

Discourse & Society

<http://das.sagepub.com/>

Constructing contexts, (re)defining immigrants: Mental models and social representations in immigration policy defense

Susana Martínez Guillem

Discourse Society 2013 24: 208

DOI: 10.1177/0957926512469436

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://das.sagepub.com/content/24/2/208>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Discourse & Society* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://das.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://das.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://das.sagepub.com/content/24/2/208.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Mar 4, 2013

[What is This?](#)



Constructing contexts, (re)defining immigrants: Mental models and social representations in immigration policy defense*

Discourse & Society

24(2) 208–228

© The Author(s) 2013

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0957926512469436

das.sagepub.com



Susana Martínez Guillem

University of New Mexico, USA

Abstract

This article examines two different instances of policy defense as a means to show how a socio-cognitive approach to contexts can help develop a dialectical account of the relationship between societal processes and our communicative practices. Based on such analysis, I argue that comparative analyses within a socio-cognitive theory of context can offer new insights into how, first of all, mental models control the process of discourse production and interpretation in important ways, and second, how they are intrinsically related to ideologically based understandings of particular groups and/or situations. Such an approach allows us to account for and explain the potential effectiveness of the discursive moves that emerge from this co-constitutive relationship between contexts and communicative practices.

Keywords

Contexts, European Union, immigration, mental models, policy defense, social representations, United States

Introduction

This article examines two different instances of policy defense as a means to show how a socio-cognitive approach to contexts (Van Dijk, 2008, 2009) can help develop a

*A previous version of this essay was presented at the annual meeting of the Western States Communication Association in Monterey, CA, February 2011.

Corresponding author:

Susana Martínez Guillem, Department of Communication & Journalism, MSCO3 2240, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001, USA.

Email: susanam@unm.edu

dialectical account of the relationship between societal processes and our communicative practices. First, I analyze Franco Frattini's intervention during a 2006 plenary setting at the European Parliament (EP) titled 'Freedom, security and justice – immigration.' I then compare Frattini's speech with that of George W Bush when he addressed the US Senate to talk about his proposed 'Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007.' My goal is to explore the interdependence of cognitive, discursive, and social dimensions of political discourse by conceptualizing the speeches' contexts as mental models subjectively constructed by participants (Van Dijk, 1999), as well as showing how these relate to broader social representations.

Based on this analysis, I will argue that comparative analyses within a socio-cognitive theory of context can offer new insights into how, first of all, mental models control the process of discourse production and interpretation in important ways, and second, how they are intrinsically related to ideologically based understandings of particular groups and/or situations. Through this framework, I will examine some of the structures and properties of each speech in order to highlight how discourse can be seen as controlled by – while also influencing – participants' understandings of a particular communicative situation, rather than as solely the product of an external and 'objective' reality. As this analysis will show, such an approach allows us to account for and explain the potential effectiveness of the discursive moves that emerge from this co-constitutive relationship between contexts and communicative practices.

Context and communication

Even though the discipline of Communication Studies shows a consistent concern for the notion of context, especially through its commitment to exploring how language and society are connected (Tracy and Craig, 2010), it still lacks explicit definitions of what contexts are and how they can be explored. This, of course, is not exclusive to communicative approaches. As Duranti and Goodwin (1992) point out with reference to the social sciences, there is a tendency to define context more 'by situated practice, by **use** of the concept to work with particular problems than by formal definition' (p. 2, emphasis in the original). In other words, a definition of context is assumed to stem out of the ways in which this notion is deployed in particular analyses. Duranti and Goodwin also point out that 'a single, precise, technical definition of context' may not be possible, or even necessary. However, as Van Dijk (2008) emphasizes, if the notion of context is so crucial in our studies, instead of taking it for granted we may benefit from devoting some time to the examination of context *per se*. I would argue that Communication Studies, with its multi-disciplinary core of different scholarly traditions (Craig, 2008; García Jiménez and Martínez Guillem, 2009), is undoubtedly equipped to account for a notion of context that pays attention to the interrelation among its cognitive, discursive, and socio-political dimensions.

In an attempt to emphasize this interconnectedness, in the following section I discuss Van Dijk's (2008) theoretical approach to contexts, rooted in cognitive psychology. I will argue that, in the realm of political discourse, a communicatively oriented perspective that takes into account Van Dijk's proposal can help us develop more nuanced analyses of discourse *properties* such as strategies of persuasion. With this goal in mind, in my analysis section I will explore two different examples of policy defense in order to

show how a theory of context models can illuminate the cognitive/social nature of communicative practices when examining political discourse.

Cognition and/as society: A mental models account of context

Several influential accounts of communicative practices across disciplines such as linguistics (Giora, 2003; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999), psychology (Clark, 1997; Schank and Abelson, 1977), and anthropology (Gumperz and Hymes, 1986; Holland and Quinn, 1987) have paved the way in the last few decades for an approach to discourse that is grounded in the interconnectedness of its cognitive and social aspects. Some of these approaches, such as the pragmatically oriented Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986), have also shown the potential of a cognitive framework when looking specifically at contexts. From this perspective, a context is not an external reality, but 'a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world' (1986: 15). As such, it constitutes 'the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance' (1986: 15).

Although extremely valuable as a starting point, these accounts tend to emphasize the isolated individual at the expense of his inevitable connection to particular socialization processes, thus precluding a view of context that is rooted in individual *as well as* societal forces, or, rather, a view of mental structures *as* social constructs and vice versa. Such possibility is explored by Van Dijk (1997), who defines context as '[t]he structure of all properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production and reception of discourse' (p. 19). Importantly, in this socio-cognitive view, contexts are not seen as determined by texts or vice versa (see also Hasan, 1999). Instead, as argued by Van Dijk (2009):

Context properties do not 'cause' their contextualization in text or talk, nor do discourse properties themselves influence, affect or cause changes of context. The 'causal' terminology may be intuitively handy, as long as we realize that situations and discourse do mutually 'cause' each other. Indeed, without an appropriately 'personalized' cognition–action interface between social situations and discourse all speakers in that social situation would say the same thing. (p. 290)

According to Van Dijk, that interface is found in cognitive psychology. In fact, his view of context is based on his previous psychological research on text processing, and more specifically on the Kintsch and Van Dijk processing model (1978; Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983). This model suggests that readers make use of mental, linguistic, and extra-linguistic elements in different degrees in order to adapt themselves to a particular processing situation – which in their case is reading, but could also be hearing or viewing. In this seminal work, the authors argue that all these factors need to be combined in the analysis of text comprehension, an important step that implies the recognition of both personal and shared knowledge as crucial aspects of understanding. As Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) put it: 'Discourses (such as stories) do not occur *in vacuo*. They are produced and received, by speakers and listeners, in specific situations within a wider

sociocultural context. Hence, discourse processing is not merely a cognitive event, but also a social event' (emphasis in original, p. 7).

