

*Analyzing Racism
Through Discourse Analysis
Some Methodological Reflections*

TEUN A. VAN DIJK

This chapter draws some methodological conclusions from a research program on the reproduction of racism through discourse and communication. At the same time, it is my hope that these reflections allow other scholars engaged in the study of racism to assess the theoretical and methodological relevance of discourse analysis for our understanding of ethnic and racial inequality.

In a multidisciplinary research program on discourse and racism, carried out since 1980 at the University of Amsterdam, I have studied the ways majority group members write and talk about minorities, for example, in everyday conversations, textbooks, news reports, parliamentary debates, and academic and corporate discourse. These analyses have focused on the following major questions, among others (for details, see van Dijk, 1984, 1987a, 1987c, 1991):

1. How exactly do members or institutions of dominant white groups talk and write about ethnic or racial minorities?
2. What do such structures and strategies of discourse tell us about underlying ethnic or racial prejudices, ideologies, or other social cognitions about minorities?
3. What are the social, political, and cultural contexts and functions of such discourse about minorities? In particular, what role does this discourse

play in the development, reinforcement, legitimation, and hence reproduction of white group dominance?

Although these questions focus on “texts” and their cognitive and sociocultural “contexts,” study of the issues raised requires a multidisciplinary approach that involves several disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. One of the attractive roles of discourse analysis is that it is able to integrate such a multidisciplinary approach, also in the equally multidisciplinary study of ethnic or racial prejudice, discrimination, and racism. The major contribution of discourse analysis, however, takes place at the micro level of social practices involved in the enactment and reproduction of racism.

The Relevance of Discourse Analysis

To spell out the broad multidisciplinary relevance of discourse analysis for our understanding of racism, I will very briefly summarize some of the relations between discourse and racism in several disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. For the new discipline of *discourse studies itself*, the study of the discursive reproduction of racism through text and talk provides not only a highly relevant field of application, but also more insight into the relations between various structures of text and talk on minorities on the one hand, and the mental, sociocultural, and political conditions, effects, or functions—that is, various “contexts” of the reproduction of racism—on the other hand. Overlapping with its sister discipline of linguistics, the study of racism and discourse shows how various grammatical structures, to be discussed below, may express or signal the perspectives and ethnic biases of white group speakers. The study of history is largely based on the many types of discourses (stories, documents) from and about the past, including those about race and ethnic events and relations. A detailed discourse analysis of such historical texts allows us to make inferences about otherwise inaccessible attitudes and sociocultural contexts of racism in the past.

The social psychology of intergroup relations, and especially that of prejudice and ethnic stereotyping, focuses on, for example, the social cognitions, interpretations, and attribution processes of white dominant

group members. In both laboratory and field experiments and survey research, the data for this research are largely discursive: questionnaires, experimental responses, think-aloud and recall protocols, stories or argumentation and accounts, among many others. Discourse analysis allows us to make explicit the inferences about social cognitions of majority group members about minorities from the properties of their text and talk.

Political science and the study of *law* are also largely based on discourse, such as government deliberations in decision making, parliamentary debates, laws, regulations, and so on, also with respect to ethnic affairs. Detailed study of these many forms of political discourse reveals underlying sociopolitical and in particular ethnic attitudes of politicians, and the strategies of agenda setting and the manufacture of the ethnic consensus, among many other processes of the politics of ethnic affairs and immigration.

In *sociology* and *anthropology* (ethnography) discourse analysis plays a primary role in accounting for the structures of everyday interaction, for instance, in conversations in culturally variable sociocultural contexts. In both intercultural communication and talk and texts about ethnic minorities or non-Western peoples, thus, majority group speakers, or more generally people in the West, may engage in the local production and reproduction of white, Western group dominance, in communicating stereotypes and more generally in the reproduction of social, cultural, or political hegemony. Such studies thus are not limited to the micro level of everyday interaction in sociocultural contexts, but also involve macro notions such as groups, social formations, or institutions, such as schools, business corporations, and especially the mass media. Such processes involved in the reproduction of racism are more specifically also studied in various subdomains of *communication studies*.

We see that discourse plays a central role not only in the “text” studies of the humanities, but also in the social sciences, and virtually all dimensions of the study of prejudice, discrimination, and racism also have an important discursive dimension. This is primarily the case for all the basic *data* studied in these disciplines, namely, text and talk of white group members. Second, discourse itself may be the *object* of research when it is seen to express, signal, confirm, describe, legitimate, or enact ethnic dominance, as in communication *with* or *about* ethnic minorities. This is true, third, both for the micro level of everyday interaction and for broader societal structures and processes involv-

ing groups, group power and dominance, ideologies, and institutions. One of the aims of this chapter is to urge social scientists engaged in the study of racism to take (more) seriously the many discourse data or discursive aspects of their object of study: Both theoretically and methodologically, they allow fine-grained and well-founded insights into the often subtle structures and processes of modern racism.

In sum, ethnic and racial inequality in all social, political, and cultural domains is multiply expressed, described, planned, legislated, regulated, executed, legitimated, and opposed in myriad genres of discourse and communicative events. Such discourse is not “mere text and talk,” and hence of marginal relevance. On the contrary, especially in contemporary information and communication societies, such text and talk are at the heart of the polity, society, and culture, and hence also in their mechanisms of continuity and reproduction, including those of racism.

The Study of Discourse

Not only in the humanities but also in the social sciences, this prominent role of discourse is increasingly becoming recognized and subjected to systematic study—so much so, however, that confusion about the theories, goals, and methods of discourse analysis has become as widespread as their application in various disciplines. Indeed, the now often fashionable “postmodern” uses of the concept of “discourse” have not always contributed to our understanding of the complex structures, strategies, mechanisms, or processes of text and talk in their sociocultural or political contexts. Therefore, we also need to summarize some of the backgrounds, goals, and approaches of what we see as the more explicit, critical, and relevant discourse-analytic approach to racism.

Although discourse studies historically go back to classical rhetoric, most contemporary approaches find their roots between 1965 and 1975, in the new structuralist or formalist approaches to myths, folktales, stories, and everyday conversations in anthropology, ethnography, semiotics, literary studies, and microsociology. Much of this work was influenced by the sophisticated methods and concepts of linguistics, which itself also went beyond the self-imposed boundary of isolated sentences in order to explore the more complex grammatical and other structures of whole texts, and especially those of naturally occurring

talk. Similar developments took place, as from the early 1970s, in the new cognitive psychological approaches to the mental processes of text comprehension. Other disciplines, such as social psychology and media and communication studies, followed suit in the 1980s, which also brought increasing multidisciplinary overlaps, influences, and integration. Thus dialogic interaction or other “texts” in courtrooms, classrooms, parliaments, or doctors’ offices, among many other contexts, came to be studied by sociolinguists, ethnographers, sociologists, communication scholars, psychologists, legal scholars, and political scientists alike (for an introduction to and survey of the different methods, fields, and applications of discourse analysis, see the contributions in van Dijk, 1985b).

Text in Context

Unfortunately, while focusing on the detailed structures of text and talk, many of these earlier approaches tended to neglect the relevant relationships with the historical, sociocultural, and political contexts of discourse. Only in later developments do we find increasing attention to such notions as power, dominance, ideology, and institutional constraints, and to the roles of class, gender, and race in the production, comprehension, and functions of text and talk in society (see, e.g., Chilton, 1985; Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Kedar, 1987; Kramarae, Schulz, & O’Barr, 1984; Seidel, 1988; Wodak, 1989). Obviously, a discourse-analytic account of racism needs to tie in with these later, more critical, sociopolitical and cultural approaches to discourse.

That is to say, in my view, discourse analysis has a double aim: a systematic theoretical and descriptive account of (a) the structures and strategies, at various levels, of written and spoken discourse, seen both as a textual “object” and as a form of sociocultural practice and interaction, and (b) the relationships of these properties of text and talk with the relevant structures of their cognitive, social, cultural, and historical “contexts.” In sum, discourse analysis studies “text in context.” The critical momentum of such an approach lies in the special focus on relevant sociopolitical issues, and especially makes explicit the ways power abuse of dominant groups and its resulting inequality are enacted, expressed, legitimated, or challenged in or by discourse. This critical orientation in discourse analysis also allows us to make a significant contribution to the study of racism.

Discourse and Racism

It is within this complex framework of the study of discourse that we need to examine, more specifically, the role of text and talk in the social, political, and cultural structures and processes that define the system of ethnic and racial dominance of white groups over minorities. The logic of these relationships is relatively straightforward; the argumentation features the following steps:

1. The white dominant group is able to reproduce its abuse of power only through an integrated system of discriminatory practices and sustaining ideologies and other social cognitions.
2. Part of the discriminatory practices are directly enacted by text and talk directed against minority groups, for example, by derogation, intimidation, inferiorization, and exclusion in everyday conversations, institutional dialogues, letters, evaluative reports, laws, and many other forms of institutional text and talk directed to minority groups and their members. Given the official norm against discrimination and racism, whites will not normally admit such discriminatory practices to other whites, at least not in official contexts of inquiry. This means, methodologically, that such practices should primarily be accessed through the accounts of everyday discrimination experiences of minorities themselves (Essed, 1991).
3. At the same time, however, the social cognitions of white group members about minorities are developed, changed, or confirmed so as to maintain the overall social cognitive framework that supports discriminatory actions in the first place. Whereas discriminatory acts may be verbal or nonverbal, influencing the social minds of white group members is mainly discursive: Majority group members often speak and write about minorities, and thus persuasively formulate and communicate personal and socially shared opinions, attitudes, and ideologies. This chapter focuses on this kind of “majority discourse about ethnic affairs.”

