语境的认知和语用研究

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内 容 摘 要

上个世纪 Malinowski 和 Firth 对语境的研究为后人在这方面更深入的研究奠定了基础。自那以后，语境逐渐成为语言学文献中使用最频繁的术语之一，语境在语言学研究中扮演着举足轻重的角色。随着语用学的出现和兴起，语境借助于这个被认为是"研究语境意义"的学科，最终在语言学众多理论中占有一席之地。就是时下人气颇盛的认知语言学，也对语境极为关注。语境研究的成果不可谓不丰富，然而某种程度上却显得零散、片面，缺乏系统性。本论文主要从认知和语用的角度来对语境进行系统、全面的研究。

认知语言学家认为，储存在人们大脑中的共有的世界知识和经历，可以作为一种帮助人们解读语言的语境。他们把语境看作是一种心理现象，因而将其定义为认知范畴（或心理概念）之间的相互作用的认知表征。Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47)认为，认知语境不仅仅是孤立的心理经验，还与储存在长时记忆中的知识密切相关。

语用学无疑是最重视语境的学科，离开了语境语用意义将无从谈起。语用语境包括一切有助于解读话语含义的要素。从语用学角度研究语境将涉及指别、言语行为、含义、预设、推理等语用学的传统组成部分。而这些部分是依赖于语境的。对语境系统的研究少不了从这个角度接近语境。

本论文由六章构成：

第一章是简介。简要介绍了论文写作的背景和目的。由一则新闻引出语境的概念，接下来阐述了从认知和语用角度系统研究语境的必要性和可行性。

第二章是语境的文献综述。本章从语境的定义、分类、特征、和部分相关术语等方面回顾了不同流派的语言学家对语境的研究，为以后章节的展开打下基础。

第三章是语境的认知研究。本章从关联理论，以及同语境密切相关的一些认知语言学概念入手，阐述了语境在认知语言学中的地位和作用。这些同语境放在一起讨论的概念是认知模型、文化模型、原型、范畴、框架、图样、图式等。

第四章是语境的语用研究。本章从语用学角度研究语境，语用学研究的是语言在语境中的使用及其意义。语用语境跟指别、言语行为、含义、预设、推理等依赖于语境的语用学传统组成部分放在一起进行讨论。

第五章是对语境的语用——认知研究。本章用认知语用学方法分析研究同语境相关的语用学概念和理论，反过来又用语用学方法来分析研究认知语言学概念和理论。并且随后试图提出一种语用——认知方法来完整、灵活地研究语境。

第六章是结论。本章回顾总结了整篇论文对语境的认知和语用研究，并指出了语用——认知方法应用于语境和意义研究的前景。

总之，用一个较为理想的方法，相对全面地研究语境很有必要。由于二者对语境有着同样的兴趣，语境的认知研究和语用研究合而为一，也就是说，用一种语用——认知法来研究语境不仅可能， 而且可行。当然，这种方法只是一个尝试或一个开头，要将语境的语用——认知法付诸实践，还需大量的进一步研究工作。

M. A. DISSERTATION

A Cognitive and Pragmatic Study of Context

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Abstract

Since Malinowski (1923) firstly put forward the notion of context and Firth (1957) developed it afterwards, it has gradually become one of the most widely used terms in all kinds of linguistic literature and hence played an increasingly essential and significant role in linguistic study. When pragmatics came into being, the notion of context eventually set up its dominant status in linguistic theories because pragmatics is considered as the study of language use in context. Cognitive linguistics, which is presently popular and has attracted vast interests, also shows great concern to the notion of context. The study of context was abundant in the past, but to some extent, segmental, one-sided, lacking in systematicity. In this thesis, a systematic and comprehensive study of context will be pursued primarily from a cognitive and pragmatic perspective.

Cognitive linguists believe that the shared experience and knowledge of the world stored in the mind serves as some kind of context supporting our interpretation and understanding of language. They consider the notion of context as a mental phenomenon and define cognitive context as a cognitive representation of the interaction between cognitive categories (or mental concepts). Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47) argue that the cognitive context does not remain an isolated mental experience, but is immediately

associated with the related knowledge in long-term memory.

Pragmatics is undoubtedly the discipline which places the most importance on context. Context plays such a crucial role in the study of pragmatics that pragmatic meaning can hardly be interpreted without taking it into consideration. Pragmatic context includes all the componential factors that are helpful in interpreting the implied meaning of an utterance. The study of context from a pragmatic perspective will inevitably involve such conventional components as reference, speech act, implicature, presupposition, inference, etc., which are context-dependent. An approach to context from this perspective can never be neglected in a systematic and comprehensive study of context.

This thesis is composed of six chapters.

Chapter one provides a brief introduction of the background and purpose of writing the thesis. The notion of context is introduced by the analysis of a piece of current news, after which follows the necessity and feasibility of studying context systematically from a cognitive and pragmatic perspective.

Chapter two is a literature review on context, which reviews the definition, classification, features, and some related terms of context from the points of view of various disciplines and schools. This serves as a foundation of further discussion of the following chapters.

Chapter three conducts a profound study of context from a cognitive perspective. Cognitive context is discussed together with the relevance theory, and some major concepts such as cognitive model, cultural model, prototype, category, domain, frame, script, and schemata, etc. in cognitive linguistics.

Chapter four studies the context from another perspective—pragmatics. Pragmatics studies language use and meaning in context. Pragmatic context is discussed with the conventional context-dependent notions such as implicature, reference, presupposition, speech act, inference, etc..

Chapter five offers an integrated approach to context which studies the major componential pragmatic notions from a cognitive perspective and the other way round. A pragma-cognitive approach is put forward, trying to achieve an ideal and efficient

approach to the application of context to a successful understanding and interpretation of language.

Chapter six is a conclusion, which draws a summary of what has been discussed in the previous chapters, and tries to put forward a left-right hand theory to contribute to the study of context.

In a word, a comparably exhaustive study of, and an ideal approach to context are necessary. The organic combination of a cognitive and pragmatic approach, or a pragma-cognitive approach to context is possible and feasible because both share a common interest in context. However, this approach is just a try, or a beginning. Considerable amount of further work has to be done to put the pragma-cognitive approach to the study of context into application.

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Introduction

1.1   The Importance of Context in Linguistic Study

Why do people need context? What role does it play in language interpretation and understanding? To answer these questions, a case in point is a latest piece of news presented as below. Firstly, look at sentence (1):

(1)   Ladies and gentlemen, we got him.

<div align="right">(From news program on CCTV-4)</div>

Who produced this utterance? Who are addressed here? Who else are "we"? Whom does this "him" refer to? What do "we" mean by "got him"? What have "we" done to "him"? Those who know nothing about the Iraqi War and the corresponding events in the year of 2003 will find it hard to understand the meaning of this six-word sentence. In other words, this sentence is meaningless without context.

In December 14, 2003, American army-men in Iraq succeeded in capturing Sadam Husein, the former president of Iraq, who had been the target since the outbreak of Iraqi War and then the collapse of the former Iraqi government. On the press conference, after several senior officials of American army stood in a row, one of them began their declaration of this breaking news with the following words: "Ladies and gentlemen, we got him." Judging from the reaction of the correspondents and journalists present and the audience in front of TV, every person caught the idea of the news. This is because some kind of knowledge related to this event had been stored in their mind in the past. With the help of the stored knowledge, they knew "we" refers to "the American army and their allies"; "got him" means "successfully captured the former Iraqi president Sadam Husein". Hence, it can be safely argued that this stored knowledge in the mind is a kind of context, precisely, cognitive context and pragmatic context.

In language interpretation and understanding it is frequently found that linguistic

componential analysis alone does not account for all the interpretation of meaning. The interpreter of language has to turn to the words and sentences before and after what has been written or uttered. Mostly he has to take the nonlinguistic environments into consideration in order to infer what is implied between the lines. Still on some other occasions he may as well turn to the knowledge and experience stored in his mind. With the assistance of all these factors mentioned above, a mutual and successful understanding in communication becomes possible.

Context used to be a peripheral concept in linguistic study. Malinowski (1923) firstly put forward this concept and did its classification. Firth (1957) then developed the notion of context in his linguistic theory. Since then, context has moved gradually from a peripheral position to a comparably more central position in linguistic theories. When pragmatics, a brand-new discipline in linguistics which studies the language use in context, came into being, the notion of context eventually set up its dominant status in linguistic theorizing.

Context has been playing an essential and significant role in linguistic study. It is undoubtedly one of the most widely used linguistic terms in all kinds of contexts. The essential role that context plays in linguistic study can be seen from the fact that one can systemize a history of linguistics by recalling its role in a successive theories. Though in the 1940s and 1950s, Malinowski and Firth had contributed a lot to earn a place for the notion of context, and "context of situation" was a dominant feature in Firthian linguistics at that time. From the 1960s onwards, there have been global changes from a very reductive treatment of context towards models which pay more and more attention to conditions of language use.

In various linguistic theories and branches context has found a place for itself. Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar's concept of an autonomous syntax as the "standard" language theory was firstly challenged by generative semantics, which paid more and more attention to contextual issues. Searle's speech act theory has been becoming a very popular theory in both pragmatics and philosophy. In the theory he (Searl, 1969) considers speaking as acting under contextual conditions. Early semanticists analyze language from a totally context-independent linguistic approach and they find that it is impossible to attain some aspects of meaning without taking context into consideration. As a result, formal semantics had moved from the formal

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representation of proposition by means of predicate logic to intentional semantics, in which the formal representations include context—environmental factors in speech such as time, place, participants, etc..

Still some other branches of linguistics also have taken context as an essential part and a kind of means in their linguistic analyses. Sociolinguistics defined situational and social variables in term of social context. Discourse analysis conceptualized structure in general as sequentially ordered units establishing logically and globally, forward and backward operating contextual forces. Conceptualizations in language acquisition have moved from context-independent grammatical generalization to the concept of a rich interpretation as an analytic approach to the context-bounded utterances, especially the highly contextualized adult-child interaction.

Context is dichotomized in various ways, just as it is used itself to establish other dichotomies: verbal and non-verbal elements of relevant distribution are differentiated. Context itself is also served as a distinctive criterion for the differentiation of various poles in linguistic description. For example, spoken and written language, different stages in language acquisition, colloquial and standard language, language varieties, are distinguished by the degree of context-dependency among other aspects. Therefore, context, or consequently context-dependency, has considerable impact on various unit of linguistic analysis under consideration.

1.2 The Study of Context from a Cognitive and Pragmatic Perspective

The study of cognitive science and artificial intelligence is on the rise and attracting more and more attention, and what is more important is that a great deal has been achieved. This could be one of the major explanations of the reasons why cognitive linguistics also finds its popularity among linguists and other language researchers. Cognitive linguistics "is an approach to language that is based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it" (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001: F36). What this "experience of world" is based on can definitely be considered as context. As a result, the notion of context is somewhat tangible, yet still cognitive, and important for cognitive linguistics to consider it as a mental phenomenon.

Pragmatics can be briefly defined as the study of meaning and language use in

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context. According to this definition, it goes without saying that context plays a crucial role in the pragmatic approach in linguistics. Semantics also studies meaning and lays its emphasis on the conventional meaning that is based on linguistic knowledge. Semantics meets challenges (Saeed, 2000: 7-9), one of which is that utterance meaning is not always and not necessarily conventional and literal. It is proved to be tough task to isolate the meaning of words from any possible context. As soon as semanticists turn to context for help, they are touching the specific area of pragmatics. The study of context from a pragmatic perspective will involve reference, speech act, implicature, inference, etc., which, from a very traditional and conventional point of view, are major components of pragmatics.

In this thesis, context will be studied primarily from a cognitive and pragmatic perspective for two reasons. On the one hand, the study of context was abundant in the past, but to some extent, segmental, one-sided, lack of systematicity. From Malinowski, Firth onwards, to the present pragmaticists, much of their work had been done to the definitions, classifications, and application of context in various ways. However, their research work lays emphasis either on linguistic or nonlinguistic, cultural or situational, or functional aspects of context. On the other hand, our mental world, which may include our experience, knowledge, and our perception of the material world, will contribute to the interpretation of language. This part can be taken as the context from a cognitive perspective. A systematic study of context is feasible if context is studied from both a pragmatic and a cognitive perspective. In this case, a comparably exhaustive study of context by combining cognitive and pragmatic approach also becomes possible.

Cognitive science and pragmatics interact and interrelate to a considerable extent. However, they are too broad in sense, in other words, the scope of their study extends far more than that of linguistics. Not to mention cognitive science, which developing theories about human perception, thinking, and learning, pragmatics refers to a branch of semiotics or a branch of an even broader field of philosophy. Therefore, this thesis primarily aims to discuss context from the perspectives of cognitive linguistics and linguistic pragmatics. In this case, it can be argued that both are concerned with how language is presented and understood. Both introduce and apply the theories of their counter part. And most important of all, both are greatly concerned with the meaning in context.

Literature Review on Context

2.1 Introduction

Modern linguistics begins from Swiss linguist Ferdinand De Saussure, the father of modern linguistics in the west. He distinguished the difference between langue and parole, of which, according to him, language is the subject of linguistic study, because it is relatively stable and systematic. While parole was not chosen as the subject of study because it is a naturally occurring speech event, specific to the speaking situation, and thus said to be personal, situational, and not suitable for systematic investigation. Since then, language has been studied from the perspective of its internal system for almost half a century, without taking the actual language use into consideration. This trend was enhanced by American structural linguists represented by Bloomfield, put to a peak by Chomsky in his theory of transformational-generative grammar (Jiang, 2003: 14). Just when Chomsky's theory prevailed through the world of linguistics, sociolinguistics firstly began to challenge this trend, and then follows the functional linguistics.

The criticism of sociolinguistics and functional linguistics to the American structuralism and Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar had brought forth the coming into being of context and put forward the developmental process of contemporary linguistics. Even Chomsky himself noticed the influence of context to language and realized the insufficiency of his theory. He accepted the suggestions of John Kats etc. and added the semantic section up to his theory. Some philosophers, anthropologists, and linguists are interested in the studies of linguistics, most of whom contributed a great deal to the discipline of pragmatics.

2.2 Definition of Context

Context has various versions of definitions. It goes without saying that from different viewpoints different linguists of different schools or approaches will define this

term specifically. But no matter how it is defined, some essential parts will never be excluded, namely, language and the environmental factors to which language use is related. However the concept of context itself is context-dependent. In particular linguistic approach, different terminological systems or analytical unit, context finds various explanations of its concept.

In *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics*, context is defined as "any relevant features of the setting in which a form appears or might appear"(Matthews, 1997). While *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (the tenth edition) explains it as "the parts of discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning". *Longman Dictionary of Language teaching & Applied Linguistics* defines it as "that which occurs before and/or after a word, a phrase or even a longer utterance or a text; the context often helps in understanding the particular meaning of the word, phrase. etc."(Richards, etc.. 1998). Still another definition in *Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar* is "the words or sentences surrounding any piece of written (or spoken) text" (Chalker, etc.. 1998). As is mentioned in the previous paragraph, all these definitions suggest that they generally include the linguistic components and the environmental components which both contribute to the understanding of meaning.

As far as the linguistic approaches and linguists are concerned, what will their definitions be like? To answer this question, linguistic approaches such as sociolinguistics. semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and linguists such as Malinowski, Firth, Halliday, Sperber and Wilson, etc. have to be taken into consideration. Malinowski did not provide a clear definition of context, but his proposing of the term "context of situation" greatly influenced the study of context afterwards, take, for example, Firth's study on context. Firth (1957) defined context of situation as the entire cultural setting of speech and the personal history of the participants rather than as simply the context of human activity going on at the moment. His notion of context included "not only spoken words, but facial expression, gestures, bodily activities, the whole group of people present during an exchange of utterances, and the part of the environment in which these people are engaged"(Firth, 1957: 32). Just as Malinovski had influenced Firth, the latter, in return, had great impact on another famous linguist, M. A. K. Halliday (Halliday, 1985) deepened Firth's context of situation into a more specific and detailed one in utterance and text interpretation. In his register theory he described

context as field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse. The definition of context given by Sperber and Wilson is from a cognitive view and thus diverse from those given by the previous linguists. They (Sperber and Wilson: 1986: 15-16) define context of utterance as "the set of promises used in interpreting" and hold that context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world.

It is less likely that the definitions of context can be exhausted since every linguist will inevitably come across this term and tries to explain it. All these definitions, regardless of their differences, basically share some aspects in common that context is context-dependent and language-centered. In other words, it is inter-related and contributes to the understanding of meaning. In this thesis, context will be taken as the pragmatic and cognitive elements of an uttered expression or written text.