Van Dijk and Kintsch developed a terminological apparatus for the study of text comprehension that Van Dijk later updated to account for his view of context. Their concept of 'situational models' explains the fact that 'to understand the text we have to represent what it is about' (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983: 337). As the authors put it, they assume that

discourse understanding involves not only the representation of a text base in episodic memory, but at the same time, the activation, updating, and other uses of a so-called situation model in episodic memory: this is the cognitive representation of the events, actions, persons, and in general the situation, a text is about. (p. 337)

The concept of 'situation model' is thus crucial for the reader's understanding of a text. As Van Dijk and Kintsch explain, 'a text is coherent for A if A is able to assign a mental model to it; in other words, A is able to imagine a situation in/for which the text could be true' (1983, p. 7). Thus, the application of a situational model encompasses the activation of knowledge structures, such as scripts, frames, and schemata (Graesser and Zwaan, 1995), which are grounded in our (perceived) experiences and therefore have an important social component.

Scholarly applications of text comprehension techniques to different elements such as emotional knowledge (Weaver et al., 1995) or new media (Van Oostendorp and De Mul, 1996) show their relevance and functionality. However, very little has been done to relate this model to communication-oriented research. Van Dijk (2008: xi) attempts to bridge this gap by offering 'the first monograph dedicated entirely to the notion of context' in discourse studies. In order to understand how an approach to text interpretation can help us explore the relationship between discourse and context, we need to recall Van Dijk's concept of 'social representations,' which play a crucial role in the sense that they allow people to form mental models of which context is a concrete kind: 'a context is simply a subjectively variable mental model of a communicative situation' (Van Dijk, 1999: 292). This 'context model,' Van Dijk claims, 'acts as a "relevance" mechanism on other representations during processing, and makes text and talk situationally adequate' (Van Dijk, 1999: 292). The crucial step Van Dijk suggests, then, is to complicate existing understandings of context as a fixed external reality by incorporating a 'mental-model theory of context' which, according to him, 'provides the missing link between personal, subjective interpretations of social situations and their relevance [...] and the socio-cultural common ground needed for adequate and hence normative interaction and understanding among group members' (p. 292).

The most important implication of Van Dijk's theory for the purposes of this discussion is that it exposes how most contextually oriented research carried out in the realm of (socio)linguistics has focused on the influence of context on discourse structures, whereas discourse *properties*, such as strategies of persuasion, have hardly been addressed (Van Dijk, 2009). In other words, traditional socio-linguistic approaches to context have not been interested in exploring communicative elements such as rhetorical strategies, a limitation that could certainly be overcome from the perspective of Communication Studies. As Tracy (2001) explains, strategy, audience, and persuasive situations, among other things, are defining characteristics of a communicative approach

to interaction.¹ More specifically, the rhetorical tradition in this field has a long history of emphasizing the speakers' goals, especially persuasive goals, when communicating (see e.g. Black, 1965; Burke, 1950, 1966; Richards, 1965; Toulmin, 2003).

A communicative approach thus aligns with Van Dijk's (2008) call for an exploration of the 'goals of contexts' (p. 114) that could allow researchers to pay attention to how 'speakers self-represent themselves and their co-participants in terms of several social categories at the same time'² (p. 115). Contextual models, in other words, may be strategic, and thus the goal from a Communication perspective would be to explain how these strategic identity constructions are achieved in discourse. As explained by Van Dijk, the 'persuasive dimension of rhetoric may have the specific function of drawing special attention to specific meanings and hence to enhancing the possibility that these are being constructed as important parts of intended event models' (p. 192).

According to Van Dijk (2008), one method for a study of contexts as mental models is to systematically study their 'consequences, that is, discourse variations, in different situations' (p. 107). However, he also acknowledges that most of this type of research is based on experiments and not on actual text and talk, which would constitute a more adequate way to observe discursive practices – although it would be much more difficult to control. As this analysis will show, one way to overcome these methodological difficulties while still focusing on situationally variable conditions is to provide a comparison, across spaces, of text and talk within a particular genre.³ In the following section, I will develop an attempt to empirically test this approach by comparing two 'policy defense' speeches, one taking place in the European Union Parliament, and the other in the United States Senate. My goal is to show how the speakers' mental models – that is, their construction of their particular communicative situation – control their specific discursive lexical choices, as well as their broader ideological representations of certain social categories – such as 'immigrant,' 'European,' or 'American' – in ways that are intrinsically linked to different persuasion strategies.

Method of analysis

As mentioned earlier, the materials for the present analysis are two different political speeches whose main goal was to defend a policy – specifically, an immigration policy.⁴ The first one, by Franco Frattini (former vice-president of the European Commission), was given during an intervention at a plenary setting of the European Parliament (EP) dealing with 'Freedom, security and justice – immigration.' The second text is a speech by President George W Bush referring to his proposed 'Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007,' which was given in Washington DC on June 1, 2007. The official transcriptions of both speeches are available online,⁵ and the claims developed throughout this analysis are based on those written texts.

An important consequence, worth mentioning, of working with the written versions of these documents is the loss of typical conversational features such as repairs, repetitions, and grammatical mistakes. However, in the case of the EP, the so-called 'revised' written version is considered the only official source of what was said in the debate – and for consistency reasons, the equivalent document was selected for Bush's speech. Nevertheless, and although some significant nuances may not be present in the texts discussed here, the materials selected still constitute a suitable source for the purposes of

this analysis, since the main goal is not to examine aspects such as grammatical structures, but rather to look at how discourse properties provide important evidence of the different ways in which contexts may be constructed.

With regards to the specific focus of this analysis, and since the main analytical category – mental models – encompasses too many aspects to be covered in a single study, I will concentrate on the connections between context models and other kinds of cognitive structure through the notion of knowledge. In his discussion of ‘knowledge management strategies,’ Van Dijk (2008) explains how, for communication to be successful, ‘[I]anguage users need to have beliefs or knowledge about the knowledge [or beliefs] of the recipients’ (p. 83). Thus, in mentally representing the relevant properties of a particular communicative situation, speakers will ‘model the social properties of themselves and other participants, but also what the others already know’ (p. 83). Van Dijk labels this device that regulates our use of knowledge in communication the ‘K-device’ (Van Dijk, 2003). This K-device is then subdivided into the following different strategies encompassing more specific and broader types of knowledge: personal knowledge management, specific social knowledge, and general socio-cultural knowledge (Van Dijk, 2008).