These three “modes” of the discursive enactment and reproduction of racism should be understood within the framework of a broader theory of social group dominance based on discourse. That is, if (social) dominance is simply defined as the abuse of power with the goal of

maintaining self-serving inequality, such as unequal access to socially valued resources, we need to know how power and power abuse may be implemented by discourse. Theoretically, my approach to the discursive reproduction of racism analyzes discourse as an interface between both macro and micro levels of racism (that is, between racism as a system of ethnic group dominance and racism as everyday discriminatory practice), and between social actions and cognitions (again at the micro and macro levels, namely, as actions and ideologies of groups or institutions, and as actions and attitudes of social members). Obviously, such insights should contribute to a broader, multidisciplinary study of contemporary racism, which will not be further detailed in this chapter (see, e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Essed, 1991; Katz & Taylor, 1988; Marable, 1984; Miles, 1989; Omi & Winant, 1986; Wellman, 1977; see also the other chapters in this volume).

Mental Models and Social Cognition

Social and political analyses of power and dominance usually focus on groups, social formations, classes, or institutions. Occasionally, more cognitive notions, such as “consciousness” or “ideology,” may also be involved, but the sociopsychological dimensions of these rather vague notions tend to be neglected. In order to link discourse with the social situations and structures of ethnic and racial inequality, the theoretical framework employed here features a powerful and crucial *sociocognitive interface* of both personal mental models and socially shared mental representations.

Such social representations include (a) general knowledge about the rules of language, discourse, and communication; (b) other “world knowledge,” such as “scripts” of stereotypical episodes (e.g., “going to the movies” or “participating in a demonstration”); (c) general opinion schemata or attitudes (e.g., about “immigration” or “affirmative action”); and (d) more fundamental ideological systems that construe and organize these attitudes, such as in terms of basic norms, values, interests, or goals of groups (e.g., sexism, xenophobia). That is, the “prejudice” component in a theory of racism is accounted for in terms of such social cognitions, and especially in terms of its “evaluative” parts, namely, attitudes and ideologies. Note, however, that this approach to social cognition has a less individualistic orientation than in much contemporary social psychology (see, e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1984), and focuses especially also on the social context (acquisition, uses,

institutional embeddings) of social representations of people as group members (van Dijk, 1990).

Another cognitive notion needed in our account of discursive dominance and influence is that of a mental model (Johnson-Laird, 1983; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). A model is a personal, ad hoc, and unique mental representation of an event or situation, such as one personally experienced or heard/read about. Such a model is a subjective representation of the relevant structures of the event (setting, participants, actions, and so on), but it may also include a personal evaluation (opinion) about the event. Each time we read a text—for instance, a news report in the press—we either recall and update a relevant old model on the same event (e.g., “Skinheads attacked refugees in Germany in the fall of 1991”) or build a new model about a new event we now witness or hear or read about (van Dijk, 1985a, 1987b).

Such models are not built from scratch: Not only may they embody fragments of old models, they also feature particular instantiations of more general social beliefs (scripts, attitudes). That is, even personal, unique models of an event may have a strong social dimension: In my personal model about the German skinhead attacks, gradually construed from my reading of many newspaper and television news reports, I share with others some knowledge about Germany, skinheads, refugees, and so on, and maybe also personal versions of more general opinions about skinheads, racial attacks, or the reactions against these attacks by German politicians. Conversely, scripts and attitudes are developed by generalizing and abstracting from those model fragments we share with others.

One special type of mental model is the kind built by speech participants of the present communicative situation. This *context model* features self- and other representations of the speech participants; of their goals; of ongoing action and interaction; of the type of communicative event; of time, location, or setting; and so on. This context model monitors which information or opinions language users will take from their models of events as relevant input for discourse production. Indeed, the context model may “warn” speakers not to voice their personal opinions about minorities in some situations, or at least to mitigate them with such well-known disclaimers as “I have nothing against refugees, but” Hence context models feature particular instantiations of general attitudes and norms about appropriate communication, about the own group, and so on. That is, context models monitor the well-known processes of face keeping and positive self-presentation in talk and text. In sum, each text or talk is monitored by underlying (a) (event) models, (b) context models, and—often indirectly, that is, through models—(c) social cognitions (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies).

With these few cognitive notions at hand, which also explain part of the crucial “context” of text and talk, we now have a more sophisticated instrument to use in detailing further the issues of discursive and communicative power and dominance.

Discourse and Dominance

Basically, the enactment of social power entails (more or less legitimate or illegitimate) social control over others (for details about the very complex notion of power, see Lukes, 1986). This control applies to the range of possible actions and cognitions of others: More powerful actors have the means and resources to influence the actions or the minds of the less powerful. However, because actions are also cognitively based (on intentions, that is, on mental models of future activities), we may assume that, with the exception of the exercise of bodily force, most forms of power enactment first of all control the minds of people. Since mind control is typically one of the goals and consequences of text and talk, systematic discourse analysis also allows us to examine the detailed enactment of power and power abuse, and hence dominance, ethnic dominance, and racism (van Dijk, 1989).

To take a first example from the realm of discourse to illustrate this form of control, consider the use of directive speech acts. Even in direct commands, orders, or threats, in which more powerful social actors tell others to (not) do something, these others have the freedom to refuse, although various sanctions may in practice limit such freedom considerably: People may in that case prefer to comply rather than to incur the physical, social, or economic sanctions implied by the directive speech acts. Thus the police or immigration officers may abuse their power by threatening “illegal” immigrants with expulsion if they do not comply with specific police demands. Discursive power here consists of directly limiting the freedom (to act) of less powerful others by making the others know about possible sanctions.

In the same way, judges, professors, politicians, and employers are able to control minority group members directly by more or less (il)legitimately constraining their freedom to act or their participation in socially desired social values—that is, with physical, social, or economic sanctions (such as prison sentences, low grades, or harsh legis-

lation) or by firing or not hiring minorities, respectively. Discourse power in this case is a direct function of social power: Outside their own power domain these social actors may, almost literally, have nothing or little “to say” over others. Note, however, that direct discursive racism is involved when majority actors feel entitled to thus control minorities with directive speech acts only because of their dominant group membership.

Most power in contemporary society, however, is less directly coercive. Often, in interaction, it may be subtly negotiated. People may be controlled to act more or less voluntarily according to the interests or wishes of the more powerful. That is, it may be much more effective to control the minds of others through persuasion—by making them comply out of their own free will. Even more than in coercive forms of power abuse, such persuasive dominance is typically enacted by discourse.

This more subtle mental control through discourse can take many forms. Thus actions often presuppose knowledge about specific events or situations (that is, mental models). This means that actions may be indirectly controlled through influence on the models that monitor them. This typically may be the result of providing wrong, biased, or self-interested information, or by withholding relevant information about such events and situations, as may be the case in scholarly reports or news reports. Through repeated exposure to such biased models (for instance, about “black crime” or “economic refugees”), recipients of such discourse may—without alternative sources of information—generalize from such models and form equally biased, socially shared attitudes, such as ethnic prejudices. Prejudices need not be formed, however, through generalization and abstraction from biased models. Racist discourse may also directly express and convey general ethnic attitudes, for instance, in racial slurs and in well-known over-generalizations (e.g., “Turks are . . .”).

Once these ethnic prejudices are firmly established, they will in turn control new models, and hence the future perceptions and actions of dominant group members. These negative social attitudes may further be generalized toward even more embracing and fundamental, and hence monitoring, ideologies. Although the mental representations, strategies, and processes involved here are vastly complex, and also require a detailed account of their sociocultural contexts, we may conclude that discourse dominance may be defined as the communicative control of knowledge, beliefs, and opinions of those who have few (re)sources to oppose such influence. This also means that the discursive control of ethnic attitudes—and, indirectly, of discrimination—is a prominent component in the overall system of the enactment and reproduction of racism.

Elite Discourse and Racism

Not all whites participate equally in the discursive reproduction of racism. Elites, by definition, have more power and hence more control over and access to the means of public communication, such as official propaganda, information campaigns, the mass media, advertising, scholarly publications, textbooks, and many other forms of public and potentially influential discourse about ethnic affairs. This implies that the ethnic consensus is largely preformulated and persuasively conveyed, top-down, by various (symbolic) elites, such as politicians, bureaucrats, scholars, journalists, writers, and columnists, as well as corporate managers. Despite conflicting interests between elites in other domains, their interests in the domain of ethnic affairs are largely similar; that is, they are those of the white dominant group. This also becomes clear in the many interactions and mutual influences of elite discourses on ethnic affairs: Scholarly reports are being read by politicians and journalists, politicians in turn are being heard and quoted by journalists, and the media are being read by all other elites. Instead of an elite conspiracy, however, we have routine communicative cooperation, coordination, and the joint production of the contents and the boundaries of an ethnic consensus, with the usual variation between liberal and conservative tenets, of course. Ignoring many other dimensions of the sociocultural and political backgrounds of the reproduction of racism, this will be the major context for the study of the “texts” of these reproduction and communication processes below (for details on elite racism, see van Dijk, 1993).

Text Analysis

In this complex theoretical framework, then, I shall now focus on some properties of this elite discourse, and again highlight the methodological implications of such an inquiry. Although discourse analyses may be very technical and sophisticated, depending on the aims of an inquiry, I will remain as informal as possible here and limit a potentially large number of references to a minimum (for details, see, e.g., Brown

& Yule, 1983; van Dijk, 1985b). My point here is not to give an introduction to discourse analysis, but to highlight some of the links (and their problems) between discourse structures and the sociocultural and political dimensions of racism (see also Wodak et al., 1989). Given the theoretical remarks made above, this means that I will focus on those aspects of text and talk that are particularly suitable for use by elites in controlling the minds of others. It is methodologically very important to stress, however, that such structures are not “racist,” as such: Their functions in the reproduction of racism also depend on the sociocultural and political context, for instance, on the speech participants, their social cognitions, and the group(s) of which they are members.

Surface Structures

Discourse structures are often informally divided into *surface* structures and *deep* or *underlying* structures. Although all (abstract) structures are of course invisible, while mental or theoretical constructs, surface structures are usually associated with the forms of language use one can see or hear, such as sounds, intonations, gestures, letters, graphic displays, words, and the order of words in a sentence. These surface structures are typically accounted for in such linguistic or semiotic subdisciplines as phonology, morphology, and syntax, or in the—still unnamed—discipline of written or graphical structures of discourse. Underlying structures are usually associated with meaning, or (inter)action, and sometimes with cognitive phenomena, such as mental representations or strategies of understanding and production.

