the power structures they determine, conceal, or legitimate) with concrete social practices of intra- or intergroup interaction, including the precise role of discourse in ideological (trans)formations.

#### Discourse and Ideological Reproduction

To form and change their minds, people make use of a multitude of discourses, including interpersonal ones, and of the information derived from them. Note, however, that the complexity of text processing and of attitude formation, of course, does not allow immediate transformations of public beliefs and opinions, let alone of highly organized attitudes and ideologies (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Roloff & Miller, 1980; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). And yet, it is the symbolic elite and its discourses that control the types of discourses, the topics, the types and the amount of information, the selection or censoring of arguments, and the nature of rhetorical operations. These conditions essentially determine the contents and the organization of public knowledge, the hierarchies of beliefs, and the pervasiveness of the consensus,



which in turn are potent factors in the formation and the reproduction of opinions, attitudes, and ideologies (Burton & Carlen, 1979).

In the news media, this strategic control of knowledge is exercised through restricted topic selection, and more generally by specific reconstructions of social and political realities (Hall et al., 1980; Tuchman, 1978; van Dijk, 1987b, 1987c). This process is itself governed by a system of news values and professional ideologies about news and newsworthiness, which happen to favor attention for and the interests of various elite actors, persons, groups, classes, institutions, nations, or world regions (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Preferential access and coverage (whether positive or negative) of news actors is one factor in the mass mediated reproduction of social power (Brown, Bybee, Wearden, & Murdock, 1982). The same is true in education, where the curriculum, textbooks, educational materials, and lessons are also governed by educational objectives, subjects, topics, and learning strategies that mostly happen to be consistent with the values or interests of the various power elite groups (Apple, 1979; Lorimer, 1984; Young, 1971). Therefore, we see that the symbolic elites that control the style and content of media and educational discourse are also those who have partial control of the mode of influence, and hence of ideological reproduction in society.

The symbolic elites, we suggested, are not independent of other, mostly economic and political, power groups (Bagdikian, 1983). There may be conflict and contradiction between the interests and, therefore, the ideologies of these respective power groups. These other power groups not only have direct or indirect means to control symbolic production, they have their own strategies for the manufacture of opinion. For the media, these strategies consist in the institutional or organizational supply of (favorable) information in press releases, press conferences, interviews, leaks, or other forms of preferred access to newsmakers. Journalistic routines are such that these preformulations are more likely to be reproduced than other forms of source discourse (Collins, Curran, Garnham, Scannell, Schlesinger, & Sparks, 1986; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978; van Dijk, 1987b).

In education, the overall constraint of avoiding "controversial" issues censors most radical social and political views that are inconsistent with dominant sociopolitical ideologies. More concretely, state organizations or corporations may supply *free* educational materials, advertise in educational journals, and have other ways to influence teachers and textbook content (Domhoff, 1983).

Similarly, the power elites also have the access to measures to control dissent and resistance, for example, through selective hiring and funding, by subtle or more overt censorship, through defamation campaigns, and by other means to silence "radicals" and their media (Domhoff, 1983; Downing, 1984; Gamble, 1986). Thus in many western countries it is sufficient to be branded as a "communist," or as an opponent of our type of "freedom," or of similar dominant values, in order to be disqualified as a serious formulator of

counterideologies. This is a potent strategy to keep the symbolic elite itself under control, both internally and externally. In other words, there is a broad array of economic, cultural, and symbolic strategies through which the various power groups may concurrently, though sometimes not without mutual conflict and contradiction, manage knowledge and information, convey dominant goals and values, and thereby provide the building blocks of dominant ideologies. The consensus-shaping power of these ideologies provides the conditions that make a "conspiracy" of these power groups unnecessary.

### THE ANALYSIS OF POWER AND DISCOURSE

Within this very general framework of social power and the control of discourse, we may now focus more specifically on the many ways discourse is related to this form of social control.

#### Discourse Genres and Power

We begin our analysis with a typology of the ways power is enacted by discourse as a form of social interaction:

(1) Direct control of action is achieved through discourses that have directive pragmatic function (elocutionary force), such as commands, threats, laws, regulations, instructions, and more indirectly by recommendations and advice. Speakers often have an institutional role, and their discourses are often backed by institutional power. Compliance in this case is often obtained by legal or other institutional sanctions.

(2) Persuasive discourse types, such as advertisements and propaganda, also aim at influencing future actions of recipients. Their power is based on economic, financial, or, in general, corporate or institutional resources, and exercised through access to the mass media and to widespread public attention. Compliance in this case is manufactured by rhetorical means, for example, by repetition and argumentation, but of course backed up by the usual mechanisms of market control.

(3) Beyond these prescriptive discourse forms, future actions may also be influenced by descriptions of future or possible events, actions, or situations; for instance, in predictions, plans, scenarios, programs, and warnings, sometimes combined with different forms of advice. The power groups involved here are usually professionals ("experts"), and their power basis often the control of knowledge and technology (Pettigrew, 1972). The rhetorical means often consist of argumentation and the description of undesired alternative courses of action. More implicitly, scholarly reports about social or economic developments may thus influence future action.

(4) Various types of sometimes widespread and, hence, possibly influential narrative, such as novels or movies, may describe the (un)desirability of future

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actions, and may have recourse to a rhetoric of dramatic or emotional appeals, or to various forms of topical or stylistic originality. The power groups involved here form what we called the symbolic elites. A specific case of this class of discourses is news reports in the media, which not only describe current events and their possible consequences, but which essentially portray the actions, and represent the opinions of the political, economic, military, and social power elites. It is mainly in this way that the consensual basis of power is manufactured, and how the general public gets to know who has power and what the powerful want. This is a crucial condition for the development of the supporting ideological framework of power, but also for various forms of resistance ("know thine enemies").

This first typology shows that the discursive enactment of power is mostly persuasive. Powerful groups or institutions only rarely have to prescribe what the less powerful should do, although ultimately such directives may be decisive in controlling others, as is especially the case in state control. Rather, they argue by providing economic, political, social, or moral reasons, and by managing the control of relevant information. In this way, communication may be biased through selective release of information that is favorable to the power elites, or by constraining information that is unfavorable to them. The realization of these goals may be facilitated by various rhetorical or artistic means.

#### Levels of Discourse and Power

A second dimension goes beyond this simple typology of discourse genres and their contributions to social control. It features the various levels of discourse that may specifically enact, manifest, express, describe, signal, conceal, or legitimate power relations between discourse participants or the groups they belong to.

Thus as we have seen earlier, power may first be enacted at the pragmatic level through limited access, or by the control of speech acts, such as commands, formal accusations, indictments, acquittals, or other institutional speech acts. Second, in conversational interaction, one partner may control or dominate turn allocation, self-presentation strategies, and the control of any other level of spontaneous talk or formal dialogue. Third, selection of discourse type or genre may be controlled by more powerful speakers, for instance in the classroom, courtroom, or within the corporation: Sometimes stories of personal experiences are allowed, but more often than not, they tend to be censored in favor of the controlled discourse genres of the business at hand, for instance interrogations. Fourth, outside of everyday conversation, topics are mostly controlled by the rules of the communicative situation, but their initiation, change, or variation are usually controlled or evaluated by the more powerful speaker. The same is true for style and rhetoric.