My comparative analysis will explore how these different kinds of knowledge are directly and indirectly invoked in the speeches analyzed, and can thus be seen as controlling the speakers’ discourses in different ways. The use of the term ‘control’ here is deliberate in that it attempts to highlight the dialectical relationship between context models and discourse production and interpretation, in the sense that, as Van Dijk puts it, ‘shared knowledge is a necessary condition, although not the only one, for appropriate discourse to take place’ (2008: 127).

Imagining ‘European solidarity,’ limiting the space for immigrants

On 27 September 2006, the European Parliament (EP) held a plenary session where, among other items, Members of Parliament (MPs) engaged in a ‘joint debate on freedom, security and justice, as well as immigration,’ as introduced by the EP’s President at the time, Josep Borrell (European Parliament, 2006). One of the first interventions in this debate was the European Commission’s ‘statement on the common immigration policy,’ delivered by Franco Frattini – who was at the time vice-president of this Commission.⁶ In the speech’s opening sentences, Frattini introduced the European Commission’s approach to immigration in the following way:

Implementing and further developing The Hague Programme is a joint goal. This calls for effective decision-making and requires clear political priorities to make a real difference. The strategic political goal remains striking the right balance between improving citizens’ security and promoting and defending people’s individual rights. As you know, last week in Tampere, we discussed the main challenges in the area of freedom, security and justice and how best to address them. It is clear that the fight against terrorism and the management of migration flows are currently the main priorities for the European Union.

Frattini’s context model, or his subjective definition of the relevant dimensions of this communicative situation (Van Dijk, 2008), controls his discourse production in the above

statements in different ways. As a general characteristic of this introductory excerpt, we should notice Frattini's representation of, first of all, the current actions taking place in the present communicative situation (i.e. 'effective decision-making'); second, what is needed to take those actions (i.e. 'clear political priorities'); and third, the goals of those current actions (i.e. 'to make a real difference'). Based on this, the overall political aim of European Union (EU) policy, in which this debate is embedded, is presented as that of 'striking the right balance between improving citizens' security and promoting and defending people's individual rights.'

When analyzed in terms of K-strategies and their control of context models, these are definitely relevant lexical choices through which the speaker is indexing that he represents himself and his audience – as well as their shared beliefs – in particular ways. First of all, in modeling his audience's relevant opinions about what counts as a priority, he constructs a shared starting point. This Common Ground (Van Dijk, 2009) is built on the commonplaces of 'security' and 'fundamental rights' – values that, based on their political identities, all MPs are supposed to endorse (see Billig, 2003). As Frattini continues with his speech, he explicitly represents shared knowledge through the comment clause 'As you know,' which in this case foregrounds the relevance of previous discussions for the present debate, and contributes to the speaker's representation of the main goals of the current situation: to defend an immigration policy that will be based on both 'the management of migration flows' and 'the fight against terrorism' as equally relevant 'main priorities for the European Union,' and therefore worthy of discussion as a unit in this particular place and time.

Another important feature that shows the mutually constitutive relationship between Frattini's context model and his speech in terms of lexicalization is the use of particular terms to highlight certain personal attributes of the MPs, and, more specifically, their solidarity in relation to their political, national, and European identities. Frattini's explicit definitional move, introducing the term 'solidarity' in a distinct – and restrictive – way, thus builds on and (re)creates specific links among, first, a particular, expected attitude; second, MPs' political responsibilities as representatives of member states; and third, a series of practical measures – affecting the EU as a whole – with regards to immigration:

Solidarity means practical help to Member States under pressure. We need funds, equipment, boats, helicopters and aeroplanes. For example, for the period 2007–2013, the Frontex Agency will have EUR 272 million, which I deem insufficient to deal with the growing phenomenon of migration.

[...]

It is a matter of ensuring an immediate political response based on tangible European solidarity – and I stress the word 'tangible' – and a sharing of responsibilities and burdens. That means, as recently stressed by President Barroso and by myself at Tampere, it is of the utmost importance that all Member States continue working together in a spirit of solidarity, not least to assist those southern Member States most affected today by illegal immigration from Africa. It must be absolutely clear that it is up to Member States to provide the assets required to make the joint operations a success.

Through his appeal to a European ‘solidary face,’ Frattini is indexing a prominent element in his interpretation of the current communicative event: the importance of in-group (European) identity, and more specifically the material benefits, in the shape of mutual help, that come with belonging to the EU. Accordingly, the concept of solidarity put forward in this excerpt does not include ‘practical help’ for countries outside of the EU – for them Frattini will reserve the term ‘collaboration’ later in the speech. Instead, ‘solidarity’ is constructed as a condition sine qua non for approaching relationships among the different member states, whose common needs and belonging to a particular political alliance are indexed through the deictic ‘we.’

These sentences thus show how solidarity, a particular (assumed) defining characteristic of the EU – and of the EP as its institutional manifestation – is foregrounded as the guiding principle for the kind of policy defended in this speech, a principle that will allow for ‘more funds, equipment, boats, helicopters and aeroplanes’ that can help tackle ‘the growing phenomenon of migration’ by assisting, for example, southern member states in their efforts to contain immigration from Africa. Such a shared ‘solidary’ identity is thus foregrounded as a way to construct a solid base for Frattini’s policy defense, which includes evaluations of past events as well as recommendations for future action, such as a set of ‘recommendations for operational measures to be taken in the short term.’ Subsequent suggestions include the development of a ‘Mediterranean patrol network,’ as well as a ‘European surveillance system,’ and the establishment of ‘Rapid Border Intervention Teams.’

The uncovering of a series of rhetorical strategies through which something we could call ‘solidary repression’ is legitimated here thus shows how discourse properties index the aspects of a communicative situation that the speaker considers and constructs as important – in this case, the shared political identities of the participants, as well as the personal attributes, relations, and responsibilities that are seen as linked to those identities. As a result, an integrated European identity is (re)produced in a discourse that highlights selected meanings and events in order to emphasize what are perceived as relevant similarities among the participants while mitigating inappropriate differences.

The excerpts analyzed so far also demonstrate how the notion of context model as described here helps us avoid the so-called deterministic trap, since it is not entirely equivalent to what we would refer to as an (external) social situation that ‘surrounds’ the interaction (Van Dijk, 2008). Thus, a description of the current socio-political landscape in the EU in terms of a social situation would probably include events such as the frequent clashes among member states with regards to policy implementations of all kinds, and more specifically immigration policies,⁷ or the reluctance of states to accept a common government whose power may eventually surpass that of national parliaments.⁸ However, what we are exploring through this analysis is not the social situation as a whole, but ‘the definition, interpretation, representation or construction of participants of *their* social situation’ (Van Dijk, 2009: 119, my emphasis), as well as how it may affect, for example, strategies of persuasion. For this reason, so far our discussion has centered on commonalities among members of the EP, as well as across the EU as a whole. To reiterate, this does not mean that there are no other characteristics of EU policies, or relations among member states, worth discussing as social reality that people may or may not be aware of. It only means that they are not considered ‘context’ for the purposes of this

analysis, since they are not constructed as relevant in this particular communicative situation.

