Cognitive Context Models and Discourse

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1.   Mental models

Since the early 1980s, the notion of 'mental model' has been quite successful in cognitive psychology in general, and in the theory of text processing in particular (Garnham 1987; Johnson-Laird 1983; van Dijk & Kintsch 1983; Van Oostendorp & Zwaan 1994).*

Such models have been conceptualized as representations in episodic memory of situations, acts or events spoken or thought about, observed or participated in by human actors, that is of 'experiences' (Ehrlich, Tardieu & Cavazza 1993).

In the theory of text processing, such (situation or event) models played a crucial role in establishing the necessary referential basis for the processing of anaphora and other phenomena of coherence (Albrecht & O'Brien 1993). They further explained, among many other things, why text recall does not seem to be based on semantic representations of texts, but rather on the mental model construed or updated of the event the text is *about* (Bower & Morrow 1990).

Conversely, mental models also play a role in the much neglected theory of discourse *production*, viz., as the mental point of departure of all text and talk, from which relevant information may be selected for the strategic construction of their global and local semantic structures.

Many experiments have confirmed these hypotheses, and have shown at text comprehension and recall essentially involve a strategic manipulation of models, for instance by matching text information with structures of the 'mental space' of such models (Morrow 1994; Morrow, Greenspan & Bower 1989; Zaal & Van Oostendorp 1994). The notion of 'mental space' is sometimes also used in formal linguistics as a construct that has similar functions as our notion of a mental model (Faucormier 1985).

Models also embody the interface between episodic, personal knowl-
edge of events, on the one hand, and the socially shared beliefs of groups. Thus,
model construction and updating involves fragments of instantiated sociocul-
tural knowledge, whereas such shared beliefs or other social cognitions are in
turn partly derived from episodic models by processes of generalization, ab-
straction and decontextualization. At the same time, given their individual na-
ture, models are also construed or updated on the basis of other representations
in episodic or 'personal' memory, such as generalized and abstract personal
models of events, personality factors, or personal attitudes. In other words,
models typically embody both the (instantiated, applied) knowledge and other
beliefs of social groups as well as the cognitive representations that define in-
dividual persons self-awareness (Hull *et al*. 1988).

For the discussion in the present volume, it is interesting to note that
mental models, while being representations of personal experiences, in fact also
provide a more detailed and empirical account of some aspects of the notion of
'consciousness'. That is, 'being conscious' of an event, action, object or per-
son, and their properties, involves the construction or updating of episodic
models. This does not mean that all information processing (of discourse, ac-
tion, or other events) proceeds 'consciously'. There is enough evidence to sug-
gest that many levels of analysis and understanding are more or less conscious,
although these may always be made conscious as soon as processing occur,
e.g., when unknown words, complex syntax, semantic incoherence or prag-
matic inappropriateness needs to be dealt with (for details, see van Dijk &
Kintsch 1983; see also Davies & Humphries 1993; Greenberg & Tobach 1983;
Jackendoff 1987). Models however represent the result of the more or less con-
scious processing of 'knowledge' about discursive or other events (Johnson-
Laird 1983).

This does not mean, however, that all levels and all details of models
are always conscious. Sometimes only the higher macrolevels of events need to
be conscious for active processing (understanding, production) in Short Term
Memory. And conversely, when (depending on context) we need to be
'conscious' of lower levels or specific details of events, then deeper and more
detailed analysis or construction of models will take place. This amount and
level of processing of models may be regulated by an overall Monitor (see be-
low), but we shall be proposing below that many of the functions of this elusive
(theoretical) Monitor are in fact carried out by models of the context. This is
not only true for text processing, but also for the processing of social informa-
tion relevant for context model construction (for further discussion, see Bargh
1984; Mandler & Nakamura 1987; Natsoulas 1992; Shallice 1988).

Lacking alternative formats of representation, episodic models are usually conceived of as consisting of (abstract) propositions, although also 'analog' information has been proposed as a necessary element of our models of reality in order to account for people's memory of spatial or configural information about objects, places, people, or events.

Despite the rather extensive work on mental models, an explicit theoretical account of their internal structures has so far not been provided. As is true for most other memory representations, they may be thought of as hierarchically structured networks, possibly organized by a number of fixed categories, that is, as schemata of some kind. Thus, higher level, abstract nodes may represent the macrostructure of a model, and the more detailed, lower levels, the microstructure of a model, representing the actual details of events, people and situations. This familiar distinction in text processing at least explains what we know about text processing for a long time, viz., that macrostructures usually tend to be better recalled than microstructures, e.g., because of their functional relevance, structural importance (they organize much other information) and hence their accessibility.

Me may only speculate about the further features that define model structures. There is some linguistic evidence (e.g., from sentence semantics and narrative structures) that model structures may be organized by the categories that define events, such as Setting (Place, Time), Participants in various roles (Agent, Patient, etc.), an Event or Action, and possibly various Circumstances, each with their own Modifier categories. This simple structure would reflect, if not explain the characteristic semantic structure of complex propositions as well as the case structure and ordering of syntactic structures in discourse (Dik 1989). In other words, model structures should be seen as the strategic schemata people use in the fast interpretation of the events in their daily lives, and it is not surprising that such schemata would also shape at least some of the structures of the discourses engaged in by speech participants when talking or writing, reading or hearing *about* such events.

In this paper we shall also ignore the specific representational, *format* of models, but simply assume that they are networks that may be represented by propositions organized by schematic categories, like 'Participant' or 'Setting'. Although many elements of the theory of mental models, such as their internal structures, or their relations with specific semantic representations of texts, on the one hand, and their relations with cognitions in 'semantic' (or rather 'social') memory, are still on the agenda, this account of the nature and role of mental models is both straightforward and persuasive. Models simply explain many properties of text processing that were hitherto obscure or ignored, or dealt with in more *ad hot* ways.

One element virtually lacking in most theories of mental models so far, is their evaluative dimension. People not only build and use models of events in order to represent their knowledge about such events, but also in order to represent their *opinions* about them. One may have a model of a specific party, a car accident, or of a new event in the war of Bosnia, as reported in the media, and we may expect that this model will also embody some information about whether we liked or disliked the event, or some feature of the event. Obviously some of these models (like that about Bosnia) may be very complex, and consist of many partial models of separate events. The same may be true for many other opinions, and possibly even of the emotions associated with an event. That specific opinions or emotions, and not only knowledge propositions may facilitate recall of events suggests that these are somehow coded in or with the model (Bower 1980; Tan 1994).

In a similar way as personal, episodic event knowledge is associated with general, socially shared knowledge, the assumption that models also represent opinions further suggests that these opinions are also linked with social cognition, viz., socially shared opinion structures, such as attitudes, ideologies, and their underlying norms and values (van Dijk 1990, 1995). That is, our models about (events in) Bosnia are obviously a function of (among other things) our social group attitudes and ideologies: To wit, Bosnian Serbs and Muslims will have a very different 'interpretation' of the events in Bosnia. Such a different interpretation or model, not only may involve different knowledge, different points of view or perspectives, but of course also different opinions derived from different attitudes, ideologies and other social cognitions that are a function of different social, political or economic interests of the groups involved, and hence of their members. It is this 'evaluative' (or affective) nature of models that requires our main attention in future model theories.

For the discussion in this book it is especially important to emphasize that we do not vaguely consider the ideologies on which such evaluations are based as forms of 'false consciousness', as is common in the Marxist-Leninist tradition of ideology analysis (Eagleton 1991; Wood 1988). Rather, we see them as specific, schematically organized self-representations of groups (including such group categories as Identity, Tasks, Aims, Position, Values and Resources, together defining the Interests of the group) that control the attitudes and models of its members (van Dijk 1995).

2.   Context models

There is however another missing link in the theory of mental models and their links with the structures and strategies of discourse. Language users not only

form or update models of events or situations they communicate *about*, but also of the *communicative event* in which they participate. This deictic, reflexive and pragmatic dimension of language use has been virtually lacking in current mental model theories (for an early approach, see van Dijk 1977). During a conversation, a lecture, doctor-patient interaction, reading the newspaper or watching TV, participants of course also need to mentally monitor such encounters themselves, e.g., by planning, executing, controlling or indeed understanding them. It is here proposed that such ongoing, continuously updated episodic representations should be conceptualized as a special type of models, viz., context models.