### Dimensions of Power

The analysis of power structures allows us to list other relevant categories, namely, those dimensions of power that may have an impact on discourse and its structures: The various institutions of power, the internal power structures of these institutions, power relations between different social groups, and the scope or domain of the exercise of power by (members of) these institutions or groups. Without a further analysis of these structures and dimensions of social power, we simply argue here that they are also manifested in the various structures of "powerful" text and talk.

In this list we first find the major power institutions, such as the government, parliament, state agencies, the judiciary, the military, big corporations, the political parties, the media, the unions, the churches, and the institutions of education. Each of these institutions may be associated with its specific discourse genres, communicative events, topics, styles, and rhetorics. Second, there is the usual hierarchy of position, rank, or status within these institutions and these imply different speech acts, genres, or styles, for example, those signaling authority and command.

Third, parallel and sometimes combined with the institutions, we have, group power relations, such as those between the rich and the poor, men and women, adults and children, white and black, nationals and foreigners, the highly educated and those who have little education, heterosexuals and homosexuals, believers and nonbelievers, the moderates and the radicals, the healthy and the sick, the famous and the unknown, and generally those between *Us* and *Them*. Both within institutional and in everyday, informal interaction, these power relations may be structurally enacted by the members of the respective dominant groups. As is the case for institutional members, members of dominant groups may derive their individually exercised power from the overall power of the group they belong to. The effect on discourse in these cases will be especially obvious in the unbalanced control of dialogue, turn taking, speech acts, topic choice, and style.

Fourth, the enactment of power may be analyzed as to its domain of action or scope and type of influence. Some institutions or their leading members may accomplish discursive acts that affect whole nations, states, cities, or large organizations, or they may affect life and death, health, personal freedom, employment, education, or the private lives of other people, whereas other institutions or their members have a less broad and a less serious impact on other people.

Finally, we may distinguish between the various kinds of legitimacy for these forms of social control, which may vary between total control imposed or maintained by force (as in a dictatorship, and in some domains also in a democratic system of government), on the one hand, and partial control sanctioned by an elite, by a majority, or on the other hand, by a more or less

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general consensus. These (gradual) differences reflect the possible sanctions of the powerful, as well as the acceptance or resistance of those subjected to the enactment of power.

These differences in the modes of legitimation are also manifest in different genres, topics, and styles of discourse. Discussion, argumentation, and debate, for example, are not characteristic of dictatorial discourse. Hence the importance of the amount and nature of discursive legitimation in these different sorts of power systems. It may be expected that each political system, viewed as an institutionalization of power, for instance by the state, is associated with its own characteristic orders or modes of discourse. Since the principles (norms, rules, values, goals) of legitimacy are embedded in an ideology, the processes of legitimation will also appear as discursive processes.

#### Different Approaches

With these various dimensions of power in mind, we should be able to make the next step and establish systematic links between these dimensions and the various structural dimensions of discourse. However, this may be done in different ways and from different, complementary perspectives. Thus the social scientist may start with an analysis of the dimensions of social power just mentioned and then examine through what discourses or discursive properties these power structures are expressed, enacted, or legitimated. This (macro) approach favors a more general and integrated analysis of various discourse genres and properties related to a class, institution, or group (for instance, the discourse of the legal system, or the patriarchal power of men over women). On the other hand, the sociolinguist will usually start with an analysis of specific properties of language use or discourse, and try to show how these may vary, or depend on, different social positions, relations, or dimensions, for example, those of class, gender, ethnic group, or situation. This perspective will usually pay more detailed attention to linguistic properties of text and talk, and take a more general view of the various social "circumstances" of such properties.

We opt for an approach that combines the advantages of these two alternatives, namely the analysis of discursive (sub)genres and communicative events in social situations (Brown & Fraser, 1979). Such a "situation analysis" requires an integration of both discourse analysis and social analysis. Through an interdisciplinary study of everyday conversations, classroom dialogues, job interviews, service encounters, doctors' consultations, court trials, boardroom meetings, parliamentary debates, news reporting, advertising, or lawmaking, among many other communicative events, we are able to assess both the relevant discourse structures and the relevant structures of dominance and control in the social context. That is, understanding these communicative genres requires an analysis of participant representation, interactional strategies, turn allocation, topic and code selection, stylistic registers, rhetorical operations, and also an analysis of the roles, relations,

rules, norms, or other social constraints that govern the interaction of participants as social group members. In this way, we capture both the properties and processes of text and talk, and the micromechanisms of social interaction and societal structure. Also, this level and scope of analysis allows a sociocognitive assessment of knowledge, opinions, attitudes, ideologies, and other social representations that exercise the cognitive control of acting agents in such situations. Finally, these social microstructures (e.g., the lesson) may in turn be related (e.g., by comparison or generalization) to relevant social macrostructures, such as institutions (e.g., the school, the education system, and their ideologies) and overall social relations (e.g., the dominance of whites over blacks) (Knorr-Cetina & Cicourel, 1981).

#### POWER IN DISCOURSE: A REVIEW

In the previous sections, I have given a brief theoretical analysis of the notion of power and its links with discourse and communication. We have witnessed how the powerful have recourse to many strategies that allow them to control the material and symbolic production of text and talk, and, therefore, part of the cognitive processes that underlie the cognitive management and the manufacturing of consent from the less powerful. On several occasions, this discussion has mentioned some properties of discourse that are specifically affected by this process of (re)productive control, for instance, conversational turn taking, topics, and style. In the remainder of this chapter, we analyze in more detail how power is actually expressed, signaled, reproduced, or legitimated in various structures of text and talk. Whereas the previous sections focused on various social strategies of discourse and communication control, we will now systematically examine the discursive strategies that implement such (inter)actions, and briefly review empirical studies that show power "at work" in text and talk. We will organize our discussion around a few selected discourse types, namely, subgenres or communicative events, that also embody typical social relations, including specific power relations. In this discussion, a reinterpretation of research will sometimes be necessary, for instance, when the notion of power is not used as such. We begin with various sorts of spoken, dialogical discourse, and then discuss written types of text. We will focus on social power and disregard types of individual power, influence, or status in interpersonal communication (see, Berger, 1985 for a review of this work, and Brooke & Ng, 1986, and Falbo & Peplau, 1980, for empirical studies on interpersonal influence).

#### Conversation

Although the analysis of conversation generally presupposes that speakers have equal social roles (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; McLaughlin, 1984), it is obvious that group and institutional

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membership of speakers, and in general social inequality, introduce differences in control over the ongoing dialogue. These differences appear, for instance, in talk between men and women, adults and children, whites and blacks, the rich and the poor, or between the more or less educated. It is assumed that such control by the more powerful speaker may extend to turn allocation or appropriation, speech act choice, topic selection and change, and style. The enactment of this control, however, need not be static, but may be dynamically negotiated or challenged by the less powerful speakers. In other words, talk is continuously contextualized by signaling various conditions or constraints of the social situation in general, and by the social relationships between the speech participants, in particular. And although it makes sense to make a distinction between everyday, personal, or informal talk, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, formal, institutional discourse, it should be stressed that informal or private discourse may be imbued with formal and institutional constraints. Conversely, institutional discourse also may be informal and an everyday accomplishment among other social practices.