With this scholarly metaphor of surface versus underlying structures, common in many disciplines, we assume that the underlying structures, such as meaning or action, are being “expressed” or “realized” in surface structures. I shall be brief about surface structures, but it should be recalled that meaning structures require surface structure expressions or “coding,” and these surface structures again are crucial in the comprehension of discourse. The reason I focus on meaning structures is that they have a more direct and explicit link with ethnic knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies that we assume to be controlled in discursive dominance.

One good reason, however, to account also for surface structures in the analysis of discursive dominance is that they are less and less easily controlled by speakers than “content” or meaning. In spontaneous conversations, speakers may make pauses, hesitate, correct themselves,

or otherwise show less “fluency.” This may signal lack of knowledge or confidence but also, as I have seen in my own work on conversations about minorities, functional hesitations about the “correct” way to speak about delicate issues such as ethnic affairs (van Dijk, 1987a). This suggests that self-monitoring, based on the present context model, may be particularly strong in talk about ethnic affairs. That is, detailed analysis of seemingly incidental properties of everyday talk may reveal much about the underlying mental strategies and representations of majority group members, such as whether or not their opinions about minorities are in line with the general formal norm (of tolerance) or those of the recipient.

Similarly, a boss, judge, or professor may seemingly make a “friendly request,” but the “tone” of the request, featuring intonation, pitch, loudness, gestures, and face work, may still convey the implication of an unfriendly command (for a survey, see, e.g., Berger, 1985). If such a command violates norms of interaction, such a violation may be characteristic of many forms of everyday racism directed against minority group members (for instance, if it has no acceptable excuse, and if it is only because the recipient does not belong to the majority group) (Essed, 1991). In sum, although usually dependent on meaning, surface structures may more or less directly signal such psychological dimensions of discourse and interaction as speech production processes, opinions, emotions, and “true intentions.” This is the case not only in dialogical interaction *with* minorities, but also when dominant group members speak *about* minorities. In this case, negative opinions about minority groups may be expressed and conveyed by intonation or gestures that may be inconsistent with seemingly “tolerant” meanings.

Somewhat closer to underlying meanings are the *syntactic structures* of sentences, for instance, word order or the use of active or passive constructions. Thus, among other things, word order may express the role and the prominence of underlying meanings. In the description of action, for instance, the responsible agent of an action is usually referred to with the expression that is a syntactic subject of the sentence, and that occurs in first position. Other roles, such as patient, experiencer, object, or location, are usually expressed later in the sentence. Thus order may signal how speakers interpret events, that is, what their mental models of such events look like.

Thus if majority speakers want to mitigate negative actions of their own group members, they may tend to make their agency less prominent, for instance, by expressing the agent role later in the sentence, as

in the passive sentence “A group of black youths was harassed by police officers,” or by wholly omitting such an agent, for instance, in headlines: “Black youths harassed.” Similarly, agents may also be concealed through the use of nominalizations instead of full clauses, as in “The harassment of black youths was a major cause of the riots in Brixton.” The converse may be true if speakers or writers want to emphasize the negative actions of out-group members. Thus when black youths engage in deviant actions, we may expect that they will be prominently mentioned, as semantic agents and syntactic subjects, early in the sentence (Fowler, 1991; Fowler et al., 1979; van Dijk, 1991). Here is one example from the British press that combines both tendencies: There is no doubt about the identity and the qualifications of the Asians, *but who* attacked the Asians is not mentioned:

[Four Asians acquitted] They were among a mob of 50 Asians who smashed up an East London pub after a series of hammer attacks on other Asians. (*Sun*, August 14)

This may also be the case for the order of the text as a whole, for instance, in a news report, in which information that is found to be important will be highlighted by its placement early in the report, as in the headline or in the lead (van Dijk, 1988a). Hence textual order may express or signal prominence, relevance, importance, or interestingness, according to the mental models, and hence the possibly biased opinions, of the author. As the overall strategy of much majority discourse about minorities is to emphasize the positive properties of *us* and the negative ones of *them*, we may generally expect discourse to code such a strategy also at the level of its surface structures, that is, in intonation, gestures, face work, and the order of words and sentences in the text, as in the following characteristic headline:

WEST INDIAN GANG INVADED PUB IN REVENGE RIOT (*Telegraph*, August 23)

This may even be the case for graphic or visual expressions such as the position of news reports (front page versus inside pages, top or bottom of page), size and fonts of headlines and leads, and the use of photographs (Hodge & Kress, 1988). If pictures of police actions or of “drug scenes” often feature Blacks as suspects (and not as police officers), such visual information may be a compelling means for the

interpretation of texts, and hence for the formation of (biased) models of the events the texts are about. Indeed, such visuals may “racialize” or “ethnicize” models that would otherwise simply be about “crime” or “drugs.”

Surface structures not only code for underlying models of speakers. Given more or less the same meaning, stylistic variations of expressions, they may also be a function of the sociocultural context. Thus, depending on who is speaking to whom, or about whom, we may expect stylistic differences that may “mark” class, gender, ethnicity, social position, and, more generally, relations of dominance (Scherer & Giles, 1979). Familiarity, formality, (im)politeness, deference, respect, and many other social attitudes or properties of social situations and actions may thus be subtly expressed through variable surface structures (Giles & Coupland, 1991). This also characterizes ethnic encounters, as well as talk about minorities, and may therefore be used to enact, emphasize, or confirm dominance and inequality between “us” and “them.” Lack of the usual markers of respect or politeness, for instance, may be a typical way of subtly derogating or inferiorizing minority participants in or referents of discourse.

Lexical Style

At the boundary of surface structure “forms” and underlying meanings, studies of “political language” often focus on lexical style, that is, on the context-dependent use of “words” (Edelman, 1977; Geis, 1987). Even more than sounds, graphics, and syntax, such variations in the very choice of words may signal vast underlying complexes of contextual significance. The wornout example of “freedom fighters” versus “terrorists” is a case in point. In the lexical description of the properties and actions of majority versus minority groups, we find the major surface manifestations of underlying mental models of ethnic events, and hence of ethnic prejudices. Whereas in modern public discourse about ethnic affairs overt racist abuse has become rare or marginalized, signaling of negative associations may occur rather subtly. The very changes during the past few decades in the descriptions and names of various minority groups (e.g., coloreds, Negroes, Blacks, Afro-Americans, African Americans) show how closely lexical style may follow changing attitudes, and this is even more the case for the large register of words of racist abuse of minority groups.

In recent conservative political and media discourse about refugees in Germany, the term *Asylanten* (asylees) is often used instead of *Asylbewerber* (applicants for asylum, asylum seekers), which, however, recalls many other negative words in German ending in *anten*, such as *Simulanten* (simulators, frauds) (Link, 1990). Similarly, in several European countries, the term *economic refugees* has received wide currency for denoting all those who, according to authorities, are not true or bona fide political refugees. That is, a seemingly respectable bureaucratic term is used to conceal a negative political-legal judgment: They are only “fake” refugees (van Dijk, 1988b).

Whereas minorities allegedly engaging in crime, riots, or drug trafficking may routinely be described in negative terms, there are some limits to the overt forms of lexical derogation in contemporary public discourse. However, white or unspecified group dissidents or ideological and political opponents, such as leftist antiracists, may safely be described by a panoply of harshly negative words taken from the registers of animals, mental illness, or oppression, as are the following words used in the British press (see van Dijk, 1991):

snoopers (*Daily Telegraph*, August 1, editorial)
 a noisy mob of activist demonstrators (*Daily Telegraph*, September 23) these
 dismal fanatics, monstrous creatures (*Daily Telegraph*, September 26)
 unscrupulous or feather-brained observers (*Daily Telegraph*, September 30)
 the British race relations pundits (*Daily Telegraph*, October 1)
 Trotzkyites, socialist extremists, Revolutionary Communists, Marxists and
 Black militants (*Daily Telegraph*, October 9)
 race conflict “high priests” (*Daily Telegraph*, October 11)
 bone-brained Left-fascism (*Daily Telegraph*, November 30, editorial)
 the multi-nonsense brigade (*Daily Telegraph*, January 11)
 mob of left-wing crazies (Mail, September 24)
 THE RENT-A-RIOT AGITATORS (Mail, September 30)
 what a goon [said about Bernie Grant] (Mail, October 10, Frank Chapple)
 he and his henchmen ... this obnoxious man, left-wing inquisitor [about
 Grant] (Mail, October 18)
 SNOOPERS, untiring busibodies (*Sun*, August 2, editorial)
 blinkered tyrants (*Sun*, September 6)
 left-wing crackpots (*Sun*, September 7)
 a pack trying to hound Ray Honeyford (*Sun*, September 25)

unleashing packs of Government snoopers (*Sun*, October 16)
 the hysterical “anti-racist” brigade.... the Ayatolabs of Bradford, the left-wing anti-racist mob (*Sun*, October 23)

Meaning

Although surface structures are the more “visible” part of discourse, language users are mainly oriented toward meaning. Depending on the meanings of words, sentences, and whole texts, the surface structures may also take on different associations. The variable meanings of words have already been described above. The same is true for the syntactic expression of variable roles (agents, patients) of participants described in sentences. In the more complex semantic structures of whole sentences and texts, however, there are other means to convey or signal speaker perspective, underlying opinions, or contextual structures. Of this vast number of semantic properties of discourse we examine only a few that are particularly relevant for the issues discussed in this chapter.