The structures and functions of context models are straightforward. Their structures should of course be similar to those of any kind of model: After all, a communicative event or situation, that is, a context, is not essentially different from other events or (inter)actions people participate in. In this case, however, actors self-represent themselves as speech-participants, and the activities involved are constituted by the very discourse, verbal interaction or speech acts *now* being enacted or received. That is, the categories of the model schema, such as Setting (Time, Place), Circumstances, Participants and Action (and their modifiers), including those that represent opinions), now define the mental (and hence subjective) counterpart of the canonical structures of a communicative situation or context as we know them from a vast literature in ethnography, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, microsociology and social psychology (Argyle, Furnham & Graham 1981; Cicourel 1987; Cook 1990; Dascal & Weizman 1987; Duranti & Goodwin 1992; Forgas 1985; Givón 1989; Gumperz 1989; Gumperz & Hymes 1972; Hymes 1972; Watson & Seiler 1992).

On the basis of this and other work, we shall assume that contexts typically consist of at least the following major categories, possibly each with their own internal schematic structure, as if they were 'sub-models':

- Setting: location, timing of communicative event;
- Social circumstances: previous acts, social situation;
- Institutional environment;
- Overall goals of the (inter)action;
- Participants and their social and speaking roles;
- Current (situational) relations between participants;
- Global (non-situational) relations between participants;
- Group membership or categories of participants (e.g., gender, age).

This means that, first of all, we now have a theoretical framework to begin to represent obvious elements of discourse and communicative events such as intentions, goals or purposes, as is true for any kind of action and interaction. Note though that a mental model of a communicative event is not the same as the theoretical analysis of communicative events *per se*: Context models are episodic, personal and hence subjective *interpretations* and experiences of the communicative event or context. That is, speech participants will usually have similar or overlapping models of the event they participate in, but their models are both theoretically and practically unique and different, as is true for all models: Rather trivially, speech participants have different goals, perspectives, knowledge, opinions, etc., about ongoing text and talk. In written communication this may even be more pronounced, given the obviously different models of writers and readers, models that also have different information in their Setting (Time and Place) category. Indeed, 'routine complications' in talk may be largely based on conflicting context models, and negotiation may be necessary to strategically manage such conflicts.

More than mental models of events, context models are under permanent change. Especially in spontaneous conversation, participants need to constantly monitor the other participant(s) as well as the other elements of the context and adapt their context models accordingly in order to be able to participate appropriately and competently (Slama-Cazacu 1961, 1973, 1981). Hence, context models are routinely and ongoingly updated, negotiated, challenged, and interactively managed. Indeed, much of the conversational 'work' being done in interaction pertains to the mutual control of participants' context models. In written communication such immediate interaction takes another form, e.g., the strategies writers use to manage the context models of the readers, for instance by genre markers, self-descriptions as communicators, explicit definitions of the context or speech act ('this is a threat'), making their goals or intentions explicit, asking for cooperation or the benevolence of readers, and so on. Many of these strategies are well-known since classical rhetoric.

If we assume that context models have the same basic structure as event models, and that such a structure is strategically built up just prior to and then updated during discourse processing (conversation, reading, writing), we still need to know how such a (partial) model is actually used during processing. In the same way as not all information of the previous parts of the discourse is relevant for later understanding (and the same is true for all details of the model constructed for such a text), we may assume that the complexity of the context and of its mental model also does not allow people to 'keep track' of all relevant context factors. This means that again notions of importance and relevance

are involved, as we also know them from the macrosemantics of discourse: Language users therefore will typically abstract (micro)details of the context and infer overall, macro-concepts describing the ongoing (and ongoingly relevant) aspects of the context, such as the macro speech act now being engaged in, the ongoing (sub-)genre, overall setting information (approximate time and place), main actors, and the overall goal of the interaction. This will allow them to disregard local context details during the rest of the discourse, and focus to what is important. Only when things go wrong, or when special focus on details is required, a re-activation search may be done for lower level details of the context model. Moreover, instead of detailed and focused attention to context characteristics, (different) language users may generally process context information very sloppily, again depending on context as well as on individual differences, as is generally the case in reading. In all these cases, then, we assume that contexts are typically accessed and strategically used primarily at the overall macro-level. This macro-level information will be more or less conscious during discourse processing, whereas micro-level (detail) information about the context will only be attended to as the moment it is processed, and later only when necessary.

Another issue that needs to be dealt with is the relationship among, and the integration of different context models. Theoretically, they have been postulated as distinct or discrete representations. Yet, when conscious, people build context models all the time, viz., of contexts that are temporally continuous and structurally contiguous: time, place, participants and actions of these models usually overlap. It is however precisely one of the functions of mental modeling to interpret events as being distinct even when they are integrated part of ongoing activities and occurrences. That is, people self-represent (and hence recall) the event of a conversation or of reading the newspaper as a more or less discrete event. The relevant criteria for such segmentation of the continuous social situation in which they participate may be overall (macro-)interpretation of the ongoing act ('I am now talking to X in room Y' vs. 'I am now leaving room Y', etc.), as well as a number of contextual changes (different goal, different time, different place, different participants, etc.). Yet, even within the 'same' context, we may have sub-contexts, as is the case in for instance a meeting, a court trial, and so on, which may have different, functional parts that are also defined by different sub-contexts (e.g., entry of witnesses as the beginning of the sub-genre of an interrogation in a trial). We surmise that locally connection and coherence of models takes place through the usual abstract rules of local coherence (e.g., conditionality, causality, etc., of events) whereas globally integration takes place by macro-abstraction: A sequence of settings, participants and acts

are mapped onto higher level, abstract propositions that organize the context (e.g., of a trial) as a whole: Main participants, main overall actions, main setting, and so on, as we have seen above for the reduction of contextual details to manageable overall macrostructures for models.

As is true for all mental models, also context models feature evaluative propositions, or *opinions*: Speech participants usually have opinions about each other, about the actual text and talk of the other as well as about other features of the context (time, place, circumstances, etc.). Communicative conflicts may thus also be based on clashing opinions about the ongoing talk, or the present text, and may need to be resolved by negotiation or other problem-solving (meta-)talk about the present interaction.

As is the case for the general knowledge with which communicative models are related (general knowledge about the language, discourse structures or structures of speech acts or conversational strategies), also these opinions are linked with general, *socially shared representations*, representing the typical attitudes or ideologies of the groups and their members about specific communicative events. Teachers and students, doctors and patients, police officers and suspects, women and men, etc., may have different points of view, perspectives, norms and values, and hence different attitudes and ideologies of the verbal interaction they engage in.

Finally, within the general theory of the architecture and functions of episodic memory, we shall assume that *text representations* (or 'text models') are part of context models. In earlier work on text representations (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983), this relationship and the episodic nature of textual representations (TR's) remained undefined. There are however good reasons to suppose that TR's need to be embedded in context models. If a context model is a representation of the whole communicative event, and if text or talk is part of that event, then also the representation of discourse is (special) part of the context model, as is true for other relevant social interaction of the present situation.

Indeed, in many or most situations, the very goal or point of the communicative event is to accomplish this particular text or talk (either in production or reception), and the goals of the interaction can hardly be represented separately from the interaction itself. This is obviously true for dialogic, spoken interaction, and there is no reason why this should not be so for written communication. Note though that, unlike abstract 'finished' TR's, we here typically have to do with a developing, changing representation, as it is constructed in ongoing speaking, writing, reading or listening.

This conception is a natural implication of our 'strategic' approach to text processing (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983): Discourse representations are

'gradually' being constructed both by speakers/writers as well as their recipients, and are inherent part of the unfolding context, both being influenced by (other) factors of the context as well as influencing or defining that context. That is, both 'past text' as well as 'planned (or expected) text' will thus become part of the context and 'available' for all participants. This hypothesis also nicely emphasizes the close interaction and integration of text and context as represented by these participants. For instance, what 'has just been said' is thus both part of the text/talk 'under production' but at the same time becomes part of the context, e.g., in the sense that it is known, shared or 'done' together by the participants. One may expect that in experimental situations subjects would therefore often confuse the information they obtained from the text and the information they inferred from their observation or participation in the context. In the rest of this paper, however, our argument will generally be theoretical and not dwell on possibilities of empirical testing of the hypotheses developed here about the nature, the structure and the functions of models.

The problem of the relations of text representations and context models is not solved by simply postulating that 'text models' are part of context models. It seems trivial that if a discourse is always 'part' of a context also their representations are thus related. For ongoing actions, this may not be too difficult to represent: Speech acts and other 'verbal acts' are natural part of the sequence of ongoing action, and in such a case text and context seem to merge in one type of representation. However, if it is the case that language users construct a separate 'model' for what is actually said or written, that is, for the various structures of the utterance, we get different types of representations that are not as easily integrated or merged. That is, the social act of 'being impolite' may well be represented separately, viz., as an interpretative inference, from the use of a specific pronoun, a use that may be represented (and hence recalled) separately. This would empirically be proven if language users are able to recall that someone was 'impolite' ('informal', etc.) to them, but do no longer remember the special verbal means of being impolite. We therefore assume that communicative events are built up from specific sub-events (or sub-states) that each may need its own format of representation. Thus what a participant (or speaker), a location, or time, look like in representation will be different from the representation of what people now are 'doing' and what they now are actually 'saying', i.e., sequences of words, sentences, and other structures being assigned to the utterance. It is this latter part of the context model we would designate as the 'text representation'—in the same way as we may have participant representations, which also have their characteristic structure, e.g., organized by person schemata.

