Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis

The theoretical premise of this study is that ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies. Obviously, ideologies are also enacted in other forms of action and interaction, and their reproduction is often embedded in organizational and institutional contexts.

Thus, racist ideologies may be expressed and reproduced in racist talk, comics or movies in the context of the mass media, but they may also be enacted in many forms of discrimination and institutionalized by racist parties within the context of the mass media or of Western parliamentary democracies.

The Theory of ideology

Ideology is considered pervasive in respect to the following categories that encompass all aspects of interaction and social order which are undoubtedly multidisciplinary:

1-Ideology is articulated within a conceptual triangle that connects society, discourse and social cognition in the framework of a critical discourse analysis.

2-Ideologies are considered the basic framework that organize the interface between the cognition of social group and members and thus it is both cognitive and social.

3-Ideology essentially functions as the interface between the cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action, on the one hand, and the societal position and interests of social groups, on the other hand.

4-It also forms the social representation of the groups at the macro-level analyses, , social formations , social structure and micro-level studies of situated, individual interaction and discourse.

Ideology as a Form of Social Cognition

Social cognition is, here, defined as the system of mental representations and processes of group members. Part of the system is the sociocultural knowledge shared by the members of a specific group, society or culture. Members of groups may also share evaluative beliefs, viz., opinions, organized into social attitudes. Thus, feminists may share attitudes about abortion, affirmative action or corporate glass ceilings blocking promotion, or other forms of discrimination by men. Ideologies, then, are the overall, abstract mental systems that organize such socially shared attitudes.

As ideologies take a form of shared socio-cultural knowledge social information processing , they are intended to:

1-be gradually acquired by members of a group or culture.

2-as systems of principles that organize social cognitions, ideologies are assumed to control, through the minds of the members and the social reproduction of the group.

3-Mentally representing the basic social characteristics of a group, such as their *identity*, *tasks*, *goals*, *norms*, *values, position* and *resources.*

4-a functioning instance of self-serving, it would seem that they are organized by those group-schemata.

  White racists, for example, represent society basically in terms of a conflict between whites and non-whites, in which the identity, goals, values, positions and resources of whites are seen to be threatened by the Others. They do so by representing the relations between themselves and the Others essentially in terms of **us** versus **them**, in which we are associated with positive properties and they are associated with bad properties.

Ideologies of groups and group relations are constructed by a group-based selection of relevant social values. Seemingly it is a matter of attachment to certain social values .For instance, Feminists are attached to **independence**, **autonomy** and **equality** whereas Racists are indulged into **self-identity, superiority of the own group**, **advocating the primacy of their own group** and **the privilege of preferential access to valued social resources.**

The contents and schematic organization of group ideologies in the social mind shared by its members are a function of the properties of the group within the societal structure. The identity category of a group ideology organizes the information as well as the social and institutional actions : who belongs to the group, and who does not; who is admitted and who is not. This phase is for example enacted through directing attitudes against foreigners , immigrants , refugees or blacks.

As basic forms of social cognition, ideologies also have cognitive functions. That is, they control each of :

a) Development of structure and application of sociocultural knowledge

b) More specifically controlling evaluative beliefs, that is, social opinions shared by the members of a group.

c) Creating mental models that control peoples' biographical experience (i.e. knowledge and opinions people have about their everyday lives and defines what we usually call people's experience)

d) Forming the well-known missing link between the individual and social representation.

e)Linking the micro and the macro analysis of society.

f) Making explicit the relations between general group ideologies and actual text and talk. That is, models control how people act, speak or write, or how they understand the social practices of others.

Ideologies and Discourse: Levels of Analysis

1 -Social Analysis

a-Overall societal structures, e.g., parliamentary democracy, capitalism

b-Institutional/Organizational structures, e.g., racist political parties .

c-Group relations, e.g., discrimination, racism, sexism.

d-Group structures: identity, tasks, goals, norms, position, resources.