2.3 Classification of Context

Interestingly many linguists would like to classify context. It seems as if only by classification can they make a clear explanation to this notion. A brief review will also begin from Malinowski. He (Malinowski, 1923) distinguished three types of context: 1) the immediate context of utterance; 2) the general context of situation on, and 3) the broader context of culture. Malinowski's context refers to these kinds of context of utterance. However, he thought that "... on the one hand, ...the concept of context has to be broadened and on the other hand... the situation in which words are uttered can never be passed over as irrelevant to the linguistic expression" (Malinowski, 1923: 306). So he introduced the term "context of situation" to refer to a "wider idea of context" or "the general conditions under which a language is spoken" (ibid). His context of culture refers to "the reality of the culture, the life and customs of a people" in which "language is essentially rooted" (ibid.: 305).

Firth did not give a classification to the notion of context. But he further deepened Malinowski's "context of situation". He preferred to regard context of situation as part of the linguists' apparatus in the same way as the grammatical categories that he used in order to set up the framework for the description of the context of situation which could be used for the study of texts as part of a general linguistic theory. From his point of view, all kinds of linguistic description, the phonology, the grammar, etc., as well as the context of situation are statements of meaning, and all the meaning is functioned in a

context. He therefore categorized context of situation as:

1) The participants in the situation: what Firth referred to as persons and personalities, corresponding more or less to what sociologists would regard as the status and roles of the participants;

2) The action of the participants: what they are doing, including both their verbal action and their non-verbal action;

3) Other relevant features of the situation: the relevant objects and non-verbal and non-personal events;

4) The effects of the verbal action: what changes were brought about by what the participants in the situation had to say.

Halliday and Hasan (1985: 12) described the notion of context in terms of a framework of three dimensions: 1) field, referring to the on-going social activity, or "what is actually taking place"; 2) tenor, concerning with the role relationship of the participants involved, or "who is taking part"; 3) mode, touching on the symbolic or rhetoric channel, i.e. "what part the language is playing". They developed a conceptual framework of this theory and elaborated the three components of context of situation with illustrations. Halliday gives us a more specific and detailed view of context in utterance and text interpretation. He claims that the field, tenor, and mode of discourse are the three features of the context of situation and these concepts enable us to give a characterization of the nature of any texts. He summarized his register theory into five periods in the cycle of text and context (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 12):

1) the text, as a metafunctional construct: a complex of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings;

2) the context of situation: the configuration of field, tenor and mode features that specify the register of the text;

3) the context of culture: the institutional and ideological background that give value to the text and constrain its interpretation;

4) the "inter-textual" context: relations with other texts, and assumptions that are carried over therefrom;

5) the "intra-textual" context: coherence within the text, including linguistic cohesion that embodies the internal semantic relationships.

Hu Zhuanglin (1994: 181-182) classified context into three types, namely linguistic

context (or co-text); situational context; and cultural context. He argues that linguistic context refers to the internal environment of a text, which is also termed as "co-text"; situational context refers to environmental factors in which the text is produced, the events and their nature, the participants and their relationship, and when, where, how the text is produced; cultural context refers to the history, culture, customs and folks capable of being understood by speakers belonging to a particular speech community.

2.4 Features of Context

Just as Firth was greatly concerned with context of situation and its application to language events, Hymes (1964) emphasizes the importance of communicative events within communities. He views the role of context in interpretation as, on the one hand, limiting the range of possible interpretations and, on the other hand, as supporting the intended interpretation. He (Hymes, 1964) sets about specifying the features of context which may be relevant to the identification of speech event. He begins his work from the "persons" participating the speech event.

Addressor: the speaker or writer who produces utterance.

Addressee: the intended hearer or reader.

Topic: what is being talked about.

Setting: physical relations of the interactants with respect to posture and gesture and facial expression.

Channel: how is contact between the participants in the event being maintained by speech, writing, signing, smoking signals, etc.

Code: what language, or dialect, or style of language is being used.

Message form: what form is intended—chat, debate, fairy tale, sonnet, etc.

Purpose: what the participants intended.

(Hymes, 1964, quoted in Brown and Yule, 1983: 38-39)

Hymes (1964) suggests that the analyst may choose from the contextual features, those necessary to characterize a particular communicative event. The more the analyst knows about the features of the context, the more likely he is to be able to predict what is likely to be said. Every utterance is uttered in a certain context. Contextual features influence a lot on the recognizing of the conversational implicature. We cannot derive conversational implicature independent of context. A same utterance used in different

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context, the meanings it conveys will be much different. Above all, contextual features influence a lot when we try to arrive at the implicature the utterance intends.

The contextual features suggested by Hymes enable us to give a partial account of what the undifferentiated term "context" may mean. This gives some account of what it might mean to "change the context". Fillmore (1977: 119) envisages this when he says "I ... find myself asking what the effect would have been if the context had been slightly different." We could reply that if you alter the condition specified by any of the coordinates, you alter the context.

By adopting the term "topic", Brown and Yule (1983: 75) develop it in term of a "topic framework". They suggest that those aspects of context which are directly reflected in the text, and which need to be called upon to interpret the text, are referred to as activated features of context. These activated features constitute the contextual framework within which the topic is constituted. Certain elements which constrain the topic can be determined before this discourse begins. These elements are part of the context of a speech event. In relating contextual features to a particular speech event; however, interests are particularly given only to those activated features of context pertaining to the fragment of discourse being studied.

They (Brown and Yule, 1983: 78) proceed to present a set of activated contextual features:

> Conversation between Participant R (50 years old, Scottish, male,...) and Participant S (20 years old, American, female,...) in location p (Stornoway,...) at time t (late 1970s,...)

This simple set of features, namely, participants (and their age, nationality, sex), location (or place), time, etc., are necessary for a discussion of topic required. These contextual features are, of course, derived from the physical context. They are external to the text. Within the domain of a particular discourse fragment are the people, places, entities, events, facts, etc.. If we say that characterizing the topic framework is a means of making explicit some of the assumptions a speaker can make about his hearer's knowledge, we are not talking about the total knowledge which the speaker believes he shares with his hearer.

2.5 Some Related Terms of Context

In the literature of the study of context, some terms concerning context are frequently used, but not always clearly explained. Such crucial terms as co-text, context of situation, contextualization, context-sensitivity, context effect, context free, context dependent, etc. can hardly be overlooked or neglected. The clear explanation of these terms will contribute to the study of context.

Co-text is relatively narrower in sense comparing with the wider notion of context. It generally refers to the linguistic context only. In other words, it refers to the linguistic units that occur immediately before and after the utterance.

Context of situation, which is also termed as extra-linguistic context, was first used by the social anthropologist Malinwski, and then deepened and further studied by his student Firth. It refers to the whole situation in which an utterance is made, that is, who is addressing whom, in what way, for what purpose, why, when, where, etc. regardless of the fact that some sentences and texts are complete themselves, most others depend greatly on the extra-linguistic situation for a correct interpretation. Therefore, context of situation can be an important factor in interpreting meaning.

Contextualization is the acting or process to put a linguistic form into a context in which it might be said. In this process, the interpreter tries to avoid the mistake of reifying or petrifying context; meanwhile context are actively used to contribute to clarity by being subject or negotiation, uptake or rejection, acceptance of uptake or renegotiation. Gumperz (1992: 4) argued that in most general terms, contextulaization comprises all activities by participants which make relevant, maintain, revise, cancel...any aspect of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence.

Both context-free and context-sensitive are used in generative theory. They contrast with one another. A context-free rule is one that is theoretically applicable in all contexts. It would be of the simple type "Rewrite X as Y", with no exclusions or variants. A context-free grammar is a form of phrase structure grammar in which each rule holds for a specific category regardless of context. Meanwhile context-sensitive rules are applicable only in certain specified context. A context-sensitive grammar is not subject to the restriction that defines a context-free grammar, and it is more complicated but more

accurate. Hence. a context sensitive language is formal and can be generated by a context-sensitive grammar.

Contextual effect is explained by Sperber and Wilson (1986) as kind of contextual implications, which is result of interaction between new and old information as premises in a synthetic implication. Apart from contextual implications, they (Sperber and Wilson. 1986) also include other types of possible contextual effects such as strengthening. contradictions resulting the erasure of premises from the context.

2.6 Summary

The study of context has attracted the attention and interests of philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, cognitive scientists, logicians etc. However, special interests are from the linguists who engage in the study of semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, functional linguistics, and cognitive linguistics. Among them, the study of context is closely related to pragmatics, whose definition involves the notion of context in. As a result, the study of context necessarily becomes a essential part of pragmatics itself. Cognitive linguistics also involves itself in the study of context, which is discussed in diverse terms of category, schema, script, grounding, etc.

A Cognitive Study of Context

3.1 Introduction

As is mentioned in chapter one that context is studied in psychology, cognitive science, and particularly, cognitive linguistics. The recent focus on the social cognition also helps explain how language is understood through the social context. And the recent trend is also in favor of a situated analysis in which cognitive competence is defined as a function of the context and content of knowledge structures. The study of cognitive science and artificial intelligence is on the rise and attracting more and more attention, and what is more important is that a great deal has been achieved.

Contextual factors operate at different hierarchical levels and have specifically identifiable effects through language, perception and attention which situate the individual in a physical and social reality. On this view, the perceptual field provides the public frame of reference within which socially shared acts of communication occur. Language, developmentally speaking, marks the attainment of cognitive level, and refers to the objects which exist in the space held in common by speaker and listener. The perceptual field may have priority in development and for referential communication, and it may be the first contextual determinant on which other contexts are founded. The interpretation of perception, thought, language and culture may provide an explanation for many of the phenomena of situated cognition.

The success of communication by a conversation depends on the speech and other joint activity to build a shared contextual framework which will support their mutual understanding. It is not that the context determines what is said, but that the participants of the conversational communication create through talk the very context on which they depend to support their conversation. They use their knowledge of context to generate appropriate reaction to the words, and in return, the appropriateness of their reaction then serve to define the context in which they interact. This means that "context" in this sense

is a mental phenomenon. But the discourse produced by the conversation, in which context is created and evoked, can be observed and analyzed because the participants in a conversation, useful contextual information may be drawn from shared past experience.

This could be one of the major explanations of the reasons why cognitive linguistics also finds its popularity among linguists and others language researchers. Cognitive linguistics "is an approach to language that is based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualized it" (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001: F36). What this "experience of world" is based on can definitely be considered as context. As a result, the notion of context is somewhat tangible, yet still cognitive, and important for cognitive linguistics to consider it as a mental phenomenon.

According to Ungerer & Schmid (2001: F39), cognitive linguistics today is represented by three approaches: the experiential view, the prominence view, and the attentional view of language. They focus on in their book the experiential aspects and the principles of prominence and attention allocation underlying language the experiential view seems to be superior to the logical view because it provides a much richer and more natural description of the meaning of language. Cognitive linguists believe that our shared experience of the world is stored in our everyday language and can thus be gleaned from the way we express our ideas. This shared experience is also stored in our mind and serves as some kind of context supporting our interpretation and understanding of language. Thereafter, it can be considered as cognitive context.

Although context has been studied from various perspectives other than cognitive linguistics, it will undoubtedly benefit a great deal if being put on a cognitive basis. This chapter will do this task by reviewing the cognitive study of context various theories and approaches such as the relevance theory, prototypical theory, figure and ground, frame and attention. Cognitive context is a dynamic and tangible. It goes far beyond the uttered language itself and may vary greatly in accordance to when and where who speaks to whom for what purposes.

3.2   Traditional Context and Cognitive Context

The notion of context has turned out to be rather a mixed blessing for linguists. On the one hand, we tend to resort to this notion whenever we run into difficulties with looking at isolated linguistic data. Often viewed as a panacea, context is invoked, for

example, to disambiguate ambiguities in semantics, to resolve anaphora and account for marked constructions in syntax, and to guide inferencing in text comprehension. On the other hand, attempts to spell out what context really is and to come up with an in-depth definition of this notion have been rare. The precise way in which context can solve the diversity of tasks assigned to it tends to remain open. Of course, there are linguistic schools that have recognized and to some extent remedied this deficit, for example the Prague School linguists, British Contextualism, and, in Malinowski's and Firth's wake, especially Halliday, who contributed to widening the notion of context and disseminating the distinction between linguistic, situational and cultural context.

3.2.1 Context in Language: A Traditional View

The traditional notion of context is an all-inclusive one. It includes the language knowledge, linguistic co-text, human's world knowledge, socio-cultural background of communication, time, place, participants of communication, and how the language is uttered, etc.. Pragmatics, which is widely accepted as the study of language in context, takes the above-mentioned contextual factors as the basic ground for pragmatic inference. Pragmatic inference itself is considered as a comprehensive referential process concerning human's knowledge together with the factual contextual factors. The shortcomings of traditional notion of context lies in that by applying it, the psychological state of both parties of language communication cannot be reflected. Therefore, pragmatic context alone will never be able to solve all the problems because it can hardly account for all aspects of language interpretation and understanding in communication.

Context has been studied and defined and classified in many ways by different scholars from different approaches with different background and various purposes in mind. From a purely linguistic view, the context has been regarded as the linguistic material preceding and following a word or sentence. Language philosophers, such as Searl (1979:125), have defined context as the set of background assumptions that are necessary for an utterance to be intelligible. In discourse-oriented approaches to language the context has been related to the situation in which an utterance is embedded. Malinowski, an anthropologist who firstly put forward the notion of "context of situation", extended the notion further to include the so-called "context of culture" and argued that both were necessary for a proper understanding of an utterance or text.

The view to context in traditional study of the notion of context is primarily a static one (Cai Yun: 1997). Many scholars regard context as something objectively existing, which includes the co-text (or linguistic context), physical surroundings and socio-cultural surroundings in which the speech events occur (or non-linguistic context). In analyzing the relationship between context and meaning, some of them (Bloomfield, 2002:158) argued that the meaning of a form for any one speaker is nothing more than a result of the situation; others (Firth, 1957) held that meaning is the combination of all the contextual features; still others (Searle, 1969) were of the view that in actual speech events context is something with which the clarification of linguistic implicature can be made. It is evident that the defect of all these views concerning context is that they have not taken the inner world, or psychological factors into consideration, and thus have not explain the dynamic cognitive process of how the communicators generate the context and apply it to the interpretation of meaning. Therefore, the discussion of cognitive context becomes necessary in the following section.

3.2.2 Context in Mind: A Cognitive View

Recently there has been a converging tendency in text linguistics, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics to think of context first and foremost as something that takes place in our mind, as a mental process or even activity. Nevertheless, this emerging consensus has so far not sparked off any noticeably more detailed models of context; especially empirical, data-based descriptions of the role and effects of context on different levels of language are still outstanding.

It is the aim of this section to contribute to a better understanding of context in general, and of context understood as a mental phenomenon in particular. The theoretical perspectives taken in the section range from systemic-functional linguistics to pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, the data come from various linguistic areas such as prosody, semantics, syntax and texts. It will provide a state-of-the-art account of the treatment of context in modern linguistics from an historical perspective.

With the arrival of pragmatics, discourse analysis and, more recently, cognitive linguistics on the linguistic scene, context has both attracted more attention and been forced to shoulder an even heavier burden. As a result, the need to understand its nature and its role in the system and use of language is now more pressing than ever. For

cognitive linguists like Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 46), it is important that the notion of context should be considered as a mental phenomenon. By giving the example sentence of "The boy was building a sandcastle with his bucket and his spade", they (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001: 46) illustrate their suggestion for a meaningful terminological distinction between the notion of context and situation. The former was simply put as cognitive representation or cognitive context, which in the example sentence is roughly characterized as "building a sandcastle". They define the latter as the interaction between objects in the real world. In the example sentence, it is made up of four objects: a boy, a sandcastle, a bucket and a spade, which interact through the activities of the boy.

From a cognitive point of view, context is something inside, lying in the mind. Xiong Xueliang (1996) argues that pragmatic inference does not necessarily rely on the concrete context because the related concrete context has been internalized and cognized by language users via their experience or mind, and the consequence of the internalization and cognition of contextual factors is the cognitive context in the mind. He finds it reasonable when he quoted his Dutch supervisor Van Dijk's words that "context is right in your mind."

3.3 Relevance Theory and Context

In 1986 Sperber and Wilson published their book *Relevance: communication and cognition.* In this book they presented a new approach to the study of human communication, namely, the principle of relevance, which, according to them, is grounded in a general view of human cognition. They argue that human cognitive processes are geared to achieving the greatest possible cognitive effect for the smallest possible processing effort; that the principle of relevance is essential to explaining human communication and is enough on its own to account for the interaction of linguistic meaning and contextual factors in utterance interpretation (Sperber and Wilson 1986: Preface).

