Discriminatory Discourse
Conceptual and methodological
problems

Carl F. Graumann

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Kontaktadresse: Prof. Dr. C.F. Graumann
Psychoplogisches Institut
Universität Heidelberg
Hauptstr. 47-51
69117 Heidelberg

DISCRIMINATORY DISCOURSE

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS[1]

Carl F. Graumann

University of Heidelberg

Germany

"Discrimination includes any conduct based on a distinction made on grounds of natural or social categories, which have no relation either to individual capacities or merits, or to concrete behavior of the individual person"

Memorandum of the United Nations, 1949

<u>Abstract</u>

While social discrimination is commonly defined as the treatment of others on a categorical basis, i.e., in disregard of the others' individual traits and merits, from a social psychological point of view it is important to differentiate between discrimination from the actor's, from the victim's, and from the observer's perspective. For the study of discourse, discriminatory talking to and talking about victims have to be distinguished. Within the framework of a functional model of social discrimination (Graumann & Wintermantel, 1989) cases of direct vs. indirect, explicit vs. implicit discriminatory speech are presented and some conceptual and methodological problems are discussed.

Zusammenfassung

Während soziale Diskriminierung allgemein als die rein kategoriale Behandlung anderer, also in Absehung von deren individuellen Eigenschaften und Verdiensten, definiert wird, ist es aus sozialpsychologischer Sicht wichtig, Diskriminierung aus der Perspektive des Täters, des Opfers und des Beobachters zu unterscheiden. Bei der Untersuchung diskriminierender Rede ist außerdem das Reden mit vom Reden über den Diskriminierten zu unterscheiden.

Im Rahmen eines funktionalen Modells sozialer Diskriminierung (Graumann & Wintermantel, 1989) werden Beispiele direkter und indirekter, expliziter und impliziter sprachlicher Diskriminierung gegeben und einige der damit verbundenen begrifflichen und methodischen Probleme diskutiert.

Contents

1. Discriminatory speech: Talking and being talked to and about

The recent resurge of xenophobia in our own and other countries as well as the spread of ethnic strife have sharpened our awareness of the many forms of social discrimination which range from redefining one's neighbour and friend as a stranger and enemy through depriving whole categories of people of their rights and property to their terrorization, expulsion and extermination. Whatever the kind or degree of intergroup hostility may be, it is without fail accompanied by discriminatory discourse, be it in preparation or in justification of the hostilities committed, and occasionally even in the condemnation of atrocities.

But discriminatory talk is not necessarily connected with other forms of social discrimination and aggression. When regulars meet in their favourite pub or at their "*Stammtisch*" and talk "a lot of politics", discriminatory speech seems to belong to this genre of discourse in more or less closed ingroup meetings[2], without leading to other hostile activities against those who are talked about but hardly talked to. Considering that, as we shall see, social discrimination implies distancing, it is safe to assume that we find more discriminatory speech in talk about outgroups and outgroup members than in direct talk with them.

While the distinction between "indirectly" *talking about* and "directly" *talking to* outgroup members is important since it raises questions of difference in linguistic topic and structure, there is another distinction relevant for research on discriminatory discourse which, with some hesitation, I call the *actor-observer-victim* distinction. The thesis related with this differentiation is that the perception, and mainly the

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[2] The mere presence of an "outsider" may change the style or topic of talk - one of the major methodological problems for the proper (unconcealed) registration of such semi-private dialogues.

identification, of discourse as discriminatory is a function of the perspective taken (cf. below 3.3).

For an unprejudiced observer or witness of a discriminatory act it may be relatively easy to recognize either the explicit discriminatory features of what is said or written or the effects that verbal discrimination leave on a target person. Sometimes it is only by such effects (e.g., verbal or affective reactions) that observers come to recognize discriminatory features of speech or texts.

Members of minority or other groups against which a strong prejudice has been maintained for a longer period of time, have learnt what it means to be discriminated against and are quite sensitive (sometimes over-sensitive) to forms and figures of discriminatory speech. It is from these victims or targets of discrimination that most researchers have taken their corpora of discriminatory (racist, sexist, ageist) discourse.