2- Cognitive Analysis

2.1 Social Cognition

a) Sociocultural values, e.g., intelligence, honesty, solidarity, equality .

b) Ideologies, e.g., racist, sexist, anti-racist, feminist, ecological …

c) Systems of attitudes, e.g., about affirmative action, multiculturalism …

d) Sociocultural knowledge, e.g., about society, groups, language, …

2.2 Personal Cognition

2.2.1 General (context free)

a) Personal values: personal selections from social values.

b) Personal ideologies: personal interpretations of group ideologies .

c) Personal attitudes: systems of personal opinions.

d) Personal knowledge: biographical information, past experiences.

2.2.2 Particular (context-bound)

a) Models: ad hoc representations of specific current actions, events.

b) Context models: ad hoc representations of the speech context.

c) Mental plans and representation of (speech) acts, discourse.

d) Mental construction of text meaning from models: the text.

e) Mental (strategic) selection of discourse structures (style, etc.).

3. Discourse Analysis

-*The various structures of text and talk*.

In other words, ideologies are localized between societal structures and the structures of the minds of social members. They allow social actors to translate their social properties (identity, goal, position, etc.) into the knowledge and beliefs that make up the concrete models of their everyday life experiences. That is, the mental representations of their actions and discourse. Indirectly (viz., through attitudes and knowledge), therefore, ideologies control how people plan and understand their social practices, and hence also the structures of text and talk.

Ideologies define and explain the similarities of the social practices of social members, but the theoretical framework at the same time accounts for individual variation. Each social actor is a member of many social groups, each with their own, sometimes conflicting ideologies.

At the same time, each social actor has her/his own, sometimes unique, biographical experiences (old models), attitudes, ideologies and values, and these will also interfere in the construction of models, which, in turn, will influence the production (and the comprehension) of discourse.

Hence, the schema given above may be read top down, or bottom up. The relations involved are dynamic and dialectic : ideologies partly control what people do and say (via attitudes and models), but concrete social practices or discourses are themselves needed to acquire social knowledge, attitudes and ideologies in the first place, viz., via the models people construct of other s social practices (including others discourses).

Ideologies are not merely systems of ideas neither are they vaguely defined as forms of consciousness but rather very specific basic frameworks of social cognition, with specific internal structures, and specific cognitive and social functions. They are social, for they are essentially shared by groups and acquired, used, and changed by people as group members in social situations and institutions, often in situations of conflicting interests between social forms.

Discourse Analysis As Ideological Analysis

Ideologies, though variably and indirectly, may be expressed in text and talk, and that discourses similarly function to persuasively help construct new and confirm already present ideologies. In both cases, this means that there may be discourse structures that are particularly relevant for an efficient expression or persuasive communication of ideological meanings.

For instance, headlines in newspapers,, taken as prominent expressions of the overall meaning or gist (semantic macrostructure) of a news report in the press, form a special discourse category that is probably more likely to express or convey ideological content than, for instance, the number of commas in a text.

Indeed, virtually all discourse structures are involved in the functional expression of mental models of events or communicative contexts, and, therefore, of the opinions that are part of such mental models. To wit, a racist opinion of a speaker about his black interlocutor, may be subtly expressed (involuntarily or not) by minimal intonation variations, interpreted by the black interlocutor as a racist way of addressing her, while sounding unwarrantably insolent or impolite.

Given the theory of ideology presented above, it is necessary to attend primarily to those properties of discourse that express or signal the opinions, perspective, position, interests or other properties of groups.

This is specifically the case when there is a conflict of interest, that is, when events may be seen, interpreted or evaluated in different, possibly opposed ways. The structures of ideologies also suggest that such representations are often articulated along an us versus them dimension, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their own group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms.

Thus, any property of discourse that expresses, establishes, confirms or emphasizes a self-interested group opinion, perspective or position, especially in a broader socio-political context of social struggle, is a candidate for special attention in such an ideological analysis. Such discourse structures usually have the social function of legitimating dominance or justifying concrete actions of power abuse by the elites.

Surface structures

The surface structures of discourse refer to the variable forms of expression at the level of phonological and graphical realization of underlying syntactic, semantic, pragmatic or other abstract discourse structures. With a few exceptions, such surface structures of text and talk do not have explicit meanings of their own.