What is to be noted is that the relevance theory made a great breakthrough in the study of context. In their relevance theory, a context is considered as "a psychological construct", i.e. "a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world". Sperber and Wilson (1986: 15) claimed that it is the assumptions, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance. It is unquestionable that

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psychological construct is characterized by its variability with the progress of communication. In the course of communicating with each other, the participants try to obtain from each new item of information as great a contextual effect as possible for as small as possible a processing effort. So Sperber and Wilson concluded that context is *not given but chosen*, and "the selection of a particular context is determined by the search for relevance" (ibid., 1986: 141). They also stated, "it is relevance which is treated as given, and context which is treated as a variable" (ibid., 1986: 142). Therefore, selection of an appropriate set of contextual assumptions is crucial to the understanding of an utterance.

3.3.1 Cognitive Context: Given or Chosen

Generally speaking, two kinds of views are held concerning whether the context is determined before the utterance interpretation process or is chosen with the process. As far as pragmatic context is concerned, it might be given. Linguistic context, or co-text, for example, is given when a discourse is uttered or written. Context of situation is also the case when the place, time, participants, etc. of communication are set by communication itself. However, when cognitive context is taken into consideration, it is quite another story. According to the relevance theory, cognitive context is not determined before the interpretation and understanding of the utterance or discourse. It is a consequence of the continuous choosing within the process of utterance interpretation.

3.3.1.1 A Given Context

In much of the literature, it is explicitly or implicitly assumed that the context for the comprehension of a given utterance is not a matter of choice; at any given point in a verbal exchange, the context is seen as uniquely determined, as given. Moreover, it is generally assumed that the context is determined in advance of the comprehension process. The assumption explicitly expressed by an utterance is seen as combining with a context present in the hearer's mind at the start of the act of utterance.

To account for whether context is given or chosen, Sperber and Wilson (1986: 132-136) presented five hypotheses. Each will be quoted and then illustrated by giving some examples. These hypotheses generally support the view that context is given, but undoubtedly they are helpful in accounting for the explanation of cognitive context.

The simplest version of this view is the hypothesis that the context for the

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comprehension of a given utterance is the set of assumptions explicitly expressed by preceding utterances in the same dialogue or discourse. This hypothesis would be seem to be borne out by the following short dialogue between a husband and his wife:

(2) (a) Husband: I am busy writing.

   (b) Wife: If you are busy, I'll go to fetch the kid.

This situation can easily be imagined for those nuclear families in which the couples are working while the kids are sending to the kindergarten and must be taken back at a fixed time. In this situation, Wife's answer is relevant. Husband assumes that in this context he has explicitly expressed himself and his wife will certainly comprehend. The assumption expressed by Wife will contextually imply that:

(3) Wife will go to fetch the kid.

The second hypothesis: the context for comprehension contains not only all the assumptions explicitly expressed by preceding utterances in the discourse, but also all the implicatures of these utterances. Now consider the second version of the dialogue:

(4) (a) Husband: I am busy writing.

   (b) Wife: I'll go to fetch the kid.

In this version, Wife's answer has no contextual effect whatsoever in such a context. It is not relevant and the two answers of Wife must be treated differently. If what Husband remarked was relevant, it would implicate something like (5):

(5) Husband wants Wife to go to fetch the kid.

With this as part of the context, both (2b) and (4b) would contextually imply (6):

(6) Wife will do what Husband wants her to.

In this case, both answers are relevant in this context, and relevant in the same ways.

The third hypothesis claims that the context for comprehension consists not only of assumptions expressed or implicated by preceding utterances, but also of encyclopedic entries attached to any concepts used in these assumptions. The following is the third

version of the dialogue:

(7) (a) Husband: I am busy writing.

(b) Wife: It's 4:50. I'll go to the kindergarten.

Wife's answer here is still relevant. But neither if the hypotheses mentioned above can account for it, because there are no context effects in a context consisting of the assumptions previously expressed explicitly or inexplicitly. To support the relevance of (7b), the context used by the hearer must include the premise that:

(8) Parents are supposed to fetch their children from the kindergarten at 5.

With (8) added to the context, contextual implication (9) will be got from (7b):

(9) Wife will go to fetch the kid.

Then from (9) and (5) (Husband wants Wife to fetch the kid), contextual implication (6) (Wife will do what Husband wants her to) can be derived, just as it was derivable, in a more restricted context, from (2b) and (4b).

The fourth hypothesis: the context for the comprehension of a given utterance consists of the assumptions expressed and implicated by preceding utterances, plus the encyclopedic entries attached to any concept used in any of these assumptions, plus the encyclopedic entries attached to any concept used in the new utterance. On this hypothesis context is not fixed in advance of the comprehension process. It implies that one of the preliminary stages of comprehension consists in identifying the concepts used in the new utterance and adding their encyclopedic entries to the context. However, there is still no question of a choice of contexts. Consider the fourth version of the dialogue:

(10) (a) Husband: I am busy writing.

(b) Wife: it's 4:50. I'll take a taxi to the kindergarten.

Generally there is not much difference between the relevance of Wife's fourth answer (10b) and her third one (7b). However, the context in which (10b) in interpreted contains an assumption such as (11):

(11) It takes 20 minutes to walk while 5 minutes to take a taxi to kindergarten.

With (10) in the context, the assumption explicitly expressed by Wife's third answer(7b) (It's 4:50. I'll go to the kindergarten) is contextually implied by her fourth answer(10b), which explains the similarity in relevance of (7b) and (10b). However, assumption (10) is a kind of encyclopedic entry, or common knowledge shared by the couple. The concept of "taking a taxi" is introduced for the first time by Wife's answer, which is not compatible with the third hypothesis. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is formulated to accommodate the fourth version of the dialogue, and in this case, (11) is part of the context in which Wife's answer (7b) is interpreted and the relevance of her answer is thus explained.

The fifth hypothesis: the context for the comprehension of a utterance consists of the assumptions expressed and implicated by preceding utterances, plus the encyclopedic entries attached to any concept used in these assumptions and in the utterance itself, plus the encyclopedic entries attached to any concepts used in the assumptions contained in the encyclopedic entries already added to the context. The following is the fifth version of the dialogue:

(12) (a) Husband: I am busy writing.

(b) Wife: It's 4:50. I'll be in the kindergarten in five minutes.

To build the relevance of Wife's answer (12b), the hearer must first turn to the encyclopedic entry or personal experience that:

(13) Taking a taxi is the only means to get to the kindergarten in 5 minutes since it would take 20 minutes to walk and the kid is supposed to be fetched before 5.

But the statement "I'll be in the kindergarten in five minutes" occurs for the first time, so (11) is not part of the context for the interpretation of (12b). Again, the fifth hypothesis is needed to account for Wife's answer (12b), to make (13) become part of the context in Wife's fifth answer, and to explain the relevance of this answer.

With the fourth hypothesis, one layer of encyclopedic entries was added to the context, while with the fifth one, two layers are added. Moreover, it is very likely that examples are found to show two layers are not enough, and thus more layers of encyclopedic information might be needed and then added to the context. As a result, the

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context would be shown to consist of the whole of encyclopedic memory. If the context includes the whole of the hearer's encyclopedic knowledge, any new information the speaker can express will be relevant because any new information will have some contextual effects in such an enormous context. If there were such an enormous context, a corresponding effort would be needed to achieve these effects.

It is known that the formation of hypothesis is a matter of creative imagination. By viewing the above five hypotheses, the view that context in which a given assumption is to be interpreted is uniquely determined is widely held. Context in this case is formed either before the comprehension process gets under way, or as a preliminary stage in this process. That the context is uniquely determined may leads to a limitless enlarging of context and eventually will lead to absurdities. Then, the question is how to solve this tendency. Because nothing in the nature of context and comprehension can exclude the possibility that context formation is open to choices and revisions throughout the comprehension process, a way out will be found in the next section.

3.3.1.2 A Choice of Context

In the above section, the view that context is previously determined has been discussed and proved to be somewhat problematic. Therefore, it becomes necessary to search another possibility that the process of utterance interpretation is the process of constructing and choosing a proper context. How does the listener construct and choose a proper context? What determines the selection of a particular context out of a range of conceivable contextual assumptions? Sperber and Wilson point out that, "the selection of a particular context is determined by the search for relevance" (1986: 141).

According to the way of traditional pragmatics, the context is first determined, then, relevance is assessed in light of the predetermined context. However, Sperber and Wilson (1986: 113-114) consider that such model of comprehension is quite implausible because communicators not only assess the relevance of the newly-presented information but also try to obtain from the newly-presented information as great a contextual effect as possible within as short a period of time and for as small a processing effort as possible. They (Sperber and Wilson: 1986: 113-114) propose a different model accordingly: first, relevance is determined, otherwise, it will be unnecessary to process an utterance; and then they try to select a context, which justifies the existence of relevance.

Sperber and Wilson (1986: 137-138) assume that a crucial step in the processing of

new information, verbally communicated in formation in particular, is to combine it with an adequately selected set of background assumptions, which constitutes the context in the memory of the deductive device. For each item of new information, many different sets of assumptions from diverse sources (long-term memory, short-term memory, perception) might be selected as context. However, not any arbitrary subset of the total set of assumptions available to the organism might become a context. The organization of the individual's encyclopedic memory, and the mental activity in which he is engaged, limit the class of potential contexts from which an actual context can be chosen at any given time.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986: 140-141), we know that the interpretation of the previous utterance constitutes an immediately given context in which both the speaker and the hearer process the next turn of communication. In order to construct an appropriate context, communicators can extend this immediately given context in three different directions: first, by going back in time and adding to it assumptions used or derived in previous deductive processes; second, by adding to it the encyclopedic entries (or possibly smaller chunks of encyclopedic information, taken from these entries) of concepts already present either in the context or in the assumption being processed; and third, by adding to it information about the immediately observable environment. The following is a dialogue between the wife and the husband which will contribute to illustrate this point:

WI: What would you like to have for dinner? (Holding a cup of coffee and a magazine)
HI: How about you?
W2:   I would prefer a big dinner, what do you think? (Thumbing through the magazine)
H2:   I don't know. I'm too tired.
W3:   I'm also TIRED, but I'm ravenous. (Stopping thumbing and looking up)
H3:   Let's go out, OK? When will you be ready?
W4:   Read this article about a TV show we watched yesterday (Smiling)

(He Zhiran, 1997)

In this dialogue it is easy to understand the first and second rounds of the exchange. The husband's comprehension of W3 depended on the information provided in W2 that she would prefer a big dinner. At the same time, the wife's behavior — stopping thumbing through the magazine and looking up at her husband, suggests that the wife

was expecting the exchange would develop in a direction as she hoped. The husband's encyclopedic knowledge can cause him to realize the fact that when somebody is tired, he must want to relax and that when somebody is hungry, he must want to have a big dinner. Thus, the context is constructed, which contributes to the understanding of W3. But for W4, it is really more difficult to extend the context. The husband must first determine the existence of relevance, because it seems that the wife's answer is irrelevant to her husband's question, "When will you be ready?" but actually it is relevant. The wife did not know the exact time she needs to get ready. Therefore, she estimated that the time spent in reading that article was the approximate time required. Just like in interpreting W3, first, the husband determined that W4 is relevant to the exchange, and then constructed a particular context by taking the following factors into consideration: (a) the preceding text—going out for dinner; (b) the information observed from the physical environment: smiling means she agreed with her husband; (c) encyclopedic knowledge: it will not take too much time to read an article about a TV show. Thus, the husband could draw the conclusion, that her wife would be ready quite soon.

It can be argued that the extension of contextual assumptions cannot be infinite. If the case is true, communication will frequently break off because the communicator will expend too much time and more efforts in comprehending the utterance. What the communicator does is to choose the minimal set of contextual assumptions that make the utterance worth being processed and stop there properly. He is capable of determining relevance in a very short period of time because the human beings possess the ability to quickly determine on relevant contextual assumptions.

To conclude, the context is not given before the relevance is assessed. People in communication hope that their assumptions are relevant, and thus they make their efforts to choose a context which is going to support and realize the hope. This context chosen is supposed to maximize the relevance of any information being processed. The relevance, especially in verbal comprehension, is considered as given, while context is treated as variable, or chosen.

3.3.2 Contextual Effects and Relevance

The notion of contextual effect is essential to a description of the comprehension process. It helps describe the two properties of utterance comprehension: first,

comprehension involves the joint processing of a set of assumptions; second, in that set some assumptions stand out as newly presented information being processed in the context of information that has itself been previously processed.

The notion of context effect is also essential to a characterization of relevance. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 122) define relevance as "An assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in the context". They argue that having contextual effects is a necessary condition for relevance, and that other things being equal, the greater the contextual effects are, the greater the relevance is. They (1986: 132) proceed to suggest that a variety of contextual effects is yielded by the combining of new assumptions processed by the context and the individual's old assumptions. It is these assumptions, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance. An individual forms an assumption in the expectation that he will be able to combine it with existing assumptions to derive a new assumption, which will yield what Sperber and Wilson call a "contextual effect".

Other things being equal, the greater the cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater its relevance. However, the processing of the input, and the derivation of these effects, involves some mental effort. Other things being equal, the smaller the processing effort required, the greater the relevance:

(a) The greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance;

(b) The smaller the processing effort, the greater the relevance.

When an item of information has a contextual effect in a given context, Sperber and Wilson say it is "relevant" in that context. In each case establishing the relevance of a new assumption involves inference, and it involves the interaction of existing assumptions with new assumptions. The relevance of an assumption depends on the context in which it is processed. Processing information yields rewards (improvements to one's representation of world) only at a cost. Deriving contextual effects takes time and effort, and the more time and effort are expended, the less relevant the information will seem to be, and in processing information, people try to balance costs and rewards—they automatically process each new item of information in a context where it yields a maximal contextual effect for a minimal cost in processing.

To modify and improve a context is to have some effect on that context. But not any modification will do and not all addition of new information to the old information may

cause an improvement, not to mention the addition of new information which is totally unrelated to the old information. Here the contextual effect is the result of interaction between the new and old information. A good case in point is the contextual implications, which are taken as contextual effects, because they result from an important interaction between the new and old information as promises in a synthetic implication. Yet there should be two more types of contextual effect: first, new information may provide further evidence for, and therefore strengthen, old assumptions; second, new information may provide evidence against, and perhaps lead to the abandonment of, old assumptions. These two types of contextual effect have their corresponding two aspects of deduction, because assumptions placed in the memory of the deductive device come with varying degrees of strength, and that a deduction may result in contradiction.

Contextual effects are achieved only when the new assumption displaces an assumption already present in the in the context, with subsequent weakening or erasure of other contextual assumptions linked to it by relations of analytic or synthetic implication. In verbal communication, for example, the hearer is generally led to accept an assumption as true or possibly true on the basis of a guarantee given by the speaker. The hearer is supposed to fulfill his task by finding out which of the assumption the speaker made are guaranteed as true. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 116) hypothesized that "the hearer is guided by the principle of relevance in carrying out this task". The speaker intends to convey some kind of information the hearer expects, when processed in the context he expected it to be contextualized in, to be relevant: that is, to have a substantial effect, at a lower processing cost.

Sperber and Wilson (1986: 115-117) described and surveyed various types of possible contextual effects such as contextual implications, strengthening, and contradiction resulting in the erasure of promises from the context. They then generalize that if all a contextualization does is add all, some or none of the new information to the context without otherwise altering the context at all, then this contextualization has no contextual effect. Otherwise, there is some contextual effect, in the form of an erasure of some assumptions from the context, a modification of the strength of some assumptions in the context, or the derivation of contextual implications.

However, there are cases in which an assumption may lack contextual effects. and be irrelevant, in a context. If you take a particular Set of assumptions {C} and add to it

some arbitrarily chosen assumption *P*, there is little reason to expect *P* to be relevant at all in the context {C}, or to have any contextual effect in it either. For instance, take {C} to be the set of assumptions you have in mind while reading this sentence. In the first place, illustrated by (1):

(14) October 10, 1936 was a sunny day in Xi'an.

The assumption explicitly expressed by (14) is not likely to have any contextual effect in{C}, or to be relevant, (in any sense) in {C}. It is intuitively obvious that the assumption expressed by (14) is irrelevant in {C}. This can be accounted for by pointing out that (14) has no contextual effect in {C}: there is no assumption in the context with which (14) might combine to yield contextual implications; nor does if affect the strength of any assumption already present in the context. The assumption may contribute new information, but this. Information does not connect up with any information present in the context.