When we think of contexts as ad hoc constructions relating to a series of discourse properties and vice versa, it is also important to note that some elements of context models may be rather constant throughout a communicative situation (such as the speaker's representation of his or her identity), whereas others are less stable and can be monitored as discourse production proceeds (Van Dijk, 2008). More variable elements may include the 'representations of intentions, purposes and goals of the ongoing actions, and the (shared) relevant social and political knowledge' (Van Dijk, 2008: 122). Thus, as seen in the previous excerpts, throughout his speech Frattini is fairly constant in his use of the deictic expression 'we' – which allows him to highlight his and his audience's shared political identity as members of the EP, as well as their current status of Europeaness, granted by their belonging to an EU member state.

On the other hand, at certain points in his speech, Frattini also introduces the deictic expression 'I,' thus highlighting his own institutional role as vice-president of the European Commission, mostly as a way to express his personal agreement with the tenets of the policy he is proposing, a position that he then transposes to the organization he is representing as a whole, in an effort to persuade his audience of the need for the measures advocated:

As I stressed in Tampere, I consider that our efforts in the fight against terrorism at European level need to focus on key areas such as fighting radicalisation and recruitment, the misuse of the internet by terrorists, the prevention and detection of the misuse of explosives, the protection of critical infrastructures, bio-preparedness and transport security.

I am also convinced that any new security measure, especially in relation to air transport, should not bring about a disproportionate reaction which, in my view, would hand victory to terrorism. Security is at the centre of my action and we will assess carefully the effect and proportionality of any decision taken in that field. The fight against terrorism and the defence of individual rights should go hand in hand.

Another example of the variability of (shared) relevant social and political knowledge, which can be foregrounded or backgrounded during a communicative situation for different purposes, is seen in Frattini's concluding remarks:

Finally, citizens do want more Europe. Europe would then be more effective in taking decisions. Practitioners, judges, prosecutors and police authorities also want more effective instruments to fight organised crime and terrorism. To be frank, we cannot allow civil society to move faster than our political strategies and policies. If we want to be credible, we have to respond now and not only after tragic events, as has happened in the past.

In this segment, the representation of the wider audience's – EU citizens – knowledge in the form of skepticism towards 'Europe' is indexed as being explicitly relevant. We can interpret this shift from highlighting the EU's strength in its unity – as seen in the speech's initial sentences – to an emphasis on the lack of confidence EU citizens have in the effectiveness of this union, as yet another rhetorical move serving two different

purposes: on the one hand, it reinforces the necessity of what had previously been described as crucial measures, still backgrounding the lack of credibility of the EU at the institutional level; on the other hand, it could correspond to a variation in the representation of the speaker's goals: what is relevant now is the incorporation of distant audiences – whose knowledge is also assumed – in order to guarantee a favorable response at the level of public opinion. Thus, this excerpt shows not only how the different elements of context models may vary during the course of a communicative event, but also how these variations are often interrelated, since a change in a speaker's representations of her goals may lead to a change in what is represented as relevant shared knowledge in order to better suit these goals.

A final important piece in our contextually oriented, socio-cognitive exploration of this speech is an attempt to explain how the semantic event models that guide this speech – such as the ones discussed up to now – are inevitably tied to pragmatic models of the issues talked about. This means that the different *in situ* roles, identities, and goals foregrounded in Frattini's words are informed by and also help to reproduce a series of general social representations. I attempt such explanation by examining Frattini's allusions to different categories of foreign-born EU residents, which can be seen as signaling his ideological position with regards to immigration – a position that is indexed as relevant in the current communicative situation.

Throughout his speech, Frattini introduces several terminological distinctions that clearly represent certain knowledge, attitudes, and general ideologies with regards to immigrants and immigration. I would argue that these ideologically based representations are embedded in an overall persuasive strategy, and are thus intrinsically tied to the perceived goals of the event – to defend a particular immigration policy. The general social representations indexed by Frattini are partly composed of a series of positive and negative qualities attributed to specific groups, and are thus fundamental in reconciling the 'solidary' EU identity highlighted before with a *de facto* repressive approach to immigration. The exclusionary discourse that follows, with its rhetorical association of specific meanings with specific labels, constructs a pragmatic model of the immigration issue based on (assumed) shared knowledge and relevant opinions, thus strategically indexing Frattini's ideological group membership as a way to gain approval from the rest of the MPs participating in this debate.

Frattini starts his speech using the neutral label 'migration' to refer to the phenomenon that the policy he is proposing is supposed to address. The debate as a whole is also defined in relatively neutral terms as dealing with the 'management of migration flows.' However, Frattini's constant stress on the need to protect the EU border and 'collaborate' with, for example, African countries signals his understanding of the term 'migration' as restricted to flows that come from outside of the EU. Later on, he introduces a disassociation between 'legal' and 'illegal' immigration, expressing very different attitudes towards what each term, in his view, represents. In his first statement referring to 'illegal immigration,' Frattini asserts: 'We should [...] ensure that illegal migrants are returned to their countries.' After establishing this clear division between a general 'Us' (which is ambiguous here and could refer to MPs, but also, more generally, to politicians, or member states of the EU as a whole) and 'Them' (i.e. 'illegal immigrants'), the term 'legal economic migration' is introduced, thus establishing a disassociation between different kinds of immigrants:

We should also not forget another important element in fighting illegal immigration: the need to step up the fight against illegal work. It is a key pull factor for illegal immigration. As mentioned in July's Commission communication on illegal migration, we are currently considering drafting a legislative instrument to harmonise sanctions against employers of illegally resident migrants. Obviously, Member States would have to take immediate measures in this direction, so as to address the issue of illegal work.

In relation to legal economic migration, I must emphasise that the implementation of the Policy Plan on Legal Migration is a priority for the Commission and for me personally. By eliminating illegal work and creating admission procedures for legal migrants, Europe will set up a virtuous circle, or, should I say, a positive structure of incentives.

Frattini's discourse in this excerpt alludes to a conceptual situation of the immigration experience in one of two extremes: on the one hand, he is representing a social category of illegal immigrants who are coupled with negative activities, such as illegal work, and therefore have to be returned to their countries; on the other hand, he indexes a different social category, represented by 'legal migrants,' which is constructed as positive as long as it is regulated through 'admission procedures.' Needless to say, the outcomes resulting from being associated with one of these two polarized categories as opposed to the other are radically different. Immigrants are thus classified as *either* legal or illegal, with no space for fluidity across categories. Moreover, qualifying as 'legal' is not a guarantee to become a desirable immigrant. Rather, through Frattini's foregrounding of particular issues, we learn that 'legal economic migration' also needs to 'contribute to economic growth' in order to be positively evaluated:

The Commission is convinced of the necessity of a common approach to managing economic migration as an additional means of achieving the Lisbon objectives and tackling the negative effects of demographic ageing, in order to foster the European economy and competitiveness. In particular, to contribute to economic growth, it is fundamental that Europe becomes, first and foremost, a real pole of attraction for highly skilled migrants. The idea of proposing a directive on the conditions for admission to the European Union for highly skilled workers, including the possibility of a European green card, responds to this economic necessity.