#### *Conversation Between Parents and Children*

One of the more obvious power differences in many cultures is that between parents and children. Although there is important cultural variation (Snow & Ferguson, 1977), and differences between fathers and mothers (Gleason & Geif, 1986), parental control is generally enacted in parent-child talk in many ways: "The low status of children in stratified societies can keep them silent, forbid them to initiate or discuss certain topics, prevent them from interrupting, or require them to use a special deferential variety of speech" (Ervin-Tripp & Strage, 1985, p. 68).

As these and other authors show in detail, parents may also control child behavior more directly, for example, through scolding, threatening, directing, or correcting children in talk. More indirect forms of action control in parent-child talk may take the form of advice, requests, or inducement through promises. These differences in parental control in talk have often been related to class differences (Cook-Gumperz, 1973). Relevant to our discussion of social power, social representations of power are acquired and displayed rather early, as through different forms of discursive politeness and deference, or through verbal power play and ritual (Bavelas, Rogers, & Millar, 1985; Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, & Rosenberg, 1984; Labov, 1972; Lein & Brenneis, 1978).

#### *Conversation Between Women and Men*

The power differences between women and men and their manifestation in language have received extensive attention, especially during the last decade, and by feminist researchers (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Kramarae, 1980, 1983; Spender, 1980; Thorne & Henley, 1975; and Thorne, Kramarae, & Henley,

1983, who provide an extensive bibliography). Therefore, we mention only a few general conclusions of this important work, which in many respects has become paradigmatic for the analysis of power in language and communication, and focus on the more recent studies of gender power in discourse (for a brief review, see West & Zimmerman, 1985).

Although differences may sometimes be subtle and dependent on situation (Leet-Pellegrini, 1980), and on social position (Werner, 1983), it has been found that women generally "do more work" than men do in conversation, by giving more topical support, by showing more interest, or by withdrawing in situations of conflict (Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Fishman, 1983). Several studies document that men tend to interrupt women more often, especially at irregular turn transition places (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Natale, Entin, & Jaffe, 1979; West & Zimmerman, 1983).

Some of the studies collected by Trómel-Plótz (1984) show that male dominance is not restricted to informal situations, such as the home, but also appears in public contexts, such as television talk shows, which are moderated mostly by men (see also Owsley & Scotton, 1984). For instance, women tend to get the floor less often than men do, and men talk longer, more often, and use long, complicated sentences and various types of pseudostructuring of conversational contributions.

Gender differences in talk may also be studied in a more general perspective as instances of "powerful" and "powerless" speech, which may be found in other social situations (Bradac & Street, 1986; Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O'Barr, 1978), to which we turn next.

#### *Racist Talk*

What is true for the subordination of women in talk, also holds for discourse addressed to, or about blacks and other minority groups in many Western countries (Smitherman-Donaldson & van Dijk, 1987). White group power may also be exercised through verbal abuse and derogation of minority group members (Allport, 1954). Although there are many historical and literary sources that document the pervasiveness of racial slurs, there are few systematic studies of their usage and functions. Kennedy (1959) provides a brief list of "etiquette rules" for the ways blacks and whites should address each other in the period of Jim Crow racism in the United States. One of these rules was that blacks should never be addressed as "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Sir," or "Ma'am," but by first names only, whereas whites always must be addressed in the polite form. Although the last decades have seen much of this verbally expressed racism mitigated because of changing official norms and laws, racial slurs still exist in everyday white talk. Verbal derogation of blacks, as well as of Chinese, Italian, Mexican, or Puerto Rican Americans is common in the United States, and of Turkish, Moroccan, South Asians, Caribbean, and other minorities or immigrants in Western Europe (Helmreich, 1984).



Ethnic conflict may also be manifested in different speech styles that lead to misunderstanding and stereotyping (Kochman, 1981). Within a German project on language acquisition by immigrant workers, attention was paid to the ways these "Gastarbeiter" were addressed in terms of a perceived, simplified "foreigner German" (Dittmar & Stutterheim, 1985; Klein & Dittmar, 1979). Often, such talk by itself may signal superiority of the speakers and their group. This is an interesting specific case of the functions of linguistic accommodation and conflict in interethnic communication (Giles & Powesland, 1975; Giles & Smith, 1979; Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b).

Much recent research on prejudice and racism suggests that even if racist opinions, talk, and action have become more indirect and subtle in certain contexts, basic attitudes may not have changed very much (Barker, 1981; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Essed, 1984). Greenberg, Kirkland, and Pyszczynski (1987) show that the use of racial slurs by experimental confederates against black subjects may activate such basic attitudes among white subjects and result in more negative evaluations of these black subjects. Among the conservative elites, racist discourse has taken a more "cultural" orientation during the last decade. Such discourse emphasize assumed cultural differences between in-groups and out-groups, and sometimes subtly advocates nationalist cultural autonomy of the dominant white group (Seidel, 1987a, 1987b).

In my own work on the expression of ethnic opinions and prejudice in everyday talk, such explicit racial slurs appear to be rare, both in the Netherlands and in California (van Dijk, 1984a, 1987a). However, the informal interviews on which my research is based are typically examples of talk with relative strangers (university students), and, therefore, such talk is likely to be heavily monitored by official norms of nondiscrimination. In fact, white people routinely express their knowledge of such norms, and elaborately affirm that whatever they may say about "foreigners" they do not mean to be racists.

Therefore, the overall strategy of talk about minorities is twofold. On the one hand, many white people express negative experiences and opinions about ethnic minority groups. On the other hand, however, this negative "other-presentation" is systematically balanced by positive self-presentation, namely, as tolerant, nonracist, understanding citizens. This overall strategy is implemented by many local strategies and tactics, such as apparent denials and concessions ("I have nothing against them, but . . ." "There are also good ones among them, but . . ." and so on), contrasts that emphasize group differences, competition, generally the us/ them opposition ("We work hard, and they don't have to do anything"), and transfer ("I don't mind, but other people in the country, city, street, or department do"). Besides such semantic and rhetorical strategies of positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation is mainly implemented by argumentation and concrete storytelling. Stories are based on one's own personal experiences, and, therefore, "true" and good "evidence" for negative conclusions. Most of these stories feature events

and actions of minority groups that are perceived to violate dominant (white) norms, values, goals, and interests, but which also happen to substantiate current stereotypes and prejudices. Often, the news media are used to legitimate such stories and opinions, for instance by referring to minority crime "about which you read in the paper everyday." More subtly, conversational properties such as hesitations, repairs, and corrections provide insight into the underlying cognitive processes and monitoring in such talk. Lexical choice and the use of identifying pronouns and demonstratives also suggest social distance: "them," "those people," "those Turks (Mexicans, and so on)." In this way, everyday talk among white majority group members reproduces such prejudices within the ingroup, while at the same time verbally confirming group membership, and group goals and norms, which in turn are relevant in the maintenance of white group power.

#### *Institutional Dialogue*

Dialogues with and within institutions or organizations are forms of institutional interaction, and, therefore, also enact, display, signal, or legitimate a multitude of power relations (Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981). Participants in such interactions may follow context dependent rules and norms of interaction, but may also negotiate different roles or positions, including those of status, hierarchy, or expertise. Another difference with everyday, informal conversation is that institutional members are mostly professionals, experts "at work" (see also Coleman, 1984, 1985b). Let us examine some of the more prominent subgenres of institutional dialogue.