3.   Functions of context models

Context models are used to manage communicative events. They represent the intentions, purposes, goals, perspectives, expectations, opinions and other beliefs of speech participants about each other, about the ongoing interaction or currently written or read text, or about other properties of the context, such as time, place, circumstances, constraints, props and any other situational factor that may be relevant for the appropriate accomplishment of the discourse. That is, context models have multiple communicative functions. These functions also affect the structures of text and talk, and vice versa, structures of discourse may in turn affect the structure or contents of context models. In the remainder of this paper, we focus on these relations between context models and the (processing of) discourse structures and their (other) underlying mental representations. For each major (pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, expression) level or dimension of discourse we shall examine how its structures may be constrained by the information of the underlying context model.

3.1.   *Context models as interface between event models and discourse*

The first major function of context models is to mediate between event or situation models on the one hand, and (semantic structures) of discourse on the other hand. This is one of the many aspects of mental modeling of discourse that has hardly received any attention. That is, it is commonly assumed that event or situation models represent the knowledge of language users about the event being talked or written about. Such knowledge may be very detailed, either because of own observation or experiences (as in personal stories), or because of the integration of instantiated general (social) knowledge. Only a fragment of such knowledge is usually expressed in text or talk. Indeed, precisely because language users are normally able to supplement information in discourse with their own activated, inferred or otherwise construed personal or social knowledge, discourses need not be very explicit. The obvious metaphor is that, semantically, they are the tip of the proverbial iceberg (of consciousness), and the models the large hidden part. In other words, models are much richer in information than the discourses that are based on them, both in production as well as in comprehension.

This discrepancy between discourses and their (event) models, however, poses the obvious problem how to manage such differences. That is, given a speaker who wants to tell a story about a personal event, a journalist having to write about a political event, or a scholar writing a research paper, they are all

confronted with the mental and practical task what information they have about the events talked about should be expressed, and what should not or need not be expressed in their actual text or talk. It seems obvious that the strategies managing this selection are based on information supplied by the context model of the speaker or writer.

The crucial concept summarizing these criteria is 'relevance', and the simple overall strategy is that only the information in the context model that is *relevant* in the present context must (or needs to) be expressed in the (semantic structures of the) present discourse. Note though that 'relevance' is a broad and essentially fuzzy notion (Sperber & Wilson 1986), and hence needs to be made explicit precisely in terms of context structures. One obvious criterion of relevance is intended knowledge of recipients: If S knows p (i.e., p is part of the event model of S), and if S believes that H does not know p, and that H should know p or would be interested to know p, then p should be included in the semantic representation (henceforth SR) of the discourse. Indeed, this simple and obvious rule is similar to the crucial condition of the speech act of assertion. This also means that context models do just that: *They define the ongoing speech act*. Hence, whereas event models essentially have a semantic role, context models have a *pragmatic* role.

Now, the relevance condition just formulated has a typically abstract and normative nature, as is the case for traditional speech act theory. We know from more realistic discourse and conversation theories (as well as from theories of natural text processing) that actual speakers may know this rule, but do not always follow it—for a number of, again contextual reasons. Indeed, we routinely tell people things they already know, or things we know they do not want to know, or indeed things we don't actually know ourselves. Hence, traditional views of pure 'communication', in which language users rationally 'exchange information' as specified by this rule of assertion, have been generally replaced by a more flexible and realistic conception of what language users actually do when they speak or write, listen or read. That is, the actual theories of interaction, as well as of the mental models managing such interaction are more complex and much more messy.

Thus, the partial condition about the mutual knowledge of speech participants, would need to involve such typical context conditions as the interests of the participants, the importance of the information, and the social relations between the participants, among other things. Complicating the normative rule given above (which remains the overall, abstract strategy of most assertions), a proposition p of a model M, represented as M(p), may well be selected for inclusion in the semantic representation of a discourse D, represented as D(SR),

also for other more or less good social or interactional reasons, which may be partly co-dependent:

- *p* is very important information in the present context (importance);
- S has special interest in H's knowledge of *p* (s-interests);
- S knows that H has special interest in knowledge of *p* (H-interests);
- S wants to make sure that H does know *p* (reminders);
- S is not sure whether H knows *p*;
- H acts in such a way as if he/she does not seem to know *p*;
- S is emotionally involved in communicating *p*, etc.

Many types of context and hence different context models may be specified that satisfy such conditions. The security instructions on board of a plane are (for many travelers) repeated even if the company and the speakers know (most) hearers know. However, the information is deemed to be so important (and some hearers may *not* know) that it is expressed anyway. Teachers may want to repeat information for pedagogical reasons and conversationalists may do so when they have doubts about, or forgot whether the recipients already knew the information, or when they are so enthusiastic about an event that they need to describe it several times to the same recipient (as is typically true in conversations between close partners), and so on.

That is, institutional constraints (air safety regulations), social relations (teacher-student), opinions and emotions of language users and their personal interests, or lack of memory are among the many further contextual constraints that may modify the actual application of the pragmatic knowledge rule of assertions, that is, the conditions that regulate the selection of model information for inclusion in semantic representations.

Note that various types of context and genres also may have differential effect on knowledge management, and the inclusion of model-beliefs in discourse. For instance, in interrogations by the police or in court, speakers (actors, witnesses, etc.) may be obliged to 'tell all they know', sometimes in considerable detail. The same may be true for students during examinations, novelists telling a story, scholars writing a paper, and so on, that is, for all those contexts and genres where 'expressing all we know' is either legally or morally required, or in the interests of the language user(s).

The converse is obviously true for the *non-inclusion* of information in a SR. There are many social and personal reasons why known information is not expressed, suppressed or concealed from recipients, first of course irrelevance (S knows that H already knows *p*; S knows that H is not interested in knowing

p; *p* is trivial; *p* may be inferred from q which is expressed, etc.). However, H's knowledge of *p* may also be not in S's interest, S and H are in a social relation in which knowledge about *p* is not shared (taboos, intimate information, etc.), and so on. Indeed, apart from privacy criteria, there are many general, social criteria, derived from attitudes, ideologies, norms and interests about communicative events, that require that known information is not expressed, typically so for taboos, secrets, intimacies, and any other knowledge of which sharing is not in the interests of the speaker or his/her group or institution. Strategies of face keeping, politeness and impression formation are partly articulated on the basis of such regulation about things that are said or remain unsaid (Brown & Levinson 1987). Thus, as a rule information that may hurt the self-image of the speaker or the hearer, will tend to remain unsaid, unless special context criteria prevail (as in attacks, reproaches, punishment, etc.).

We see that even the formulation of one single set of criteria regulating the relations between event model knowledge and discourse, may require complex context models. That is, context models may need no feature information about beliefs of participants about each others' knowledge (or beliefs), about social relations, personal and group interests, social norms, institutional rules, laws (like the Official Secrets Acts in the UK), personal involvement and emotions, face keeping and politeness.

Obviously, depending on the context, not all context models need to be that specified, in the same way as not all discourse needs to be based on detailed event models and vice versa. Again, such choices are regulated by context models. This also implies that context models need to be self-regulating (so as to avoid an infinite regress of models regulating of context models, etc., etc.), although it has often been assumed that all text processing is regulated by an overall Monitor that allocates resources, controls depth or length of memory searches, distributes time over processes, and so on, and hence also regulates the ongoing construction and change of context models. Indeed, we may focus on the communicative context (e.g., because it is important, difficult, new, etc.) or process context information routinely and superficially. At this point we have no way of deciding which functions of an overall monitoring device are exactly played by context models. Below we shall briefly come back to the relation between context models and consciousness (Section 3.3; see also Baars 1988).

It was already suggested that the context criteria that regulate the expression of knowledge, and hence mediate between event models and semantic representations in fact define the normative or more realistic appropriateness conditions of the speech act of assertion. The same is true for all speech acts.