As opposed to the target person, the actor or discriminator is not necessarily aware of his/her discriminatory speech. For one thing, social discrimination is nowadays socially undesirable and, hence, an activity not easily confessed. After all, speaking and writing are (voluntary) social actions for which we are and will be held responsible. Also, there is bias, such as gender bias, firmly embedded in the structure of some languages and not a matter of individual language use only. Many men have been criticized for sexist speech who neither knew nor meant to be gender-biased, but there were sensitized hearers (or overhearers).

This experience exemplifies both a problem and an ambivalence. The problem which we shall have to discuss is whether discrimination is to be defined by discriminating *intention* or by the discriminatory *effect* experienced by whoever considers him/herself a target of discrimination. The ambivalence is experienced by all those who know that they are no racists or sexists, but who nevertheless may be blamed for an involuntary use of discriminatory language.

Both the difference between talking to and talking about members of a discriminated outgroup and the perspectival differentiation between an actor's, an observer's and a victim's perception of discriminatory speech give a first hint of the conceptual and methodological problems with which research in this field is confronted. Before we deal with methodological problems a conceptual clarification of what we mean by social discrimination and by explicit vs. implicit discourse will be helpful.

2. Social discrimination in direct and indirect speech: Concepts and conception.

2.1. Social discrimination

While discriminating in its elementary sense means to differentiate or to make a difference, social discrimination means to make a difference in treatment *on a categorical basis*, i.e. in terms of group or class membership. In disregard of their individual properties or merits others are treated as mere instances or typical specimens of a social category, such as race, gender, age, ethnic or national membership, religious or professional affiliation. Theoretically, categorical treatment may have positive or negative effects, but the interest of social science has mainly been in the techniques of disadvantaging others, of denying members of a certain social group access to resources, outcomes and goals that are granted to other groups, above all to one's own group. In other words, social discrimination maintains or leads to inequality and injustice. Its major and most consequent purpose and effect is the denial of equal rights, be it equality of employment, of pay, of housing, or of political representation.

The establishment and maintenance of inequality can be achieved by many patterns of behaviour, but the mere fact that discrimination is differential treatment on a categorical basis gives communicative acts a special significance. In speaking and writing discriminators label, devaluate, abuse and repel others as instances of their target category. Hence, verbal discrimination deserves special attention.

In 1989 Graumann & Wintermantel proposed a functional model of social discrimination. They identified several social functions of discrimination with corresponding cognitive-emotional processes and forms of linguistic manifestation (cf. Table 1):

Separating. The basic meaning of discriminating is setting and keeping apart, drawing a line of separation. Its cognitive correlate is categorization. By means of categories we differentiate A from Non-A, self from other, ingroup from outgroup, "us" from "them".

Distancing. A dividing line may be sufficient to distinguish non-A from A. But the safer way to keep things apart is to place a distance between them by which measure being different becomes salient.

Accentuating. The difference between categories is enhanced if dissimilarities are emphasized, similarities belittled or ignored. If possible, A and non-A are brought into polar opposition or dichotomized as mutually exclusive.

Debasing/degrading. Social discrimination tends to devaluate or degrade the (members of an) outgroup as somehow inferior and not really deserving equal (or humane) treatment. As a rule discriminatory treatment is unfavourable for the target group.

Fixating. Treating someone as an instance of a category disregards not only a person's individual makeup but also the fact the he/she will behave differentially (adaptively) in different situations. The tendency is to treat targets of discrimination generically, i.e. as basically interchangeable. Two strategies are common: typing and assigning fixed traits (as in stereotyping). The economy of such fixation "for good" is evident: Once typed we "know" who somebody is and how to deal with him or her: women are women, Jews will be Jews (Graumann & Wintermantel, 1989, 186).

(Table 1 about here)

Ignoring. While the above-mentioned functions of social discrimination are features and effects of activities, there is one common way of discriminating against others that is refraining rather than acting, viz., whenever others, or whatever others do or say, is

ignored on categorical grounds. If people are overlooked, if what they say is not listened to or passed over because of their membership, we must consider this a case of social discrimination in the strong sense of the denial of equal rights, i.e. of rights accorded to (comparable) others. However, as an avoidance technique its identification is more difficult and less unambiguous that the determination of an activity as discriminatory.