Perspective. Events are usually described from a specific perspective. This may literally be the point of view from which events are seen, or more generally the social or political “position” of the speaker. Thus “race riots” are often described in the media from the perspective of the police, or from that of (white) officials or “experts,” as is also often true for camera positions in news film (Wilson & Gutiérrez, 1985). Perspective may be expressed or more indirectly signaled in many ways, for example, by the choice of specific verbs (as in *buying* versus *selling*, or *coming* versus *going*), but also more generally appears in lexical items, sentence structure, and the overall meaning of propositions. Thus, from the point of view of victims or that of an antidiscrimination organization, it may be true that “Blacks were discriminated against during the recruitment procedure,” whereas this claim may be represented by the press as “Blacks were *allegedly* discriminated against” or “Blacks claimed they were “discriminated” against.” In the same way, acts of racism are rather differently described by victims and perpetrators, or more generally from the perspective of majority group members or that of minority group members. As soon as descriptions of ethnic events may imply negative properties of the majority, and especially of white elites, they may be seen as “controversial,” and such a controversial interpretation is usually marked with quotation marks or expressions of distance or doubt. In other words, what is knowledge of minorities, based on experience and socioculturally transmitted expertise about ethnic relations, may count only as “opinion” from a white perspective (Essed, 1991). Similarly, the right-wing press may describe accusations of racism as “branding” someone a racist, an expression that is not used

in self-description: One does not say, "I branded him a racist." Similarly, the use of context-dependent pronouns (called *deictics*) may signal perspective, as is most obvious in the well-known opposition between *us* and *them*. Who belongs to "our" people or lives in "our" country depends very much on who is speaking, and with whom the speaker identifies (J. Wilson, 1990). In sum, descriptions of ethnic events should be carefully examined for the various perspectives that are signaled by the words used in the description.

Implications. Discourse may be seen as a semantic iceberg, of which only a few meanings are expressed "on the surface" of text and talk, whereas others' meanings remain "implicit" knowledge stored in mental models. With our knowledge of the world, however, we are usually able to infer such implicit meanings from the meanings that are actually expressed. When we read in the newspaper that "ten Tamil refugees were yesterday expelled," we may infer, among other things, that Tamil refugees were in the country, that they are now outside of the country, that the police or other officials were involved in putting them across the border, and so on (for details about this Tamil example, see van Dijk, 1988b). That is, from our social scripts we know how expulsions usually take place and such knowledge allows us to spell out a number of implications of the text in the news report. Implications play an important role in discourse and communication, also because they allow us to convey meanings that are not actually (literally) expressed in the text, for example, because such implications may be inferred anyway, or because they are irrelevant for the present communicative event, or because the speaker or writer prefers to conceal such implicit information.

In discourse about ethnic minorities, implications may specifically play a role in the strategies of positive self-presentation of white group speakers, or in the negative other presentation of minority groups. Thus when the newspaper reports that many immigrant youths have "contacts with the police," it may thereby imply that immigrant youths are particularly criminal without actually saying so. That is, given the norm of nondiscrimination it may be too blunt to express the latter, implied, proposition. On the other hand, if we read that police officers of the city are taking lessons in Turkish, we may infer that "our" officials are doing their best to improve race relations through better contacts with Turkish immigrants. In the following example from the London *Times* the description of a policeman as someone "who lost his temper" because

of someone else shouting at him may be read to imply not only momentary lack of control and hence less responsibility, but also an excuse for his loss of temper, an excuse we never find for the actions of the Blacks in Brixton, despite the fact that their “rioting” was occasioned by the shooting of an innocent Black women:

[Brixton] A policeman at the head of one detachment lost his temper with a man who had been shouting at him and hit him in the face with his shield. (*Times*, September 30, 1985)

That such implied “excuses” for white reactions are not exceptional may be seen in the following example:

[Discrimination] A club manager banned a coloured singer after he had been mugged three times by blacks, an industrial tribunal heard yesterday. (*Mail*, August 16, 1985)

Presuppositions. A specific type of implication is presupposition. Presuppositions may be signaled in many ways in a discourse and represent the knowledge speech participants must share in order for a specific sentence to be meaningful. Again, meanings may thus be conveyed without being explicitly stated. For instance, when a corporate manager says that “lacking qualifications of minority applicants need to be eliminated by additional educational programs,” it is presupposed that such applicants *do* in fact have lacking qualifications. Such a presupposition may be induced by a negative corporate attitude about minority hiring, or by an implicit strategy to conceal other reasons for minority unemployment, such as discrimination (R. Jenkins, 1986). In the following typical example from the British press, the journalist presupposes that Britain is in fact a tolerant country:

[Racial attacks and policing] If the ordinary British taste for decency and tolerance is to come through, it will need positive and unmistakable action. (*Daily Telegraph*, August 13, 1985, editorial)

Coherence. Text and talk typically consist of sequences of sentences that express sequences of propositions. The propositions of such sequences are multiply related among each other. That is, discourses are usually more or less (made or interpreted as) “coherent.” Coherence between subsequent propositions, that is, so-called local coherence, is

first of all based on their relations with (our interpretations of) the events a discourse is about: Proposition P may be coherent with proposition Q for instance if P refers to a fact F(P) that is a condition (e.g., a cause) of the fact F(Q) denoted by proposition Q, as in “Minority unemployment was again on the increase last year. Therefore, the government persuaded employers to hire more minorities.” Similarly, propositions may also be coherent if their meanings fulfill specific functions relative to other propositions, for instance, the functions of explanation, generalization, specification, example, and contrast, as in “Minority unemployment worsened again last year. More than 40% of Dutch minority groups are now out of a job,” in which the second sentence/proposition is related to the first through the function of a specification. In other words, such meaning coherence that (partly) defines the unity of text and talk is based on our knowledge of the structures of the world: We know that unemployment of minorities is an important social issue, that improving minority employment is a government policy, and that more employment depends on employers, and that hence asking employers to employ more minorities is one of the ways to reduce minority unemployment. It is such knowledge about minorities, employers, and work that provides the structure of the situation the text is about, that is, the mental model of the speaker, and that allows specific sentences to be connected into coherent sequences.

As elsewhere in the study of discourse meaning, we see that coherence is relative; it depends on the knowledge as well as the attitudes of the speaker. Speakers may presuppose knowledge that is at least controversial, or even patently false, and thus signal coherence between sentences that is void. For instance, if a cabinet minister intimates that immigration should be reduced because of increasing resentment of majority group members against (further) immigrants, the use of “because” suggests that xenophobia is caused by immigration, that is, by immigrants and not by majority group members (or elites, such as the media) themselves (Reeves, 1983). Examples of such spurious “explanations” of ethnic relations abound in parliamentary discourse, as in the following example taken from a debate on immigration in the British House of Commons:

If we are to work seriously for harmony, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in our cities, that has to be accompanied by firm and fair immigration control. (c. 380)

In the same way, a critical analysis of discourse about ethnic relations may uncover many of the assumed beliefs of speakers or writers that subjectively define the coherence of their discourse. As is the case for implications and presuppositions, these forms of quasi-coherence thus assume a possibly biased view of ethnic affairs, and spelling out all implications and (other) presuppositions reveals what the contents and structures are of these “ethnic beliefs.”

Relations between propositions may also take the functional role of moves in an overall strategy. Thus I have already noted the role of disclaimers such as *apparent denials*, as in “I have nothing against Turks, but . . . “ and *apparent concessions*, such as “There are also intelligent Blacks, but . . . ,” in which the first part plays a role in the overall strategy of positive self-presentation, and the second part contributes to the overall negative other-presentation characterizing much discourse about minorities (van Dijk, 1987b).

Level of description and degree of completeness. Events may be described at various levels of generality and specificity (as in headlines versus the later details in a news report), and each level may again be described more or less completely. Generally, more important or news-worthy aspects of an episode tend to be described with more details. However, the relevance of such details may depend on the mental models and the ethnic attitudes of the speaker or writer. Thus in the press we may find many details about the negative acts of minorities (e.g., Black youths) and many fewer details about equally negative police actions. Indeed, the very mention of the ethnic backgrounds of news actors in crime news may itself be irrelevant for the comprehension of news reports, but such information may nevertheless be given as if it were an explanation of the actors’ actions. Similarly, why would the information about the background of Mr. Ajeeb, mayor of Bradford, in the following example be relevant?

[Comments of Mayor Ajeeb on CRE and Race Relations Act] Mr. Ajeeb, former peasant farmer from Pakistan, was speaking to . . . (*Daily Telegraph*, October 16)

Global coherence and topics. Discourse is not coherent merely at the level of subsequent sentences. It also displays overall, global coherence, for instance, by the topics that are defined for longer parts of a text or talk, or for discourse as a whole. The topics, or semantic macrostructures, define what the text “is about,” globally speaking—

for instance, a whole event—and play a fundamental role in the production and comprehension of discourse. Thus the topic is the information that is best recalled of a text, and hence also plays a primary role in influencing the audience. Discourse about ethnic affairs may thus feature specific topics such as “Minority unemployment rises to 42%,” or “Los Angeles police bludgeoned Black motorist.”

The highest topics of a news report are typically expressed in the headline and in the lead of the report. As suggested above, this also allows manipulation: Some important topics may be “downgraded” and not be expressed in the headline, whereas more detailed information of a news report may nevertheless be expressed in the headline. Thus in the coverage of two “riots” in 1985 in the British press, the occasion of these riots—the shooting death of a Black woman resulting from a police raid—was less prominently topicalized than the ensuing violence of Black youths (van Dijk, 1991).

More generally, then, it is important in the analysis of any discourse about ethnic affairs to establish what its overall coherence and major topics are, and how such topics are expressed, signaled, or otherwise given more or less prominence in the text. In analyses of news reports about ethnic affairs, of parliamentary debates, of scholarly publications, or of textbooks, we thus need to establish which topics, or more general topic classes (such as immigration or the arts), are characteristically found relevant or interesting by white elites. Much research, as well as my own, has shown, for instance, that negative topic classes such as immigration problems, crime, violence, deviance, and (unacceptable) cultural differences are among the most frequently covered in the press (Hartmann & Husband, 1974; van Dijk, 1991). More neutral or positive topics, such as the everyday lives of minorities or their contributions to the economy or culture (with the exception of popular music), tend to be covered much less than for majority group members (C. Martindale, 1986). As is also the case in everyday conversations, topics in many types of elite discourse about ethnic affairs typically focus on problematic differences, deviance, or threats of minorities, while at the same time downplaying or fully ignoring the topics that show the negative actions or cognitions of white group members, such as prejudice, discrimination, and racism.