The second way in which an assumption may lack contextual effects is illustrated by (15) that the assumption is already present in the context and its strength is unaffected by the newly presented information; this newly presented information is therefore entirely uninformative and irrelevant.

(15) You are now typing a letter.

The assumption explicitly expressed by (15) is likely to be irrelevant in the context of whatever assumptions you had in mind immediately before reading it; this can again be accounted for by pointing out that it has no contextual effect in that context. You were presumably already aware of the fact that you were typing a letter, so that any implications which (15) would have had in that context would, already have been computed. Moreover, you presumably held this assumption as certain, so that its strength could not be increased.

In the third type of case, illustrated by (16), the assumption is inconsistent with the context and is too weak to upset it; processing the assumption thus leaves the context unchanged. To take a third example, which is irrelevant for different reasons still, suppose we were now to tell you,

(16) You are quite alone.

The assumption explicitly expressed by (16) is inconsistent with a number of unshakable assumptions which you currently have in mind. You are presumably aware not only of the fact that you are now typing a letter, but also of the fact that this is an activity which is incompatible with being quite alone. Since, however much you trust us, on this question you would rightly trust yourself more, the contradiction which results when the assumption expressed by (16) is added to the present context would lead to the erasure of (16), as described in the last chapter. In other words, (16) would have no contextual effect in the present context, and this is why it is intuitively felt to be irrelevant.

It should be stressed that in all these examples it is only the assumption explicitly expressed by the utterance that lacks contextual effects and is irrelevant: the fact that someone chooses to express an irrelevant assumption may itself be highly relevant. For instance, it may be a way of making manifest a desire to change the subject, and this desire may well be relevant. Or, to take an actual example, the irrelevant assumptions (14)—(16) which have been expressed in an attempt to make what is supposed to be relevant remarks. Relevance may be achieved by expressing irrelevant assumptions, as long as this expressive behavior is itself relevant.

On the basis of these examples, the claim can be made that an assumption which has no contextual effect in a given context is irrelevant in that context. In other words, having some contextual effect in a context might be not only a necessary condition for relevance but also a sufficient one.

3.4 Cognitive Context: Internal World in Communication

Constituents of the world can be generalized, systematized and stored in an individual's memory as his or her own knowledge if he or she tries to understand the world, and so can linguistic characteristics used in specific situations and physically contextual elements. Therefore, the hearer will naturally think of the specific situations concerned once some particular linguistic expressions associated with them are mentioned; whereas, the speaker will naturally think of the linguistic expressions involved in specific situations. The notion of cognitive context explains the reason why

people can understand an utterance where no physically contextual elements are available.
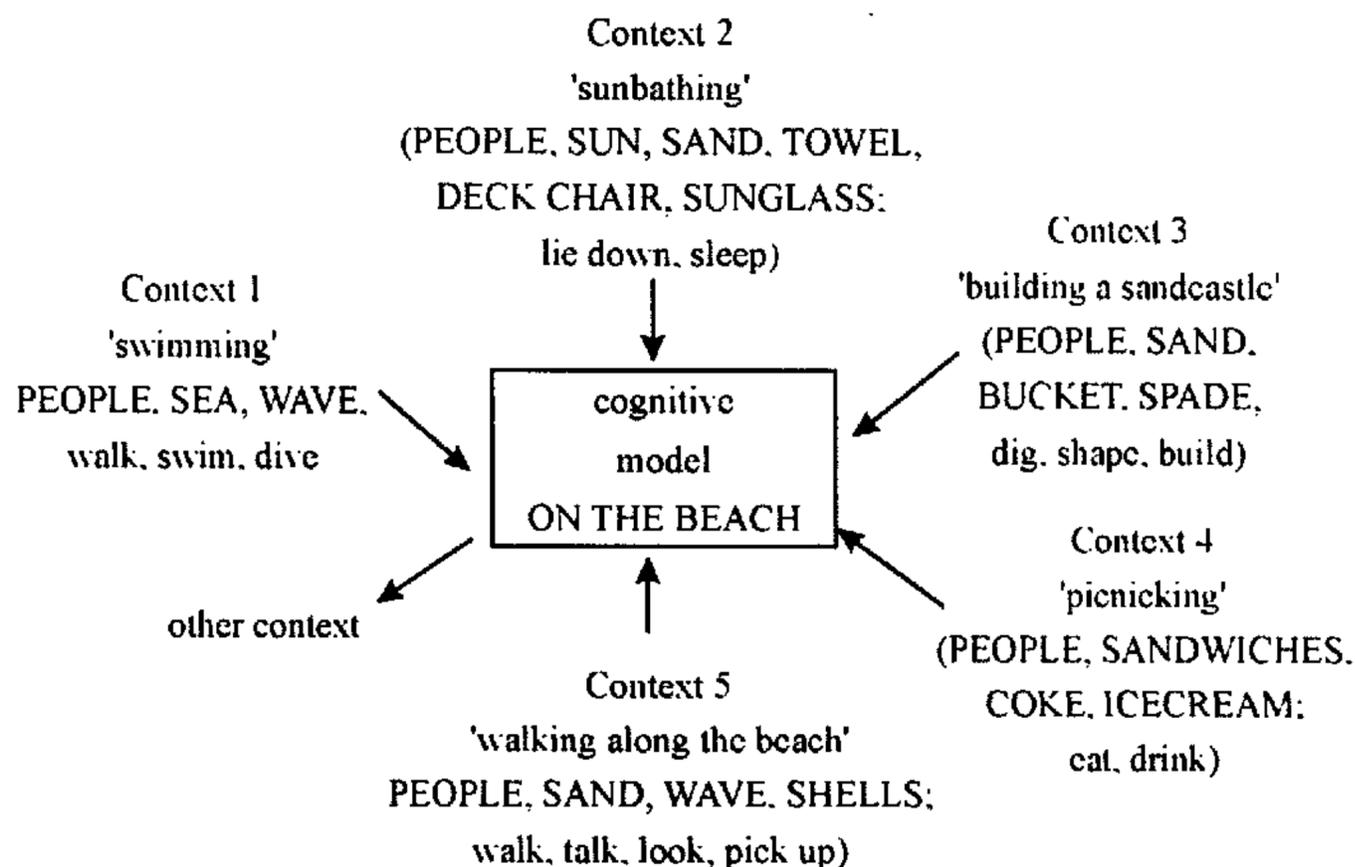
According to the conception and formation of cognitive context, it is known that it comprises *immediate occasions, linguistic contexts, and the representation of background* knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge and social psychology, especially it stresses the representation of knowledge, that is, it stresses the role that background knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge played in utterance interpretation. In this section the discussion will be focused on some aspects that are related to the cognitive context. These aspects may include such couplet notions as the cognitive model and cultural model, category and prototype, domains and frames, the knowledge script and psychological schema.

3.4.1 Cognitive Model and Cultural Model

Cognitive linguists consider the notion of context as a mental phenomenon and define cognitive context as a cognitive representation of the interaction between cognitive categories (or mental concepts). Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47) argue that the cognitive context does not remain an isolated mental experience, but is immediately associated in at least two ways with related knowledge stored in long-term memory. On the one hand, context-specific knowledge about the categories involved is retrieved. On the other hand, the currently active context calls up other contexts from long-term memory that is somehow related to it. We have experienced and then stored a great many interrelated contexts which we come across in everyday life. Cognitive context depend not only on the immediate context which they are embedded, but also on the whole bundle of contexts that are associated with it. Therefore, it would be quite useful to have a term to cover all the stored cognitive representation that belongs to a certain field. The knowledge is termed as "cognitive model" by Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47). In this *section cognitive model will be discussed with another term, cultural model, for together* with which it is interrelated and interacted. And other related terms concerning cognitive context like "frame" or "script" will be discussed in section 3.4.4.

3.4.1.1 Cognitive Model

Cognitive model, as the sum of the experienced and stored mental context for a certain field by an individual, covers the range of immediate context and associated context. This can be showed in Figure 1:

Context 2
'sunbathing'
(PEOPLE. SUN, SAND. TOWEL,
DECK CHAIR, SUNGLASS:
lie down. sleep)

Context 1
'swimming'
PEOPLE. SEA, WAVE.
walk, swim. dive

Context 3
'building a sandcastle'
(PEOPLE. SAND.
BUCKET. SPADE,
dig. shape. build)

cognitive
model
ON THE BEACH

other context

Context 4
'picnicking'
(PEOPLE, SANDWICHES.
COKE. ICECREAM:
cat. drink)

Context 5
'walking along the beach'
PEOPLE, SAND, WAVE. SHELLS:
walk. talk. look, pick up)

Figure 1   Schematic illustration of the cognitive model ON THE BEACH

(the major categories and the way they interact are indicated in brackets)

Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 48)

This figure shows that the context "building a sandcastle" is likely to be put in one of the two models, namely ON THE BEACH and IN THE SANDPIT. According to Ungerer and Schmid (2001), there are two important properties of cognitive models in this example. On the one hand, the cognitive models are basically open-ended. As a result, it is very difficult to describe the cognitive model of a domain and that descriptions of cognitive models are never exhaustive, but always highly selective. This incompleteness is a typical property of cognitive models, which is indicated by the reference to "other contexts" in Figure 1. On the other hand, just as the cognitive models are made up of a series of contexts, cognitive models themselves are not isolated but interrelated. And the cognitive models have a tendency to build networks, because recent theories of the mind which lay emphasis on so-called "connectionist" argue that cognitive models tend to combine and build networks. Thus a network consists of various cognitive models that are interrelated through multiple connections.

However, there might be a third property that cognitive models are omnipresent. They are everywhere because in every act of categorization we are referring to one or several cognitive models that we have stored in our mind. Even when we are in a totally unfamiliar situation or come across an unknown object, we are able to form a cognitive

model by calling up a similar experience. Just as cognitive models are omnipresent, their influence can never be avoided and they are always there ready to offer help. Even in some rather artificial situation of goodness-of-example ratings, the cognitive model of the field that the subjects are being asked to rate is at work. Therefore, it might be improper to argue that there are such experiments occurring in an uncontextualized vacuum, and it would also be unthinkable to have uncontextualized language or language without cognitive models.

3.4.1.2 Cultural Model

Cultural model is defined as "a view of cognitive models highlighting the fact that they are inter-subjectively shared by the members of a society or social group"(Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 55). Because cognitive models represent a cognitive, basically psychological view of the stored knowledge about a certain field, and the psychological states of people are always individual and thus private, descriptions of such cognitive models necessarily involve a considerable degree of idealization. In other words, descriptions of cognitive models are based on the assumption that many people have roughly the same basic knowledge about things like sandcastles and beaches.

Cognitive models are of course not universal, but depend on the culture in which a person grows up and lives. The culture provides the background for all the situations that we have to experience in order to be able to form a cognitive model. A Chinese and an Englishman may not have formed a common cognitive model of dragon simply because it is not part of the culture of his own country. So, cognitive models for particular domains ultimately depend on so-called cultural models. In reverse, cultural models can be seen as cognitive models that are shared by people belonging to a social group or subgroup.

Cognitive models and cultural models are thus just like two sides of the same coin. On the side of cognitive model, the psychological nature of these cognitive entities stressed and inter-individual differences are allowed. On the other side of cultural model, the uniting aspect of its being collectively shared by many people is emphasized. Although the former are related to cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics while the latter belongs to sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics, researchers in all of these fields should be, and usually are, aware of both dimensions of their object of study.

Our earlier reference to Malinowski's "context of culture" has already shown that to

include cultural aspects in linguistic considerations is not really a recent invention. Yet although the cultural background has long been part and parcel of investigations in sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics, only few semanticists have bothered to deal with such matters. In the following we will discuss two examples of categories where cultural models are highly relevant for a proper understanding of cognitive categories and their structure.

One example is still the above mentioned imagined animal "dragon". Dragon in Eastern, particularly Chinese cultural context is primarily favorable and thus related to royalty, vigor, and auspiciousness. What is more, the whole Chinese nation may regard themselves as the offspring of dragon. While dragon in the western cultural context is taken as something evil and unfavorable. The second example is the cognitive concepts of breakfast in different areas of China. In rural areas of northern China, Shanxi Province, for example, people think of steamed bun, fried pie, and millet gruel as soon as people there are asked what have for breakfast. While in Southern China, the county of Mengzi in the south of Yunnan Province, for example, the first and the most popular choice for breakfast would be a huge bowl of Cross-Bridge Rice Noodle, which has long been being a well-known traditional flavor there and even in Yunnan Province as well.

What these examples illustrate is that cultural models are not static but changing that the cultural models are held by the majority of the people. Cultural models are considered to be based on the collective experience of a society or social group. To get through everyday life, laypersons do not need scientifically correct models, but functionally effective ones. This means that as long as a model is in line with what we perceive and enables us to make functionally correct predictions, it can have widespread currency although it may be technically inaccurate. To conclude, contextual models are a series of cognitive cultural contexts shared by a social group or sub-social group.

3.4.2 Prototype and Category

It is known that cognitive categories are made up of prototypes and periphery, of good examples and bad ones. Cognitive categories are labeled by words. Cognitive context is the mental representation of the interaction of related lexical categories. Good examples are helpful in identifying the categories and interpreting the words within them. Among the good examples, prototype is defined as the "best example of a category",

"salient examples", "clearest cases of category membership", "most representative of things included in a class", or "central and typical members" (see Rosch 1978; Lakoff 1986; Brown 1990; Tversky 1990, quoted in Ungerer and Schmid 2001). But this is not the conception of prototype that cognitive linguists advocate. From a cognitive view of categories, prototype can be defined as a mental representation, as some sort of cognitive reference point.

However, the prototype of a category may change when the concept of context is taken into consideration. Ungerer and Schmid (2001) argue that prototypes are not after all the fixed reference points for cognitive categories but that they are liable to keep shifting as the context changes. A series of contexts which share some common features concerning a certain topic, together they will constitute what is known as cognitive models. Therefore it is worthwhile to discuss prototypes together with context, which is never neglected in the research of the meaning of language.

3.4.2.1 Prototype, Category and Prototypicality

The notion of prototype was firstly introduced in the work by Eleanor Rosch and her associates on human categorization. According to her early definition, prototypes are "the clearest cases of category membership defined operationally by people's judgments of goodness of membership in the category" (Rosch 1978). Since the early 1980s, a number of monographs and collective volumes, in which prototype theory and its cognitive extensions play a major role, have witnessed a steadily growing success in linguistics.

Considering the prototype as an abstract entity or a set of properties, rather than as a concrete instance or a specific individual. Different members of the category share different sets of properties. The prototypical instance, "robin" in the BIRD category, for example, share all the available features in the category, while less central instances, such as "ostrich", share only some of the features. Members of a category therefore do not necessarily need to share the same set of properties in order to be considered legitimate members.

The reason the concept of category or categorization are important for linguistics is that it underlies the use of words and the use of language of language in general. Cognitive processes are undoubtedly involved in the producing and understanding of human language. Categorization, the mental process of classification of our world experiences, is destined to occur in our mind. The products resulting from this are

cognitive categories, which can be understood as mental concepts stored in our mind. These mental concepts are signaled by the words of a language and they might be considered as equivalent with the meaning of these words.

It is accepted that cognitive categories are composed of prototype, good examples and bad examples, and they have fuzzy boundaries. Labov's tests of "cup" and "mug" in 1973 can be taken as a notable experimental proof of the fuzziness of category boundaries. Ungerer and Schmid (2001) relate Labov's findings to what has emerged about the nature of cognitive categories in four sections:

(1) Categories do not represent arbitrary divisions of the phenomena of the world, but should be seen as based on the cognitive capacities of the human mind.

(2) Cognitive categories of colors, shapes, but also of organisms and concrete objects, are anchored in conceptually salient prototypes, which play a crucial part in the formation of categories.

(3) The boundaries of cognitive categories are fuzzy, i.e. neighboring categories are not separated by rigid boundaries, but merge into each other.

(4) Between prototype and boundaries, cognitive categories contain members which can be rated on a typicality scale ranging from good to bad examples.

This suggests that the internal structure of categories is very complex and deserves a more detailed examination. Cognitive linguistics is concerned with both the exploration of individual categories and the relationship between the categories and the words.

Taylor (1995) argued that there are two ways in which to understand the term prototype. It can be applied to the central member, or perhaps to the cluster of central members, of a category. Thus one could refer to a particular artefact as the prototype of "cup". Alternatively, the prototype can be understood as a schematic representation of the conceptual core of a category. As a result, it is not that a particular entity is the prototype, but that it instantiates the prototype. Prototypical members of cognitive categories have the largest number of attributes in common with other members of the category and the smallest number of attributes which also occur with members of neighboring categories. Marginal category members (or bad examples) share only a small number of attributes with other members of the category, but have several attributes which belong to other categories. This is another proof of the fuzziness of category boundaries.