These social functions of discrimination are neither meant to be exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Nor would a single feature as such constitute discrimination unambiguously. Finally, as with any social action, a discriminatory effect is contingent on contextual conditions: the social situation and the context of discourse.

It is relatively easy to match these social functions with corresponding linguistic manifestations and fitting utterances. Some examples for explicit verbal discrimination are given in Table 1 (right column), and if we go through the pages of right-wing, nationalist or downright neo-Nazi papers and pamphlets, we find many more. More difficult, however, is the identification of these functional features in (transcriptions of) normal discourse. At least, manifestations of direct and explicit discriminatory speech are rather rare. The reason has been widely discussed in the recent literature on the changing face of racism and the growing awareness of sexism and ageism in language use.

If we take racism we are told by researchers in the field that, mainly due to the success of the civil rights movement, since the 1950s the old-fashioned, blatant, very direct racism has given way to a more indirect "modern" form, sometimes called "symbolic racism" (McConahay & Hough, 1976). Racial or ethnic prejudice is uttered in a more concealed and subtle way. Which means that racism is still there, but its expression has become more guarded (cf. Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986, Pettigrew, 1989).

Also in Europe we find that the unbridled and unmitigated utterance of xenophobia and prejudice is socially undesirable, at least in public (Pettigrew & Mertens, 1993). Hence, indirect and implicit forms of discriminatory discourse have become more frequent. This change in style is one of the reasons why the use of so-called unobtrusive measures has become a major methodology in the study of social discrimination (cf. Crosby et al.,

1980) with nonverbal (para- and extralinguistic) rather than verbal cues as data base. As important as these cues may be, mainly as contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982; 1992), we must independently consider discriminatory speech.

In his studies of ethnic prejudice in discourse van Dijk (1984, 1987, 1993) restricts the term discrimination to direct talk to members of minorities. Prejudiced discourse about minorities may be called racist or sexist, but not discriminatory. But if we treat individuals indiscriminately as instances of a negatively valued category, disregarding their individual properties, does it matter if they are absent? If a speaker expresses his/her need to keep members of a social group at a distance, separated from the speaker's ingroup, and refers to them in a disparaging and stereotyped manner, we should not hesitate to designate such speech acts as discriminatory.

Another and much more decisive reason for not restricting discrimination to the face-to-face discourse between actor and victim is the fact that a large part of racist, sexist and other prejudicial discourse is published in print and audiovisual media with no control of who the recipients are: victims who feel discriminated or others who may sympathize with the discriminating author?

A different restriction in the use of "discrimination" in discourse is practiced by Mary Sykes (1985). When she speaks of discrimination in language, she does not refer to the "explicit informational content of utterances" (i.e.,propositional content), but only to its grammatical form. Hence, a sentence like

(1) "*Whites are naturally more intelligent than blacks*"

is a prejudiced, but not discriminatory statement. The latter is the case if differential treatment is reflected in lexical choice, as in

(2) "*Whites are naturally more intelligent than niggers*"

or in the propositionally unbiased but lexically biased statement

(3) *"Black females have the same natural intelligence as white women"* (Sykes, 1985,

85)

It is "niggers" vs. "black" or "females" vs. "women" that indicate differential treatment lexically. There are other grammatical forms of differential treatment, but, according to Sykes, it is only lexical choice and syntax that define "discrimination in discourse". Against this limited conception of discourse we hold that propositional content may be as indicative of social discrimination as grammatical forms. It is, of course, more direct and explicit. Hence, the sign, which was quite common in Nazi Germany

(4) *"No Jews (admitted)"*

is, according to our definition, a discriminatory speech act although, in its grammatical form, it is as unbiased as the common sign

(5) *"No dogs (permitted)"*[3].

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[3] Just to reconfirm the present conception of social discrimination we should underline that "No dogs permitted" is not discriminatory (even if cats were) since it does not (suggest to) treat one social class, group or category less favourably than others. In the grammatically equivalent case (which we may see displayed in front of night clubs, special movie performances, gambling and other "strictly adult" entertainment establishments (6) "No children (admitted)" we (adults) do not see unfavourable (ageist) treatment. Such signs are, on the contrary, put up in favour of, i.e. in protection of, children.