Schemata

Much in the same way as the meanings of sentences are expressed and ordered in/by syntactic structures, the overall meaning or topics of

a discourse may be organized by more or less conventional forms or *schemata* (also called *superstructures*). Thus an argument may be globally organized by traditional schematic categories, such as premise and conclusion; everyday conversations usually begin with greetings and often end with leave-taking; scholarly articles often begin with titles, abstracts, introductions, statements of aims, and the like, and close with conclusions; and newspaper reports typically feature such categories as summary (consisting of headline + lead), recent events, context, background, verbal reactions, and evaluation.

As we have seen for many of the other structures of discourse mentioned above, such overall schematic forms may be modified in several ways, and such changes may signal elements of meaning or context that may be sociopolitically relevant. We have already seen that some lower-level topical information may thus appear in the headline, or vice versa, and that such up- or downgrading may be related to what kind of information the speaker may find more or less relevant or important. In ethnic affairs reporting, for instance, this is typically the case for positive or negative actions of minorities and majorities: Negative minority actions and positive majority actions are usually emphasized, for instance, by putting them in an early and prominent category of a text—in the headline, in the lead, in the summary, or in the conclusion. The reverse is true for positive actions of minorities and negative ones of majority group members.

Similarly, in news reports the verbal reaction category normally features quotes and hence opinions of prominent news actors or politicians. This is less so, however, when prominent minority leaders are involved or could give reactions. Instead, what we often find is the “expert” opinion of a white elite group member, especially when the topic is rather “delicate,” such as discrimination or prejudice (Downing, 1980; van Dijk, 1991).

Sometimes, categories may also be missing. For instance, in an analysis of a large number of everyday stories about minorities in various Amsterdam neighborhoods, I found that the customary resolution category following the complication category in narrative structure was often absent (about 50% of the time; van Dijk, 1987a). That is, only the problem or the predicament may be expressed and thus may highlight the fact that minorities are seen to “cause” problems, and solutions are not attempted or focused upon. Thus the structures of such stories also express the ways the events of a story are being perceived and evaluated in speaker models. Other research shows that besides the “apparent” story of an

incident (e.g., a car accident) there is usually the “real” story (e.g., about minority incompetence or threat; van Dijk, 1992).

Among the major schematic structures organizing various types of discourse, I finally should also mention argumentation. Errors and abuse in this field are specifically known as such, that is, as fallacies, and it is clear that critical argumentation analysis of discourse about minorities is of primary importance (Windisch, 1978). Tacit assumptions, once made explicit, may indicate general ethnic opinions or prejudices of speakers or writers. Consider, for instance, the following fragment from an editorial in the British tabloid the *Sun* (August 14) about recent racial attacks against Asians:

Britain’s record for absorbing people from different backgrounds, peacefully and with tolerance, is second to none. The descendants of Irish and Jewish immigrants will testify to that. It would be tragic to see that splendid reputation tarnished now.

Instead of focusing on the racist nature and the causes of racial attacks, the *Sun* argues for another perspective, namely, that this attack should be seen as an incident, as a regrettable spot on an otherwise unblemished past of racial tolerance in the United Kingdom. That is, the main point of the editorial is first supported by presuppositions and claims about British tolerance, which are in turn supported by the example of the position of the Jews and the Irish in Britain. Both “arguments” are controversial at best, but they are posited as facts that must support the (implicit) conclusion: Racial attacks are incidents and “un-British.”

Sometimes argumentation and storytelling are combined, as when a negative story about immigrants is told to support an overall negative conclusion about such immigrants. Indeed, such “foreigner stories” are seldom told with the usual communicative function of amusing the audience, but as an element in a broader argument, as support for a complaint or accusation, and generally in order to persuade the audience of the negative character of minorities.

Action, Interaction, and Speech Acts

I have stressed that discourse is not merely meaning plus expression, but also a form of social practice, action, or interaction. It is what language users “do,” “engage in,” or indeed “participate in,” most clearly so in spoken dialogue, but also in written communication such as letters, news reports, textbooks, and e-mail messages. Similarly, with specific utterances in specific contexts, we may accomplish so-called

speech acts, such as assertions, questions, requests, accusations, and promises—that is, social acts that are typically performed through verbal utterances. Thus dialogues may consist of more or less orderly exchanges of turns, which are regulated by specific rules of allocating, distributing, or appropriating next turns, or by sequences of moves in effective storytelling or argumentation. The execution of such verbal interaction may be subject to the usual properties of spontaneous speech: pauses, hesitations, self-corrections, restarts, and incomplete sentences (for details about conversational interaction, see, e.g., Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Boden & Zimmerman, 1991).

Speech acts. As is the case for other forms of action and interaction, discourse may be used and abused to enact, express, and legitimate power and dominance, as we have seen in many examples above for the expression or representation of ethnic relations. In action analysis, this becomes particularly relevant in the account of direct power abuse, for instance, in speech acts such as commands, orders, or threats when—inappropriately—used against minority group members by white group members who are not their formal superiors (Levinson, 1983). Similarly, also other “offensive” speech acts may be addressed to minorities and thus contribute to their delegitimation, exclusion, and marginalization, for instance, in accusations. Even sequences of assertions about minorities may thus indirectly function as derogation, defamation, or other verbal acts that present minorities in a negative light, as we have seen for the other levels of discourse.

Turn taking. The same is true for other aspects of action and interaction involved in the use of discourse. Thus in conversations and other dialogues speakers in principle change turns, and thereby follow strategies for the allocation and appropriation of turns. Power differences, as well as institutional rules, however, may influence such turn taking: Some speakers may refuse to let others speak, or a next speaker may continually interrupt at inappropriate places. In ethnically mixed conversations, it may happen that minority group speakers may thus be marginalized in conversations—for example, when they literally cannot get a word in edgewise. Similarly, in more formal dialogues, institutionally more powerful speakers (chairpersons, judges in courtrooms, professors in classrooms) may subtly or overtly refuse to allow minority members to speak—by not addressing them, by prohibiting their interruptions, or by curtailing the length of their speech turns (Atkinson & Drew, 1979).

Impression formation. Among the many overall strategies that may be accomplished in discursive interaction, impression management plays an important role (Goffman, 1967; Tedeschi, 1981). Speakers thus go through the moves of “saving face” and of positive self-presentation, so as to avoid making a bad impression or simply to convey a positive impression to the audience. As noted above, semantic moves such as the apparent denial “I have nothing against Blacks, but . . .” may serve as part of overall strategies of positive self-presentation. What follows after the “but” in such cases will usually be a move in the complementary strategy of racist talk, that is, negative other presentation. More generally, we have found in many types of discourse (conversations, news reports, textbooks, parliamentary debates) about ethnic affairs that positive presentation of us and negative presentation of them is a major strategy in the discursive reproduction of racism. This finding is consistent with familiar observations in social psychology about in-group versus out-group perception and presentation (D. L. Hamilton, 1981).

Politeness and deference. In a similar way, spoken discourse especially multiply signals the social distances and hierarchies between speakers and hearers. Many expressions in talk thus express politeness or deference toward the addressee, such as when the addressee is socially more powerful, has more status, or is older (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These rules may vary for different cultures. In general, we may say that ethnic dominance may also manifest itself by lack of respect, and hence lack of “normal” politeness or deference for minority speakers, as in the notorious example of the white policeman addressing famous African American psychiatrist Dr. Poussaint on the street with “What’s your name, boy?”

In sum, in discursive action and interaction there are many complex rules and strategies for effective, socially constrained communication. Ethnic dominance, like other forms of abuse of power, may thus enact or change the normal rules of appropriate dialogues, for instance, by derogating, marginalizing, or inferiorizing minority participants. Both theoretically and methodologically the upshot of this brief overview is that, given the rules and strategies of appropriate action, interaction, or discourse in specific sociocultural contexts, deviation from such rules (as when compared with those applied for majority speakers) may have the following social implications if the participants are minority group members:

1. Minorities may be virtually excluded from the communication context, through censorship or limited access, for instance, in the mass media

(e.g., as journalists, or in quotations, letters, or opinion articles of readers or experts), at scholarly conferences, in journals or other publications, at formal meetings or sessions, or in informal conversations.

2. Minorities may be admitted, but their actual rights of speaking are seriously curtailed, as in limiting or interrupting turns at speaking, or limiting the relative and context-dependent freedom of topic choice and stylistic variations.
3. Minorities may be addressed in many ways that express or signal social superiority of dominant group members, such as inappropriate directives (commands, demands, threats), impoliteness, lack of required deference, or presuppositions of inferiority (such as lack of knowledge or expertise).
4. Besides these contexts of “mixed” interaction and discourse, minorities may also be more or less subtly inferiorized, problematized, falsely accused, threatened, marginalized, or derogated in majority discourse about them, for instance, by expressing and persuasively conveying at all levels of discourse models that feature lack of respect, the misattribution of negative properties, and general instantiations of ethnic stereotypes and prejudices.

Context Analysis

In the previous sections I have repeatedly referred to elements of the “contexts” of text and talk: social cognitions, communicative situations, relations between in-groups and out-groups, institutions, and many other properties of social structure and culture that need no further analysis here. The theoretical and methodological point, however, is that critical or sociopolitical analyses of discourse as a form, expression, or means in the enactment or legitimation of ethnic inequality always need to make explicit specific discourse structures in relation to their various “contexts.” Thus meanings of discourse may be related to mental models and (through models or directly) with underlying ethnic stereotypes or prejudices, which are in turn related to the goals, interests, privileges, and sociopolitical dominance of the group to which the speakers/writers belong. Surface structures may code for hierarchical relations that are enacted, negotiated, imposed, or legitimated by discourse, for instance, by intonation, gestures, face work, or syntax. Style generally signals contextual constraints such as group membership, social distance, formality, or friendliness, among others, or positive or negative opinions about “others” talked to, or talked about. That is, given a body of text or talk, we may infer properties of

the social context, such as an unequal relation between speech participants or people talked about.