As for prototypicality, we mean the goodness of membership in the prototypical

categories. Prototypicality has four characteristics (Li Fuyin 1999):

(1) Prototypical categories exhibit degrees of typicality; not every member is equally representative for category.

(2) Prototypical categories exhibit a family resemblance structure, or more generally, their semantic structure takes the form for a radical set of clustered and overlapping readings.

(3) Prototypical categories are blurred at the edges.

(4) Prototypical categories cannot be defined by means of a single set of criteria (necessary and sufficient) attributes.

For each of the four characteristics, a reference to early prototypes-theoretical studies (Rosch 1978) may be invoked to illustrate the points at issue. For example, the experimental results of the category "fruit" exemplify characteristic (1): for American subjects, oranges and apples and bananas are the most typical fruits, while pineapples and watermelons receive low typicality ratings.

3.4.2.2 The Context-dependence of Prototypes

Prototypes vary and change in different context, or cognitive situations. Putting in another words, prototypes depend on context. The prototype of the category of birds in the western countries is usually taken as a robin, in rural areas of China it will be a sparrow, while on some islands it might be a seagull. Take Labov's cups and mugs for another example. Besides the material and handle dimension, context dimension is also involved in interpreting the attributes. Prototypes differ in neutral, coffee, food and flower contexts.

Ungerer and Schmid (2001) offer an example of 'dog', which is a good support to the context-dependence of prototype. They presented four sentences:

(1) The hunter took his gun, left the lodge and called his dog.

(2) Right from the start of the race the dogs began chasing the rabbit.

(3) She took her dog to the salon to have its curls reset.

(4) The policemen lined up with dogs to face the rioters.

Here the four sentences are four kinds of contexts, in which the meaning of "dog" or "dogs" differs from one another. In hunting context (1), the dog is likely to be some kind of retriever; in the dog racing context (2), it would be a greyhound; in context (3) and (4), one can imagine a poodle and an Alsatian respectively. In the category of dog the

prototype is our first choice. These examples indicate that, depending on the context, the prototype shifts.

However, in some cases the category structure of the context-dependent category is much thinner than of the non-contextualized category. The numbers of the members of non-contextualized category is much more than the most typical member in the context, or the context-dependent category. Non-cotextualized category members are the peripheral members of the context-dependent category. The main point is that the context not only determines the choice of the category prototype, but also leads to an adjustment of the position of other category members.

When we explain the typicality structure of a category in terms of weighted attributes, context seems to have a two fold effect (Ungerer and Schmid 2001:45): first, the context can change the weight of attributes that seem to be relevant for a certain category; second, the context can emphasize attributes that are not prominent and even introduce new attributes which would not be mentioned at all in non-contextualized attribute-listing experiments. The examples of "dog" and "bird" can explain this twofold effect on prototype category. As a result, the previously peripheral examples are provided with large amount of heavily weighted attributes and thus turned into good examples or even prototypes, while the former well-established good examples are reduced to the less important members.

3.4.2.3 Prototypical Meaning in Context

Just as prototypes change in different contexts, lexical meaning and syntactic meaning also change with the variation of context. It is important to define the relationship between lexical meaning and contextual components. This relationship is often approached from the point of view of how context influences some hypothetical and pre-existing non-contextual lexical meaning. There might be some underlying distinction between context-free meanings and context-bound meanings. It is generally the case that meanings are never completely context-free but are always indexed to some standard context of reference.

Since context can be taken as something that in some way or other modifies word meanings, it can also be seen as a selector of lexical features, because it activates some of the words while leaving others in the background. For example, the word "book" will semantically includes the following features: the perceivable features such as "physical

solid object, typical shape, made of paper, containing a written text, ...": the functional features of "made to read, containing knowledge, passing information, ...". Depending on the phrasal context in which the word "book" is inserted, only some of these features will be activated. In the following sentences:

1) John read the book;

2) John burnt the book;

3) John threw the book against the window in order to break it.

Each of the sentences focuses on a different feature of the meaning of "book": 1) the property of containing information that can be read, 2) the property of being made of paper which can be burnt, and 3) the property of its solidity as a physical object. The syntactic context thus select the prototypical feature of the meaning, foregrounds some specific component of the semantic representation while leaving the others the marginal feature in the background.

While the traditional mode of analysis views context as selecting the relevant features and making the use of any given word appropriate, or inappropriate, in the context, the cognitive approach holds the view that it is not the existence of a given context that makes the use of the word possible, but the use of word that initiates a mental process in the listener which seeks to construct a context in which its present use would be the most appropriate. When the sentence "The chair is comfortable." is uttered, the hearer tries to find something in the situation in which the word "chair" can be applied. As if it is the words that force us to intimate a search process to find conditions that might possibly justify the lexical choice made by our interlocutor. In this way words operate as devices that initiate the construal of some possible context for their interpretation.

3.4.3 Domain and Frame

The requirement that the notion of "context" should be considered a mental phenomenon is stressed by Langacker, who defined his central notion of "domain" as "a context for the characterization of a semantic unit" (Langacker, 1987: 147). The term "frame", which is introduced into linguistics by Fillmore, is supposed to be a related term to cognitive context, or "all the stored cognitive representation that belong to a certain field" (Ungerer and Schmid 2001: 47).

3.4.3.1 Domain

Most linguistic expressions are based on the perception of objects or situations in the real world from a cognitive linguistic point of view. This cognitive intake of objects or situation consists of a huge number of diverse stimuli. Langacker takes a rather abstract view that each stimulus is evaluated with respect to what he calls domains. According to him (Langacker, 1987a: 147), domains are "contexts for the characterization of a semantic unit". The most elementary domains are space and vision, temperature, taste, pressure, pain and color.

In section 3.4.2 the notion of context is defined as "the mental representation of the interaction of related lexical categories". However, Langacker's conception of domain (or context) is more general than this notion of context. For him, his contexts includes domains that are much more elementary or abstract, such as space, vision, temperature, taste and color. If several of these domains are applied to the profiling of one and the same cognitive unit, the result is a matrix of elementary domains, which is superficially reminiscent of orthodox linguistic descriptions of meaning in terms of features. The difference is that in Langacker's view these elementary domains are not "derived" or "abstracted" from the meaning of individual words, but they are "basic" in the sense that they represent basic human experiences and are not reducible to other, more fundamental, domains. In other words; they are the cognitive tools with which we approach and master the world. This matrix of domains is the base (or ground) against which cognitive units are profiled (as figure). The process involved is really pre-linguistic in the sense that in principle it does not determine what kind of linguistic expression will be used to render the cognitive unit. As these examples-show, the translation of cognitive units into cognitive categories is closely linked with the choice of word class. The governing principle is again the principle of prominence, here the selection of what is immediately relevant for the rendering of a certain situation, and this is perhaps the most impressive application of the figure/ground contrast in cognitive processing.

3.4.3.2 Frame

The notion of frame was firstly introduced into linguistics by Fillmore in the middle of the 1970s. He (Fillmore, 1975:124) defined it as

Any system of linguistic choice—the easiest cases being collections of words, buy also including choices of grammatical rules or linguistic categories—that can get associated

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with prototypical instances of scenes.

Here a frame is regarded as an array of linguistic options which were associated with "scenes" and "situations". He goes on to say that frames are "specific unified framework of knowledge, or coherent schematizations of experience" (Fillmore. 1975). Still more recently he views frames "cognitive structures [...] knowledge of which is presupposed for the concepts encoded by the words" (Fillmore and Atkins, 1992: 75). What all these definitions show is that the notion of frame is undoubtedly associated with cognitive context in that both are concerned with cognitive categories. Cognitive categories play a major role within frames. They act as anchors and as triggers for frames, because it is the format of categories and their interrelations that frames are designed and it is by the same categories that they are activated. A further functions of categories is to provide so-called "default assignments" (i.e. values for slots in the frame that apply under normal conditions) by supplying context-dependent prototypes.

Frames can be conceived as a way of describing the cognitive context which provides the background for and is associated with cognitive categories (Ungerer and Schmid 2001: 210). Frames are cognitive structures that are context-dependent and culture-dependent. The notion of frame is similar to the notion of cognitive model and culture model which is discussed in 3.4.1 because both are associated with cognitive categories which are just dependent on the immediate context but also on the whole bundle of context related and cognitive model covers all the stored cognitive contexts. Cognitive linguists find it necessary to look at individual linguistic phenomena within their larger context. Thus categories are assembled into cognitive models, emotion categories are developed into scenarios, clause patterns are seen related to interactive networks. The notion of frame will provide another cognitive attempt to widen the scope of lexical and grammatical analysis.

3.4.4 Script and Schema

Script and psychological schema demonstrate how cognitive context influences utterance interpretation because the script is representative of the form of organization of knowledge in memory and the schema is generally regarded as socio-culturally determined element in utterance interpreting. The cognitive contexts are processed on the basis of knowledge script and psychological schema.

3.4.4.1 Script

A script is the outcome of the conceptualization and structuralization of the events in the real world. It has a function similar to Minskyan frame whereas a frame is generally treated as an essential stable set about the world; a script is more programmatic because it incorporates a standard sequence of events that describes a situation. Brown and Yule (1983: 244) proclaim that all of us have more idiosyncratic scripts than stereotypical ones. Their point of view is psychologically plausible and acceptable because any event in the real world is stored in an individual's memory in a typical structured mode that he can easily have access to, and furthermore, each individual has his own exclusive experiences. In a script, the receiver of information should find a principled means of limiting the number of conceptualizations required for the interpretation of an utterance, and each individual can instinctively limit the scope of the elements of a script that are necessary for utterance interpretation.

The degree of accuracy or precision of the representation of a script is determined by the topic in discussion in accordance with the communicative requirement at the moment. For instance, the frequently cited script of consulting a doctor in a hospital involves:

(a) registering

(b) waiting to see the doctor

(c) receiving the doctor's diagnosis

(d) given a medical prescription

(e) paying the medicine charges

(f) getting the medicine and leaving

Not all of them will equally occur to an individual's mind and some of them may not occur to him at all. Suppose the communicators are talking about the service quality, it will remind them that different hospitals may provide different levels of service quality. Suppose the communicators are talking about the doctor's skill, some more kinds of specialities will occur to them. The other details that do not occur to them can be treated as assumedly existing default elements, which in turn become the presuppositions of an utterance.

Let us take the following example to demonstrate how a script influences people's understanding in communication.

(17) a. John: Will you please go to the cinema with me tonight?

b. Mary: I'm afraid I have an exam tomorrow.

In the process of comprehension, John should search for the internal relation between his invitation and Mary's answer. In this circumstance, the scripts of "going to the cinema" and "having an exam tomorrow" are both activated. At this time, for John, the activated elements of the script of examination include an arch for the relevance between the preparation for the exam and taking the exam. Furthermore, the two elements and seeing a film have a common feature: they will take quite long time, that is, going to the cinema and taking an exam contradict each other. Therefore, in this context, the implication should only be "No, thank you, but I can't go with you."

3.4.4.2 Schema

Socio-cultural elements will constantly be inputted into the brain in the form of experience information when human beings constantly communicate with each other. The inputted information forms episodic models, which in turn will be stored in the memory and will be activated on the supposition that a topic related to them is being talked about. Harriett finds that a story-schema is strongly influenced by socio-cultural background when studying some folk tales of North American Indians. He bases his experiments on a story "The War of the Ghosts", which, he believes, is typical because it has a special socio-cultural background, lacks logical connections between the plots, excites a vividly visual effect and has a somewhat mysterious upshot. He concludes that human memory for discourse is not based on straight reproduction, but is constructive (Xiong Xueliang, 1999: 119-122; Brown and Yule, 1983: 249). From Bartlett's experiment, we will find that the subjects tend to incorporate the information with the background knowledge with which they are familiar when asked to retell the story and that people's habitual mode of thinking influences their utterance comprehension. In other words, schemata predispose us to using our socio-cultural background knowledge, which leads us to expect or predict what a speaker really intends to express in our utterance interpretation.

In the United States of America almost all the Whites considered that the Blacks were superstitious, lazy, ignorant and free and unfettered, but they were apt at music. However, their knowledge about the Blacks is not from their direct contact with the

Blacks but mainly from the mass media. Once an individual incorporates information from an encountered discourse with socio-cultural background from the past experience or other channels, he will form a mental representation about it, which, of course influences his comprehension of related discourse he will encounter afterwards. Let us consider the following conversation:

(18) John: Let's go to Prof. Smith's lecture.

Jane: His lecture is always boring.

Although Prof. Smith's lecture maybe interesting or not boring this time, Jane still insists that his lecture is boring and she does not intend to go to the lecture with John, because obviously her knowledge (perhaps from her own experience or from other channels) about Prof. Smith's lecture will be used in her comprehension in the exchange in a fixed way. This is a typical mental reaction or representation in the form of schemata.

3.5 Summary

A traditional approach to context regards context as, so to speak, an all-inclusive category, including not only the preceding linguistic text, temporal-spatial factors, and topic, but also the communicators' knowledge about languages and the world, their social positions, and their cultural, social and political background, and the mutual relationship, etc. (Xiong Xueliang 1999: 113-114). However, compared with the traditional point of view concerning context, the most characteristic features of a cognitive view is that it takes into consideration the inner world of the language users in verbal communication. In other words, cognitive linguists consider context as a mental phenomenon, a cognitive representation of the interaction between cognitive categories, which are inevitably context-dependent.

Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory presents a new approach to the study of human communication and is grounded in a general view of human cognition. They argue that the principle of relevance is essential to explaining human communication and is enough on its own to account for the interaction of linguistic meaning and contextual factors in utterance interpretation (Sperber and Wilson 1986: Preface). In their relevance

theory, a context is considered as "a psychological construct", i.e. "a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world". They (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 15) claimed that In the course of communicating with each other, the participants try to obtain from each new item of information as great a contextual effect as possible for as small as possible a processing effort. So the conclusion is that context is not given but chosen, and "the selection of a particular context is determined by the search for relevance" (1986: 141). They also stated, "it is relevance which is treated as given, and context which is treated as a variable" (1986: 142). Therefore, selection of an appropriate set of contextual assumptions is crucial to the understanding of an utterance.

Cognitive linguists consider the notion of context as a mental phenomenon and define cognitive context as a cognitive representation of the interaction between cognitive categories (or mental concepts). Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47) argue that the cognitive context does not remain an isolated mental experience, but is immediately associated in at least two ways with related knowledge stored in long-term memory. On the one hand, context-specific knowledge about the categories involved is retrieved. On the other hand, the currently active context calls up other contexts from long-term memory that is somehow related to it. We have experienced and then stored a great many interrelated contexts which we come across in everyday life. Cognitive context depend not only on the immediate context which they are embedded, but also on the whole bundle of contexts that are associated with it. Therefore, it would be quite useful to have a term to cover all the stored cognitive representation that belongs to a certain field.

To summarize the contribution of cognitive context to the interpretation and understanding of language, it can be approached in two ways. First of all, the cognitive context can account for the phenomenon that in some cases interpretation of language can still be achieved when all the linguistic or non-linguistic context (the traditional notion of context) have been removed. Second, combined together with the traditional context, the cognitive context has developed, improved, and hence enriched the notion of context and therefore, will provide an ideal approach to a better interpretation of language in both spoken and written communication.

A Pragmatic Study of Context

4.1 Introduction

It goes without saying that no linguists pay more attention and thus attach greater importance to context than linguists who pursue the study of pragmatics. Pragmatics is a study of the meaning and force of language in relation to its users in context. In general, pragmatics can be assumed as a study of meaning in context or a study of contextual meaning which inevitably involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influence what is said. It has taken into consideration the factors such as how a speaker organize what they want to say in accordance with who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. In understanding an utterance, attention should be paid not only to the utterance-internal properties, but also to what is meant beyond such properties and how an utterance can be perceived and responded to on the basis of information in extra-linguistic factors.