#### *Job Interviews*

Ragan (1983) showed that in job interviews power differences manifest themselves in what she calls "aligning actions," such as accounts, metatalk, side sequences, digressions, or qualifiers. Interviewers more often had recourse to strategies that control conversational pace and progress, such as formulations, metatalk, and metacommunicative digressions. Applicants, on the contrary, are more often engaged in justifying or explaining their behavior, for instance through accounts, qualifiers, and "you knows," even when these were unnecessary. This study complements earlier social psychological work on the (power) effect of language attitudes in job interviews, which shows that otherwise identical applicants may be discriminated against because of their foreign accent, for instance, by getting lower evaluations for higher-level jobs and higher evaluations for lower-level jobs (Kalin & Rayko, 1980).

In a series of experimental studies, Bradac and associates examined the role of powerful and powerless styles in job interviews (Bradac & Mulac, 1984). As in early studies of women's language, hesitations, and tag questions were found to characterize the powerless style (see also Bradac & Street, 1986). We

shall see that similar results have been found in styles of courtroom talk.

#### *Doctor-Patient Discourse*

Doctor-patient discourse is just one specific example of medical discourse in general (Fisher & Todd, 1983, 1986; Freeman & Heller, 1987), which has often been criticized for a variety of reasons, including the abuse of power by medical practitioners. Edelman (1974), in a critical article, shows how the language of people in the helping professions, typically in psychiatry, in many ways conceals the real nature of their intentions and actions, which are geared toward the control of patients. In this way, direct power may be masked by the discourse of "helping," in which patients who have good reasons to be angry may be categorized as "aggressive." Such patients will be put in what is euphemistically called a "quiet room" instead of "solitary confinement." Similarly, the use of such terms as "predelinquent" may mean that professionals get *carte blanche* in the "treatment" of (mostly powerless, e.g., young, poor) people who have shown no sign of deviance. Professional power here combines with the power of class and age. Indeed, as we shall see next, power seldom comes alone: Institutional power is frequently enacted at the same time as group power derived from gender, class, race, age, subculture, or nationality (see also Sabsay & Platt, 1985).

West (1984) shows that the inherent social asymmetry in doctor-patient relationships is also displayed in their conversations, and that gender and race play a role here: Male doctors interrupt patients (especially black patients) much more often than the reverse, without any medical function or relevance; on the contrary, these interruptions make them miss important information. Female doctors, however, are interrupted more often by their (male) patients. Generally, in doctor-patient talk there is an imbalance in information exchange: Doctors initiate most questions and patients stutter when asking their few questions, with the exception of a specific type of conditional query. West concludes that, "Quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that physicians stand in nearly godlike relation to their patients—as entities not to be questioned" (West, 1984, p. 51). Formal expressions are used to address the doctor, whereas doctors tend to use the first names of patients, especially when the patients are black. Fisher and Todd (1983) also find an interaction between medical and gender power. They showed that female patients are subject to "friendly persuasion" by (male) practitioners to use birth control pills, while being kept uninformed about the pills' possible negative effects or about alternative forms of birth control.

In a critical analysis of clinical interviews, Mishler (1984) found discursive evidence for the domination of what he calls the "biomedical voice" of doctors, and concludes: "Typically, the voice of the lifeworld was suppressed and patients' efforts to provide accounts of their problems within the context of their lifeworld situations were disrupted and fragmented" (p. 190). Treichler, Frankel, Kramarae, Zoppi, and Beckman (1984) argue that the

physician's focus on biomedical aspects hinders the full expression of the patient's concerns. Thus concerns readily expressed to a medical student were not included in the physician's medical records. Doctors are found to use irony in showing dismissal of the patient's complaints. Finally, just as for job interviews, social psychological work on language attitudes shows that doctors may evaluate their patients differently depending upon whether or not they have a dialect or sociolect accent (Fielding & Evered, 1980).

What has been found for general practitioners may be expected to be true for other medical professionals. Coleman and Burton (1985) studied control in dentist-patient consultations in Great Britain, and found that dentists control both verbal and nonverbal activity: Dentists talk 71% and patients 26% of the time, (assistants 3%). Dentists have more turns, and longer turns (4.6 versus 2.1 seconds). Obviously, control in this case takes a very literal form: Patients usually have their mouths open, but are still prevented from speaking in such a situation, and, therefore, have little to say in the first place. Compliance with dentists' power may also depend on fear of pain. Thus the authors found that dentists regularly respond to patients' reports by making no acknowledgment, by minimizing them as irrelevant, or by dismissing them as incorrect. As is the case for most professional forms of power, the major resource of dentist dominance is expertise (see also Candlin, Burton, & Coleman, 1980).

As noted earlier, power may derive from institutional organization and routinization. Medical power is a characteristic example. The results of the studies just reviewed should also be interpreted in that perspective. Thus Strong (1979) specifies some other factors that limit the freedom of patients in consultation discourse: Doctors use technical language (see also Coleman, 1985a); there are few doctors and many patients; doctors are organized and patients are usually not; doctors have high status; in some countries, there are no or few (affordable) alternatives for the public health service provided by doctors, and, therefore, little medical competition and reduced possibilities for second opinions. We see that the local enactment and organization of power in doctor-patient talk is intricately interwoven with more general social and institutional forms of control.

These findings are also relevant in counseling or admission interviews, in which professionals act as gatekeepers of institutions and may exert relevant group power on the differential conversational treatment of minority clients or candidates (Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Mehan, 1986). Similarly, in classroom talk, teachers may be expected to exercise control over students through a series of strategies: They decide about discourse type, they initiate and evaluate topics and question-answer sequences, they monitor student speech style, and generally control both the written and spoken discourses of the students. Unfortunately, although there is much work on classroom dialogues (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982; Stoll, 1983; Wilkinson, 1982), little specific attention is paid to their routine enactments of institutional power.

*Discourse in Court*

More than in most other institutional contexts, the enactment of power in court is systematically governed by explicitly formulated rules and procedures of dialogical interaction between the judge, the prosecution, defense counsel, and the defendant. Much work has been done on courtroom dialogues in the tradition of conversational analysis, but again, little attention has been paid to such social dimensions as power, control, or dominance (Atkinson & Drew, 1979). The stylistic power of highly technical jargon shared by the participating legal representatives may be internally balanced among these professionals, but ultimately further subordinates the defendant. The combined powers of indictment by the prosecution, judicial courtroom control, and final judgment may be expected to show in what court officials say and imply dominance toward the defendant, toward witnesses, and even toward the defense counsel. Conversely, whatever defendants, in their inherent position of subordination, may say, it "may be used against them," which places a special burden on their talk.