Yet, such surface structures may express and convey special operations or strategies. For instance:

1-Special ***stress or volume*** or large printed type may strategically be used to emphasize or attract attention to specific meanings, as is the case when shouting at people or in screaming newspapers headlines.

2-Special ***intonational contours*** may help express irony, (lack of) politeness, insulting or other semantic or interactional meanings and functions.

3-A large banner headline may emphasize the biased summary of a news event, about a race riot , for instance, and *insulting volume (loudnes)* or intonation may similarly signal social inequality between the speaker and the hearer.

4-The meanings of the text may not explicitly express or encode *prejudice* or *social inequality*, surface structures may let *transpire* such hidden meanings anyway.

5- Surface structures must be *marked* . They must be out of the ordinary and violate communicative rules or principles, i.e., those of normal size headlines, normal volume or intonation in polite speech, and so on. They can be ultimately *deviant* surface structures and the same time deviant properties of models, such as a specially negative opinion about the competence of a woman or black man. In other words, ideological surface structures primarily function as signals of special meanings or model structures, and may, thus, also contribute to special processing of such interpretations of text and talk.

6-**Meanings** and **beliefs** may be de-emphasized or concealed by non-prominent graphical or phonological structures when they express meanings that are inconsistent with the goals or interests of the speaker. Intonation, such as the tone of racist insults, may also conventionally signal specific social relations, and hence also ideologically based inequality. The same is true for other forms of non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expression, proximity, and so on, which also may signal interpersonal and social relations, and, therefore, **ideological meanings**.

7-**Social relations** may also be structured in conflict and inequality, and so presuppose ideological differences. Accents may thus signal or express **prestige,** a**ccommodation**, **dominance**, **resistance** or other **ideologically controlled social relations**.

Syntax

it has often been shown that word order as well as transactional structures of sentences may code for **underlying semantic (or indeed, cognitive) agency.**

Agency is associated with grammatical subjects and initial position. The agency formation within discourse plays a vital role in the positive presentation of in –group and negative presentation of out-group. However, these two representations are ideologically presupposed. Negative properties attributed to outgroups (e.g. black youths) may be enhanced by focusing on their responsible agency.

 In that case minorities will tend to be subject and topic of the sentence. The same is true for the positive actions of us. Conversely, the agency of ingroup members who engage in negative actions will be syntactically played down by the use of passive sentences, and their role may be wholly dissimulated by agentless passives or nominalizations.

Ideologically based syntactic variation should be given in terms of model structures. **Syntactic prominence** expresses or suggests **semantic prominence**, which, in turn, may be related to prominence of **actors** and their properties in mental models.

If negative properties of outgroups are prominent in the model, this may affect s*yntactic word order and clause structure* in such a way that agency and responsibility of outgroup actors is syntactically highlighted.

Another link between syntactic structures and ideology, well-known from sociolinguistic research, is the one between **sentence complexity**, on the one hand, and education or social position of speakers, on the other hand. This can be shown by the contrast between Elite speakers and institutions who restrict comprehensibility of their discourses and ideologically based condescension, e.g., with respect to immigrants who do not speak the language well.

Lexicon

Lexicalization is a major and well-known domain of ideological expression and persuasion as the well-known terrorist versus freedomfighter pair suggests. To refer to the same persons, groups, social relations or social issues, language users generally have a choice of several words, depending on:

1- Discourse genre,

2- Personal context (mood, opinion, perspective).

3-Social context (formality, familiarity, group membership, dominance relations) 4- Sociocultural context (language variants, sociolect, norms and values).

Many of these contexts are ideologically based, as is the case for the representation of speech participants, and their mutual relations in context models, and the representation of participants and actions in event models.

Racist or sexist slurs directed at or used about minorities and women, directly express and enact relationships of power abuse grounded in inegalitarian ideologies. Additionally , such ideological medium is exploited in:

1- Political ideologies are variously expressed in differential, if not polarized lexicalization of political actors.

2-Social ideologies, about abortion, for example, may make use of words and slogans such as Pro Choice or Pro Life.