That is, the usual normative appropriateness conditions of speech acts are defined in terms of context conditions such as mutual knowledge (of the knowledge of actions) of speech participants, their wants and wishes, their expectations and their social relations. Promises, threats, congratulations, and other typical speech acts require that the semantics of discourse is regulated in such a way that they match these contextual criteria. Thus, a speaker who wants to threaten someone needs to express information about an action in a future action model (a plan) which is seriously incompatible with the wishes or interests of the recipient if the latter does (or does not) do what the speaker wants. Such an expression presupposes mutual knowledge about each others knowledge, beliefs, actions, abilities to act, interests, wishes, life goals, and so on. In sum, different configurations of context model information provide the normative and actual characteristics of speech acts. Hence also the important pragmatic nature of context models.

Semantically, the result of such context model constraints on event model expression is not merely relevant for the inclusion of propositions in semantic representations, but also conditions the very semantic *structure* of discourse. That is, contextual relevance of any kind also determines the relations between semantic macrostructures and microstructures, between overall topics and lower-level details. Thus, which information will be included in a summary, abstract, lead, title or headline, which information will be placed first or last, does not only depend on the conceptual or semantic importance (inclusiveness or rank) of the propositions, but also on their contextually determined prominence or importance. That is, information that is relatively and contextually more important, that is relevant for the speech participants, may generally be expressed first, on top, or in special discourse categories such as titles or summaries, or be repeated several times. In other words, context constraints also underlie semantic (and other) discourse structures.

Similarly, as was suggested above, some discourses may need to be more or less *explicit* or *implicit* than others. Regulations, laws, scholarly discourse, manuals, and many other discourse genres may need to be very explicit, whereas everyday conversations, poems, advertising, propaganda, political discourse may be relatively implicit for a variety of contextual reasons (large mutual knowledge, esthetic criteria, face keeping, keeping secrets, or manipulation of the audience).

All these complex constraints require equally complex situation models, which variously embody self-representations of speakers and their own beliefs, wishes, purposes, goals and interests, other-representations of similar properties of recipients, social relations, institutional constraints, knowledge of gen

res, opinions and attitudes about decency, privacy, appropriateness, and so on. This complexity of context models is baffling when we even try to think of the possible formats such context models should have. Indeed, *they are the ongoing and everyday 'application ' in the current communicative situation of a fully fledged naive theory of communication and interaction*, whose complexity is only matched by that of a grammar or our knowledge of discourse structures. Obviously, contexts and their models cannot simply consist of e.g., the knowledge and the goals of the speakers. Only the regulation of the relations between event models and semantic representations, among the many other relations between the mind and discourse, requires a very complex set of conditions and hence very complex context models.

3.2.   *Context models and discourse structures*

Context models do more than act as interface between event models and semantic representations. We already suggested that they also seem to regulate the very *structures* of meaning. The order of prominence of propositions in text or talk is also a function of relevance, and hence of context. Information may be more or less implicit for similar contextual reasons. Local coherence between propositions may be established in a more or less explicit or implicit way, with 'missing links' spelled out or left to the understanding processing of the recipient. Thus, information may be presupposed or not for contextual reasons, such as genre, clarity, pedagogical criteria, social relations, or group interests. Information may be repeated or not, summarized or not, for similar reasons, again defining some aspects of discourse structures.

     Thus, the theoretically largely ignored semantic phenomena of *levels of description* and *degree of completeness* (van Dijk 1977) also are context-sensitive. That is, the events as represented by a model may be described in text and talk at different levels of specificity, e.g., at a rather high level of summarization or abstraction (e.g., 'He robbed a bank' or 'They lost the war'), or at more specific levels where more detailed, specific or basic actions are being described ('He stopped before the bank, parked his car, got out, etc.'). Various levels of description may be conventionally defined for specific genres (stories, news reports, police reports, etc.), or have specific functions, such as calling and focusing attention of the recipients, creating suspense (as details of dangerous acts do in a movie or story), or signaling importance or relevance. The same is true, at *each* of these levels for the degree of completeness: Not all information at each level is equally interesting or relevant, as described above. That is, sometimes a detail is relevant, sometimes it is not, again depending on

genres or context, and hence regulated by context models as described above. The point here is not so much what is included or not included in the SR of a discourse, but also the effect of such contextual constraints on the overall or local *organization* of meaning, such as prominence, ordering, and variations of level, specificity, explicitness, and amount of detail.

What is true for the context constraints on semantic structures is by definition also true for a large variety of surface structures, such as those of lexicalization, syntax, style, overall schematic organization, rhetoric, non-verbal expressions (gestures, face-work), phonological and phonetic structures as well as graphic representations. Some of these structures are regulated, as we have seen, through the intermediary of semantic representations (e.g., headlines express macrostructural propositions), whereas others seem to be monitored *directly by underlying context models*. For instance, opinions or emotions of speakers may be signaled directly at the level of expression (stress, tone, graphical emphasis). Let us examine these and other relations between context models and discourses more closely.

3.2.1.   *Semantic structures --> surface structures*
Surface structures or 'expression' structures (actual words, sounds, graphics, lay-out, etc.) are a function of both meaning and context. That is, part of the surface structure is controlled by semantics, and this semantics is in turn controlled by event models, as we have seen above. Other aspects of the surface structure is however directly controlled by the context model. The best known example of this direct context control is the use of pronouns of address: whether language users in French select *vous* instead of *tu* does not depend on meaning (or the event model), but directly on constraints (such as social relations between speech participants) represented in the context model. On the other hand, contrastive intonation is a surface phenomenon that (often) requires input from underlying (contrasted) semantic representations. (For the general cognitive constraints on surface structure 'formation', see Levelt 1989.)

Discourse meanings influence many aspects of surface structures, such as lexical selection, as well as inter-clause ordering in a more or less familiar way. But *hierarchical* semantic structures, e.g., those linking topics (macropropositions) to the propositions actually expressed by sentences (microstructures), must be mapped onto the linear structures of text and talk. This is one of many 'linearization problems' that language users face when connecting mental representations with the linear sequence of words (Levelt 1982). This means, for instance, as we have seen above, that topically 'important' information may be expressed earlier in the text, or in special

schematic categories, such as headlines or summaries. Locally, the same is true for clause type and ordering in sentences, such that for instance repeated or pre-supposed propositions tend to appear in dependent clauses. In other words, event model structures map in specific ways on textual meaning structures, which in turn influence expression structures (position, order, etc.), but both processes are controlled by information in context models. Let us therefore ex-amine this form of contextual monitoring of the processing of various textual structures in somewhat more detail.

These and other processes of ongoing comprehension and production of discourse are traditionally located in Short Term (or Working) Memory (STM) (Baddeley 1992). More specifically, we presume that these processes have a strategic nature (for details, see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983). This means that they are fallible but fast, on line, context-dependent and goal-directed proc-esses, that may operate at several levels at the same time, and that in compre-hension allow fast inferences from incomplete data: As is well-known from commonsense proverbs: A good understander only needs half a word. In dis-course production, this means that we should not assume that full propositions, text representations or models are already activated or construed before surface structures or details of a text are already taking place. Similarly, although se-mantic macrostructures (topics) usually need to control local semantic process-ing (otherwise one does not know 'what one was talking about'—and people regularly show confusion when having 'lost' their topic of talk), local process-ing and context constraints (e.g., the apparent delicacy of topic) may well lead to strategic changes of topics. As is particularly clear in conversation, people develop and change semantic representations on the fly, as a direct function of ongoing context (or rather of their models of such a context). This flexible, strategic way of 'expressing' underlying meanings or knowledge allows full adaptation to the variable conditions of the context. This brief summary of in-formation processing in STM (short-term memory) again shows how important currently updated context models are also for processing information in work-ing memory: They indeed seem to act as the Control System (or at least as the information base of the Control System) that accounts for the ongoing 'focus of attention' or consciousness with which texts are being processed.

3.2.2.   *Event models --> semantic structures -> schematic structures*
Global meanings (topics) of discourse may also be organized by conventional schematic structures (superstructures), such as those of narrative, argumenta-tion or other conventional genres or interactional organization (van Dijk 1980). We already saw that main topics are typically (though not necessarily) ex-

pressed in the Headline category of a news report, or in Titles of other genres. Similarly, important implied information in an argument is typically realized in the Conclusion category, whereas macropropositions that describe place, time or circumstances of an event may be realized in the Setting category of the narrative schema of a story, whereas the main practical conclusion from an experiential story typically appears in the Conclusion or Coda of such a story. Similar observations of relations between global meaning and 'global form' may be made for psychological articles, conversations or institutional dialogues, such as courtroom proceedings or classroom talk. Details of these relationships are outside the scope of this paper.

3.2.3.   *Context models --> schematic structures*
The question here is whether global form, as defined by conventional categories and their rule-based or strategic ordering, is also controlled by underlying context models. They do, and in various ways.