2.2. Direct and indirect, explicit and implicit speech

To distinguish between an open or straightforward and a guarded or veiled verbal discrimination we speak of either direct *versus* indirect or explicit *versus* implicit speech, but the two oppositions are not interchangeable. They are, although inconsistently, used differently by different authors.

This author, for instance (GRAUMANN & WINTERMANTEL, 1989), used "direct" for the unmediated discriminatory speech from actor to victim, from an ingroup member to an outgroup member. This straight and close, i.e. face-to-face type of social discrimination may be performed in an explicit or implicit manner of speech. In the first case the target is explicitly accosted as an instance of an inferior social category, e.g. as bimbo, pimp, fag, queen or *"Itzig"* (for Jew), is assigned socially undesired (immoral or other aversive) traits, or is offered the discriminator's undisguised prejudicial opinion about the target's (assumed) group and their inferior motives and threatening schemes. In the second case, the message may be the same; yet it is not plainly expressed. It must be inferred by the listener or reader from utterances which, *prima facie*, are not discriminatory *per se*.

Discriminatory speech was called indirect, when it was not directed to the victim, but was "merely" about him or her, leaving it open whether the discriminatory message ever reaches its target in an indirect, i.e. roundabout, manner. The fact, however, that even this talk *about* a "third person" has a second person as addressee who is talked *to* directly, demonstrates that "direct" and "indirect" as used here are not mutually exclusive or disjunctive categories. From a social psychological point of view it is important that what we call "direct" discrimination involves (at least) two individuals, each belonging to a different group. Hence, we have here a case of ingroup-outgroup or intergroup communication, and it is social categorization and not individual differences that makes up the discriminatory character of discourse. On the other hand, talking about someone who is absent in a discriminating manner is a typical case of ingroup

talk[4] which is considered to strengthen and stabilize group cohesion and to mark intergroup boundaries and differences. The fact that a large part of this discriminatory ingroup talk is presented in form of prejudicial and stereotyped stories and jokes that are appreciated and applauded by an eager audience illustrates the group-dynamic function that discriminatory talk about outgroups may have.

While it is conceptually easy to distinguish between discriminatory discourse as ("indirect") ingroup talk about others and as ("direct") intergroup talk, aimed at others, there is one other reason for avoiding "direct" and "indirect" in a social sense: Linguistics and, mainly, speech act theory have reserved this pair of attributes for speech acts irrespective of the communicative situation. A speech act is called direct if, from the intention of the speaker, it may be taken literally; if it is not meant to be taken literally, it is an indirect speech act (Searle, 1975; Zimmermann & Müller, 1977). The famous "Can you please pass me the salt?" is an indirect speech act, because, literally taken (i.e. propositionally), it is a question; but it is meant and understood as a request (i.e., taken by its illocutionary force). Before we consider how this applies to and may be helpful for the analysis of discriminatory speech we must note that the other pair, explicit vs. implicit, has also been incorporated into speech act theory and its ramifications, but not quite consistently.

For the present methodological purpose I shall not try to reconstruct the development of the finer distinctions of indirectness and implicitness, but simplify by presenting and discussing some common types of discriminatory talk. Compare the following utterances

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[4] Sometimes the discriminated person is physically present, able and even expected to overhear what is said, but treated as if non-existent (see above on the discriminatory technique of ignoring).

(7) *"Go back to where you came from"*[5]

This speech act is direct and explicit in its directive form trying to get the hearer to do exactly what is explicitly stated. There is no dissociation between the proposition and the illocutionary act (cf. Searle, 1975; Bach & Harnish, 1979). On the other hand,

(8) *"Why don't you go back to where you came from?"*

is an indirect explicit speech act since its propositional (grammatical) form is a question, but not meant to be answered. It is, as the preceding utterance, directive. Hence, we have a dissociation between propositional and illocutionary act.

The utterance is, by the way, "direct" also in the social sense of face-to-face interaction, but (speech-act-) theoretically no different from

(9) *"Why don't they go back to where they came from?"*,

taken from an ingroup discourse sample, i.e. from talk about others who may be present or absent.

(10) *"Why don't they stay where they are at home?"*

is indirect speech for reasons given under (8), but it is also implicit, the implication being here that "they" have not stayed. The explicit argument would be:

(a) "They" are here.