Europe continues to receive low-skilled or unskilled labour only, while the United States, Canada and Australia, for example, are able to attract talented migrants. However, at the same time, I think proper measures should be taken to avoid the growing risk of a brain-drain from poorer countries.

Thus, the depiction of (im)migration as associated with a more or less useful labor force leads to a further conceptual division among legal migrants: those who are skilled (and preferred) and those who are low-skilled or unskilled, who are not 'talented migrants' and therefore not the ones the EU should 'attract.' These nuanced representations of the social category 'immigrant,' together with Frattini's emphasis on the positive or negative attributes attached to them, (re)produce a series of ideological distinctions that reinforce a particular understanding of the phenomenon of immigration, based on polarized positive and negative representations of 'others.' This polarization is what allows Frattini – and, via his rhetorical strategies of inclusion, his audience – to keep a tolerant, democratic face while at the same time endorsing exclusionary political measures.

In sum, and in order to manage the tension between the contradictory components of the shared knowledge he is invoking, Frattini represents a conceptual split of the term immigrant into 'illegal' immigrant and 'legal' immigrant, dividing the latter further into 'high skilled' and 'low skilled.' Through a polarization of negative attributes associated with many, and positive attributes associated with some, the social category 'immigrant', except when attached to the terms 'high skilled' and 'legal,' is represented as not part of the project of a competitive, economically strong EU. As a consequence, the denial of access for the vast majority of potential newcomers avoids the moral dilemma of treating people unequally, since these people are not defined as equal in the first place. As a result, the speaker's subjective interpretations of specific groups and issues, biased by the ideologies of the group of which he is a member, make it possible to justify exclusion while avoiding a more extreme, socially sanctionable 'anti-immigration' stance. Consequently, the EU becomes, as Anderson (1991) so eloquently put it, an 'imagined community' with a tolerant shared identity but also, and importantly, a common set of goals and responsibilities that allow for appropriate exclusion from this privileged space of those deemed useless, unfit, or simply undesirable.

The story of US: Regulating immigration through the American dream

On 1 June 2007, George W Bush gave a speech in defense of his proposed 'Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007.' This reform – which was part of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act (CIRA) proposed by the Bush administration in 2006 and was eventually not approved by the Senate – would have been the first significant change in US immigration policy in 80 years. The title of Bush's address was 'Immigration reform and the future of American society,' and these were its opening statements:

I believe that now is the time to address the issue of immigration. I think it's in our national security interests, and I think it's in the interest of making sure America never loses sight of who we are.

[...]

No matter how difficult it may seem for some politically, I strongly believe it's in this nation's interest for people here in Washington to show courage and resolve and pass a comprehensive immigration reform.

My administration is deeply involved in this issue. I feel passionate about the issue. I believe it's in this country's interest to solve the problem. I believe it's in our interest when we find a system that is broken to fix it, and the immigration system today is broken.

Keeping in mind our previous remarks about the nature of context models – especially, that they control different aspects of discourse production and interpretation and that they are subjective understandings of the participants in a communicative event – there are several aspects to note about this excerpt of Bush's speech. First of all, there is a clear

indication of which properties of the communicative situation Bush constructs as relevant. Most significantly, the concept of 'interest' is coupled with a series of deictic expressions representing a shared set of purposes at different levels. Bush thus incorporates references to the institutional level: 'our national security interests'; and to a broader, geopolitical level: 'this nation's interest,' 'this country's interest.' Moreover, he introduces an all-inclusive 'our interest' that highlights the shared national identities of the speaker, his immediate audience, and potentially the more distant viewers of this speech. All of these discursive features signal that a perceived common 'Americanness' is represented as appropriate and therefore highlighted as part of Bush's rhetorical strategy.

Past, ongoing, and future actions are thus linked in this speech to an existing Common Ground in terms of political structures, as well as a series of values linked to an archetypal national identity. This can be clearly observed in Bush's statement claiming that passing the proposed bill is 'in the interest of making sure America never loses sight of who we are.' Here, the ideologically shaped understanding of the concept 'America,' which is indexed as shared by the different members of the audience, allows for the general 'who we are' to produce a series of powerful political implicatures (Van Dijk, 2005). Bush draws here on pragmatic, ideologically based representations of 'America' as a way to define the goals of this event in particular ways, since addressing 'the issue of immigration' is intrinsically linked to reinforcing a particular understanding of US national identity and history.

'Who we are,' coupled with 'America,' carries with it a whole set of associations with cultural myths such as the pioneer image, which can be seen as a kind of socio-cultural knowledge informing many Americans' understanding of the USA as 'a country of immigrants.' Bush continuously exploits the potential persuasive effects of these inferences, since no further explanation is given with regards to the addressees and meaning of 'who we are,' thus indexing, through the collapsing of the speaker's and the addressees' identities, the presupposition of a shared past, present, and future experience as Americans *and* immigrants which is seen as relevant in this particular communicative event. Through this rhetorical move, Bush indexes the assumed socio-cultural knowledge or position in his audience, thus precluding a disassociation between their national and immigrant identities.

The different moves to highlight shared national identity – as well as particular meanings of this identity – go hand in hand in this speech with a series of discursive features indicating that part of Bush's context model includes a hostile attitude towards his proposed bill of at least a portion of his audience. In order to better explore how this kind of knowledge is made relevant through different markers, and then linked to a particular rhetorical strategy based on ideological representations of the USA, let us look at the following excerpt from his speech:

I want to address a couple of the key issues that people are addressing. If you want to kill a bill, then you just go around America saying, this is amnesty. In other words, there are some words that illicit [sic] strong reactions from our fellow citizens. Amnesty is when a person breaks the law and is completely forgiven for having done so. This bill isn't amnesty. For those who call it amnesty, they're just trying to, in my judgment, frighten people about the bill.

This bill is one that says, we recognize that you're here illegally and there's a consequence for it. We can argue about the consequences, but you can't argue about the fact that there are consequences in this bill for people who have broken our law.