Conversely, we may also, as would be most obvious in a sociopolitical approach to racism, analyze the various patterns of ethnic inequality, and then proceed to find evidence in various types of discourse for the ways such inequality is enacted, expressed, signaled, coded, referred to, presupposed, confirmed, described, defended, legitimated, or persuasively conveyed among majority group members. For instance, immigration in Europe may involve selective exclusion of non-European people of color, and we may want to know exactly how such exclusion is prepared, discussed, decided upon, executed, defended, or otherwise legitimated in various types of political, legal, or media discourse, such as in cabinet meetings, parliamentary debates, police interrogations, court trials, or sessions of special legal bodies. Once such a specific “domain corpus” is established, a more detailed analysis may be made of the discourse structures mentioned above: How are refugees or immigrants actually addressed and talked about?

The critical and practical relevance of such analyses is that in situations where tolerance, equal rights, and the rule of law are officially respected, discourse may subtly signal that this is not the case. Even moderate feelings of superiority, stereotypes, prejudice, and de facto relations of social inequality defining “modern” racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986) may be involuntarily presupposed, expressed, or signaled in text and talk. That is, critical discourse analysis may literally reveal processes of racism that otherwise would be difficult to establish, or that would be formally denied by the majority participants. In this respect discourse analysis may yield an instrument that may provide insights that contribute to the establishment or confirmation of counter ideologies that in turn support dissent and counterpower.

A Sample Analysis

In order to illustrate further the various principles and notions discussed above, I will now finally give a somewhat more detailed (although still very succinct) analysis of a longer example. This is also necessary for a more structured insight into the many relationships in discourse: Discourse properties must always be examined in their mutual relations and relative to their specific sociocultural contexts.

The example is a fragment of a debate held on April 16, 1985, in the British House of Commons about the well-known Honeyford affair in 1985. Honeyford was a headmaster of a school with a large majority of Asian children in Bradford, England. He was first suspended, then reinstated after a court decision in his favor, but finally dismissed with a golden handshake, because of his writings against multicultural education. Many of his opponents, including the parents of his students, considered these writings to be racist. British conservatives and especially the right-wing press supported Honeyford as their “hero,” who was being harassed, as also our speaker claims, by “anti-racist busibodies” for telling the “truth” about multicultural education.

The speaker in this fragment is Mr. Marcus Fox, Conservative MP and representative of Shipley.

Mr. Marcus Fox (Shipley): This Adjournment debate is concerned with Mr. Ray Honeyford, the headmaster of Drummond Road Middle School, Bradford. This matter has become a national issue—not from Mr. Honeyford’s choice. Its consequences go beyond the issue of race relations or, indeed, of education. They strike at the very root of our democracy and what we cherish in this House above all—the freedom of speech.

One man writing an article in a small-circulation publication has brought down a holocaust on his head. To my mind, this was a breath of fresh air in the polluted area of race relations....

Who are Mr. Honeyford’s detractors? Who are the people who have persecuted him? They have one thing in common—they are all on the Left of British politics. The Marxists and the Trots are here in full force. We only have to look at their tactics, and all the signs are there. Without a thread of evidence, Mr. Honeyford has been vilified as a racist. Innuendoes and lies have been the order of the day. He has been criticised continuously through the media, yet most of the time he has been barred from defending himself and denied the right to answer those allegations by order of the education authority. The mob has taken to the streets to harass him out of his job....

The race relations bullies may have got their way so far, but the silent majority of decent people have had enough. . . . The withdrawal of the right to free speech from this one man could have enormous consequences and the totalitarian forces ranged against him will have succeeded....

... He [Honeyford] dared to suggest that in a classroom dominated by coloured children white children suffer educationally. Mr. Honeyford should know, because in his school 92 percent of the children are of Asian origin. If he had commented the other way round, that in a school with 92 percent white children the 8 percent coloured children were at a disadvantage, he would have been praised by his present detractors, not vilified.

Mr. Michael Meadowcroft (Leeds, West): Not so.

Mr. Fox: It is all right the hon. Gentleman saying "Not so." Let him just listen to what I have to say.

Mr. Meadowcroft: I have listened.

Mr. Fox: The hon. Gentleman has not heard half yet. In practice Mr. Honeyford is trying to rectify the situation in his school by emphasising that all his children are British—I see that the hon. Gentleman agrees; that is hopeful—and that English should be their mother tongue. (*Hansard*, April 16, 1985, cols. 233-236)

Unlike the theoretical approach taken above, which began with the analysis of the surface structures of text and talk, and then proceeded to the "underlying" structures, my analysis of this sample begins with some remarks about the various contextual properties of the debate, then moves to action and interaction structures, and finally to the semantic, schematic, and surface structures of this fragment. Most steps in the analysis correspond to the notions introduced above, which will not be further explained here.

Context

Access. Mr. Fox is allowed to speak, in this context, because he has permission of the Speaker of the House, and more generally is entitled to speak because he is an elected MP. In other words, access may be "layered" at several levels: It may be constrained contextually, here and now, or it may be constrained generally, or generically, for specific types of communicative events, contexts, and speech participants. For the overall sociopolitical structure of the reproduction of racism in the United Kingdom, such access is crucial: It means that those who oppose a multicultural society, write in extremist right-wing publications, and are considered racists by minority groups may be symbolically "represented" at the

highest level of political decision making and thus even influence legislation on multicultural education.

Setting, medium, and audience. Mr. Fox, speaking in the House of Commons, shares in the power of all MPs as it is also symbolized by the setting of his talk. Since television has recently entered the House of Commons, such symbols are also relevant for the public “overhearers” of parliamentary debate. That is, through the media, the setting of this fragment extends beyond Parliament, which has British society as a whole as its indirect scope (as is also clear from the meaning, to be addressed below). Whatever MPs say in their powerful function of elected legislators is thus further enhanced by the formal setting of their speech and the presence of an audience of other MPs. Locally, Mr. Fox’s power and influence coincides with his having the floor, marked not only by his speaking, but also by his standing up while the other MPs are seated. However, besides his power as an MP, Mr. Fox, in the broader setting of his speech, has even more power, as a spokesman of the Conservative Right and all those opposing multiculturalism in the United Kingdom (see below).

Genre. One other important element of context constraining the properties of text and talk is the type or genre of text and talk involved, here a parliamentary speech. Particularly, the lexical style, formal topic announcement (“This debate is about . . .”), and forms of address in this fragment signal this genre. For our analysis of the elite reproduction of racism, we may simply observe that the discursive processes involved in this reproduction process are operating at the highest genre levels in the legislature.

Social action and social relations. This speech fragment expresses or signals various social meanings and categories of social interaction. At the interaction level itself, politeness is signaled by the formal modes of address (“the honorable Gentleman”), whereas political closeness may be marked by “my friend . . .” Since the politeness markers are mutual here, social power relations seem to be equal, although it should be recalled that Mr. Fox is member of a government party that is able to control much of the parliamentary agenda and that therefore is able to hold a parliamentary debate on Honeyford in the first place. That is, the very speech of Mr. Fox signals social and political dominance.

At another level of social relations, however, that is, relative to the social situation and events talked about by Mr. Fox, there is no question of formal equality. By defending Mr. Honeyford, Mr. Fox also attacks their common, leftist, antiracist opponents, and because of his powerful position as an MP he adds considerable weight to the balance of power

of this conflict between Honeyford and the parents of his students, as is also the case for the right-wing media supporting Honeyford. We see how the conservative elites, who may otherwise be little interested in “ordinary” teachers, may take part in the struggle between racism and antiracism, between “British values” and the values of multiculturalism scorned by Mr. Honeyford.

Indeed, rather surprisingly, Mr. Honeyford was even personally received by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at 10 Downing Street, which again signals the highest support for his case. Similarly, that a conflict of a headmaster became a topic of a parliamentary debate by itself already suggests the importance accorded to the conflict, and to the sociopolitical positions to be defended at all costs. Finally, the association of Honeyford’s opponents (mostly Asian parents) with Marxists and “Trots” not only means that the case of these opponents is discredited against the backdrop of largely anticommunist consensus in the United Kingdom, but also, more politically, that the Labour opposition to which Mr. Fox’s speech is primarily addressed is thus attacked and discredited. Below, we shall see how such attacks, marginalization, discrediting, and other sociopolitical acts are enacted by properties of discourse. Here, it should be emphasized that the ultimate functions of such a speech are not merely linguistic or communicative (expressing or conveying meaning), but political.

Participant positions and roles. We have seen that Mr. Fox obviously speaks in his role as MP, and as a member of the Conservative party, among several other social identities, such as being a politician, white, and male. This position institutionally entitles him to put the Honeyford case on the parliamentary agenda if he and his party deem the issue to be of national interest. Obviously, however, it is not only his role of conservative MP that influences the structures and strategies of his speech, but also his identity as a member of the white dominant group, and especially his identity as a member of the white elites. Thus his party-political position explains why he attacks Labour, and the Left in general, his being an MP influences his alleged concern for democracy and the freedom of speech, and his being white explains his collusion with racist practices and his aggression against Indian parents and their supporters.

Interaction

Turn taking. It should first be noted that in this *Hansard* transcript it appears that the change of turns follows the rules of appropriate dialogical

interruptions: there is no overlap, and speakers are even able to finish whole clauses or sentences. Note also that since most parliamentary speeches are read, speakers may often ignore interruptions and continue reading their discourse. They literally “have the floor” as long as the House Speaker allows it, and interruptions need not be attended or replied to, even when they are heard in the first place. In this example, however, the speaker does react to an interruption, which suggests that the point of the interruption is too important to leave unattended or the criticism too serious to remain unchallenged, or, possibly, the opponent too well known, prominent, or powerful to ignore. Thus ignoring or not ignoring interruptions in formal dialogues may have many reasons and functions, one of which is the (relative) power of the speech participants involved (for a further analysis of the political role of interruptions in Parliament, see Carbó, 1992).

Apparently, what is taking place here is a small conflict about speaking and listening between two MPs. That is, they momentarily do not speak about the topic of debate, the Honeyford affair, but about the ongoing discourse and interaction itself. Mr. Meadowcroft begins this exchange by interrupting Mr. Fox, and by denying Mr. Fox’s last statement. Mr. Fox then first seems to accept the interruption, but then invites his opponent to listen, which presupposes that he thinks Mr. Meadowcroft did not listen, a presupposition that the latter challenges in a next turn.