(b) "They" should not be here since this is our home

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5 This and most of the following examples are taken from a corpus of discrimination speach about foreigners (immigrants) in Germany, which has been collected by the author's raesearch group; cf. note 1.

(c) Why didn't they stay where they are at home?

(d) Considering that there are many more threatening to come: Why couldn't they stay where they are at home? - the pronoun "they" comprising the whole category whether already here or still there.

In Grice's (1975; 1978) terms a proposition that is implied by the utterance of a sentence in a given context although that proposition is not a part of (or an entailment of) what has actually been said is called an *implicature*. In our last example (10) the implicature consists of the two not explicitly uttered propositions (a) They are here and (b) They shouldn't be here - in both cases the speaker relies on the hearer's knowledge that (a) and (b). This reliance is one of the "felicity conditions" that Austin (1962; 1970) and Searle (1969) have identified for the communicative success of indirect and/or implicit speech acts, and which Goffman (1983) has detailed in his analysis of the "taken-for-granted and the inferences made therefrom" (1983, 1).

One final conceptual distinction is of importance for the methodology of identifying indicators of implicated propositions or knowledge taken for granted: Grice's distinction between conventional and conversational implicature (Grice 1975; cf. Gazdar 1979). While the former refers to what words or sentences say by virtue of the (conventional) meaning of words, conversational implicature presupposes that a whole set of premises is fulfilled: At least, the "cooperative principle" must be observed, some relevant contextual and background information and knowledge of the "conventional" meaning of the utterance must be given. As to the contextual and background information, it may be advisable to distinguish between (reliance on) contextual and situational knowledge. An utterance like (10) is understood and meant to be understandable if and only if the conversationalists have either witnessed the presence of a foreign person (in a common perceptual situation) or referred to this presence in the preceding dialogue: If everybody concerned knows from the preceding common perceptual and/or conversational experience who is referred to, no direct or explicit further reference is required. But the analyst of discriminatory discourse has a special methodological problem.

3. Methodological problems

3.1. The intuitive assessment by victims

No social scientist or linguist doing research on discrimination can do without the testimony of those who consider themselves targets or victims of discrimination. Since, as we saw, direct face-to-face discrimination is rarely witnessed (and recorded) by scientific or, at least, neutral observers and since, for obvious reasons, discriminators themselves are, if self-aware at all, not to be expected to report faithfully on an activity that is socially undesirable, the major source for the immediate form of intergroup discrimination is the testimony of the target persons. If this cannot be cross-checked by other (independent) testimonies such reports may, in principle, be flawed by a set of well-known errors:

(1) As retrospective reports they may be highly selective, (a) depending on the interval between the discriminating experience and its recall, and (b) because of the affectivity of the experience to be recalled.

(2) The reproduction requested by an interviewer will, as a rule, not be the first recall of the discriminating experience. It may have and, in most cases, will have been talked about within the target group and, very often, has been traded against similar stories told by other ingroup members. Hence, it may have been narratively reconstructed and, as an episode, be a social construction rather than an authentic individual experience.

(3) Furthermore, as mentioned above, people who have repeatedly become victims of social discrimination may have become not only sensitized, but over-sensitive to potentially discriminatory speech acts. This may lead to accentuations and other forms of "misperception" or misinterpretation.

(4) One final potential source of error are difficulties that many members of immigrant or migrant minorities have with the language, argot and dialects of their host country.

In spite of these difficulties the material supplied by members of minority groups is indispensable. Even if - to construe an extreme case - social discrimination existed only "in the eyes (and ears) of the beholder", a student of verbal discrimination, who is aware of the mutual other-orientation and the cooperative character of discourse, must take an interest in the schemata and other forms of expectancy that a conversationalist from another social category, language and/or culture brings into a dialogue.

Being interested in discourse that is both intended and interpreted to be discriminatory we took two precautionary measures in our research. In the collection of our discriminatory corpus we sampled not only utterances reproduced by the immediate target persons, but also by witnesses who, as German friends, colleagues or spouses of foreign minority members, had overheard and, hence, could confirm discriminatory remarks. Also in the assessment of our utterances we relied on the judgment of a mixed sample of foreigners and Germans. Some of the latter had regular, some occasional and some no contacts at all with foreigners (Wagner et al., 1990; 1993). The task of these judges was to compare explicitly discriminatory sentences in terms of their similarity /dissimilarity with respect to three of the functions of the Graumann-Wintermantel (1989) model: separating, devaluating, and fixating. While these three functions have empirically been validated, the conceptual distinction between seperating and distancing could not be reproduced.