In court, the distribution of speaking turns and speech acts is strictly regulated. Unlike most other situations of dialogical interaction, defendants have the obligation to talk when requested to do so, and to answer questions with specific statements, such as simply "Yes" or "No" (Walker, 1982). Refusal to talk or to answer questions may be sanctioned as contempt of court. Harris (1984) examined how questions in court are used to control defendants or witnesses and found that question syntax appeared to be important for what will count as an appropriate response. He also found that information control is exercised by questioning sequences, rather than by long accounts, which also firmly establish the control of the questioner. Most questions are for yes/ no questions that restrict possible answers because they contain already completed propositions. Thus questioning rules and strategies, as well as legal power, together regulate the choice of a restricted set of speech acts: Most questions ask for information or make accusations (see also Mead, 1985; Shuy, 1986). Obviously, these discursive methods of control in the courtroom may vary according to the procedures of direct or cross-examination (see also Adelsward, Aronsson, Jansson, & Linell, 1987).

Besides turn taking, sequencing, speech acts, and topic control, style may be an important feature of self-presentation and persuasion of defendants and witnesses, although these may not always be preserved in courtroom transcripts (Walker, 1986; see also Parkinson, Geisler, & Penas, 1983). These strategies of interaction and impression formation in court were examined by Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O'Barr (1978) in their influential study of powerful and powerless styles. These authors found that powerless style can be characterized by the frequent use of intensifiers, hedges, hesitation forms, and questioning intonation, whereas powerful style is marked by less frequent use of these features. Experiments suggest that powerful style results in greater attraction to the witness, independent of sex of witness or subject, but that

powerful style leads to enhanced perceived credibility only when witness and subject are of the same sex (see also Bradac, Hemphill, & Tardy, 1981). In a later experimental study, these authors show that the evaluation of the defendants or witnesses may also depend on whether the defense counsel relinquishes control by letting them tell their own stories (Lind & O'Barr, 1979).

As in all cases already discussed, factors of class, gender, and race play a role, and may possibly reinforce or mitigate the subordination of the defendant. Thus Wodak (1984, 1985) shows that middle-class defendants are better able to build a positive image in court proceedings. They know the strategies of courtroom interactions, tell coherent stories, and mention plausible facts. Working-class defendants, however, appear to perform less successfully on these crucial tasks. Such class differences also appear in the way the judge addresses the defendant, for instance through forms of politeness, patience, understanding, and showing interest in the occupation of professional, middle-class defendants. On the other hand, Maynard (1985), in a study of plea bargaining, suggests that the discursive characterization of defendants in terms of specific categories (old, woman, minority) may sometimes be taken as arguments to dismiss a case. That is, unlike cases of discrimination, age, class, or race may sometimes be used to reduce the responsibility of the defendant. Maynard claims that knowledge of the social interaction (of justice) is needed to make conclusions about discrimination, and that general assumptions about unfair treatment of the less powerful in court may not always be warranted.

Whereas the enactment and reproduction of legal power surfaces most concretely in courtroom interaction, it also characterizes other types of legal and bureaucratic discourse, such as laws, contracts, regulations, and many other texts. Besides the power embodied in their pragmatic functions of legal directives, such texts also indirectly manifest power by their exclusive "legalese." This archaic lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical style not only symbolizes and reproduces a legal tradition, thus facilitating communication among legal professionals, but obviously excludes lay persons from effective understanding, communication, and, hence, resistance (Charrow, 1982; Di Pietro, 1982; Danet, 1980, 1984; Radtke, 1981).

#### *Organizational Discourse*

Discourse in business organizations has, unfortunately, led to fewer studies of details of dialogical interaction. Especially in "vertical" communication between bosses and their subordinates, such talk is obviously an enactment and expression of hierarchical power (McPhee & Tompkins, 1985). In their review of organizational communication, Blair, Roberts, & McKechnie (1985) found that managers spend 78% of their time with verbal communication; when leaders dominate leader-subordinate communications, subordinates react by deferring; and there is more self-disclosure upward than

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downward in the organization. Focusing more on the content of such talk Riley (1983) found in an analysis of interviews that power in organizations is expressed through signification, legitimation, and domination. Verbal symbols, such as (military) metaphors, myths, jokes, and legends, dominate the discussions, whereas game metaphors provide legitimation by expressing possible sanctions.

Power differentials in business may be expected to show in different forms of politeness, deference, and, hence, in forms of address (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Slobin, Miller, and Porter (1972) studied forms of address in business corporations and found that the first name is used primarily when subordinates are addressed by their superiors. Conversely, title and last name are used when talking to higher management, who communicate among themselves mostly on a first-name basis. These different forms of address appear to be more or less independent of age differences. The authors not only found, expectedly, more self-disclosure among fellow workers, but found nonreciprocal self-disclosure to immediate superiors (even when no first names are used). These results confirm the rules established by Brown and his associates (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Brown & Ford, 1972): The greater the status difference, the greater the tendency toward nonreciprocal address. However, unlike the findings by Brown et al., subordinates show more self-disclosure to bosses than the reverse. That is, the use of first names in business contexts is not always associated with greater familiarity, and vice versa.

Whereas organizational hierarchy and power may be directly enacted in commands, orders, instructions, or other directives, power may also be expressed by representation. Members in the organization may be expected to talk about daily events, and thus try to make sense of their lives. Such experiences are typically expressed in narrative. In one of the few studies of its kind, Kelly (1985) analyzed scripts and schemata of stories told by people at different levels of "high-tech" organizations. He found that many of these stories focused on the boss, and whether positive or negative, they emphasized the power structure and at the same time legitimated it.

#### *Political Discourse*

Since the rhetorical treatises of classical Greece and Rome, political discourse—and its persuasive power—have received much attention as a special object of study (Chaffee, 1975; Nimmo & Sanders, 1981; Seidel, 1985). Unlike most other discourse forms, political discourse may be relevant for all citizens. Its power derives both from this scope and from its various degrees of legitimacy. Few forms of oral discourse are as well known, routinely quoted, or distributed as widely through the mass media as that of top politicians, such as the president or prime minister. Especially in the United States, speeches and media performances of the president are both a prominent social or political event, and a preferred object of study (Hart, 1984; Lindgren-Lerman, 1983). This dominant presence in, and preferential access to, the

media may be interpreted as a manifestation of political power.

In light of what we just assumed, we may expect many studies to deal with political discourse. This is indeed the case, but many of these studies focus on what is commonly called "political language," which mostly means specific lexical style (see Bergsdorf, 1983; Edelman, 1964; Guespin, 1976; Hudson, 1978; Shapiro, 1984). Thus ideologies have been studied through analysis of preferential use of specific words or concepts, typically so for extremist politicians of the left or the right (fascist or communist language). It is interesting, however, to go beyond the study of single words, and look into other discourse structures, of which some are even less in the control of the speaker, and therefore often more revealing of attitudes and ideologies (see also Guespin, 1976; Pecheux, 1975). Although only indirectly interested in the analysis of power, Atkinson (1984) investigated various properties of political oratory, such as the management of applause by political speakers, and the careful preparation of such performance by experts (for instance by taking speech lessons). Against the background of my remarks on gender and especially racial power, it is interesting to note that Atkinson found that applause is particularly likely after passages in which different outgroups are negatively discussed.

#### *Institutional Texts*

Whatever the power of directors, top politicians, corporate boards, professors, judges, or doctors in face-to-face discourse, their real power seems to have formal consequences only when somehow "fixed" in writing or print. Therefore, many types of formal dialogues, such as meetings, interviews, or debates, have a written counterpart in the form of minutes, protocols, or other official transcripts that define the "record" of the encounter, and are often the institutional or legal basis for any further action or decision making.