Both semantics and pragmatics are concerned with meaning. However, they approach meaning from different perspectives: the former studies the conventional meaning of sentences while the latter the utterance meaning in context. One major difference between the two linguistic disciplines is whether context is taken into consideration in the interpretation of meaning. When someone says to you that "you are an idiot", your first reaction is most probably a retort of "What do you mean by 'an idiot'?" It is not that you do not know the word "idiot" nor the literal meaning of the sentence. What you do not know and want to know is the speaker's intention in uttering the sentence. It is also possible that you do know the intention of the speaker. you want to deny his assertion and defend yourself by asking "What do you mean by 'an idiot'?". Here the speaker and the hearer both use a sentence with "intended" meaning rather than literal meaning. This kind of meaning is sometimes referred to as speaker's meaning. utterance meaning, or contextual meaning. It differs obviously from semantic meaning in

that its interpretation depends more on who the speaker and the hearer are, when and where it is used. In a word, it depends more on the context. In this sense, pragmatics is the discipline which is concerned with this kind of meaning from (or partly from) the use of language in a specific context.

The notion of context frequently discussed is primarily a pragmatic one. The study of context from this perspective can never be neglected in a systematic and comprehensive study of context. The notion of context will be discussed from a pragmatic perspective in this chapter. In various versions of the definitions of pragmatics, many (at least some) are related to context. Thus from those definitions the relationship between pragmatics and context can be seen to some degree. The notion of context will also be discussed together with the major theories and important terms in pragmatics such as speech act theory, the theory of conversational implicature, reference, presupposition, inference, etc., and therefore, what role context plays in them will be demonstrated.

4.2   Pragmatics and Context

Since context plays a crucial part in pragmatics, the latter calls for an explicit characterization of the notion of the former. Yet it still remain difficult to achieve such a goal and the notion of context is still far from being explicit. Pragmatics is the study of the role context plays in speaker's meaning or utterance meaning. But since a clear notion of context can hardly be produced, what can be included in context is likely to be whatever being excluded from semantics in the way of meaning relations. In other words, pragmatics concerns whatever aspects of meaning are not included in semantics. The nature of context makes clear that one of the goals of a pragmatic theory should be to explicate that nature. For particular purposes, pragmatists are accustomed to restrict the nature of context in line with the problems in hand: thus in a work dealing mostly with presupposition and implicature, Contexts are sets of propositions constrained only by consistency. The consistent sets of propositions that comprise contexts are to be interpreted as the unique speaker's own commitment slate. Van Dijk argue that "a context is construed as a 'complex event', viz. as an ordered pair of events of which the first causes the second. The first event is roughly the production of an utterance by the speaker, the second the interpretation of the utterance by the hearer" (Van Dijk, 1976:

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29). But clearly a general theory of aspects of context relevant to production and interpretation must be broader than either of these.

4.2.1 Context and Definitions of Pragmatics

Pragmatics has been given various versions of definitions by many linguists or pragmaticists. A considerable number of definitions are defined in terms of context or at least in relation to context. Levinson (1983: 6—27) lists nearly ten definitions of context, among which three are defined in relation to the notion of context:

> Pragmatics is the study of those relations between languages and context that are gramaticalized, or encoded in the structure of language.
> Pragmatics is the study of the relations between languages and context that are basic to an account of language understanding.
> Pragmatics is the study of the abilities of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.
>
> (Levinson. 1983: 9, 21, 24)

All the three definitions are defined with an explicit use of the notion of context.

However, definitions that are not explicitly related to context can also be found actually related to context: "Pragmatics is the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory"(Levinson, 1983: 12). Here, "all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory" undoubtedly refers to the contextual meaning. This definition is originally demonstrated with a formula by Gazdar(1979: 2, quoted in Levinson, 1983: 12):

> Pragmatic has as its topic those aspects of meaning of utterance which cannot be accounted for by straightforward reference to the truth conditions of the sentence uttered.
> PRAGMATICS = MEANING – SEMATICS.

Semantic meaning is limited to the conventional aspects of meaning. It does not touch that part of meaning in context. Only by taking contextual factors into consideration. does it become possible that all aspects of meaning are exhausted.

Stalnaker (1972:383, quoted in He Zaoxiong. 2000:8) define pragmatics as "Pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the context in which they are performed." Leech (1983) argues that pragmatics can be defined as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations. Mey (2001; 6) defines it as "Pragmatics studies the use of

language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society". These definitions are all concerned directly or indirectly with context. The words "situations" and "conditions" can safely be viewed as two alternative terms of context. Though every definition has its own focus, all reveal some intimate relationship between context and the definition of pragmatics.

This thesis prefer to define pragmatics from a contextual perspective that pragmatics is the study of implied meaning in context produced by language users in communication. In contrast to the literal meaning studied from a semantic perspective, implied meaning is "between the lines" or the speaker's "intended meaning". As soon as the speakers and the hearers begin to communicate, they produced a specific context and then they try to share this context to a possibly large extent. With the mutually shared context, the implied meaning can be conveyed and interpreted.

Since participants in communication play an important role in the production of context, they are taken into consideration in defining pragmatics. For example, Yule defines pragmatics as "Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by the listener (or reader)" (1996: 3). In fact, participants themselves can also be considered as an essential part of context because in interpreting the meaning of an utterance the interpreter has to make it clear that who is talking to whom. He goes on to conclude four areas that pragmatic study is interested in: 1) pragmatics is the study of speaker's meaning; 2) pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning; 3) pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said; 4) pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance. Among the four areas, participant (the speaker) and contextual are included in 1) and 2) respectively. This does not mean that 3) and 4) has nothing to do with context because "more gets communicated than is said" in 3) means the implied or intended meaning, which is necessarily dependent on context, and the "relative distance" in 4) means the distance of the participants of communication, which is proved previously a part of context. Therefore, almost all the definitions of pragmatics are inevitably related more or less to context.

4.2.2 Scopes of Pragmatic Context

Pragmatic context is the context contributing to the accounting for the interpretation

of pragmatic meaning. It includes all the componential factors that are helpful in interpreting the implied meaning of an utterance. Though people are instinctively aware of the existence of context and its effects on utterance meaning, they still find it hard to give a definite answer to the question that what factors constitute context. Linguists approach the study of language in use from different angles and come to various interpretations of context. According to Lyons, "context is a theoretical construct, in the postulation of which the linguistic abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language-event, systematically determine the form, the appropriateness or the meaning of utterances" (Lyons, 1977: 572).

Lyons also suggests what we have in mind is knowledge of the kind that determines particular phonological, grammatical and lexical options within the language system in particular contexts of language use. He lists six different kinds of such knowledge (ibid.: 574-584);

1) Each of the participants must know his role and status.
2) The participants must know where they are in space and time.
3) The participants must be able to categorize the situation in terms of its degree of formality.
4) The participants must know what medium is appropriate to the situation.
5) The participants must know how to make their utterances appropriate to the subject matter.
6) The participants must know how to make their utterance appropriate to the province or domain to which the situation belongs.

It is thought-provoking that Lyons interprets context via knowledge because the linguistic knowledge of the language in use is an initial and fundamental step towards sentence meaning and then makes utterance meaning possible. However, pragmatic context contains much more than what Lyons has provided for context. Besides linguistic knowledge, there is extra-linguistic knowledge in the pragmatic analysis of context. According to He Zhaoxiong (1985), extra-linguistic context includes: 1) background knowledge; 2) situational knowledge; and 3) mutual knowledge or common ground.

These above discussed factors of knowledge which constitute context can be shown in the following figure:
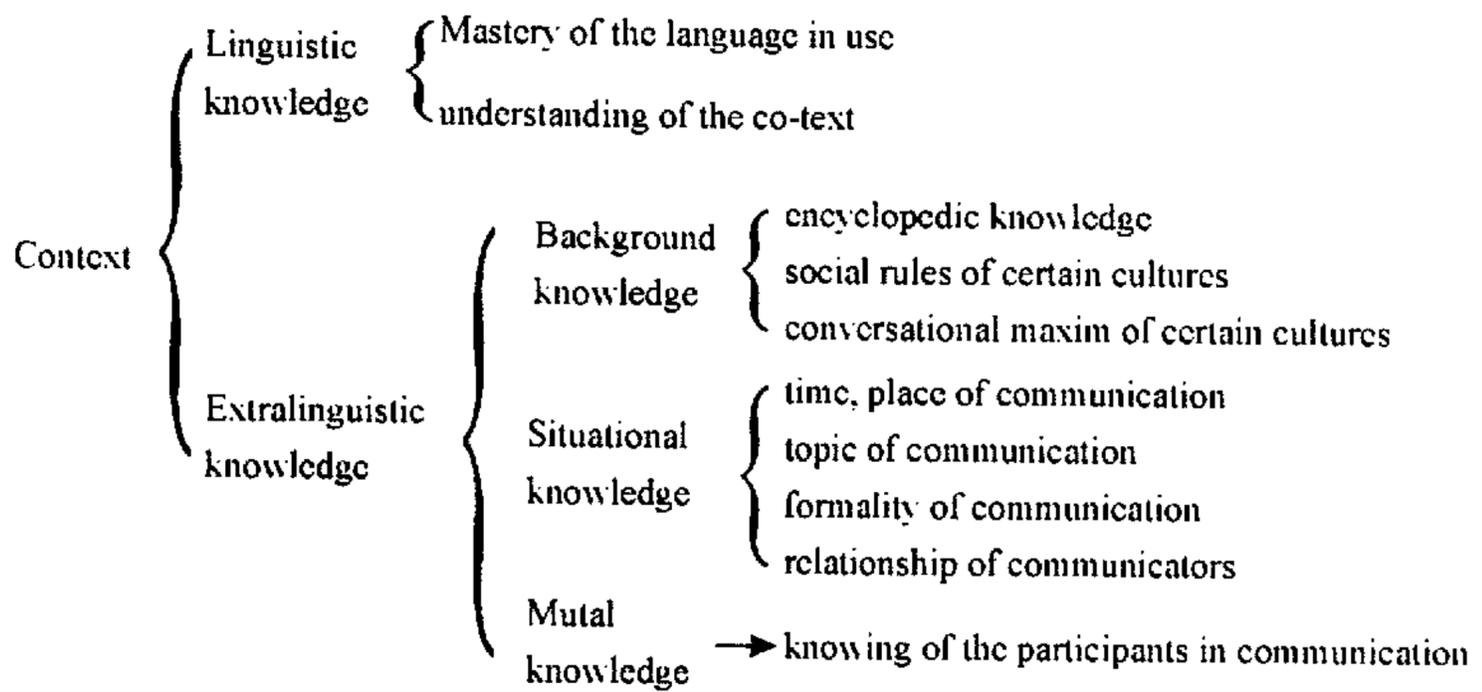
Linguistic knowledge { Mastery of the language in use / understanding of the co-text

Context {

Extralinguistic knowledge {

Background knowledge { encyclopedic knowledge / social rules of certain cultures / conversational maxim of certain cultures

Situational knowledge { time, place of communication / topic of communication / formality of communication / relationship of communicators

Mutal knowledge → knowing of the participants in communication

Figure 2   Factors of knowledge that constitute context
(adopted and translated from He Zhaoxiong, 1985: 21)

In order to interpret the special kinds of pragmatic inferences such as presupposition, conversational implicature and indirect illocutionary force, extra-linguistic knowledge is also required. For such kinds of inferences cannot be thought of as semantic, they are too sensitive to contextual information like mutual knowledge, background knowledge, felicity conditions and so on. In the process of communication, the "sender's" communicative intention becomes mutual knowledge of both "sender" (S) and "hearer" (H), i.e., "S knows that H knows that S knows that H knows that S has this particular intention"(Levinson, 1987: 16). Attaining this state of mutual knowledge of a communicative intention is to have it successfully communicated.

Context is dynamic because communication is a dynamic process in which language is used as an instrument of communication in a certain context by speakers or writers to express their meanings and achieve intentions. It has been accounted for previously that Lyons (1977: 574) singles out the role of "knowledge" in language use including: the knowledge of role and status, location, formality level, the medium (spoken or written), subject matter, province (or domain determining the register of a language). Additionally, he also sees the importance of linguistic features that interact with context. Leech (1983: 13) characterizes context as "any background knowledge assumed to be shared by S and H and which contributes to the H's interpretation of what S means by a given utterance." (The letters S and H stand for the speaker and hearer respectively). Levinson (1983: 13) restricts context to the basic parameters of the context of utterance which include participants' identity, role, location, assumptions about knowledge, etc. He justifies such

an approach to context with the aim of his book, which he sees as "an introduction to the philosophical-linguistic tradition" rather than "an exhaustive coverage of all the contextual coordinates of linguistic organization."(Levinson. 1983: 13).

Mey (1993) presents a broad view of context as knowledge. situation. and co-text. He maintains that context is a dynamic rather than static phenomenon; therefore, contextual factors are in steady development during the process of social interaction. Besides, Mey holds that "any understanding that linguists can hope to obtain of what goes on between people using language is based, necessarily and uniquely, on a correct understanding of the whole con-text (my emphasis) in which the linguistic interaction takes place." (Mey, 1993: 186). He has also introduced the notion of "wording the world" that has social and contextual implications. Thus, Mey maintains that "in order to understand another person's wording, I have to participate in his or her contexts, to word the world with him or her." (ibid, 1993: 304).

Verschueren (1999: 74-114) locates language users within contextual correlates of adaptability represented as a linguistic context and the "mental world", "social world", and "physical world". This is a broad scope of contextual factors including knowledge, situation, co-text. and others. According to Verschueren, the mental world activated in language use contains cognitive and emotive elements which have been discussed in chapter 3. He also mentions "personality", "beliefs", "desires", "wishes", "motivations". and "intentions". The "social world" is examined by its social settings, institutions. cultural norms. and values. The analysis of the "physical world" focuses on temporal and spatial reference, and the physical properties of language users such as bodily postures, gestures. gaze, sex, physical appearance, etc.. In his approach to pragmatics. Verschueren puts emphasis on the dynamics of interactive meaning generation.

In conclusion, the approaches to context presented above differ in their view of the scope of context and in their focus (one might also say bias) on some elements of context and the exclusion of others. The reason for this is the disciplinary bias and goals of ˙ particular researchers; note the influence of cultural anthropology on Malinowski's idea of. context, of analytical philosophy on John Austin. John Searle and Paul Grice, of sociolinguistics on William Labov's variation analysis and John Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics or of ethno-methodology on conversational analysis and so on. A prevailing method used by "contextualists" (or researchers analyzing the context of

language use) is that of "enumeration" of relevant contextual factors (elements). Sometimes, they provide some disciplinary (local) justification for their claims rather than offering a general framework or justified theory of contextual phenomena.

4.3 Implicture: Meaning Derived from Context

It has been discussed previously that pragmatic meaning is different from semantic meaning in that the latter is the literal and conventional meaning while the former is not literal but implied and extra-linguistic information. Pragmatic meaning is also known as utterance meaning, speaker's meaning, and inclusion, meaning in context. Conversational implicature is an inference about speaker's intention that arises from the conventional or literal meaning of an utterance. It is produced in a specific context which is shared by the speaker and the hearer, and depends on a recognition of the cooperative principle and maxims by the speaker and the hearer, In other words, context proposed by conversational implicature is a general principle that participants assume one another to believe and observe: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose of direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975). This is called cooperative principle.

A crucial feature of implicature is that they must be capable of being calculated by a hearer. To work out a particular conversational implicature, the hearer will rely on the following knowledge (Grice, 1975):

1) the conventional meanings of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved.
2) the CP and its maxims.
3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance.
4) other items of background knowledge.
5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

In item 3), Grice divides context into "linguistic" and "otherwise". These contexts bear on inferencing only because they contribute information that can be used as mutually known background knowledge. That contexts are akin to mutual knowledge is suggested by item 4), noting other items of background knowledge, and by item 5), the

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availability of mutual knowledge.

The cooperative principle is quite similar to the contexts listed above. It is also the background that participants assume one another to share. This similarity suggests that what allows hearers to calculate implicatures and infer speaker meaning is conventional meaning (item 1)) and background knowledge from a number of different sources, i.e., assumptions about human nature (item 2)), text (item 3)), situation (item 3)) and the world (item 4)). To sum up, the way that conversational implicature analyzes speaker meaning is dependent upon the context of shared beliefs and assumptions.

The word "implicature" is derived from the verb "to imply", which means "to fold something into something else". What is implied is "folded in", and has to be "unfolded" in order to be understood. A conversational implicature is, therefore, something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use. The reason that pragmatics is interested in this phenomenon is that we seem to be dealing here with a regularity that cannot be captured in a simple syntactic or semantic "rule", but has to be accounted for in other ways. In everyday talk, information or meaning is merely implied or often conveyed implicitly in our utterances. Sometimes we are able to draw such inferences only by referring what has been explicitly said to some conversational principle. In these cases, we are dealing with conversational implicature.