3.2. Indicators of explicit discrimination

It is rather easy to find explicit expressions of the major social functions of discrimination. The tendency, e.g. to *separate* and distance oneself from (members of) the outgroup is clearly expressed in our sample sentences (7) to (10), directly in

(7) *"Go back to where you came from!"*, or indirectly in the question

(8) *"Why don't you go back to where you came from?"*

Equally explicit and unambiguous can be utterances of *fixation*. The two common forms, distinguished by Graumann & Wintermantel (1989), are (a) assigning (typical) *traits*, as of an ethnic stereotype, to a person, or (b) addressing or referring to an individual as a *type*, interpreting an individual's behaviour as typical.

Since ethnic stereotypes very often become manifest as a fixed set of traits or rather of trait-names, an individual who is treated categorically is attributed the traits of his or her social category: A woman, e.g., is called "moody" since women are said (by some men) to be moody; a person whom we know or suspect to be Scottish is labelled "stingy" because people say Scots are. There are a lot of less harmless assignments of deindividuating traits meant to characterize others as mere instances, exemplars or prototypes of a (somehow inferior) social category.

The other method of fixation is *typing*.

(11) *"That's just women all over"*

is an utterance, if spoken to or about an individual woman, classifies whatever she has said or done as typical for the social category "woman" - whose "kind" or "nature" is known to be different from man's. The specific traits need not be made explicit. What a woman is may be taken for granted and, hence, the difference between men and women, similarly between whites and blacks, Christians and Jews, "Aryans and "non-Aryans" etc. - all types and counter-types. Once typed or stereotyped such labelling does not only ignore a person's individual makeup; it also disregards development and change. In our corpus whole ethnic groups are typed as "criminals", "crooks", "parasites", etc.

Sometimes indistinguishable from typing is the expression of *devaluation*. Even the relatively common phrase

(12) *"That's just typical"*

is rarely meant value-free, although not necessarily depreciative. But ordinary language and, mainly, colloquial and slang varieties are full of abusive words that are used categorically as ethnic slurs or "ethnophaulisms" (cf. Mullen & Johnson, 1993): "Niggers" for black Africans or African Americans, "chinks" for Chinese, "kikes" (or German "*Itzig*") for Jews, "krauts" or "*boches*" for Germans, "wops" for Italians are examples of such ethnophaulisms which, at least, in their connotations are derogatory rather than neutral. They all "imply to the target, >you are a creature indistinguishable from the rest of your group<", as Greenberg et al. (1988, 80) note (cf. Mullen & Johnson, 1993, 298).

Whether derogatory or not, the consistent and exclusive use of an ethnic (social) label either in addressing or in referring to an individual emphasizes the indiscriminate typicality put on a person. An historical climax of the semiotic deindividuation by typing was the Nazi practice of forcing all Jews to go by the first names of "Sarah" and "Isaak" and wear the yellow Star of David. And in every official paper or publication reference to these victims of discrimination had to be explicitly reference to the "Jew (first name) Isaak (surname)".

The most recent example of a dehumanizing dedifferentiation by treating a contingent number of people categorically comes from Northern Ireland where a "Protestant" terrorist machine-gunned several customers of a restaurant indiscriminately under the reported motto

(12) *"Any catholic will do"*

So much about some direct and indirect but explicit forms of (ethnic/social) discrimination by means of language in its major functions of separating (distancing), devaluating and fixating others as instances of social categories.

3.3 Indicators of implicit discrimination

As compared with the relative simplicity and ease of identifying explicitly discriminatory speech, the realm of implicit discrimination is vast and largely unexplored. It is the realm of the commonality and mutuality of beliefs (Graumann, 1991) and of the (art or) skill of perspective setting and taking (Graumann, 1989; 1990; 1992), of 'reading between the lines', generally speaking, of *inferencing*.