First of all, schematic structures also organize interaction, and may be controlled by interaction regulation in context models. To wit, the conventional opening and closing categories of conversations, such as Greetings or Leave-takings, or the Opening of a meeting or session in many forms of institutional dialogue, are obviously 'firsts' and 'lasts' in interaction, and hence represented as such in the context model of such interaction. As such they have various interactional, social and institutional functions, such as marking beginning and end of a communicative event, defining the type of event, addressing or defining participants, and establishing the institutional validity of such an event (e.g., a meeting or session can only start, and hence do the business it is supposed to do, when opened, etc.) (for details, see e.g., Boden & Zimmerman 1991; Drew & Heritage 1992).

In a different but similar way, Headlines 'open' news reports, and define their beginning (and thereby often the end of another), and thus regulate reading and comprehension. Also, some schematic categories seem to be defined primarily in contextual terms. For instance the news report category of 'Previous Information' usually serves as a 'reminder' of knowledge presupposed by the journalist to be known by the reader on the basis of earlier news reports. Similarly, Evaluation or Prediction categories in news or other genres may code for the opinion and hence the social or political perspective or position of newsmakers (van Dijk 1988a).

Secondly, context models may affect schematic structures also in a different way, viz., by controlling various types of 'transformations' of normal ordering. For instance, although the normative rule would be that main topics

are expressed in headlines (subjective) contextual information may upgrade lower-level topics or even microstructural details by putting such information in the Headline category, while at the same time downgrading the prominence of the main topic. That is, contextual or 'pragmatic' criteria may supersede semantic criteria of ordering or schematic organization. For instance, in news reports there are various criteria that define the 'relevance structure' of such discourse, and besides semantic importance, we may also have pragmatic relevance, such as (assumed) interest of the readers, and the implication of news values, such as that of recency. This means that sometimes information about more recent events may take precedence over semantically more important information, and thus get expressed in the headline, pushing back the main topic to the Lead or a minor headline (van Dijk 1988a, 1988b).

Changes of normal or canonical ordering (which also occur in semantics, e.g., when a mapping of events on a normal, chronological order of propositions is changed for an order determined by prominence, relevance or other criteria, see also Levelt 1982) are often the result of a contextually controlled strategy or the functional moves that constitute such a strategy. This is also true for schematic organization. Instead of the 'normal' ordering of stories, e.g., beginning with a Summary, Setting and Orientation, stories may begin with 'in medias res', as we know from the classical theory of the novel as well as from conversational story analysis. That is, there may be contextual constraints that change the canonical order into an order that is controlled by non-semantic criteria as relevance (interest of the participants), urgency, or cognitive and social constraints, such as creating suspense in stories, or skipping normal greetings or leave-taking formulas in relations of power abuse or dominance in conversations. In other words, as is the case for sentence syntax, also overall discourse forms are flexible in the expression of underlying (global) meanings, and such variation may be taken advantage of by contextual criteria as represented in context models. Indeed, up to a point, virtually all canonical forms may at some point be changed as a function of much more prominent constraints than those of (context-free) rules or conventions, viz., current contextual necessities or preferences.

Of course, there may be some strictly obligatory conventional categories, without which the very genre or type of interaction would no longer be properly defined or socially recognized: Headlines in stories, Titles and Abstracts of psychological articles, Conclusions in argumentation, Openings in meetings, or an Indictment in a trial. Here contexts are themselves constrained by convention, rule or law in such a way that deviance in discourse would make the discourse structurally inappropriate or 'invalid' in any particular

context. In other words, despite the broad influence of context, we should not forget that language use and discourse also are controlled by (more or less) context-free rules and conventions.

3.2.4.   *Context models -> lexicalization (style)*

Although lexical choice is of course largely monitored by event models and meaning structures of discourse, there often are (near) synonyms defined precisely by their semantic similarity as well as by their different presuppositions and implications of 'use', that is, by context. Hence, as is well known, the stylistic variation of lexical choice may be a function of categories represented in context models. Indeed, one of the useful shorthand definitions of style is that it is the "trace of the context in the text".

One classical example is constituted by contextually varying forms of address, such as pronominal deictics (like French *tu* vs. *vous*), the use of titles (*Professor, Dr.,* or *Mr. President*, etc.), or the use of first or last names. In different cultures, thus, variations of address may depend on a complex structure of social relations, such as those of family membership, kinship role, institutional role, hierarchical position, social or personal power, fame, and so on. This is well known from the ethnography of speaking, sociolinguistics and pragmatics and need, as such, no further analysis here (see, among many studies, e.g., Brown & Levinson 1987).

Our point is that in discourse production and comprehension what counts is not the 'real' social context, but how this is represented by the speech participants in their context models. Thus, the conventional effect of 'real' social position may well be canceled out by the way speakers actually define their own position or role in the present context. They may refuse to be polite, pay respect or conversely express admiration or subordination when none is due. Hence, rather trivially of course: Despite the constraints of the social context, it is the subjective representation of such contexts that controls text and talk, and such a subjective representation may very well violate socially shared rules for a number of more or less valid reasons: resistance and challenge, creativity and originality, urgency and emergencies and other special circumstances. Although perhaps trivial from a cognitive processing perspective, this point is not always sufficiently recognized in exclusively socio-cultural approaches to the influence of context on stylistic variation, which is by definition unable to define personal variation, deviation, change and creativity. Much in the same way as the macro and the micro constraints of society and culture need to be taken into account in a theory of discourse and its conceptualization, we also need a cognitive component that describes and explains the way social actors deal with such social and cultural constraints.

Secondly, lexical items not only code for knowledge, but also for opinions, as the famous triple 'freedom fighter', 'guerrilla' and 'terrorist' and many other socially and politically constrained variations show. Though referentially able to denote the same objects, persons, actions or events, such variable use expresses the more or less positive evaluation of the speaker. This evaluation was earlier represented in event models: They represent the present interpretation of an event but may also feature an opinion about such an event or its components. We have seen that such opinions may be strictly personal (like my like or dislike of this apple or vacation), but often also instantiate socially shared attitudes, as when whites think or say negative things about blacks, men about women, or Christians about Muslims, that is underlying attitudes (e.g., prejudices) and ideologies.

However, such opinions are not always context-free, and again depend, for each concrete discourse, on the ways speech participants define their own social position. Thus one may speak or write 'from' the Left or Right, or as a feminist or as union representative, and so on. Such positions, whether assumed, challenged or suspended (also a feminist may sometimes break the 'rule' and speak 'unfeministically') in the present context need to be represented in the context model, viz., in the self-representation of speakers, that is in speakers' contextual self-models. The same is true for the other-models of the speaker, who may select different lexical items as a function of the social category, position or role of the recipient, as is well known in all social processes of accommodation as well as discrimination: Parents speaking differently to children than to adults, women differently to other women than to men, or whites differently to blacks than to other whites, and so on. In other words we here find a broad array of types of contextual social constraints, as subjectively represented in context models, that control lexicalization.

Note though that theoretically we should distinguish between the control of event models by social cognitions (such as knowledge, attitudes and other beliefs), explaining the kinds of opinions people may have about events, on the one hand, and the (episodic, personal) control of such event models by underlying context models, on the other hand. That is, the context model defines the ways language users socially self-define themselves and other participants in the present communicative situation. This self-definition may be both subjective and ad hoc, as we have seen for the occasionally 'unfeminist' lexical choice of the feminist in specific situations.

Such a contextually specific constraint accounts for the multiplicity of social group membership. Thus a black female liberal journalist has at least four possible allegiances, and for each social situation, these might need to be

managed in such a way in everyday interaction and discourse that specific combinations of positions and opinions, or some contextually more prominent position controls what she will actually write in a specific news report or feature article, say in a dialogue with news sources or in a conversation with her boss. In other words, whereas social cognitions explain and control context-independent and relatively stable group membership of language users, episodic context models explain uniqueness and variation as a function of the possibly ad hoc constraints of the present situation.

The contextual control of lexicalization of course not only operates in production but also in comprehension process: The use of specific words allows for inferences by recipients of the social position or ad hoc contextual 'position' speakers. The repeated use of 'terrorist' by a given speaker may define him or her as a conservative, or as a liberal who in this specific situation disagrees with the violence of those with whom he normally feels solidarity.

What has been said here about the stylistic variation of lexical alternatives expressing social or political opinions, of course also holds for the contextual constraints on meanings more generally. That is, topic selection, propositional meanings, coherence relations, as well as their semantic or schematic organization in discourse, may also be controlled by such contextually variable positioning. In this respect, lexicalization is simply part of a broader pattern of contextual]zed ideological control of the meaning of text and talk.