3-The lexicon of military and political discourse may also distinguish between the peaceful nature of our weapons or military operations and the catastrophic and cruel nature of theirs.

4-Euphemisms, such as surgical strikes or smart bombs are well-known here, as was evident in the military propaganda and news reports about the Gulf War.

5-During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was characterized as the Evil Empire . Similarly, in the Middle East conflict, our opponents are often terrorists , whereas especially Muslims and not Christians, are called fundamentalists , zealots or fanatics.

6-A similar use of euphemisms is made in elite discourse on ethnic or race relations, in which racism is typically denied, and replaced by less harsh words such as xenophobia , prejudice , discrimination or resentment

7-On the other hand, the credibility of refugees may be undermined in political and media discourse by calling them economic refugees, or illegal aliens instead of undocumented immigrants.

Local semantics

Local semantics mainly has to do with the local coherence. Local coherence depends on models, that is, on ideologically controlled representations of the situation. Biased reasons and causes that define relations in the model may, therefore, appear in partisan local semantics.

As it is ideologically motivated, local semantics illustrates:

1-Cultural Differences : manifests the attribution by employers of high minority unemployment in the Netherlands to cultural differences, the lack of motivation or knowledge of the language by minorities as an example

2-Self-presentation : well-known socio-cognitive processes underlying positive self-presentation of ingroups and negative presentation of outgroups, such as the fundamental attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979) and blaming the victim (Ryan, 1976), may also translate as biased local coherence in the semantics of text and talk.

3- Another important property of discourse semantics and its **relations to underlying mental models** (and hence to social cognitions) is **implicitness**. Since parts of models may be known to recipients, speakers are allowed to presuppose such information. Such normal processes of mutual knowledge may also be ideologically managed when it is suggested that knowledge is shared even when it is not as when newspapers speak about rising crime , or about the linguistic deficit of immigrants.

4-Underlying ideologies also control **communicative contexts**, and hence the self-definition and impression management of speakers, who will generally try to make a good impression or avoid a bad impression. This is particularly clear in the strategic use of disclaimers. Examples of such semantic strategies in research on the reproduction of racism in discourse of such semantic strategies are well-known and comprise such classical moves as the disclaimers of the *apparent denial* (I have nothing against Blacks, but ... , Refugees will always be able to count on our hospitality, but ...), the *apparent concession* (There are of course a few small racist groups in the Netherlands, but on the whole ...), or *blame transfer* (I have no problem with minorities in the shop, but my customers...).

Global semantics: Topics

Topics or semantic *macro propositions* of discourse subjectively define the information in a discourse that speakers find the most relevant or important.

This means that topicalization may also be subject to ideological management. Ingroup speakers may be expected to detopicalize information that is inconsistent with their interests or positive self-image and conversely they will topicalize information that emphasizes negative outgroup properties. For instance, immigration fraud and minority crimes are prominent topics in the press, but not the (equally documented and accessible) everyday discrimination by politicians, employers, journalists, police or professors. This difference cannot simply be attributed to preference for negative information or crime in the press. Both topics are negative and represent social crimes.

Schematic structures

Schematic structures are the overall meanings, i.e. topics or macrostructures, may be organized by conventional schemata (superstructures), such as those that define an **argument**, a **conversation** or a **news report**. As is the case for all formal structures, schematic structures are not directly controlled by ideological variation.

Schematic categories also define the (canonical) order of discourse, they may signal importance or relevance. Initial summaries, such as **_headlines_** in the news, for instance, have the crucial function of expressing the **_topic highest in the macrostructure hierarchy_**, and, therefore, the (subjectively) most important information of news report.

This means that this link between **macrostructures** and **superstructures** may be ideologically manipulated. Semantically subordinate topics (that is, topics that organize little local information in the text) may be upgraded and put in the headline, thus assigning more prominence to them, and vice versa. Topics are upgraded and downgraded according to circumstances and settings. Political discourse may also feature specific text schema categories (such as problem and solution) that highlight ideologically based opinions.