The request by Mr. Fox (“Let him just listen”) is, however, more than a request that Mr. Meadowcroft listen. It is also a reproach, first because Mr. Meadowcroft has interrupted the speaker in an early stage of his speech, but also, as he claims, that Mr. Meadowcroft has violated another norm of appropriate interaction, namely, that conversational participants are supposed to listen, so that the reproach may also be interpreted as an accusation and hence as an attack on the opponent. Indeed, from our knowledge about parliamentary rules, we may, even without considering the actual content of the dispute—whether or not Honeyford has acted in a racist way—infer from this exchange that Mr. Meadowcroft is part of the opposition, and not a member of Mr. Fox’s party. Thus conversational conflict here also signals and symbolizes political conflict on ethnic affairs.

Interestingly, the interaction even goes beyond a rejection of interruption, a reproach of not listening, and an attack on an opponent. Mr. Fox knows very well that Mr. Meadowcroft has listened, simply because the latter’s interruption, “Not so,” is a relevant continuation, to

the point, and an appropriate denial of the preceding assertion of Mr. Fox. The reproach of “not listening,” thus, is rather a rhetorical strategy, namely, to translate into a “metacomment” (about the interaction itself) a rejection of what takes place at the level of the interaction and the flow of discourse, namely, that Mr. Meadowcroft explicitly denies the last statement, and hence explicitly signals that Mr. Fox is wrong.

When Mr. Fox takes his turn again, he reacts to the previous interruption and the further reaction of his opponent, by emphasizing again that Mr. Meadowcroft was “speaking out of turn,” simply because, as Fox claims, he “*hasn’t heard half yet.*” In other words, Mr. Meadowcroft is accused of speaking too early. Note that in the middle of the next sentence, Mr. Fox seems to react to a nonverbal (nontranscribed) signal of Mr. Meadowcroft that Fox interprets as an agreement, and hence welcomes (“*hopeful*”) as a small victory in an argumentative debate.

Address. Although there are many other interactional strands and layers that may be analyzed in this small fragment, I close this brief analysis of the interactional dimension of this fragment by noting the formality of the exchange: The speakers do not address each other by the pronoun *you*, or even by first or last name, but by using the third-person deictic *he* and the standard address phrase here transcribed with an abbreviation, *hon. Gentleman*. Apart from their purely ritual nature as defined by the rules of address in Parliament, such forms of address are of course also signals of politeness, deference, and formality, if not of collective institutional “face work,” by which the “real” conflicts, oppositions, and power plays may be masked. I shall come back to this power play below.

Speech acts. Most of Mr. Fox’s speech consists of assertions, and also at the global level of macro speech acts, he primarily accomplishes an assertion. However, we have observed that, indirectly, he also accuses Honeyford’s “detractors” of vilification, lying, and intimidation. At the same time, he thereby accuses and attacks his Labour opponents, whom he sees as supporters of Honeyford. Again, within Parliament his accusations and allegations may be met by appropriate defense by his sociopolitical equals. Not so, however, beyond the boundaries of Parliament, where his accusations may be heard (literally, over the radio) or read (when quoted in the press) by millions, who may thus be exposed to biased information about Honeyford’s opponents (most of whom are not Marxists or Trotzkyites at all). For other discussion on the role of elites in the reproduction of racism, this means that the function and the scope of speech participants may largely define the effectiveness and

“authority” of their speech acts. Indeed, other supporters of Honeyford may legitimate their support by referring to such accusations in Parliament. We shall see below how the accusation is actually carried out and supported by (semantic) “evidence.”

Schemata

Argumentation. One major form of text schema is argumentation. Also in Mr. Fox’s speech, as in parliamentary debates in general, argumentation plays a prominent role. As we have seen above, his main political point coincides with his argument’s “position,” which consists of his opinion that an attack against Honeyford is an attack against democracy and the freedom of speech. How does he support such a position? His first argument is a negative description of the facts: One man who writes in a “small-circulation” publication has brought a “holocaust” on his head. In other words: Whatever Honeyford has written, it was insignificant (published in a “small-circulation” publication), and the reaction was massively destructive (a “holocaust”). Moreover, what he wrote was also a “breath of fresh air in the polluted area of race relations” and hence not only not reprehensible, but laudable. For Mr. Fox it follows that a massive attack against laudable critique is a threat to the freedom of speech, and hence against democracy. We see that we need several steps to “make sense” of Mr. Fox’s argument, and that such a reconstruction needs to be based on the subjective arguments and attitudes of the arguer. After all, Mr. Honeyford was able to speak his mind, so that the freedom of speech was not in danger. To equate criticism or even attacks against him with a threat against the freedom of speech and against democracy is, therefore, from another point of view, hardly a valid argument, but hyperbole, a rhetorical figure we also find in the rather inappropriate, while trivializing, use of the term holocaust. To understand this argument fully, however, we need more than to reconstruct Mr. Fox’s attitudes. We need to know, for instance, that antiracist critique in the United Kingdom is more generally discredited by right-wing politicians and media as a limitation of free speech because it does not allow people to “tell the truth” about ethnic relations in general, or about multicultural education in particular—hence the reference to the “polluted area of race relations.”

The second sequence of arguments focuses on Honeyford’s “detractors,” by whom Honeyford allegedly has been “vilified as a racist.” By categorizing such opponents as “Marxists and Trots,” and by claiming

they have been engaged in lies and innuendo and even “harassed [Honeyford] out of his job,” Mr. Fox details how, in his opinion, free speech is constrained, while at the same time discrediting Honeyford’s opponents as communists and as “totalitarian forces,” that is, in his view, as the enemies of freedom and democracy. A third component in his argumentation is the claim that Honeyford is helpless and is not allowed to defend himself. He even ranges the media among the opponents of Honeyford, although most of the vastly dominant conservative press supported him.

In sum, the argument schema features the following steps (propositions or macropropositions), of which the implicit arguments are marked with square brackets:

Arguments

1. Honeyford wrote an original and deserved critique of multicultural education.
2. His opponents attacked and harassed him massively.
 - 2.1. [Massive attack and harassment of critics constitute an attack against free speech.]
 - 2.2. His opponents are totalitarian communists.
 - 2.2.1. [Totalitarian communists are against freedom and democracy.]

Conclusion

3. By attacking Honeyford, his opponents are totalitarian and limit the freedom of speech and attack democracy itself.

Interestingly, the argument, if valid, would also apply to Mr. Fox’s argument itself, because by thus attacking from his powerful position as an MP, and given the massive attacks against Honeyford’s opponents in the right-wing press, the freedom to criticize racist publications is delegitimated, if not constrained. That is, Honeyford’s opponents hardly had the access to the mass media that Honeyford and his supporters had. Indeed, their arguments, if heard at all, were usually ignored or presented negatively in much of the press. On the other hand, Honeyford got the most unusual privilege of explaining his opinions in several long articles he was invited to write for the *Daily Mail*.

The validity of Mr. Fox’s argument itself, however, hinges upon his definition of the situation, which is not only biased, but unfounded: Honeyford’s critics are not Marxists and Trotzkyites (at least, not all or

even most of them are), they did not prevent him from writing what he wanted to write, and, apart from protests, demonstrations, and picketing of his school, they did not harass him. Moreover, the majority of the press did not attack him, but supported him. What happened, however, was that he was suspended because he had publicly derogated his Asian students and their parents, and thus, for the Education Authority, he had failed as a headmaster.

The point of this brief analysis of the argument schema of (part of) Mr. Fox's speech for the discussion in this chapter is that a powerful and influential speaker, an MP, whose arguments may be quoted in the media, may misrepresent the facts, discredit antiracists as being undemocratic and against free speech, and at the same time support and legitimate racist publications. Unless his audience knows the facts, and unless it knows the opponents of Mr. Honeyford and their arguments, it may thus be manipulated into believing that Mr. Fox's argument is valid, and thereby associates those who oppose racism with "totalitarian" methods. This indeed is very common in the press, not only on the Right, and Mr. Fox reinforces such a negative evaluation of the struggle against racism. Ultimately, thus, Mr. Fox legitimates racism and enacts the dominance of the white group, not only by marginalizing antiracism, but also by discrediting multicultural policies in education. His political power as an MP is thus paired with his symbolic, discursive power, consisting of controlling the minds of his (secondary) audience, the media, other elites, and finally the public at large.

Meaning

Topics. The topic of the debate in the British House of Commons, as signaled by Mr. Fox himself ("The debate is concerned with . . ."), is clearly "the Honeyford case." Propositionally, however, the topic may be defined in various ways, for instance, as "Honeyford wrote disparaging articles about his Asian students and about multicultural education more generally," "Honeyford has been accused of racism," or "Honeyford is being vilified by antiracist detractors." It is the last of these topics that is being construed by Mr. Fox. At the same time, however, topics have sociopolitical implications, and these implications also are made explicit by Mr. Fox: The debate is not only about Honeyford, or even about race relations and education, but about the "very root of our democracy," namely, free speech. This example nicely shows how events, including discourse about such events, are repre-

sented, at the macro level, as a function of underlying norms and values, that is, within the framework of dominant ideologies. That is, Mr. Fox and other supporters of Honeyford, also in the conservative media, interpret Honeyford's racist articles and his attack on multicultural education as a "breath of fresh air," and hence as an example of justified criticism, whereas his opponents are categorized as restricting free speech, and hence as being intolerant and undemocratic. This reversal of the application of values is well known in anti-antiracist rhetoric, where those who combat ethnic and racial intolerance are themselves accused of intolerance—that is, of the "freedom" to "tell the truth" about ethnic relations.

