Dijk

Society and Discourse

After his earlier book Discourse and Context, also published by Cambridge University Press, Teun A. van Dijk in this study presents the second part of his new multidisciplinary theory of context. The main thesis of this theory is that the influence of society on discourse is not direct, as is postulated for instance in sociolinguistics, but cognitively mediated by subjective mental models of the communicative situation: context models. These dynamic models control discourse production and comprehension and define the pragmatic appropriateness of text and talk. Whereas in Discourse and Context the psychological and linguistic aspects of context were analyzed, this book focuses on the social psychological, sociological, anthropological and political aspects of context. Tony Blair's 2003 speech defending his motion to go to war against Saddam Hussein and the following debate in parliament is used as an example illustrating the new theory.

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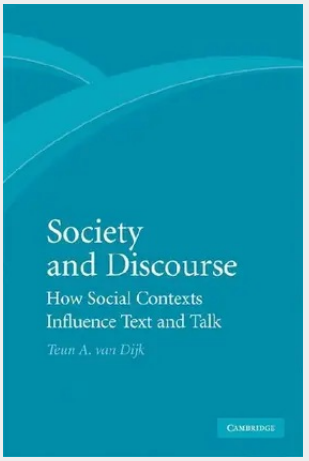

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