Institutional dialogues are often accompanied by various types of text, which function as guidelines or reference for the accomplishment of the spoken discourse. Thus most formal meetings involve a written agenda as well as various kinds of documents. Courtroom dialogue is related to many written texts, such as law texts, a formal indictment, written statements, witness reports, and a final judgment. Even in oral consultation, doctors may sometimes have recourse to medical handbooks and make notes, and the encounter is often closed after writing out a prescription or a referral to a specialist. Records in medical organizations play a vital role. School or university lessons are unthinkable without textbooks or a host of other written (or to be written) materials. In other words, most formal business, even when accomplished orally, requires written texts as its basis or its consequence. Thus texts are literally the consolidation of communicative power in most institutional contexts.

Written discourse is, for the most part, explicitly programmed or planned and, therefore, better controlled. In complex ways, this property has



implications for the exercise of power. Whereas less monitored, face-to-face encounters allow the exercise of illegitimate dominance, for instance against women or ethnic minorities in service encounters, job interviews or counseling discourse, written discourse is, in principle, often public, and therefore its writers may be held accountable. This publicness may imply that in texts, power may need to be enacted and formulated in more indirect, veiled, formalized ways, especially when such power is not legally or organizationally established. Another factor that makes the exercise of power through written communication less direct is that often authors of institutional texts are not identical with the public speakers, senders, or sources of such discourse. Public discourse, therefore, is often a form of collective, institutional discourse, as is the power it enacts.

*Media Discourse: News Reports and News Production*

There can be little doubt that of all forms of printed text, those of the mass media are most pervasive, if not most influential, when judged by the power criteria of recipient scope. Besides the spoken and visual discourses of television, newspaper texts play a vital role in public communication. Contrary to popular and scholarly beliefs, news in the press is usually better recalled than is television news (Robinson & Levy, 1986), and perceived to be qualitatively superior (Bruhn Jensen, 1986), which may enhance its persuasive influence, and therefore its power.

We have seen that many power holders (as well as their talk) get routine coverage by the news media, and thus their power may be further confirmed and legitimated. Even when the power of the media is a form of mediating power, it has its own autonomous role in the production and reproduction of social power structures. Through selective source use, news beat routines, and story topic selection, the news media decide which news actors are being publicly represented, what is being said about them, and, especially, how it is said. Much recent work on news production has shown that these processes, are not arbitrary, and not simply determined by intuitive, journalistic notions of interestingness. Journalists learn how to portray the power of others, and at the same time learn how to contribute to the power of their own organization, for example, by making it independent of other organizations (Turow, 1983). Newsworthiness is based on ideological and professional criteria that grant preferential media access to elite persons, organizations, and nations, thereby recognizing and legitimating their power (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Gans, 1979). Similarly, the routine organization of news production favors news gathering in the institutional contexts that guarantee a constant source of news stories, such as the major political bodies of the state, the police, the courts, and the big corporations (Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). In sum, the corporate embedding of most Western media, especially newspapers, as well as the routine organization of news production, the reliance on readily available and credible sources, and the general professional and ideological aspects of

newsworthiness, all concur in social cognitions and text production that favor stories about the most powerful people, groups, or institutions in society (van Dijk, 1987b). In this way, instead of simply being a mouthpiece of the elite, the media also show that they are an inherent part of the societal power structure, of which they manage the symbolic dimension.

Such power is, of course, locally embodied and exercised by media professionals. The question then arises: How do journalists reproduce or challenge the ideologies they are confronted with? Critical media scholars have emphasized that because of their socialization and class membership, journalists tend to reproduce the dominant ideologies of the elite (Hall et al., 1980). It has also been argued, however, that journalists are critical of dominant politics and business, and do not always share the ideologies of these elites (see a review of this position in Altheide, 1985). Despite these contradictions, we may assume with the critical theorists that media practices usually remain within the boundaries of a flexible, but dominant consensus, even when there is room for occasional dissent and criticism. Fundamental norms, values, and power arrangements are seldom explicitly challenged in the dominant news media. In fact, this latitude of dissent is itself organized and controlled. Opposition, also by the media, is limited by the boundaries set by the powerful institutions, and may thus also become routinized.

One important aspect of the process of power (re)production is how journalists acquire the professional and ideological frameworks that guide their daily practice. Turow (1983) examined the processes whereby journalists learn how to portray institutional power. He argues that the media, just like other organizations, want to reduce their dependence on other organizations. They cope with environmental risks through routines. Journalists, writers, and directors must produce creative products, but these must be successful. This happens, for example, through formulas, both in fiction (plots, characters, and settings), and in news reports. This analysis from an organizational point of view partly agrees with the microsociological analysis of news production routines studied by Tuchman (1978).

In a series of discourse analytical case studies of news in the press, I examined how subordinate social groups are represented in news reports (van Dijk, 1987c; see also van Dijk, 1985b). Minorities, refugees, squatters, and Third World countries and peoples appear to be represented in ways that are often rather similar, that is, in contrast with the portrayal of powerful groups and nations. The general conclusion of these studies is that these and other outgroups (a) tend to have less access to the dominant mass media, (b) are used less as credible and routine sources, (c) are described stereotypically if not negatively, primarily as a "problem," if not as a burden or even as a threat to our valued resources, (d) are assumed to be "deficient" or "backward" in many ways, as compared to our norms, goals, expertise, or culture, and, therefore, (e) need our (altruistic) help, understanding, or support, assuming they adapt to our social and political norms and ideology. These general

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implications may be inferred from the analysis of news production routines, amount, size, and prominence of presentation, dominant topics, as well as style of news reporting (see also Cohen & Young, 1981, for studies with similar conclusions).

Within the framework of the New International Information Order debate, I examined the international coverage of a characteristic media event—the assassination of President-Elect Bechir Gemayel of Lebanon in September 1982 (van Dijk, 1984b, 1987c). In addition to the usual content analytical study of this coverage in newspapers (from some hundred countries), I performed a more qualitative analysis of news discourse. It may be expected that political, ideological, cultural, or regional differences influence the perception, interpretation, and description of this event, which was taking place in the confused and controversial Middle East conflict. I found that although there may have been differences of size, and especially of editorial commentary, the news reports themselves were surprisingly similar as to their schematic, conventional format, and as to their topical contents. An unexpected, major difference was found between first world and Third World newspapers as to their use of their own correspondents: Most Third World newspapers relied on the Western news agencies. My interpretation of these findings was that on the one hand, there may be historical and professional conditions that impose an internationally pervasive news schema for the press reproduction of news events, but that, on the other hand, Western dominance and power, in many complex ways, was an explanation of the pervasiveness of "Western" formats in reporting. Time constraints, lack of money and correspondents, Western-influenced professional socialization, and other factors will favor more or less the same type of stories in Western and non-Western countries. Stories from and about Third World countries are most likely to be either written by Western journalists or adapted to international (i.e., Western) agency formats in order to reach and be used by these agencies and their (rich) Western clients.