3.2.5.   *Context models --> syntactic structures (style)*

Similar arguments and examples may be put forward for the analysis of the contextual control of syntactic structure. Obviously, even when such control is partly autonomous, it is always co-control with semantic structures: Syntactic structures are primarily a function of semantic organization, such as the structure of propositions and their underlying event models: various agency roles, responsibility, or the semantic consequences of old and new information, focus or other cognitive factors that control the expression of information of event models in text and talk (Levelt 1989)

However, as is the case for lexicalization, we also have (stylistic) variations of syntactic structures that are not controlled by event model structures, but by more 'pragmatic' features of the situation as represented in context models. Word order, even when signaling topic-comment articulation and as expressing differences between given-new or presupposed-asserted information, may thus also have a pragmatic dimension. For instance whether information is assumed to be known by the recipient depends on the model speakers have about (the knowledge of) recipients, which is a contextual criterion.

Similarly, what information is more or less relevant or important, may also depend on the self-representation of the goals or positions of speech participants, and such criteria may be coded also by word order or clause dependency and position. The same is true for spatial, social or political perspective.

A well-known example of such positional and hence contextual control is the way semantic agency is dealt in syntactic structures. A headline like *Police killed demonstrators*, thus, attributes not only agency role and responsibility to the police, but also emphasizes such a role by syntactic subject position and topical position up front, as would not be the case for the passive variant *Demonstrators killed by police*, and even less by *Demonstrators killed*. In the latter examples, different syntactic structures code for different focus and topicality (we are now speaking about demonstrators, depending on textual structures), but also because of their later position and hence lower prominence, downplays the agency role and the responsibility of the police. This is a familiar ideological effect in the media portrayal of ingroups and outgroups (Fowler et al. 1979; van Dijk 1991).

That is, depending on the way speakers or writers self-define themselves in their context models, they also have a different perspective on events, and hence on the ways such events are selected for inclusion in semantic representations as well as in the ways such semantic representations are in turn formulated. More generally we may therefore assume that in addition to semantic control there is autonomous, parallel, control from context models in such a way that syntactic structures tend to be selected that signal the prominence, relevance or importance of the perspective, point of view, social position or ideological interest of the speaker. This means, among other things, that events are expressed in such a way that agency, responsibility, causality, etc., as they are syntactically coded, are a function of the goals, intentions, position, opinions or ideologies of the speaker.

The overall contextual strategy involved in syntactic formulation, thus, is: Emphasize the (structure of the) events that are positive for our group or for me, de-emphasize the events that are negative for our group or for me, and conversely, emphasize 'their' negative properties and de-emphasize 'their' positive ones. This social or ideological US-THEM polarization, well-known for instance in racism and ethnocentrism, and more generally in group dominance or conflict, thus also affects the self-representation and hence the roles and strategic goals of speech participants as group members, and thus the ways events from even models are syntactically formulated (van Dijk 1993, 1995).

3.2.6.   *Context models -> rhetorical structures*
Whereas stylistic variation is the typical textual 'locus' of context coding, it way be asked whether also the specific structures of rhetoric (or rather of rhe-

torical 'elocutio'), such as metaphors, alliteration, litotes, mitigation or irony have a contextual basis. Obviously, and has been emphasized since classical rhetoric, such specific structures have persuasive functions. Semantically speaking they may, as such, have no or a marginal function. Rather, they may call (or cancel) attention to specific forms, meanings or actions. That is, they typically manage processing and the structures of representation. As we have seen for the structures of semantics and syntax, thus, rhetorical devices of prominence may signal importance or contextual relevance, which is at least partly a contextual constraint.

On the other hand, rhetorical devices may be called for by genre, as is the case for specific structures (like rhyme or alliteration) in poetry, literary prose or advertising, or irony in conversation and argumentation. The more specific question though is whether such rhetorical devices may be contextually controlled in a more specific sense of coding the spatial, temporal or social position of speech participants. This would, more generally, be the case for those cultures where specific rhetorical figures should be used (or not) by specific social categories, e.g., on the basis of age, gender, class, social relation or kinship. Thus, it may well be that those in dominant relationships in such cultures may be reserved the right to use specific metaphors, mitigation or exaggeration. Further research will be necessary to examine the contextualization of rhetoric as intended in this paper.

3.2.7.   *Context models -> expression structures*
The same argument again applies in the control of the structures of 'expression', viz., those of sound structures, graphical structures and non-verbal structures. That is, personal opinions, social position, social relations between participants, and even institutional roles of speakers may be multiply and autonomously coded at the level of intonation, stress, standard language, sociolectal or dialectal pronunciation, as well as gestures, face-work, proximity, and so on. Politeness and deference, as a form of social relation, may thus be coded by a more formal speech pronunciation, volume (speaking softly), bodily position (e.g., bowing), distance, and so on. Conversely, lack of respect, racist or sexist power abuse and all forms of social inequality may be 'marked' in the expression structures in many ways: an insulting 'tone', loudness, threatening or domineering bodily position, and concomitant face work and gestures. Such contextually dependent expression structures are partly autonomous because they may intentionally or unwittingly be at variance with meaning: Polite formulas may be expressed with insulting intonation, face-work or gestures. This is well-known, and need no further analysis. The point here is that in a theory

of text processing the variation of 'surface' structures of expression is not merely controlled by underlying meanings or event models, but also by the context as subjectively represented by participants in their context models, allowing both for social and cultural conformity as well as for personal or local deviation'.

Similar remarks hold for the contextual control of graphical structures, such as news report lay-out, print size, pictures and photographs, and so on. Social and ideological position of journalists may for instance be signaled by the emphasizing or de-emphasizing lay-out associated with the expression of the actions of specific social groups. For instance, minority crime, especially of black youths, tends to be emphasized not only by semantic topicalization, schematic positioning in headlines, but also by size of headlines, position of articles on the page, within the paper, or by the use of photographs that have negative implications (van Dijk 1991). Ingroup favoritism, prejudices about outgroups, and in general group relations thus also shape the way language users represent their context of communication, identification and membership, which in turn controls the perspective and the opinions with which events of models are expressed in text and talk.

3.3. *Context models and consciousness*

After this theoretical analysis of the nature and functions of context models and of the ways they control the various structures of discourse, let us finally briefly 'et back to the problem of consciousness. It has already been suggested that this vague term needs to be analyzed in terms of properties of cognitive processing and representation. Following the current literature, we also have suggested that some aspects of model construction, updating and discourse control may be more or less 'conscious'. Of course, such a gradual measure need be made explicit, and hence differentiated at various levels and stages of processing, from level of general arousal and alacrity of perception, to the allocation of various cognitive resources, such as the activation of more or less knowledge in understanding, and the flow of information between STM and Long-Term Memory (LTM), among many other aspects of consciousness discussed in this hook.

One commonsense aspect of consciousness is 'awareness of who I am and of what I am (now) doing (thinking)'. This may imply specific attention, and hence explicit processing of the representation of self, one's actions and one's present environment. For consciousness in discourse, communication and interaction, part of this processing and representation is precisely accounted for

by context models. In this sense, 'conscious' talk and text—at all levels—also means that one represents the communicative context and its features, and controls discourse production and reception as a function of such features, as explained above. That is, discursive and interactional reflexivity is a crucial property of context models and their function. They represent not only (in general) 'who I am', but also 'who I am now', viz., 'as what I am now acting', as we shall see in the example of a parliamentary debate analyzed below. That is, context models as defined (and the same is true for all mental models of social practices in which people are involved) provide the necessary parameters for the dimensions or types of consciousness involved, such as consciousness of other participants, consciousness of where I am, and consciousness about what I am doing and why. Indeed, in this respect a theory of context models would be a major component of a theory of consciousness.

We have also suggested, however, that fully fledged context models may be very complex. They most certainly will not entirely fit in Working Memory. As is the case for event models that represent what we think or talk about, thus, they need to be represented in episodic memory, or at least in a memory region (or state of accessibility) that makes such context model immediately accessible. In actual discourse and interaction control, thus, only strategically selected fragments of context models need be actively applied, attended to, changed or updated, for instance, as suggested: overall, main or macro aims, goals, participants, roles and setting.

This means that although language users are aware of the properties of the context in which they are speaking and acting, all these properties need not be attended to, actively, in STM. Some of them are allocated fewer cognitive resources ('attention') at any one moment. But, the fact that as soon as something 'goes wrong' with the match between text and context or global and local context features (e.g., a sudden impolite pronoun) people will often notice that, shows that the whole context model is actively monitoring talk and interaction. However, some of its features (e.g., Time or various Roles) may at any one moment be more in focus, or now being processed in STM, rather than other features. Despite these differences or degrees of cognitive focus, attention or resource allocation, we provisionally assume that context models account for many of the intuitive aspects usually associated with (mental) consciousness: Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? Why, etc.