Not only most of the above examples of direct and, above all, indirect explicitly discriminatory speech are fully understood only if we properly infer their intended "illocutionary force". The same holds for practically all text comprehension.

Speaking understandably requires the speaker in general to observe the relevant conditions of comprehensibility which Austin (1965) has named "felicity conditions". To name but the major ones: The speaker has to follow the rules of grammar to the degree that they seem to be available to a given hearer or audience. The speaker has to account for the common history of communication and for the present situation, its potential institutional constraints, and for the hearer's assumed knowledge, abilities. interests, expectations. Last, not least, the speaker must obey the principle of cooperation (*sensu* Grice). The more a speaker succeeds in meeting these requirements, the more he or she will be able to gauge the hearer's inferences. This is of special importance if speech acts are both indirect and implicit: The hearer is to be referred to the relevant background knowledge or situational information by subtle lexical or grammatical cues, which practice, in turn, presupposes that the hearer does not miss the subtlety. Take the following question from our corpus of discriminatory discourse with and about immigrants (asylum-seekers)

(13) *How did you manage to get this residence certificate?*

The question was asked by a German who had learned that an Irani had received this much sought after document. The original German word for "manage" is "*es anstellen*",

which has the denotation rather than connotation of bringing something about by contriving, which suggests the use of tricks. Hence, what propositionally is a question, in its implicated illocutionary act is or may be understood as a reproach. The Irani should not have the right of residence.

Another case where the lexical choice discloses the intended reproach is taken from a group discussion of whether immigration should be stopped

(14) *"It is incredible: They have everything, they have apartments, food, sometimes work and everything"*

Leaving the word "everything" aside and taking the sentence after the colon as a statement of fact (which it probably is not), the state of affairs referred to would be considered normal with respect to the German majority. To have "apartments, food and sometimes work" is certainly neither "everything" nor "incredible". But for asylum-seeking immigrants to have apartments, food and, sometimes, work is equal to having "everything" and that, consequently, is "incredible". The discriminatory negation of equal rights and opportunities is not directly stated. It remains implicit, but is conveyed by lexical choice.

Sometimes a mere conjunction like "but" gives the underlying discrimination off, as in

(15) *"She is Turkish, but honest and very clean"*

from an exchange between German housewives about a new "domestic help". Without the "but" the speech act would not be discriminatory at all.

An adverbial cue, frequently used as an intensive serving to indicate an extreme or an unlikely case, is "even". An immigrant German from Roumania proudly reports

(16) *"We got along with everybody, even with Jews"*

A related and equally telltale confession of goodwill we got from a member of the Christian Democrat Youth Organization when accused of xenophobia:

(17) *"Above all, our attitude is Christian and social, especially with respect to our German fellow-citizens. But that does not mean that we are indifferent to foreign fellow-citizens"*

Here it is the restrictive "especially", which is promptly corrected by a "but" that serves as a clue rather than cue to the incriminated attitude.

While ignoring someone is a discriminatory strategy which is difficult to identify in the content or structure of speech acts, it is nevertheless practiced indirectly. A senior patient in a home for the elderly when, after ringing the night-bell, a Korean nurse shows up, asks her:

(18) *"Is anybody else available?"*

The patient rejects the needed help on categorical grounds, i.e. disregarding the skills and abilities of this individual nurse; of course, without uttering her prejudice directly.

There are other avoidance techniques for which I will give only one example. During a TV-discussion on the pros and cons of a multi-cultural society one participant resorts to an analogy:

(19) *"There are people who have sex with horses, and some like it. They must know what they do"*

Without speaking explicitly against the idea of a multi-cultural society this conversationalist denigrates the idea by his comparison between sex with horses and living together with citizens of other cultures.

A statement like (19) is a very strong, even insulting objection, but is it discriminating in the sense we have been using the term? It certainly has a separating (distancing) and a devaluating illocutionary force. The speaker treats an undefined outgroup as unfit to live with in the same community, disregarding individualities. Hence, all the essential features of social discrimination can be recognized. On the other hand, the statement may be understood as an offensive version of *"chacun à son gôut"* (Everyone to his own taste). There are all kinds of people. Let them be as they wish. But don't ask me to be like them or even to join them. - With some hesitation one may conclude that both interpretations are possible; but an ambiguity remains.