These conclusions partly confirm some of the critiques leveled by many Third World countries against the information hegemony of European and U.S. media organizations (UNESCO, 1980; Mankekar, 1978; see also the discussions in Richstad & Anderson, 1981, and in Atwood, Bullion & Murphy, 1982). As may be expected, Western news media and politicians have forcefully rejected these allegations, and usually ignore results from scholarly research that support them (Fascell, 1979). For my study of power and discourse, it is interesting to witness that such rejections are typically framed in terms of "attack on the freedom of the press." My analysis of power suggests that in such cases the notion of "freedom" may often simply be translated as (our) "power" or "control."

Knowledge acquisition and opinion formation about most events in the world appears to be largely based on news discourse in the press and on television, which is shared daily by millions of others. Probably no other

discourse type is so pervasive and so shared and read by so many people at more or less the same time. Its power potential, therefore, is enormous, and close scrutiny of the schemata, topics, and style of news reports is therefore crucial to our understanding of the exercise of political, economic, social, and cultural power, and of the communication and acquisition of the ideologies that support it.

This potential does not mean that media power can simply be understood in terms of simplistic, direct "effects." Depending on socioeconomic and sociocultural differences, people obviously interpret, represent, and evaluate news reports and news events quite differently, and, hence, form different opinions, attitudes, and ideologies. Although in some specific cases, direct forms of influence indeed do exist, especially when there are no other information sources and when no counterinformation is available or relevant, we should see the power of news media discourse in more structural terms. Structural influence implies the development of a socially shared, selective knowledge basis, goals, norms, values, and the interpretation frameworks based on them. Media power thus implies the exclusion of alternative sources, alternative information, and other relevancies in the description of world events. Governments and/ or media corporations may effectively control the publication or broadcasting of such alternative "voices," and therefore limit the information freedom of citizens, for instance by prohibiting, harassing, or marginalizing the "radical" media (Downing, 1984).

Another feature that has often been found to characterize Western news discourse is the ethnocentric, stereotypical portrayal of Third World nations and peoples. Although not all news about the Third World is of the "coups and earthquakes" brand (Rosenblum, 1981; Schramm & Atwood, 1981), it certainly focuses on only a few types of events and actors, which are generally stereotypical if not negative: poverty, lack of (our type of) democracy, dictatorship, violence and civil war, and technological and cultural "backwardness" (see Said, 1981, for the currently highly relevant coverage of Islam). Downing (1980) found that Third World leaders are often portrayed in a condescending way, and seldom are allowed to speak for themselves.

The same is true for ethnic and racial minorities and their representation in Western countries and their media. Hartmann and Husband (1974), in their classic study of racism and the press, concluded from a content analysis of the British press that (Third World) immigrants tend to be portrayed primarily as "problem people," as people who threaten our valued resources (space, housing, work, education), if not simply as welfare cheats or criminals. I found similar evidence in our qualitative studies of the Dutch press (van Dijk, 1983, 1987c). Ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands (immigrant workers from Mediterranean countries, and people from former colonies, such as Indonesia and Surinam) do not have routine access to news beats or the newspaper columns, and are seldom employed by the media. If they are portrayed at all, the topics tend to be stereotypical or negative, focusing on

immigration difficulties and illegality, emphasizing perceived cultural differences and the problems entailed by them, language and educational problems, their competition for housing and employment, and their illegal or criminal activities, centered around dominant notions such as aggression, violence, and drug abuse (see also Hall, Cretcher, Jefferson, Clanks, & Roberts, 1978). These ethnocentric, if not prejudiced and racist, portrayals can be found at all levels of textual organization, including headlining, the relevant hierarchy of news reports, and in style and rhetoric. Note that these expressions of group power may be very subtle and indirect in the quality press and on television. Overt racial abuse is exceptional. Rather, "ethnic" properties and situations are described in a manner that may be used by readers as components or arguments in the development of ethnic prejudice. These results show agreement with the general conclusions found in most other studies of racism in the media in other Western countries (Ebel & Fiala, 1983; Hartmann & Husband, 1974; Merten, 1986; Troyna, 1981; Wilson & Gutiérrez, 1985; see also the papers in Smitherman-Donaldson & van Dijk, 1987).

A characteristic feature of the syntactic style of reporting about outgroups of various kinds appears in several studies of the expression of semantic and social roles. Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew (1979) studied the news coverage in the British press of racial disturbances in London. They found that the ideology of newspapers showed in the ways the participants of varying power were represented in sentential syntax, namely, as active agents, placed in first subject position, or in later positions in passive sentences, or as implied, but absent actors. They found that when the authorities are associated with negative acts, they tend to be placed in later positions, or simply left out of the sentence. Conversely, minorities, who are usually in later, dependent syntactic positions, typically occupy first subject positions as soon as they are negative actors (see also Fowler, 1985; Kress, 1985; Kress & Hodge, 1979). In this way, the negative characteristics of ingroups or elites may be downgraded and those of outgroups emphasized. This action is in agreement with current social psychological theories of prejudice and intergroup perception (Hamilton, 1981; Tajfel, 1981; van Dijk, 1987a).

I reached the same conclusions in an analysis of the headlines in news reports about ethnic groups in the Dutch press (van Dijk, 1987e), as well as in my study of refugee immigration to the Netherlands (van Dijk, 1987c). Ingroup perspective, ethnocentrism, and group power, consequently also influence the syntactic formulation of underlying semantic representations. Further, Downing (1980) shows that such biased representations hold for minorities in Western countries and for peoples in Third World countries alike. Sykes (1985, 1987) arrives at similar conclusions in her study of official British (welfare) discourse about ethnic minorities: Syntactic structures of sentences suggest the passiveness and dependence of black youth and downgrades their own active initiative.

The importance of these various studies of racism in the mass media is that

they show an interesting interaction between group power and organizational power. White journalists (also mostly male) write both as professional representatives of media institutions and, at the same time, *as* members of the dominant, white, Western group. This position shapes their social cognitions and, therefore, their processing of information about outgroups. Social position and social cognition allows them to exercise their power by writing, and continuing to write despite many protests and studies, in a stereotypical or even negative way about relatively powerless ethnic or racial minority groups. Typically, they may do so unwittingly and will mostly forcefully reject the conclusion, made by ethnic groups and black or white researchers, that such reporting is ethnocentric, if not racist.

The effectiveness of media power also shows in the sources people use for their knowledge and attitude formation about ethnic groups (Hartmann & Husband, 1974). In the interviews we collected in Amsterdam about white people's experiences with and opinions about their "foreign" neighbors, it appears that they often refer to the newspaper to warrant prejudices about ethnic groups (van Dijk, 1987a). Stereotypical media topics also appear to be dominant topics in everyday talk. Even when the media are ambiguous in their various discourses, the information they communicate may, nevertheless, be used to develop and confirm extant racist attitudes. The same is more generally true of racist discourse by other powerful groups or cites, for instance in the polity (Reeves, 1983).

Similar conclusions hold for the representation in the media of the working class, of women (especially feminists), of youth, demonstrators, squatters, punks, and all social groups that tend to be discriminated against, marginalized, subordinated, or stereotyped but that also engage in various forms of resistance that may be seen *as a* bid for counterpower (see Cohen & Young, 1981; Halloran, Elliott, & Murdock, 1970; Tuchman, Daniels, & Benet, 1978; van Dijk, 1987c).