Not only some general "conversational principles", but also some specific, pragmatic ones will be applied to obtain a satisfactory account of implicature. One could say that conversational implicature concerns the way we understand an utterance in conversation in accordance with what we expect to hear. Thus, if we ask a question, a response which superficially does not make "sense" can very well be an adequate answer. Thus, in a particular situation involving a question, an utterance that on the face of it does not make "sense" can very well be an adequate answer. For instance, in a Chinese country house if an old man ask his old better-half:

(19) What time is it?

it makes perfectly good sense for the old woman to answer

(20) The rooster has crowed twice.

in a particular context of conversation. This context should include the fact that there is a rooster which habitually crow thrice shortly before the day break each morning, and furthermore, that the old wife is aware that her husband know when their rooster crow for the first, second, and third time before daybreak and thus giving him a hopefully relevant answer. Notice also that if we limit pragmatic explanation to the strictly grammatical (cf. Levinson 1983:98), we would have to exclude such relevant answers, since there are no grammatical items in this interchange that carry the required information about the users and their contexts.

To know what people mean, you have to interpret what they say. But interpretation is a tricky affair; misunderstandings are always possible, and sometimes seem to be the rule rather than the exception. As Leech remarks, "interpreting an utterance is ultimately a matter of guesswork, or (to use a more dignified term) hypothesis formation" (1983: 30-1).

We have already seen that strict semantic or logical criteria will not help; neither will just guessing, unless qualified in relation to the particular circumstances of the question, the persons involved in the situation, their background and so on. The more we know about this context, the more qualified our guesswork is going to be. The reason that people normally do qualify as guessers has a lot to do with the fact that their interlocutors are "guessable", and that their common context, including their language, predisposes them for certain guesses. But there is more.

As Thomas puts it, "in conversational interaction, people work on the assumption that a certain set of rules is in operation, unless they receive indications to be contrary" (1996:62). Normally, what we expect when asking a question is that people cooperate by giving us an answer; and whatever comes our way, following a question, will normally be taken for an answer. Such cooperative mechanisms have very little to do with logic and semantics, but are grounded in the pragmatics of conversation, in particular the "Cooperative Principle".

This view squares well with the observation that conversational implicatures, once established and accepted, have nothing of the "eternal", durable quality of logical implications. Conversational implicatures can always be "untied", canceled, in the course of further conversation: being "implicated" by a particular conversational context, another conversational context can "explicate" them again. Look at the following

sentence:

(21) Your son has eaten some of the candies,

then these words are added as the latter part of it:

in fact, he ate *all* of them.

Here, the added context undoes, or cancels the first utterance's implicature: "some" turns out to be "all", after all.

The context is the "universe" of everyday language use, the sum total of what people do with each other in conversation. Hence, in a case like the above, it is the current conversational context and its conversational implicatures that decide whether the contradiction between the quantifiers "all" and "some" is a logical or a pragmatic one. Consequently, for a reaction to be adequate, one will have to adapt it to the particular context of utterance. What is contextually formed as a *logical implicature will not* tolerate a pragmatic answer, and conversely, a pragmatic implicature will make no sense in a purely logical or formal-grammatical environment. The ultimate reason for this, as will seen later, is in the final analysis, both logical and conversational implicatures, in order to play a role in human interaction as pragmatic acts, must conform to their pragmatic contexts of use.

4.4   Ambiguity, Vagueness and Context

It is known to all that ambiguity and vagueness in language communication can hardly be avoided and that it is something we have to live with since human's language is abundant in the ways of expressing and conveying meaning. In other words, besides a large number of polysemous words and homonyms which are all context-dependent, there are many sentences and utterances which may have obscure and different meaning in various context. Context is the most important element in explaining apparent exceptions to rules, in justifying people's apparent "faulty" grammar, in disambiguating "uncertain" meanings or names, in removing obscure meanings, and in critically examining utterances. The relationship between context and conditions of pragmatic obscurity and ambiguity can be understood as: the meaningful and purposeful use of expressions in different pragmatic contexts.

4.4.1 Ambiguity and Vagueness

There is a large linguistic literature on ambiguity, which is of interest because some investigators have argued that many instances of vagueness are really instances of ambiguity. It is important to develop some tests for distinguishing between vagueness and ambiguity. The general approach to distinguishing vagueness from ambiguity may be summarized as follows. In both cases, hearers do not know exactly what they should understand. Ambiguity has traditionally been identified where a sentence has two or more competing but distinct meanings attached to it, whereas vagueness is seen where distinct meanings cannot be identified. However, for an analyst working on the real data of conversations, questions of ambiguity are not as relevant to language understanding as they have been claimed to be by theorists studying sentences in vacuum. Lyons (1981b: 203) describes the attitude of philosophers and linguists to ambiguity as "a highly prejudiced and unbalanced view". He continues:

Not only is it frequently, and erroneously, associated with the view that all sentences have precise and determinate meanings; it is based on the equally erroneous assumption that clarity and the avoidance of vagueness and equivocation are always desirable, regardless of what language game we are playing. (Lyons, ibid.: 203)

Additionally, Channell (2000: 35) argues that ambiguity is rarely a factor in real communication, because hearers read off a meaning without even realizing that there could have been another one. Ambiguity becomes interesting and descriptively relevant when it can be observed to be actually used by conversational participants, for example, in punning, or where a breakdown can be attributed to a wrong reading being given to an utterance. Take the example:

(22) (three student friends talking about music)

  A: Tom Bennet plays the trombone.

  B: No he doesn't, it's something else brass.

  C: Well in that case, it must be a trumpet (A).

The hearer of this (me) chose a reading paraphrasable by "given what you have told me, it's a trumpet". This was not what speaker C intended, as was made clear by subsequent turns. The other reading can be glossed as, "in an instrument case shaped like that, it must be a trumpet". Here, the difficulty arises from the structural identity of the

partial idiom *in that case* with a locative prepositional phrase introduced by *in.*

There is considerable intuitive agreement regarding the distinction between ambiguity and vagueness, but independent evidence is lacking. Weinreich (1966: 411) suggests that if a word "can be understood as ambiguous" in a neutral context, it has two dictionary entries, if it cannot be understood as ambiguous in a neutral context, but different meanings seem possible, it is vague. For example, *eat* is vague between the action required to "eat soup" and to "eat bread", whereas the verb *file* in "I filed the letters and my nails" is ambiguous. Considering a number approximation, such as *around four o'clock,* in a neutral context, we might want to argue that it can be understood as ambiguous between, say, all the various times between 3.45 and 4.15.

Zwicky and Sadock (1975) argue that a sentence "is not many ways ambiguous just because we can perceive many distinct classes of contexts in which it would be appropriate or because we can indicate many understandings with paraphrases" (1975: 4). For example, in the case of the number approximations described here these are appropriate in varying contexts, and moreover, are under-stood differently in different contexts, but this does not mean such expressions require analysis as being many ways ambiguous.

Confusing vagueness with ambiguity may lead to false attribution of polysemy. For example, the sentence "John has gone to the study" is, intrinsically vague as to whether John is now in the study or outside it. However, the possibility of either of these meanings led one investigator to set up two senses of *to,* one for each meaning. Dictionaries often multiply polysemy because lexicographers tend to identify vagueness as ambiguity.

It is important to understand that a sentence or an utterance can be both ambiguous and vague, Zwicky and Sadock (1975: 31) analyse as ambiguous the distinction between a "literal" and a "hyperbole" reading, as in their example:

(23) There are about a million people in San Antonio.
(24) There are about a million people in my introductory course.

where (23) is literal and (24) hyperbole. In both uses, *about a million* is vague.

It is perhaps the case that linguists have been influenced by philosophers' emphasis on ambiguity as an important part of semantics so that they think that ambiguity plays a

greater part in the act of meaning than vagueness does. However. it would be beneficial from a linguistic perspective to view them somewhat equally with a specific context.

4.4.2 Disambiguation

Ambiguity results from the fact that a word or a sentence has an aggregate of a set of meaning which is free from context. This kind of meaning is considered to be abstract meaning contrary to contextual meaning or utterance meaning. The elimination of ambiguity is dependent on context. As far as a specific context is involved, only one of the various potential aspects of meaning is appropriate, meanwhile other aspects are excluded, and hence ambiguity is removed. Therefore, when dealing with ambiguous expression, the question always has to be asked where these expression are "at home", whose viewpoint they represent. That is, the interpreter not only has to contextualize, but in many cases even has to re-contextualize them in order to make them clear. Only by placing the ambiguous expressions in their context, can a truly pragmatic view of the relationship between context and ambiguity be advocated.

All meaning is non-natural (meaning-nn), inasmuch as it always depends on the context of use what meaning we assign to a particular expression. In other words, just as there are no universally valid descriptions, no single, "correct" meanings of words, there is no unique disambiguation of polyvalent expressions. In particular, all ambiguity depends on, and is conditioned by, the context of the ambiguity, including the point of view of the utterers as well as that of the interlocutors, along with their common understanding of each other as members of society sharing certain (but by no means all) goals. Ambiguities are often about nuances, shades of differences in meaning. Small changes in near-identical items may be more important in pragmatic and cognitive interaction than big changes in distant, different items.

Since utterance meaning goes beyond what is actually said and it includes what is implied. And context is highly relevant to this part of the meaning of utterances. In such cases, the utterance inscription itself will usually be either grammatically or lexically ambiguous (or both). For example, sentence

(25) They passed the port at midnight

is lexically ambiguous. However, it would normally be clear in a given context which of

the two homonyms, "port" has two meanings: 1) harbor; 2) kind of fortified wine, is being used and also which sense of the polysemous verb "pass" is intended. Polysemy, unlike homonymy, does not give us grounds for distinguishing one sentence from another. But it may none the less give rise to lexical ambiguity. In collocation with meaning 2), the most salient sense of "pass", in most contexts, is undoubtedly the one in which it means "hand from one to another". But it is easy to see that in an appropriate context "pass" meaning "go past" can be collocated with meaning 2) just as readily as it can be collocated, in other contexts, with meaning 1).

If the sentence contains one or more polysemous expressions, we do not know in what sense they are being used. Context, therefore, is a factor in the determination of the prepositional content of particular tokens of utterance inscriptions on different occasions of utterance. Usually, we operate with contextual information below the level of consciousness in our interpretation of everyday utterances. Most of the ambiguities, whether lexical or grammatical, therefore pass unnoticed. For example, the phrase "the vintage port" would normally be interpreted as referring to wine, and "the busy port" as referring to a harbor. From time to time, however, we are made aware of such ambiguities, precisely because our contextual beliefs and assumptions differ from those of our interlocutors. The second of these two possibilities is often exploited by humorists and comedians, who deliberately set up the context in such a way that their audience will unconsciously assign one interpretation to an utterance-inscription.

Ambiguity is commonly described by philosophers and linguists as if it were of its nature pathological—something which gets in the way of clarity and precision. This is a highly prejudiced and unbalanced view. It is based on the equally erroneous assumption that clarity and the avoidance of vagueness and equivocation are always desirable, regardless of genre, style and context. Nothing that is said about ambiguity in this section, or anywhere else in this thesis, should be taken to imply that ambiguity is, or should be, avoided in all contexts. Context can make clear, not only which sentence has been uttered, but also what proposition has been expressed. Obviously, out of context there is no way of knowing.

4.4.3 Vagueness-Removing

Language is a system consisting of sounds, vocabulary and grammar. Just as

ambiguity is inevitable, vagueness exists within these elements of language. It is difficult to delimit the connotation of words while on the other hand the denotation of words is also difficult to master. Since the 1960s linguists have begun to study vagueness in language. Vagueness exists objectively in our lives, and plays an important role in literary works and spoken interactions. We should not avoid this phenomenon but find ways to interpret it. Since language comes from social life, it can also be interpreted in social life; since language is a sequential semiotic system, the best way for removing vagueness in understanding is through context, both linguistic and extra-linguistic.

Vagueness refers to words or sentences with unclear or inaccurate meaning. English language contains many words with vague meaning, such as in "He has an animal", "animal" is a vague concept, which is too large to specify. The most conspicuous example of vagueness of meaning in English is the addressing terms of some kinships which are also vague. Take, for example, grandmother and grandfather (father's side or mother' side?), sister and brother (elder or younger?), aunt and uncle (maternal or paternal, younger or elder?). And the hearer can hardly know whether "cousin" in the utterance "I have a cousin" is male or female. But from a Chinese perspective, these terms can be clearly distinguished between *waigong, waipo and yeye, nainai; jiejie, meimei and gege, didi;* for "aunt" the corresponding terms are *bomu, shenshen, guma, gugu, and jiuma, yi(ma);* for "uncle" there are *bofu, shufu (shushu), gufu, and jiujiu.* The context, in this case, defines to whom is to be addressed in the communication.

In fact, whether a word is vague or not is only relative. For instance, doctor is vaguer than surgeon, but more concrete than man. The removal of vagueness by context has two aspects: removal by modification of words, and removal by situation. Removal by modification of words includes the use of modifier to remove the vagueness of the modified and vice versa, as shown in the following two sentences as examples:

(26) Charles talked to a buxom Briton peasant.
(27) My grandfather, my mother's father, died last year.

In sentence (26), die adjective "buxom" determines that the "peasant" referred to is a female. In sentence (27) the appositive "my mother's father" makes clear which grandfather is referred to. The latter is exemplified by the following sentences.

(28) This is a good strawberry.

(29) This is a good lemon.

(30) What a heavy pencil!

(31) What a heavy machine!

In sentence (28), the modified noun—strawberry fixes the connotation of "good", here is sweet not sour; while in sentence (29) the meaning of lemon defines that of "good" is *sour not sweet*. In sentence (30) the degree of "heavy" is more than that in sentence (31). For in the Chinese traditional habit, the person with the "heavy" pencil must be the intellectual one, he could solve the important matters with his wisdom and authority However. Sentence (31) shows us the large heavy machine, people cannot carry it away or it looks too large to be carried away.

In the following example, it is the situation that removes vagueness.

(32) It is cold today.

Without context of situation, this sentence is also vague in meaning. But if there is clear time or place continuing the sentence, the vagueness will be removed. The meaning is different when it is said in autumn and said in winter, or different when uttered in Alaska and in Hawaii.

4.5   Reference and Anaphora in Context

In presenting the traditional semantic view of reference, Lyons (1968: 404) says that "the relationship which holds between words and things is the relationship of reference: words refer to things". Yet, in a more recent statement on the nature of reference, he make the following point: "it is the speaker who refers (by using appropriate expression): he invests the expression with reference by the act of referring" (ibid, 1977: 177). It is exactly this latter view of the nature of reference which the discourse analyst has to appeal to. There is a support for such a pragmatic concept of reference in Strawson's (1950) claim that "referring is not something an expression does; it is something that someone can use an expression to do"; and in Searl's view that in the sense in which speakers refer, expressions do not refer any more limn they make promises or give orders (1979: 155). Thus, in discourse analysis, reference is treated as an action on the part of

the speaker or writer. In the following conversational fragment we shall say, for example, that speaker A uses the expressions "my uncle" and "he" to refer to one individual and "my mother's sister" and "she" to refer to another. We will not, for example, say that "he" refers to "my uncle".

(33) A: my uncle's coming home from Canada on Sunday + he's due in +

B: how long has he been away for or has he just been away?

A: Oh no they lived in Canada eh he was married to my mother's sister + + well she's been dead for a number of years now +

Theories of semantic activation have a high degree of generality and basically describe an evaluation procedure for the degree of semantic match of the two concepts. Certainly this procedure plays an important part in linguistic comprehension but this latter raises much more specific problems. The co-reference situation, for example, can be described simply as an activation of the referent concept by me antecedent concept but a view of this sort does not take into consideration the specific linguistic status of both terms involved in the co-reference. This postulates that the integration of linguistic information is based on the strategy known as "given-new". According to this, any sentence can be broken down into "given", that is, old or presupposed, and "new", that is, asserted, information.

To speak of strategy implies of necessity, and in contradiction with theories of semantic activation, an activity which is not entirely automatic and may therefore include situations involving complex and deliberate inference. Confronted with a sentence, the reader has first to encode it, then to dissociate given from new information, use the given information to search for earlier information which may be stored in memory ("given" information here serves as a "pointer" towards prior information) and finally to try to associate "new" with prior information. If the subject does not find the prior information in memory, he can still construct or reconstruct it by inference which, in this case, amounts to considering the whole of the initial sentence information as being "new".

Direct reference is more rapidly understood than indirect. Indeed, in the former case there is a literal match between given and earlier information, whereas in the latter matching requires a further inferential stage. However, reference theory, if restricted to lexical reference as such, is much too narrow to explain how context intervenes to ensure

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linguistic cohesion and integration. For example, very little is known about the part played by familiarity in the reference function. These difficulties explain why attempts to make the reference theory more general have been numerous and varied.