4.   An example: A debate in the U. S. House of Representatives

By way of illustration, we may finally examine some properties of a fragment from a debate in the U.S. House of Representatives. This debate was held on

June 4, 1991, and dealt with the Civil Rights and Women's Equity in Employment Act. One year earlier President Bush had vetoed a similar Bill proposed by the Democratic majority, a veto that however could not be overturned by Congress. The main conservative argument against both the previous and the present Bill was that it was a 'quota' bill, that not only would be bad for business (an argument less explicitly formulated) but that would only be a boon for lawyers, and would not help minorities (as in the 1990 Bill) or minorities and women (as in the present 1991 Bill). Although the present version of the Bill expressly prohibits quota hiring, the Republican opposition nevertheless keeps repeating the Q-word, and rejects the bill accordingly. In the fragment we analyze (cf. the Appendix), the floor is given to Representative of the Republican Party from California, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Since a fully fledged description of the relevant context and the ways Mr. Rohrabacher models it for his intervention would not only be speculative, but also very lengthy, we may summarize the most relevant properties of the speaker's context as follows (actual contents of relevant model categories are in full propositional format, which is expressed here in noun phrases):

1. Overall interaction and type of speech event: Congressional debate;
2. Location: The floor of the U.S. House of Representative;
3. Date, Time and timing: June 4, 1991, about 4:45 PM, Yielded time of speaking (by debate organizer Mr. Hyde): 3 minutes.
4. Participant role: Current speaker;
5. Professional Role: House Representative of California;
6. Affiliation: Republican Party;
7. Political ideology: Conservative;
8. General position on civil rights: Against extension;
9. Gender: Male;
10. Race: White;
11. Immediate Opponent(s): Democrats;
12. General Opponents: Liberals;
13. The Social Others: Minorities and Women;
14. Current role: Speaker of intervention;
15. Hearers: The House;
16. Formal Addressee: The Chairman of the House;
17. Overhearers: Public, voters, etc.;
18. Intention: Hold a good speech against Bill;
19. Purpose: Defeat Bill;
20. Overall goal: Defend business interests.

In this non-exhaustive list, we first of all find the characterization of the communicative event as whole. Without representing the type of overall event, Mr. Rohrabacher would not know where he is and what to do: His very action must be self-represented (in his context model) as a local 'intervention' and an ongoing 'contribution' to the overall event of a congressional debate.

It is also this overall event that, as a macro-category will influence genre, style and other properties of interaction, such as formal addressing the Chairman. As the previous speaker, Mr. Hyde, also shows, part of the interventions in the debate are purely formulaic ("I'm pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California"), so much so that the Congressional Record needs to specify the tacit contextual information that this "gentleman" is in fact Mr. Rohrabacher. The latter will than not formally reply to the previous speaker, as would be the case in most dialogues, but to the Chairman, who also will be explicitly addressed as such with a special, polite phrase in first position: "Mr. Chairman". These and several other formal and stylistic properties of this text are obviously controlled by context features, or rather, as we propose, by the way the speaker subjectively construes and ongoingly 'implements' this context.

Although the overall speech event of a congressional debate generally requires rather formal language (and indeed, speeches are seldom spontaneous, but read prepared statements), contextual reasons of persuasion may lead to intentional stylistic 'deviations', as is Mr. Rohrabacher's informal use of the phrase "up the ying-yang" (line 9). Apart from locally implementing the overall intention to hold a good speech, and the overall purpose to get the Bill defeated, such uses of informal style also have other contextual presuppositions and implications, viz., to convey and construct a desired speaker model in the context models of the audience, e.g., 'This is an informal, laid-back guy'. This example also shows how one surface structure phenomenon (lexicalization or metaphor) may serve several contextual categories and functions at the same time.

In the same way as Mr. Rohrabacher (henceforth abbreviated as 'R') must be aware of the current communicative event, he of course also consciously realizes in what Setting he is acting, that is, what his physical location (lectern, floor) and institutional location (House) are, and what time it is. Temporal representations in context models such as these are crucial, since speaking time is explicitly limited by the previous speaker to three minutes. Such speaking 'slots' are rather precisely monitored, since each party or group will be allocated only a fixed amount of time for its intervention, and speaking longer means that next speakers will get less time. We may therefore further

assume that in the unfolding context model of R, the category of time will be continuously self-monitored as well.

A central and crucial cluster of categories represented in the context model of R are those of self-representation: R obviously knows who he is, as what he is present, for whom he is speaking, and so on. That is, his context model needs categories for these various 'identities', viz., his personal identity (Rohrabacher), his professional role (Representative), his affiliation or group membership (Republicans) and so on. Some of these context categories will feature purely personal information, such as R's own self-image of his character (e.g., 'I am an informal guy'), others are instantiations of social and shared in-formation and opinions, such as 'We are members of the Republican Party', etc. These various structures of Identity categories in the context model will also influence the relations to the other participants in this context, such as his Democratic opponents, liberals in general, and indirectly, the groups (minorities, women, lawyers, etc.) talked about, and represented in his ongoing event model of his speech.

This is particularly clear in the various categories that define the (present) Position and Goals of R, in which for instance his ideologies and aims of the present intervention are represented: to make sure, with his speech, this 13i11 will be defeated. The disparaging remarks about "politicians and political activists who cannot find work doing anything else" (line 16-17) and "so-called liberal leaders" (line 61) exhibit negative opinions about his political and ideological opponents that not only characterize the event model (about the Bill and who is involved in its defense and benefits), but also the context model. Debate and argument on the floor of the House precisely presuppose ideologi-cal dispute and hence self- and other-positioning on the points of views, opin-ions and attitudes at stake.

Self- and other-representation in context models, and the display of such identities and allegiances in talk, usually also show in the choice of pro-nouns. It is well-known that we is the most powerful political and ideological pronoun in this case, as is true for political discourse in general (Wilson 1990). The most obvious referent for this pronoun in R's speech would be his group or party or conservatives in general. But when he says "We just do not need any more laws in this area" (line 6-7), he does not merely voice conservative opin-ion, but seems to suggest to speak for all Americans, a well-known rhetorical ploy of populist democracy. Similarly, when he says "We have got an under-class of people of all races trapped in poverty" (line 24-25), we similarly seems to indicate 'we in America'. In other words, whether superficially in his rheto-ric, or more deeply in his context model, R identifies with being an American

in this context, and as representative claims to speak for the people. The same is true in the pragmatically more active sentence, "We cannot sit by and watch our own citizens being bypassed", where *we* is ambiguously referring to 'we Republicans', or to 'we Americans', as the pronoun *our* in "our citizens" suggests.

However, when he suggests "Let us level with these people" (line 83), then us seems to self-refer to 'we in Congress', or to 'we Republicans', while precisely distancing himself from the others by the distancing demonstrative "these people", well-known in discriminating talk (van Dijk 1987). When he finally calls "Let us defeat this legislation", he obviously displays his contextual membership of those who oppose this Bill, whereas the previous sentence, "Let us quit playing the cynical game of ward politics at the national level", the use of *us* may again denote either his opponents (implicitly accused of playing 'wards' of minorities), or 'we politicians' in general, who should not engage in playing wards. In sum, at each point of the text and context, various self-definitions of the identity, membership and allegiances of the speaker must be presupposed in his context model.

Note also that the various identities also express themselves in many other ways in the text. Thus, as a Representative he can appropriately call to "defeat" this law, an action and speech act that is restricted to Legislators. As a politician he may refuse to act as a 'political warden' of minorities, and as a politician and American he may propose "not to sit by and watch our own citizens being bypassed". Similarly, we also may note the overall semantic coherence of Us and Them throughout the text. That is, the Others (Opponents, Democrats, Liberals) are consistently associated with negative opinions, as represented in his event model of this debate, opinions that are however controlled by the conservative ideologies and attitudes of his party, and the ways he espouses them personally by implementing them in his context model. Strategically, he does so effectively by especially focusing on lawyers, the most hated professionals in the U.S., and by thus discrediting the Bill as a boon for those, and by associating his political opponents with those who want to make lawyers richer, while at the same time doing nothing for women and minorities.