Ambiguity *per se* is a possible form of indirect and implicit discrimination, mainly if used intentionally. One final controversial example may exemplify this. It is taken from the ad of a tourist agency

(20) *"Why don't you let your wife decide on where to spend the next vacation?"*

When we discussed this proposition in a seminar on verbal discrimination there were, from the beginning, two opposing groups of text interpretation. One pleaded for a positive appeal to (liberal) men who want to be emancipatory, but do not yet know how to do it - a possible niche for marketing strategists. The other group, initially only women, argued that this ad is a subtle but rather insidious case of sexism since it plays with the idea that women, at least the subcategory of wives, could not and did not and maybe still cannot make such decisions, but that men, here the subcategory of husbands, should "let" them have a try. So the final responsibility for the decision remains with the "permissive" husband.

Again there is ambiguity in the message, most probably on purpose. The cues indicating the implicated sexism or possible discrimination are the fact that the direct target group ("you") is husbands although the "indirect" addressees will be wives, but the decisive cue is "let" or even "why not let?".

I conclude the exemplification of inference-gauging cues to implicated discriminatory propositions. But I know that we have only entered a vast and still largely unstructured field even if we focus on linguistic cues only.

The range of para- and extralinguistic cues is also wide. For situational information, as in a shared perceptual setting, there is the large group of (linguistic and extralinguistic) deictic signs by which, for example, a conversationalist refers a partner or an audience to the presence of a foreigner. This is frequently the case in our study when people, including a foreigner, line up at the supermarket cashier, at a bus stop, or in front of a traffic light. Glances, winks, movements of the head will be enough to "contextualize" an utterance that propositionally remains general or abstract. Gumperz (1982, 1992) has in many of his writings described, differentiated and explained the function of those features of "linguistic form that contribute... to the signalling of contextual presuppositions" (1982, 7). His list, which has not yet been exploited for the analysis of verbal discrimination, comprises "code, dialect, and style switching processes, ... prosodic phenomena ... as well as choice among lexical and syntactic options, formulaic expressions, conversational openings and sequencing strategies..." (ibid.). Most important is Gumperz' conclusion that the "signalling value" of such cues is contingent upon the participants' "tacit awareness of their meaningfulness" (p. 132) which, in turn, refers us to "contextualization conventions". For the study of discrimination in discourse we should add that in a given social context there are *discourse conventions* in effect, among others those that regulate what we may broadly call "foreigner talk", a special case of "minority talk", i.e. the ways how to talk about minorities (e.g. foreigners, immigrant workers) in a socially acceptable way. This implies that even discriminatory talk must observe what Goffman (1967) has called "face work", one of the reasons for the dominance of indirect and implicit discriminatory speech and one of the difficulties to clearly identify the cues for implicated discrimination.

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    254.

Social function	Cognitive-emotional processes	Linguistic manifestation	Examples for explicit verbal discrimination
Separating	Differentiating	Differential naming	"We/they"
	Categorizing	Semantic categorization	"Black driver causes heavy accident"
Distancing	Dichotomizing Focus on differences	Non-immediacy, e.g., spatio-temporal distancing	"We/them" "Those people"
		impersonal passive constructions	"Bullets began to fly"
		abstract nouns	"the rate of net inflow" (of immigrants) (Sykes, 1985)
		reification	
Accentuating	Exaggerating differences	Emphatic speech	"Foreign penetration of Switzerland"
	Polarizing	Contrasting	The world Jewish conspiracy "The international Jew" (Henry Ford)
Debasing/ degrading	Categorical negative evaluation	Disparaging, pejorative speech	"Nigger"
	Affective responses to social category	Ridiculing	"Wop"
	("prejudice")	Insinuating (doubts, fears) Calumniating	Polish jokes
Fixating	Stereotyping	Labeling	
Assigning traits	Categorical attribution of negative characteristics	Generic categorization by adjectives	"Lazy" "Moody" "Shifty"
Typing	Categorization as type or as typical	Generic categorization by nouns	"Fag," "dyke," "butch" "Pinko" "Woman driver"

Table 1. Social, mental, and linguistic features of social discrimination. (From C.F

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