In a series of studies of television news about industrial conflicts in Great Britain, the Glasgow University Media Group (1976, 1980, 1982) concludes that the presentation of the major participants in these conflicts tends to be subtly in favor of employers and, therefore, negative for strikers. This bias is manufactured through time and type of interviews: Employers tend to be interviewed in quiet contexts and in dominant positions, for instance in their offices, whereas strikers—if interviewed at all—are asked questions in the disturbing noise of the picket line. Camera angles and position, and the topical association by citizens of strikes with trouble, also reveal the antistrike perspective of the media. Lexical choice represents strikers as demanding, whereas government or employers are represented more positively as making offers or otherwise *as* being in control. Workers are not said to "offer" their labor under specified conditions. These and many other features of news production, source contact, interviewing, presentation, quotation, dominant topics, associations, and style, subtly convey the social and ideological

positions involved, including those of the media themselves.

What holds for news also holds for other media discourse, such as advertising. Here, corporations and advertising agencies combine powers in the production of persuasive discourse for public consumption. Unlike corporate representations in news reports, their public display in advertising, and hence, their possible influence, is bought. The power of resistance by the public may be reduced by many tactical means (Percy & Rossiter, 1980). Like news reports, however, advertisements tend to reproduce social power structures and stereotypes, for instance of women or blacks (Culley & Bennett, 1976; Dyer, 1982; Greenberg & Mazingo, 1976; Goffman, 1979; King & Stott, 1977; Manstead & Culloch, 1981; Tuchman, Daniels, & Bent, 1978; Wilson & Gutiérrez, 1985). In this framework, Goffman (1979) speaks of the "ritualization of subordination." Advertisements attract public attention while at the same time controlling exposure and opinion and concealing corporate power through complex strategies of incompleteness, novelty, ambiguity, repetition, and positive self-presentation (Davis & Walton, 1983; Packard, 1957; Tolmach Lakoff, 1981).

### *Textbooks*

Like the mass media, educational discourse derives its power from its enormous scope. Unlike most other types of texts, textbooks are obligatory reading for many people, which is a second major condition of their power. Together with instructional dialogues, textbooks are used extensively by all citizens during their formal education. The knowledge and attitudes expressed and conveyed by such learning materials, again, reflect a dominant consensus, if not the interests of the most powerful groups and institutions of societies. Because textbooks and the educational programs they are intended to realize should, in principle, serve public interests, they are seldom allowed to be "controversial." In other words, alternative, critical, radical voices are usually censored or mitigated (McHoul, 1986).

Many studies have shown that most textbooks reproduce a nationalistic, ethnocentric, or racist view of the world—of other peoples as well as of ethnic minority groups (Ferro, 1981; Klein, 1986; Milner, 1983; Preiswerk, 1980; van Dijk, 1987d). The observations are familiar from our news media analysis: underrepresentation, voicelessness, and stereotyping. Minority groups and their history and culture tend to be ignored, and a few stereotypical cultural differences are emphasized and often negatively contrasted with properties of the "own" group, nation, or culture. Although cultural differentiation and pride may be a feature of all or most groups, cultures, or countries, Western or white dominance is shown through special attention to "our" superior technology, culture, and political system. Third World countries and (black) minorities may thus be portrayed as "backward" compared to "our" position and development, if not as "primitive," "lazy," and "stupid." At the same time, the dominant white group or the Western world has its "burden" to "help these

people," through aid, welfare, or technological advice. Although there are variations among textbooks (and in some countries these properties of books for children seem to change slowly), these messages dominate the history, geography, social science, or language textbooks in many countries of the Western world (and Japan). Again, opposition, for example, by teachers, requires extensive knowledge of, and access to other sources of information, and the (usually restricted) freedom to deviate from established curricula and traditions. Thus, together with the media, textbooks and other educational materials form the core of both symbolic power and the textual reproduction and legitimation of power in society (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

## CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have examined some of the relationships between social power and discourse. We started from a general analysis of social power in terms of group-based or institutional control over actions and cognitions of other people and groups, usually in the interest of the powerful. Generally, an increase in power diminishes freedom for those who are subjected to this power. This interaction may be restricted to a specific social domain, and also affect the power holder. At the same time, the exercise of power may lead to resistance and the exercise of counterpower. Social power was further analyzed in terms of its institutional or group basis, its domain, scope, and legitimation. Personal power, which is not analyzed in this chapter, may sometimes emphasize, but also counter, these forms of social power. Indeed, some women may dominate their husbands, some students their teachers, and some children their parents; and conversely, not all doctors or men are medical or male chauvinists. Despite these personal differences, we focused on more general, structural properties of power relations and discourse in society.

Text and talk appear to play a crucial role in the exercise of power. Thus discourse may directly and coercively enact power, through directive speech acts, and through text types such as laws, regulations, or instructions. Power may also be manifested more indirectly in discourse, as representation in the form of an expression, description, or legitimation of powerful actors or their actions and ideologies. Discursive power is often directly or indirectly persuasive, and, therefore, features reasons, arguments, promises, examples, or other rhetorical means that enhance the probability that recipients build the desired mental representations. One crucial strategy in the concealment of power is to persuade the powerless that wanted actions are in their own interest.

Discursive power also involves the control over discourse itself: Who is speaking in what contexts; who has access to various types and means of



communication; and which recipients can be reached? We found that there is a direct correlation between the scope of discourse and the scope of power: The powerless generally may have control only in everyday conversation, and are merely passive recipients of official and media discourse. The powerful have recourse to a large variety of dialogical, and especially printed, formal forms of text and talk, and, in principle, can reach large groups of people. Thus the powerful control discourse through control of its material production, its formulation, and its distribution. Crucial in the exercise of power, then, is the control of the formation of social cognitions through the subtle management of knowledge and beliefs, the preformulation of beliefs, or the censorship of counterideologies. These representations form the essential cognitive link between social power itself and the production and understanding of discourse and its social functions in the enactment of power.

Against this more general background of the analysis of the links between power and discourse, our more concrete discourse analysis focused on the central micro-units of power and discourse, namely, communicative events, such as everyday conversations, courtroom trials, or classroom talk. In a review of some recent work, we thus examined how power is expressed, described, displayed, or legitimated in various genres of text and talk, and at various levels of analysis, such as speech acts, turn taking, topic selection, style, and rhetoric. Special attention was paid to the various ways institutional power is enacted by professionals and experts over their clients, and to the ways women and minority groups are subjected to power strategies, both in institutional dialogue and in media texts, such as news reports, textbooks, and advertising. It was found that in this way, communicative events may be structured by several dimensions of power at the same time, not only those of the institution, but those of gender, race, and class.

Our theoretical analysis and our review show that whether in its direct or in its indirect forms, power is both enacted and reproduced in and by discourse. Without communication—text and talk—power in society can hardly be exercised and legitimated. Power presupposes knowledge, beliefs, and ideologies to sustain and reproduce it. Discourse structurally shows and communicates these crucial conditions of reproduction for all societal levels, dimensions, and contexts. This chapter has presented an outline of these processes. Much further theoretical and empirical work will be necessary to fill in the many details of this discursive enactment and reproduction of power.

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