People say, well, the bill is really – is not going to do much to enforce the border. Well, the truth of the matter is, certain aspects of the law don't come into be [sic] until certain border measures are taken. But I would remind people that you cannot fully enforce the border so long as people are trying to sneak in this country to do jobs Americans aren't doing. You can try, but doesn't it make sense to help the Border Patrol do their job, by saying, if you're going to come and do a job, there is a legal way to do it, so you don't have to sneak across in the first place? If you're interested in border security, you've got to recognize that giving people a chance to come and work here on a temporary basis makes it more likely the border will be enforced.

There are some who – I don't know if they say this explicitly, but they certainly allege or hint that probably the best way to deal with 11 million to 12 million people is to get them to leave the country. That's impossible. That's the kind of statement that sometimes happens in the political process aimed to inflame passion, but it's completely unrealistic. It's not going to happen. And therefore, the fundamental question for those who disagree – and there's some good folks who disagree on both political parties, I might add – is, what's the solution?

In the above statements, Bush repeatedly models a generalized political other, indexed by terms such as 'those,' 'they,' 'some,' or 'people,' and whose different position with regards to the proposed bill is made explicit through a series of meta-discursive moves (see Martínez Guillem, 2009). Thus, the different descriptors are coupled with a series of reporting verbs that supposedly indicate the specifics of an 'against the bill' attitude made relevant as context in this speech. Assertions such as 'for those who call [the bill] amnesty,' 'people say [...] the bill is really – is not going to do much to enforce the border people say,' or 'There are some who [...] allege or hint that probably the best way to deal with 11 million to 12 million people is to get them to leave the country' clearly establish a distinction between the speaker's understanding of the nature, implications, and appropriateness of the proposed bill, and an alternative interpretation of those same issues. Moreover, and importantly, the vagueness of the words chosen also implies that there is no uniform position among the members of the Senate Bush is addressing, since terms such as 'those,' 'people,' or 'some' allow for a partial identification of certain addressees with the concerns enumerated, but they also construct part of this audience as aligning with Bush's implicit position – that is, in agreement with the proposed bill.

Another indicator of the ways in which Bush's representation of the current situation monitors differences of opinion is his reference to 'those who disagree' and the subsequent elaboration: 'and there's some good folks who disagree on both political parties, I might add.' Bush's political identity as head of the Republican Party is only implicitly present here, but that shared knowledge is necessary in order to point out the full implications of this statement, namely that shared political affiliation does not automatically mean agreement on this particular bill. Once again, this statement represents part of Bush's immediate audience as potentially opposed to the policy he is defending, which then calls for particular rhetorical moves that will help the speaker highlight shared goals and values beyond the realm of party membership.

As I pointed out earlier, part of the overall rhetorical strategy informing this speech had been anticipated in its opening statements, and will be developed in different ways throughout Bush's intervention. Apart from an implicit connection between Americans and immigrants, Bush's monitoring of collective knowledge about 'this country' incorporates a series of important references to uniqueness and economic opportunity – characteristics that, once again, are assumed to be part of a shared representation of 'America.' As Miller and Lotterman point out (1995: 195), 'the American dream represents a symbolically unifying dimension of American culture' in its celebration of the values of hard work and competition, which supposedly guarantees 'opportunity for each according to his [sic] ability or achievement' (Adams, 1931: 405), thus creating a seemingly naturally selective pattern in US society. Later on in his speech, Bush indexes the relevance of the idea of America's 'uniqueness' for the purposes of his intervention, using a narrative and his own evaluation of it:

I recently gave a speech at the Coast Guard Academy, and I was preceded by a young man, a Latino, who stood up as the head of his class, addressing his classmates and their families and the President of the United States. And he talked about his migrant grandfather, how proud the migrant grandfather would be. It struck me again what a remarkable country it is where a person with a dream for his immediate family and future family could come to this country, work hard, make sacrifices, and have his grandson address the President and his class.

This has been the American story for decades and decades – waves of people looking for a better life, seeking something better for themselves and their families, willing to sacrifice and work hard. And we've got to understand – and great successes have resulted from that spirit. And this country must never lose sight that what has made us unique and, in my judgment, great is that we welcome people like that in a legal way; that throughout our history there have been the stories of people who have enriched our soul and lifted our spirit by coming to America.

This excerpt shows how context models are intrinsically related, not only to formal features of discourse, but also to its contents, since they also guide and are influenced by aspects such as choice of topic. In this case, telling a young Latino man's story, and speculating on its broader consequences, constructs the assumed uniqueness of a shared geopolitical space as a key component of the present situation as defined by Bush, since it allows for a discussion of the fundamental role that (certain) immigrants play in the perpetuation of the American dream. As Van Dijk (1984, 1987) has demonstrated, storytelling is controlled by mental categories such as the group membership of a storyteller, and more specifically, stories about immigrants typically serve the purpose of highlighting an *Us* versus *Them* dichotomy. However, in this excerpt, we see how the speaker's reliance, once again, on the shared ideological components of the 'American story,' together with his use of deictic expressions in statements such as 'what has made us unique,' 'we welcome people,' or 'have enriched our soul and lifted our spirit' contribute to the strategic highlighting, through this narrative, of a shared and positive US national identity that allows for the inclusion, not only of the speaker and his immediate audience, but of anybody willing to 'work hard' and 'make sacrifices.'

The use of a narrative is also significant in other ways: it shows a motivation to personalize the issue of immigration through a story that takes immigrants away from an

unidentified mass and puts them into a much closer and recognizable environment: that of a family pursuing and realizing the American dream – which of course is an ideologically biased understanding of US societal dynamics. However, when examined in the context of identified goals of this particular situation, this story of a Latino ‘young man’ elicits a series of social representations that are worth noticing. Overall, the image of the ‘other’ that emerges in this narrative is consistently rather positive. First of all, Bush uses the neutral term ‘migrant’ to refer to the foreign-born grandfather who had ‘a dream about his immediate family and future family,’ together with the willingness to ‘sacrifice and work hard.’ In using just a single label instead of a series of polarizing ones, Bush precludes a fragmentation of the term ‘immigrant’ and highlights instead a series of common goals and values, thus locating anybody who shares and/or is able to take advantage of the basic tenets of the American dream in the realm of acceptability.

This interrelation between, on the one hand, ideological representations of the USA, and on the other, the different goals of the present situation represented through discursive features is constant throughout Bush’s speech. We can observe this connection through the different lexical choices, which clearly show ideological constraints in the development of different rhetorical strategies, with regards to both discursive presences and absences that are geared towards establishing a positive ‘other’ representation. For example, the collocation ‘illegal immigration/immigrant’ is never used. Instead, Bush uses the terms ‘people,’ ‘workers,’ or ‘newly arrived,’ while at the same time associating them with positive qualities such as ‘good’ or ‘decent.’ When Bush explicitly refers to the 11 or 12 million people that, at the time of this speech, were estimated to live in the USA without proper documentation, he portrays them as ‘living in the shadows of a free society,’ arguing that it is impossible ‘to get them to leave the country.’ Moreover, Bush reverses the typical argument based on the assumption that illegal immigrants take advantage of legal residents (Miller and Lotterman, 1995) and refers to them instead as exploited human beings:

I say the system isn’t working because there’s a lot of Americans who say that the government is not enforcing our border. I say the system is broken because there are people coming into America to do work that Americans are not doing, and there are good, decent employers who unknowingly are hiring them, which is against the law.