Relevant for this discussion is that Mr. Fox as an MP has the power to define and redefine not only the topics of debate, but also the situation. That is, the point is no longer whether or not Honeyford has insulted his students and their parents, or whether or not a teacher of a school with many minority students is competent when he attacks the principles of multiculturalism, but rather whether the critique leveled against him is legitimate in the first place. By generalizing the topic even beyond race relations and education to a debate about democracy and free speech, Mr. Fox at the same time defines both his and Mr. Honeyford's opponents—including Labour—as being against free speech and democracy, and hence as enemies of the British state and its fundamental values. By thus redefining the topic at issue, Mr. Fox no longer merely defends Mr. Honeyford, but reverses and generalizes the charges, and attacks the Left. He thereby conceals the fundamentally undemocratic implications of racism in education, and manipulates his secondary audience, the public at large, into believing that Mr. Honeyford is merely a champion of free speech, and his opponents as attacking British values if not democracy in general. As we shall see below, most of his speech tries to support that topical "point" persuasively.

Degree of completeness. One of the most conspicuous forms of overcompleteness in discourse is the irrelevant negative categorization of participants in order to delegitimize or marginalize their opinions or actions. This also happens in Mr. Fox's speech, where he irrelevantly and untruthfully categorizes Honeyford's critics as Marxists and Trotskyites, which for him and much of his anticomunist audience implies association of the political-ideological enemy (the communists) with his moral-social enemy (the antiracists).

At the same time, Mr. Fox's argument, as we have seen, is also seriously incomplete, because it says little (in the rest of his speech, not

reproduced here) about the nature of what Mr. Honeyford has written. It does, however, detail the many alleged negative actions of his opponents. He does not summarize their actions by saying that Honeyford was “criticized” or even “attacked,” but mentions lies, vilification, harassment, and so on. In this case, thus, incompleteness is a semantic property of argumentation, but also a more general move of concealment and positive self-presentation: Honeyford’s racist articles are not discussed, but only positively described, at a higher level of specificity, as “a breath of fresh air.”

Perspective. Little analysis is necessary to identify the perspective and point of view displayed in Mr. Fox’s speech: He defends Honeyford openly, supports his view explicitly, and severely attacks and marginalizes Honeyford’s opponents. However, Mr. Fox also speaks as an MP—he refers to “this House”—and as a defender of democracy. Using the politically crucial pronoun “our” in “our democracy,” he also speaks from the perspective of a staunch defender of democracy. This identification is of course crucial for a right-wing MP and for someone who openly supports someone who has written racist articles. Finally, he claims to be the voice of the “silent majority of decent people,” a well-known populist ploy in conservative rhetoric. This also implies, rather significantly, that the parents of the Asian children in Bradford do not belong to this majority of “decent people.” On the contrary, they have been categorized as, or with, the enemy on the Left.

Implications and presuppositions. Spelling out the full presuppositions and other implications of Mr. Fox’s speech would amount to specifying the complex set of specific knowledge about the Honeyford case (the Honeyford model of Mr. Fox, and those of his audience and critics), as well as the general opinions on which his evaluations and arguments are based, as we have seen above. Hence I will mention a few examples: If the matter has become a national issue “not from Mr. Honeyford’s choice,” this strongly implies that others, his opponents, have made a national issue of it, whereas it also (weakly) implies that Mr. Honeyford’s publications in a widely read national newspaper (e.g., the *Times Literary Supplement*) and later the *Daily Mail* did nothing to contribute to the national issue. The use of “small-circulation” as a modifier of “publication” implies that, given the small audience of the publication (he probably refers to the extremist right-wing *Salisbury Review*), the publication is “insignificant” and hence “not worth all the fuss” and certainly not a “holocaust.” The major presupposition of this speech, however, is embodied in Mr. Fox’s rhetorical question, “Who

are the people who have persecuted him?” which presupposes that there actually *were* people who “persecuted” him. Finally, important for the political power play in Parliament, note the implications of his categorization of Honeyford’s opponents as being “all on the Left of British politics,” which immediately addresses Mr. Fox’s opponents in the House of Commons: Labour. By vilifying Honeyford’s opponents, and antiracists generally, as communists, as undemocratic, and as enemies of free speech, he implies that such is also the case for Labour.

Local coherence. There is one interesting coherence feature in Mr. Fox’s speech, when he begins a new sentence with the definite noun phrase “the mob.” Since no mob has been mentioned before in his text, we must assume either that this phrase generically refers to an (unspecified) mob or that the phrase corefers, as is clearly his intention, with the previously mentioned discourse referents (Honeyford’s detractors and so on). Such coreference is permissible only if it is presupposed that the qualification indeed holds of previous identified participants. In other words, Mr. Fox, in line with right-wing news reports about Honeyford’s critics, implicitly qualifies Honeyford’s opponents as a “mob” and presupposes this qualification in a next sentence. This is one of Mr. Fox’s discursive means to derogate his opponents.

Lexical style. Mr. Fox’s lexical style is characteristic not only of parliamentary speeches, featuring technical political terms such as “adjournment debate,” or of “educated” talk in general, as we see in “intellectual” words such as “innuendo,” “detractors,” “totalitarian forces,” and “vilified,” but at the same time he uses the well-known aggressive populist register of the tabloids when he characterizes his and Honeyford’s opponents as “Trots,” “the mob,” and especially “race relations bullies.” That is, Mr. Fox’s lexicalization multiply signals his power, his political and moral position, and his persuasive strategies in influencing his (secondary) audience, the British public.

Surface Structures

Syntax. The syntax of Mr. Fox’s speech shows a few examples of semantically controlled topicalization and other forms of highlighting information. Thus, in the fourth sentence, the object of the predicate “to strike at, namely, “the freedom of speech,” is placed at the end of the sentence, after its qualifying clause (“what we cherish in this House above all”), in order to emphasize it—a well-known strategy of syntactic and rhetorical “suspense.” Conversely, “without a thread of evidence” is

fronted somewhat later in his speech so as to specify in a prominent position in the sentence that Honeyford's vilification was without grounds. Note also the agentless passives: By whom, indeed, was Honeyford continuously criticized in the media? Surely not by Marxists and Trotskyites, who have no access to mainstream publications in Britain.

Pronouns. In the discussion of the perspective and point of view in Mr. Fox's speech I have already suggested his multiple political and social "positions" and with whom Mr. Fox identifies. Position and identification also determine the use of pronouns and deictic expressions (such as "this" in "this adjournment debate," which signals Mr. Fox's participation in the debate). Most significant in this fragment, however, is the use of "our" in "our democracy," a well-known political possessive phrase in much conservative rhetoric. Obviously, Mr. Fox signals himself as participating in "our democracy," which may refer to British democracy, or Western democracy, or the kind of democracy as it is interpreted by Mr. Fox. The rest of his argument, however, clearly shows that the Left, and especially Marxists, Trotskyites, and the supporters of Mr. Honeyford, are excluded from this definition of democracy, because they allegedly violate the freedom of speech.

Rhetoric

Several of the other properties of Mr. Fox's speech discussed above also have rhetorical structures and functions. Besides being argumentative, his speech is largely rhetorical. He glorifies Honeyford and derogates, accuses, and marginalizes Honeyford's opponents. In the beginning of this fragment, which opens the debate, Fox immediately extends the topic from the Honeyford case to much more provocative and politically relevant topics of the freedom of speech and democracy, and he does so by using an enumerative climax, culminating in a traditional metaphor ("the root of our democracy") that emphasizes free speech as the "foundation" of democracy while at the same time making Mr. Fox's speech more important, as it addresses such "fundamental" issues. The insensitive metaphor of the "holocaust" has been discussed above, and interpreted as hyperbole for a "massive destruction." Apart from the fact that not a single person died or was even bodily hurt in the Honeyford conflict, the hyperbolic metaphor also has a number of vicious implications not mentioned above, namely, that Honeyford's

opponents are associated with Nazis or mass murderers, an association that is also explicitly made in the right-wing press for antiracists.

Similarly, within the ecological domain, Mr. Fox finds both a contrastive comparison and two metaphors to identify Honeyford's original ideas ("breath of fresh air" and the "polluted" atmosphere of race relations). Again, after associating Honeyford's opponents with Nazis, he now associates them with polluters, a new officially certified enemy. Interestingly, as shown earlier, we may interpret such qualifications also as reversals, since it is precisely the extreme Right that is politically closer to fascism, and to industrial pollution, and not the radical Left that Mr. Fox is speaking about. That is, in attacking the Left, right-wing speakers often make use of classical accusations leveled by the Left, simply by "inverting" them, and as if to deny their own lack of democratic zeal, for instance in supporting someone who writes racist articles.

Also, the rest of the speech makes full use of the usual tricks from the rhetorical bag: Rhetorical questions (e.g., "Who are Honeyford's detractors?"), parallelisms (the repeated questions), alliterations ("full force"), and especially contrasts between us and them (as in "race relations bullies" and "the majority of decent people") and between the lone hero and the irrational and threatening mass ("One man . . .") and his opponents (Marxists, Trots, totalitarian forcers, mob, vilification, lies). These rhetorical features emphasize what has been expressed and formulated already at the semantic, syntactic, and lexical (stylistic) levels of his speech, namely, the positive presentation of Honeyford (us, conservatives, and so on) on the one hand, and especially the negative presentation of the Others (them, the Left, antiracists, Asian parents).

Conclusion

The dominance expressed, signaled, and legitimated in this speech does not reside merely in the political realm of the House of Commons, for instance, in Mr. Fox's role as MP and as representative of a government party who is allowed to provoke a debate about the Honeyford affair in Parliament. Similarly, by attacking the Left he does not attack only Labour, as may be expected from a Tory speaker. Rather, the dominance involved here extends beyond Parliament to the media and

especially the public at large, when Mr. Fox uses his political influence to support publicly a teacher of students whose parents think he writes racist things, and especially in order to discredit and marginalize both these parents and their supporters. Indeed, the rest of this speech, not analyzed here, sketches in more detail what Mr. Fox sees as a wonderful teacher, while at the same time denying, as is common in much elite discourse, the racist nature of Honeyford's writings. That is, Mr. Fox's power, authority, and dominance are not even those that come with being an influential MP. Rather, his authority, in establishing what racism is, is that of a member of the white elite. It is in this way that such a speech indirectly supports the system of ethnic-racial dominance, that is, racism.

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