Indeed, although defeat of this Bill will of course hurt women's and minority's chances to defend themselves effectively against discrimination at the job, so that socially speaking these are R's opponents, R makes sure to avoid characterizing them as such, for obvious reasons of face keeping and impression management. That is, crucial in this debate, is that the Republicans who want to defeat the Bill must make sure that they do not present themselves as anti-woman and anti-minorities, lest they are called sexist and racist. This is a

general strategy of positive self-presentation (viz., the avoidance of a negative impression) by the elites in general, and by politicians in particular (van Dijk 1993). This does not mean, of course, that elite speakers represent themselves as racist and merely try to hide it, or that they are 'unconscious' racists (see also Haskell 1986). They usually know full well what they stand for, but will simply deny that such attitudes and policies are 'racist'.

The overall strategy, on the contrary, must be to present themselves as those whose real aims are to protect "an underclass of people" against "so-called" liberal politicians and lawyers. This complex management of self- and other-impressions is obviously monitored by the respective self- and other-representations in the models of the participants, as explained above. Part of these representations (and hence the need of R to present himself as the 'friend' of "these people") is R's self-representation as both male and white. His rhetorical affiliation with "these people" is expressed by well-known moves of Apparent Empathy, for instance in lexical expressions such as "trapped in poverty, living in wretched conditions, enveloped in helplessness and hopelessness".

Finally, the point of the local and global semantics of R's talk, viz., to provide arguments against this Bill, is of course a strategic implementation of the overall, pragmatic purpose of his intervention, viz., to defeat the Bill. That is, the coherent selection of negative words to express negative opinions about extending legal measures against discrimination, and the expression of propositions that have negative implications for his Opponents, are the central part of the execution of the context model. These meanings implement a conservative model of this Bill and debate, and are thus indirectly enacting the attitudes and ideologies of the Republican party and of those whose interests in this debate it rally serves, as explained above. Many expressions in the text, besides the opposition to Civil Rights legislation, show R's conservative concerns, such as 'the breakdown of the family', the 'failure of inner city schools', and especially 'the unwillingness of some to take entry level jobs'. That such a position is indeed merely an apparent form of empathy is rather clearly expressed by R's denial of discrimination and racism as a major problem of U.S. society.

The point of this semantic level of our analysis is that although obviously the meaning of the talk is controlled by the evaluative beliefs in the mental model of the conditions and intended effects of this Bill, these opinions in the event model, and especially their explicit defense in the present debate, are also controlled by the self-representation of the speaker and his aims and goals in the context model. That is, very few properties of his talk are not directly or indirectly controlled by R's context model of his intervention in this

debate, and of the debate in general. However, the opinions in both the event model and the context model are of course based on underlying conservative attitudes about Civil Rights legislation and white and male ideologies about the position of women and minorities in U.S. society (for a more detailed discussion of these relationships between models and underlying attitudes and ideologies, see van Dijk 1995; for an analysis of the ethnic ideologies and strategies of the elites, see van Dijk 1993).

5.   Final remarks

In sum, at all levels of discourse structure we find traces of the context, or rather of the context as subjectively construed and socially constrained by the speech participants. They will in many ways mark, signal, or directly express in expressions, syntax, lexical items, semantic structures speech acts or conversational management, the ways they interpret the present communicative situation, including themselves and the other participants.

They do so also by controlling the ways events of event models are included, excluded and structured in semantic representations. That is, whereas event models generally control semantic 'content', 'what' will be said, or what will be talked 'about', context models control how speakers formulate such event model information. These modes or styles of text or talk, as well as their contextual variation, are thus a function of a very complex array of those properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or comprehension of the discourse, viz., of the context as represented mentally by the speech participants.

The array of context structures thus represented is extremely complex. Discussed above, among other criteria are the following:

- Assigned relevance and importance (to information, events, etc.);
- Roles, positions and social relations of participants,
  specifically: relations of power, dominance and inequality;
- Goals, intentions, purposes of participants;
- Group membership and social affiliation of participants,
  e.g., age, race, gender and class;
- Personal association and identification with social groups;
- Social attitudes and ideologies;
- Setting: Location, timing and organization of the interaction.

It is not very difficult to spell out, also on the basis on our insights in contextual constraints in ethnography and sociolinguistics, the specifics of these overall contextual criteria controlling text and talk and their processing. However, we have as yet no idea what specific structures, schemata or strategic processes are at work in the organization and uses of context models, and how they may change and updated continuously.

This also means that we don't yet know how context models are formed (or activated) exactly in discourse and communication. Language users obviously build and update mental representations of the social situation in which they are speaking or writing at present, but we need to know by what strategies such a situation is analyzed and represented, and what schemata may be involved in their episodic storage. Indeed, what elements or information of the social context is attended to and found more or less important. In our analysis, for instance, we did not pay any attention to the 'strength' of each contextual factor in the control of text structures. Some factors, e.g., those of temporal and spatial setting and speaker roles, may have obligatory consequences for discourse (e.g., in the use of deictics), others may be socio-culturally compulsory, as may be the case for social roles, social relations and group membership (e.g., in politeness strategies), whereas others may have optional (e.g., stylistic) consequences, such as marking of focus, importance, and relevance.

We further need to know the architecture of both context models and their links with other representations in episodic or social memory. They obviously are the interface between event models and (the mental) strategies and representations of discourse structures. That is, they in many ways have the role of a Control System regulating not only the flow of information between models and text, but also the whole interaction in the present situation. They may ignore, suppress, enhance, de-emphasize or otherwise modify semantic information of such models, and are needed for speech participants to monitor their discourse also as a function of their position, perspective and interests.

However, although we still need to fill in many details of our theory, for the discussion in this volume this chapter provides insight into one crucial example of the management of consciousness, viz., the ways participants monitor communicative contexts. We discussed the nature, the levels, categories, types and strategies of more or less consciously processing the very complex information needed in discursive interaction. Speakers may not at each moment be explicitly aware of who they are, as what they are speaking, what they are doing, or what the conditions and consequences are of what they say. However, they are unable to interact intelligibly and effectively without a complex context model monitoring the context of their talk and controlling the many dis-

course features that signal and ongoingly construct that context. In this way, the theory of context models is at the same time a contribution to an important dimension of the theory of consciousness, viz., the flexible and context-dependent management of knowledge, attention, awareness and focus in effective understanding and interaction.

Acknowledgement

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Appendix

House of Representatives

Civil Rights and Women's Equity in Employment Act of 1991
(continued)

Mr HYDE. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. Rohrabacher].

[1] Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, there is already legal recourse for the victims of discrimination. Legal suits can be brought or, in [5] employment cases, complaints can be filed with the EEOC. We just do not need any more laws in this area. We have civil rights legislation and regulations up the ying-yang, Federal, State, [10] country and local laws. The only ones who are going to benefit from this unneeded legislation are those who will benefit from unnecessary litigation. This is right, the lawyers are the ones [15] who are doing the benefit.

    Of course, politicians and political activists who cannot find work doing anything else also expect to gain from this legislation. And who will not be [20] helped by this obtrusive civil rights bill? The less fortunate of our fellow citizens. That is who will not be helped.

    We have got underclass of people [25] of all races trapped in poverty, living in wretched conditions, enveloped in helplessness and hopelessness. We need

economic growth, business, expansion, not more civil rights, legislation [30] that is redundant and useless.

Mr. Chairman, the breakdown with the family, the failure of our inner city schools, drug and alcohol abuse, the unwillingness of some to take [35] entry level jobs, a welfare system that provides the wrong incentives to people who need an inspiration to change, not pressure to remain the same, these are the factors that will [40] make a difference between deprivation and self-government.

We care about these people living in horrible situations, whatever their race, and they come in all colors. Our [45] hearts break and we really feel a terrible pain for these people who are living a painful existence. Far too many Americans find themselves in these horrible situations.

[50]   Rarely is this a result of bigotry. During the 1980's, not only did we not get enterprise zone legislation passed, but the rhetoric from liberals who thwarted that effort deterred the self-improvement [55] of those who needed it the most.

The job explosion experience throughout America during the Reagan years was for far too many a [60] missed opportunity. They were listening to so-called liberal leaders who were telling them that they should not try because they did not have a chance rather than listening to conservatives [65] who were telling them to go for it.

As a result, immigrants who flooded our cities easily found entry level jobs, poor immigrants from Mexico, Asia, and, yes, Africa and black Caribbean [70] islands began to support themselves with dignity, and with hard work and their own personal perseverance they began their personal economic ascent.

We cannot sit by and watch our own [75] citizens being bypassed. The first step is to recognize that racial discrimination plays only a minor role in the economic tragedy befalling our inner cities. We need to talk about getting [80] our economy moving, creating new jobs and personal economic advancement of our citizens.

Let us level with these people. Let us create jobs and opportunity in their [85] neighborhoods. Let us quit playing the cynical game of ward politics at the national level. Let us defeat this legislation. It is going to hurt those it claims to help.

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