The system is broken, in my judgment, because there are 11 million to 12 million people living in the shadows of a free society. The system is broken because there are people who are exploiting human beings for material gain. There are coyotes – those are human smugglers – charging decent people large sums of money to come and work to put food on the table for their families.

[...]

In other words, we have got a system that is causing people – good, decent people – to be exploited. And therefore, now is the time to get it fixed.

The social representation of the category ‘immigrant’ indexed in the statements above shows a much less demeaning, and even positive depiction that incorporates an

array of aspects in what attempts to be a more nuanced picture of the immigration experience. Some of these are: immigrants' overrepresentation in undesirable occupations; their motivation to migrate; the possibility of negative consequences for immigrants, such as exploitation; the lack of opportunity for those already present in the country to 'come out of the shadows of our society'; and the interrelation with structural constraints, which Bush refers to as a 'broken system.' When compared to our analysis of Frattini's representations and his detailed sub-categories of immigrants, the differences are definitely striking. Needless to say, my goal here is not to argue whether the US take on immigration is better than the EU one – and recent episodes such as the Arizona immigration law painfully remind us of the challenges that non-citizens, as well as certain minorities, *do* face in US society – but rather to show how a socio-cognitive exploration of political discourse can help us better understand why some rhetorical strategies (and not others) are deemed *appropriate* when trying to defend a particular immigration policy in a particular communicative situation. In the case of Bush's speech, the result is the highlighting of certain ideological components of US national identity as the basic shared ground upon which immigration can be regulated.

Conclusions

In this article, I have argued for a view of context that emphasizes the interplay among cognition, discourse, and society. I have also tried to demonstrate that this view is especially suitable for Communication Studies in general and for approaches to political rhetoric/discourse within this discipline in particular. Communication scholars' traditional interest in strategies and argumentation can enhance and be enhanced by socio-cognitive discursive approaches.

Through a comparative examination of two political speeches, I have showed how an approach to context as mental model allows for an emphasis on how participants' interpretations of the communicative situation control discourse structures such as lexical choices, which are intrinsically related to broader ideological representations of, for example, nationality or 'otherness,' a move not typically embraced by (socio)linguists but almost inevitable from a Communication perspective.

The addition of a comparative component was thus aimed at offering some new insights into how we can 'spell out the detailed strategic processes of the way shared knowledge is applied in the production and understanding of meaningful and appropriate discourse' (Van Dijk, 2008: 95). By comparing the defense of immigration policies in what apparently were similar communicative situations with the same pragmatic goals, I highlighted the importance of carefully analyzing event models, and their interaction with general social representations, in order to describe more accurately the relationship between text and context without assuming that situations – however analysts define them – invariably determine discourse. Moreover, as demonstrated in this analysis, not all parts of social situations are part of context models, which again points to the necessity of approaching context not as 'some kind of objective social fact that controls how we talk, but rather [as] our subjective way of understanding or constructing this social fact' (Van Dijk, 2008: 119).

The examination of context as a type of mental model with specific goals that call for the strategic use of certain ideological constructs helped us to better understand how what controlled the speeches was not an external, objective environment, but the speakers' representations of its relevant aspects, which included different rhetorical moves to assure the 'right' kinds of (dis)identification with the audience. Thus, the assumed shared socio-cultural knowledge and values strategically invoked by the two speakers turned out to be drastically different, and a focus on how the different discursive features indexed these interpretations allowed us to better ground our explanation of these differences.

The analysis also revealed how an emphasis on socio-cognitive processes can help analysts to avoid deterministic, top-down views of the relationship between contexts and texts, where the former – typically equated to social situations – are often understood to be the starting point for critically oriented analyses of discourse. Instead, I have shown that it is possible to adopt a 'critical' stance while still attending to what discourses reveal about the aspects of the social situation that are worth examining, and not necessarily, as Critical Discourse Studies are often charged with, determining these aspects a priori in order to then 'look for them' in discourse (for a more detailed discussion of these critiques, see Tracy et al., 2011).

As we saw in this analysis, a dialectical reading of the relationship between texts and contexts can help us explore how participants' understanding of a situation may lead to more or less appropriate ways of doing similar things with words – such as defending a policy – which may lead to disparate representations of a series of social categories, including 'European,' 'American,' and/or 'immigrant.' This approach, in sum, requires limiting contextual analysis to what is relevant for the participants, and thus allows us to better deal with 'conditioning or causation between social situation and discourse structure' by combining 'the powerful explanatory power of the various social constraints, on the one hand, and the equally unmistakable presence of individual diversity and subjectivity as a component in the explanation of discursive variation' (Van Dijk, 2004: 14).

Needless to say, this article constitutes only a small step towards empirical, comparatively oriented, applications of a context model approach to discourse. There are many elements at the semantic and the pragmatic levels that remain unmentioned in this analysis, but that are undoubtedly relevant for a more thorough understanding of the discursive practices taking place in these two sites. For example, the two speeches exhibited remarkable differences in style – very formal in Frattini's case, and more informal in Bush's – which could also be attributed to K-strategies in terms of the presupposed 'attractive' form for the different audiences. Also, the reception side, although equally important, was only dealt with marginally in this analysis. A more extensive look at the complete debates and the different positionings of participants in them could shed light on how specific contextual models are reinforced or challenged as the interaction unfolds.