Argumentation is another major domain in which ideological points of view may be expressed. The study of numerous argumentative fallacies has shown that powerful arguers may manipulate their audiences by making **self-serving arguments** more explicit and prominent, whereas other arguments may be left implicit. **Strategic argumentation** is a major means of manipulating the minds of the recipients. This may involve many of the features we have studied above: the use of specific lexical items, rhetorical devices and so on.

Rhetoric

Specific rhetorical structures of discourse, such as *surface structure repetition* (*rhyme*, *alliterations*), or *semantic figures* such as *metaphors*, may function in favor of ideological control when information that is unfavourable to *us* is made less prominent whereas negative information about *them* is emphasized. Many of the figures we know from classical rhetoric have this specific effect as their main function (e.g. *over- and understatements, hyperbole (exaggeration), euphemism and mitigation*, *litotes* and *repetitions*)

The semantic operations of rhetoric, such as hyperbole, understatement, irony and metaphor, among others, have a closer relation to underlying models and social beliefs. Racist, sexist and other inegalitarian ideologies, for instance, may typically be expressed, not only by derogating lexical items referring to minorities or women, but also by demeaning metaphors that belittle, marginalize or dehumanize the others. Thus, Nazi propaganda associated Jews, communists and other ethnic and social minorities with dirty animals (rats, cockroaches). The following are some typical examples from the British conservative press:

(1) Snoopers (Daily Telegraph, 1 August, Editorial)

(2) Unscrupulous or feather-brained observers (Daily Telegraph, 30 September)

(3) Race conflict high priests (Daily Telegraph, 11 October)

(4) The multi-nonsense brigade (Daily Telegraph, 11 January)

 (5) He and his henchmen ... this obnoxious man, left-wing inquisitor (Mail, 18 October)

Pragmatics

According to our theory of ideological discourse production, the social control of **speech acts** should operate through context models that represent the communicative situation and its participants, goals, and other relevant appropriateness conditions. For instance, if speakers share sexist or racist attitudes and ideologies featuring propositions that imply the inferiority of women or minorities, such general opinions may also be applied to women and minorities as speech participants. Such negative evaluations, and, generally, relations of inequality between speech participants, also control speech act production. There must be such a kind of apprperiateness between the speech acts and the attitudes the discourse is tended to convey:

1- **Commands** and **threats**, for instance, presuppose relations of **dominance** and **power**, and may be issued to women or minority participants only because of group membership.

2-Prejudices about the intellectual inferiority of Others, similarly, may occasion speech acts such as **giving advice** or even **plain assertions** (in situations were none is asked or otherwise appropriate), since both presuppose ignorance of the recipient.

Similar remarks hold for other interactional strategies, e.g. those of politeness, self-presentation, impression management, and so on, as we have already seen above. Obviously, ideologically based inferiorization of Others may lead to inferiorization of speech partners in such a way that normal rules of respect and politeness are not respected.

Dialogical Interaction

Dialogical interaction highlights the ideological structures of discursive interaction itself.

Ideologies define relationships of power, which in turn also may control interaction, i.e., who has more or less access to the use of specific dialogical features, such as setting agendas for meetings, making appointments, opening and closing dialogues, turn management (e.g. interruption), the initiation, change and closure of topics, style selection and variation, and the more general properties of discourse also dealt with above (van Dijk, in print). Recent research on the relations between conversation, institutions and social power has familiarized these strategies.

The more specific interactional nature of dialogue may reflect the ideologically based power of interaction strategies more generally, by which speakers who share egalitarian ideologies may feel entitled to verbally treat their speech partners as inferior. This usually happens when the normal rules of conversation are broken: **by irregular interruptions, not yielding the floor or taking very long turns**, **avoiding or changing undesirable topics**, **negative meta-comments about the other's style (choice of words) or other attributed breaches of etiquette**, **using inegalitarian speech acts, as discussed above, and so on**.

Underlying ideologically based attitudes about others may not always be conscious. The subtle details of dialogical interaction are not always fully controlled controllable. Non-verbal as well as subtle interactional, pragmatic and stylistic means of controlling the other speech partner may, therefore, yield valid diagnostics for inferences about underlying inegalitarian ideologies.