To conclude, it is important to emphasize that an approach to context as mental model can be seen as aligned with an overall critical project in Communication Studies. Thus, even though interpretations of a situation may be to a certain extent subjective, they are also inevitably linked to our social experiences and constraints. Further, as I pointed out

at the beginning of this article, contextual models can be strategic, and thus participants may purposely represent communicative events in ways that (re)produce inequalities by legitimating specific abusive actions – as we saw with Frattini’s highlighting of a European ‘solidary’ identity, or Bush’s (re)construction of a supposedly shared ‘American dream’ experience. The task of a ‘critical context analysis’ (Van Dijk, 2004) would then be to point out the nature of these processes by consistently examining the relationship between different mental models and specific discursive strategies.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Notes

1. Tracy’s own approach, Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis (AIDA), also emphasizes the study of these elements of discourse, although its focus is specifically on naturally occurring conversation, and its connections to cognitive aspects of communication are limited to Billig’s (1987) notion of dilemmas (see Tracy, 2005).
2. Work within the framework of constitutive rhetoric (Charland, 1987/1994) has emphasized these same characteristics of discourse.
3. Although a definition of genre is far from being unproblematic, I rely here on a situational approach to genre (Jamieson and Campbell, 1982). That is, I consider that texts belong to the same genre if they have similar substantial, stylistic, and situational elements.
4. The EU text selected is part of a broader project examining the development of a common European immigration policy and was chosen for the present study as a representative example of broader tendencies identified in that project. Similarly, Bush’s speech was chosen as an illustration of a broader US approach to immigration, and is part of an ongoing project examining different legislative proposals developed by the Bush and Obama administrations.
5. Sources: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20060927+ITEM-003+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN> and <http://www.presidential-rhetoric.com/speeches/06.01.07.html>
6. Since it was first instituted in 1958, the EC’s main function has been to act as an independent supranational authority separate from the different governments. As such, the EC has been described as ‘the only body paid to think European’ (European Commission). This vocation to go beyond nation states is seen in the specific roles outlined in the quote above: first of all, the EC is the only body currently holding executive powers over the European Union as a whole; moreover, it is the only European institution that has legislative initiative: no other body can make formal proposals for legislation – although the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament can request specific legislative measures, and are also in charge of approving or rejecting the EC’s proposals. Once laws are passed, however, it is the EC’s responsibility to ensure that they are implemented.
7. As when in 2005 Spain decided to regularize all illegal immigrants who had a work contract – which in the end turned to be about one million.
8. These tensions are reflected at the institutional level, for example in the structure of the setting in which Frattini’s intervention took place: the EP does not have a legislative initiative, and thus the function of making proposals for legislation still corresponds to the different national parliaments across the Union. This Parliament, however, can approve and reject laws, and it also exerts a great influence through non-binding resolutions.

References

- Adams JT (1931) *The Epic of America*. New York: Blue Ribbon Books.
- Anderson BROG (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Billig M (1987) *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Billig M (2003) Political communication. In: Sears DO, Huddy L and Jervis R (eds) *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 222–250.
- Black E (1965) *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Burke K (1950) *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Burke K (1966) *Language as Symbolic Action*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Charland M (1987/1994) Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the Peuple Québécois. In: Nothstine W, Blair C and Copeland GA (eds) *Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and the Criticism of Discourse and Media*. New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 211–232.
- Clark A (1997) *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*. Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Craig RT (2008) Communication as a field and discipline. In: Donsbach W (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, Vol. II. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 675–688.
- Duranti A and Goodwin C (eds) (1992) *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- European Parliament (2006, September 27) Debates. Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=2006_0927&secondRef=ITEM-003&format=XML&language=EN (accessed 20 October 2009).
- García Jiménez L and Martínez Guillem S (2009) Does communication studies have an identity? Setting the bases for contemporary research. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies* 1(1): 15–27.
- Giora R (2003) *On Our Mind: Salience, Context, and Figurative Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Graesser AC and Zwaan RA (1995) Inference generation and the construction of situation models. In: Weaver CA III, Mannes S and Fletcher CR (eds) *Discourse Comprehension: Essays in Honor of Walter Kintsch*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 117–140.
- Gumperz JJ and Hymes D (eds) (1986) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Hasan R (1999) Speaking with reference to context. In: Ghadessy ME (ed.) *Text and Context in Functional Linguistics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, pp. 219–231.
- Holland D and Quinn N (1987) *Cultural Models in Language and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jamieson KH and Campbell KK (1982) Rhetorical hybrids: Fusions of generic elements. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69: 146–157.
- Kintsch W and Van Dijk TA (1978) Toward a model of text comprehension and production. *Psychological Review* 85: 363–394.
- Lakoff G and Johnson M (1999) *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Martínez Guillem S (2009) Argumentation, meta-discourse and social cognition: Organizing knowledge in parliamentary debates. *Discourse & Society* 20: 727–746.
- Miller G and Lotterman B (1995) Disassociating myth and practice: Pete Wilson's campaign against immigration. In: *Article presented at the ninth SCA/AFA conference on argumentation*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association.

- Richards IA (1965) *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schank RC and Abelson RP (1977) *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Sperber D and Wilson D (1986) *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Toulmin S (2003) *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tracy K (2001) Discourse analysis in communication. In: Schiffrin D, Tannen D and Hamilton H (eds) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 725–749.
- Tracy K (2005) Reconstructing communicative practices: Action-implicative discourse analysis. In: Fitch K and Sanders R (eds) *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 301–319.
- Tracy K and Craig RT (2010) Studying interaction in order to cultivate practice: Action-implicative discourse analysis. In: Thibault P and Prevignano C (eds) *Interaction Analysis: Discussing the State of the Art*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Tracy K, Martínez Guillem S, Robles J, et al. (2011) Critical discourse analysis and (US) communication scholarship: Recovering old connections, envisioning new ones. In: Salmon C (ed.) *Communication Yearbook 35*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 240–286.
- Van Dijk TA (1984) *Prejudice in Discourse: An Analysis of Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Van Dijk TA (1987) *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Van Dijk TA (1997) The study of discourse. In: van Dijk TA (ed.) *Discourse Studies, Vol I: Discourse as Structure and Process*. London: SAGE, pp. 1–35.
- Van Dijk TA (1999) On context. *Discourse & Society* 10: 291–292.
- Van Dijk TA (2003) Knowledge in parliamentary debates. *Journal of Language and Politics* 2(1): 93–129.
- Van Dijk TA (2004) Critical context studies. In: *Lecture for the first international conference of critical discourse analysis*, Valencia, Spain, May. Available at: <http://www.discourses.org/projects/context/> (accessed 10 November 2009).
- Van Dijk TA (2005) War rhetoric of a little ally: Political implicatures and Aznar's legitimization of the war in Iraq. *Journal of Language and Politics* 4: 65–91.
- Van Dijk TA (2008) *Discourse and Context: A Socio-cognitive Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk TA (2009) *Society and Discourse: How Context Controls Text and Talk*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk TA and Kintsch W (1983) *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.
- Van Oostendorp H and De Mul S (eds) (1996) *Cognitive Aspects of Electronic Text Processing*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Weaver CA, Bryant DS and Burns KD (1995) Comprehension monitoring: Extensions of the Kintsch and Van Dijk model. In: Weaver CA III, Mannes S and Fletcher CR (eds) *Discourse Comprehension: Essays in Honor of Walter Kintsch*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 177–193.

Author biography

Susana Martínez Guillem is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, USA. Her research interests are in critical discourse studies and cultural studies, focusing mainly on the rhetoric of immigration, race, and racism in the European Union and the United States.