Reference theory has therefore to account not only for semantic but also for pragmatic reference. Context is also taken to refer to that which is of the order of convictions, beliefs and guesses relating to the exchange situation, including relations between the exchange partners.

Finally it is obvious that the reference theory may be understood in two theoretically very different ways. We can consider first of all that at the time he encounters the referent, the listener/reader undertakes a memory search to obtain confirmation from relevant earlier information. This would be a backward pseudo-context effect. In the latter case discourse representation is not worked out on the basis of references between lexical entities explicitly mentioned in the discourse. The matching between old and new information (via given information) takes into account the subject's knowledge, the textual background (theme) and the succession of scenarios. In other words, new information is not simply related to old information, but this latter makes it possible to develop expectations and predict the former. Only a conception of this sort can explain the relative independence of comprehension of an anaphor with respect to the distance between referent and its antecedent or to the amount of intervening information between referent and study. In co-reference, elements are not all processed in the same way: the existence of a "companion" to the antecedent may complicate discourse comprehension.

Sentence sequence does not merely contribute a relational structure between referents and antecedents, but something more in the nature of a "reference space" continuously modulated by the background and the subject's knowledge, which give it wider range, and by the focalization on a topic or a particular scenario, which narrows its scope. In other words, standard reference theory probably gives a good explanation of discourse cohesion, but cohesion does not necessarily mean coherence and reference theories are not entirely satisfactory from this point of view.

4.6   Presupposition and Context

Generally speaking, to presuppose something means to assume its existence beforehand. Presupposition can be referred to the aspects of meaning that must be

presupposed, understood, taken for granted for an utterance to make itself meaningful. Linguists began their interests in presupposition from the study of semantic relation. They consider it as "a relationship between two propositions"(Yule, 1996). In this respect presupposition is like entailment, an automatic relationship free from context effects. However, in pragmatic respect, presupposition is sensitive to the context of utterance. A presupposition is something the speaker assume to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers, not sentences, have presupposition. That is to say, presupposition is the speaker's belief that in producing his utterances he has had some potentially assumed information which is related to his intended utterances. As far as participants of communication are concerned, their knowledge in common is an important component of context. Pragmatic presupposition, as an essential part of context, lies in the whole process of communication.

Different levels of context can cause fluctuations in presuppositional behavior. At the most general level, the context provided by background knowledge; then, the context provided by the topic of conversation; and finally, the narrower linguistic context of the surrounding syntactic structures—all can affect the production of presuppositions. Simply giving a truth table of fixed relations between presupposing and presupposed sentences cannot adequately describe this complicated behaviour. Some more sophisticated account is required which takes account of how what participants know forms a background to the uttering of a sentence.

4.6.1 Pragmatic Theories of Presupposition

Various understandings and definitions can be found without difficulties as to what the pragmatic presupposition is. He Zaoxiong (2001, 281-284) concludes three categories of viewpoints: 1) pragmatic presupposition is the speaker's assumption to the context of utterance; 2) pragmatic presupposition is the necessary conditions to meet the performance of a speech act or the making of social adaptability of a sentence; 3) pragmatic presupposition is the common knowledge or background knowledge of the participants in communication. These viewpoints concerning pragmatic presupposition are related more or less, directly or indirectly to context. For example, "conditions" in 2) and "common knowledge" in 3) can be taken as kind of extra-linguistic context.

Leech (1981) have divided presuppositions into two types: one, semantic

presupposition, amenable to a truth-relations approach; another, pragmatic presupposition, which requires an interactional description. In contrast, presupposition is essentially a pragmatic phenomenon: part of the set of assumptions made by participants in a conversation, which he termed the common ground. This set of assumptions shifts as new sentences are uttered. In this view a speaker's next sentence builds on this common ground and it is pragmatically odd to assert something which does not fit it. Presumably cases of presuppositional failure like "The king of France is bald" would be examined in terms of the speaker assuming something (There is a king of France) that is not in the common ground.

This type of approach can cope with cases where presuppositions are not necessarily already known to the hearer, as when a speaker says "My sister just got married" (with its presupposition *I have a sister)* to someone who didn't know she had a sister. To capture this ability Lewis (1979: 127) proposes a principle of accommodation, where: "if at time *t* something is said that requires presupposition *p* to be acceptable, and if *p* is not presupposed just before *t* then—ceteris paribus—presupposition *p* comes into existence". In other words presuppositions can be introduced as new information. A pragmatic view of presupposition is also proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1995) who argue that presupposition is not an independent phenomenon but one of a series of effects produced when the speaker employs syntactic structure and intonation to show the hearer how the current sentence fits into the previous background. These writers integrate presupposition with other traditional discourse notions like given and new information, and focus. They propose (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 215) that the same principle of relevance to contextual assumptions covers both presupposition and the choice of the different word orders and intonations in (33) below:

(33) a. It rained on MONDAY.
      b. On Monday it RAINED.
      c. On MONDAY it rained.

These sentences belong to different contexts of use, that is, the preceding context will naturally lead a speaker to choose one of the sentences in (33) over another.

4.6.2 Pragmatic Presupposition as a Context

Pragmatic presuppositions are conditions which are necessary for a sentence to be appropriate in a given context. The origin of the concept of pragmatic presuppositions lies in the recognition by philosophers of language and logicians that there are implications of utterances which do not belong to the set of truth conditions. and that there are other relations between utterances besides that of entailment. Various definitions of pragmatic presupposition have been put forward since the 1970s. Gazdar (1979), in his hook *Pragmatics: implicaturc, Presupposition and Logic form* lists the definition form of pragmatic presupposition by many linguists. Among them, Stalnaker (1974) introduces the concept of pragmatic presupposition as one of the major factors of a context. Pragmatic presupposition, which enables him to distinguish contexts from possible worlds, is defined as prepositional attitude. Keenan (1971) defines pragmatic presupposition as a relation between utterances and their contexts. An utterance of a sentence pragmatically presupposes that its context is appropriate. Keenan said of the French utterance *Tu es de goutant* (You (informal) are awful (male)) (Keenan. 1971. from Lyons, 1977: 603) that it pragmatically presupposes that the addressee is an animal. child, socially inferior to the speaker, or personally intimate with the speaker. Pragmatic presuppositions of an utterance are the conditions that it must satisfy, if it is to be interpretable and appropriate, in the context in which it occurs.

Pragmatic presuppositions are not a necessary condition on the truth or the falsehood of an utterance; rather, they are necessary to the felicity of an act. They concern expectations, desires, interests, claims, attitudes toward the world, rears, etc. Look at sentence (34):

(34) She blamed Tom for breaking the window.

In this sentence, the speaker presupposes that Tom broke the window while he asserts that was wrong to do so. By contrary, the sentence (35):

(35) She accused Tom of breaking the window.

presupposes that breaking the window was wrong while asserting that Tom did it. According to such an analysis, the two verbs "blame" and "accuse" contain the same information, but disturb differently between presupposed and asserted meaning.

However, in some cases lexical presupposition shifts according to the context in which the lexical item is used. Take, for example:

(36) John is a bachelor.

The meaning of *bachelor* includes the information that John is an unmarried adult male. Under normal circumstances the information "unmarried" is the asserted portion of the meaning, while the information "adult male" is presupposed by the use of the word bachelor. The condition "adult male" is necessary for the assertion of (36) to be true and the condition "adult male" is semantically entailed by sentence (36), but it is not a semantic presupposition of (36). Instead, it is necessary for (36) to be appropriate.

Karttunen and Peters defined presupposition, along the following lines: cooperative participants have the obligation to "organize their contributions in such a way that the conventional implicature of the sentence is already part of the common ground at the time of utterance" (Levinson, 1983: 209). Pragmatic presupposition can be thought of, in more dynamic terms, as basic to the progress of communicative discourse. When two people engage in conversation, they share all kinds of background knowledge: not just knowledge specific to the situation in which they find themselves, but general knowledge about the world. For example:

(37) a. John has a sister.

   b. John exists.

(38) a. The Indian he befriended was the chief.

   b. He befriended an Indian.

In these two examples, *a* presupposes *b*. Pragmatic presupposition as mutual knowledge can be shown in the way indicated in the following definition by Levinson (1983: 205):

(39) An utterance A pragmatically presupposes a proposition B iff A is appropriate and only if B is mutually known by participants.

Pragmatic presupposition is not a stable, invariant and context-independent inference. It takes place in the context, and in fact, part of the context. And the background is not stable, but is variable. When people begin to communicate, they share all kinds of

background knowledge, knowledge specific to the present situation and the general knowledge about the world. As the conversation progresses, its context progresses, in the sense that new elements are added to the pool of knowledge that can be taken for granted: the new knowledge becomes the shared knowledge or common knowledge. According to Leech (1981: 288) any utterance will consists of 1) the elements of meaning which are presupposed in that they are already part of the context; and 2) elements which are asserted in that they are not yet part of the context, but with the progressing of communication they will eventually be involved in. The reason is that there is no context-free discourse and even the beginning of a conversation calls for kind of background information. What is more, the common knowledge is not only what the communicators actually share in their minds, but also what the speakers assume that the hearer also share with him.

4.7 Context and Speech Act: Doing Things with Language in Context

All human language activity consists in 'doing these things with those words', that is, uniting what is said with what is done, joining speech activity with world action. Speech act theory is an important theory in pragmatics. It is founded by British philosopher J. Austin and developed by Austin's pupil, American philosopher and linguist J. Searle. The discovery of speech acts has been instrumental in paving the way toward a better understanding of our use of language, Speech act can be explained in a very simple way that people use language to do things. In other words, people use language not only to express themselves by producing utterances containing grammatical structures and words, but also to perform actions via the utterances.

However, not every utterance people produce can serve the purpose to perform action. Besides the utterance itself, the performance of action via utterance is context-dependent. Austin argues that "for some years we have been realizing more and more clearly that the occasion of an utterance matters seriously, and that the words used are to some extent to be explained by the context in which they are designed to be or have actually been spoken in a linguistic interchange"(1975: 100). In metapragmatic terms, the never-asked, yet crucial question can be formulated as: what are the societal (and other "extra-linguistic") conditions that determine whether or not a particular speech act succeeds, is "felicitous" or "happy"?

4.7.1 The Context-Change Theory of Speech Acts

The pragmatic theory of speech acts is a view that treats speech acts as operations on context, i.e. as functions from contexts to contexts. A context must be understood here to be a set of propositions, describing the beliefs, knowledge, commitment, etc. of the participants in a discourse. The basic intuition is very simple: when a sentence is uttered more has taken place than merely the expression of its meaning; in addition, the set of background assumptions has been altered. The contribution that an utterance makes to this change in the context is its speech act force or potential. Thus if you assert that p, you add to the context that you are committed to p.

On this view, most speech acts add some propositions to the context. For example, assertions, promises and orders work in this way. Each of these may be expressed as functions from contexts into contexts very roughly along the following lines:

> (i) An *assertion* that p is a function from a context where the speaker S is not committed *to* p (and perhaps, on a strong theory of assertion, where H the addressee does not know that p), into a context in which S is committed to the justified true belief that p (and, on the strong version, into one in which H does know that p)
>
> (ii) A *promise* that p is a function from a context where S is not committed to bringing about the state of affairs described in p, into one in which S is so committed
>
> (iii) An *order* that p is a function from a context in which H is not required by S to bring about the state of affairs described by p, into one in which H is so required
>
> (Levinson, 1983: 276)

One should note that not all speech acts add propositions to the context; some remove them, for example, permissions, recantations, abolitions, disavowals. Thus, for example, we could characterize the giving of permission as follows:

> (iv) A permission that (or for) p is a function from a context in which the state of affairs described by p is prohibited, into one in which that state of affairs is not prohibited
>
> thus capturing the intuition that it makes no sense to permit what is not prohibited.
>
> (ibid., 1983: 276)

One of the main attractions of the context-change theory is that it can be rigorously expressed using set-theoretic concepts. There is no appeal, as there is in most versions of thesis, to matters of intention and other concepts that resist formalization.

4.7.2 Felicity Conditions: Context for Speech Act

Speech acts can also be seen to be fundamentally context dependent. First, speech acts are dependent on, and contribute to, the context in which speech is taking place. One way of seeing this is to construe speech acts as operations on the context (conceived of as sets of propositions taken for granted): a statement adds a proposition to the context, a question requests that such a proposition is added, a denial removes one, and so on. Note too how a permission presumes that a prohibition would otherwise be in force. Second, the interpretation of a sentence as performing a specific speech act is obviously context dependent.

The utterance has to be produced under certain conventional conditions to count as having the intended illocutionary force. There are certain expected or appropriate circumstances, technically known as felicity conditions, for the performance of a speech act to be recognized as intended. For some clear cases, such as (40), the performance will be infelicitous (inappropriate) if the speaker is not a specific person in a special context (in this case, a judge in a courtroom).

(40) I sentence you to six months in prison.

In everyday contexts among ordinary people, there are also preconditions on speech acts. There are general conditions on the participants, for example, that they can understand the language being used and that they are not play-acting or being nonsensical. Then there are content conditions. For example, for both a promise and a warning, the content of the utterance must be about a future event. A further content condition for a promise requires that the future event will be a future act of the speaker.

The preparatory conditions for a promise are significantly different from those for a warning. When one promises to do something, there are two preparatory conditions: first, the event will not happen by itself, and second, the event will have a beneficial effect. When one utters a warning, there are the following preparatory conditions: it isn't clear that the hearer knows the event will occur, the speaker does think the event will occur, and the event will not have a beneficial effect. Related to these conditions is the sincerity condition that, for a promise, the speaker genuinely intends to carry out the future action, and, for a warning, the speaker genuinely believes that the future event will not have a beneficial effect.

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Finally, there is the essential condition, which covers the fact that by the act of uttering a promise, one thereby intends to create an obligation to carry out the action as promised. In other words, the utterance changes may state from non-obligation to obligation. Similarly, with a warning, under the essential condition, the utterance changes my state from non-informing of a bad future event to informing. This essential condition thus combines with a specification of what must be in the utterance content, the con-text, and the speaker's intentions, in order for a specific speech act to be appropriately (felicitously) performed.

4.7.3 Pragmatic Act: Speech Act Situated in Context

Though speech act theory has contributed a lot to the interpretation of language in use, some linguists find it not so satisfactory. Mey pointed out that "what is wrong with speech act theory, ..., is that it lacks a theory of action" (2001: 214). A recurrent problem with speech acts has been how to isolate and identify them in relation to the actual utterances. There is nothing like a simple, one-to-one correspondence between the words uttered and the speech acts performed (let alone the latter's perlocutionary effects). Speech acts function always in dialogue: requests are granted or refused, promises are accepted or rejected, threats are acknowledged or ignored, questions are (normally) answered and greetings returned; and so on. Rarely, if ever, is a greeting not returned (except by oversight); congratulations are normally not rejected; and so on. Thus, speech acts play a structuring role in the baffling diversity of human talk.

Mey presents and discusses another term, pragmatic act, with a whole chapter (chapter 8) in his book *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. He (Mey, 2001: 227) defines pragmatic act as "contextualized adaptive behavior" and argues that "a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context, as well as (on the basis of past situations and looking ahead to future situations) adapting context to oneself".

According to the canonical theory, certain theoretical conditions have to be fulfilled in order that speech acts can play its role; however, most of these conditions are not met in normal contexts of language use. Once an utterance is produced and placed in context (its linguistic context and entire world context) and its effects have become visible, the speech act is set up and known as a situated, pragmatic act. There is more between speech act and the language user's world than what is contained in speech act philosophy

for the reason that all human language activity eventually underlies the laws of the greater universe of discourse, understood as the entire context of human language in use. Metapragmatics goes beyond the philosophy of speech act: it reflects on the discursive context of the users and examines how is active in the production of human language acts; it also regards the latter as conditioned by this context, inasmuch as they are, in essence, pragmatic acts.

The indirect speech act dilemma is resolved by moving the focus of attention from the words being said to the things being done. In the sense that 'indirectness' is a straight derivative from the situation, and inasmuch as all speech acting depends on the situation, one may say that in a situational sense, there are only indirect speech acts; alternatively, that no speech act, in and by itself, makes any sense. By contrast, a pragmatic approach to speech acting will always raise the question of the *user's possibilities* in a given situation. It is the situation that (along with the active perceptive categories) creates the objects of perception, in accordance with the possibilities afforded by the situation. Applying this to the situated speech acting, we conclude that in using language for communication, what we can (and actually do) understand is what we can afford to hear.

These conditions of society and its implicit and explicit values, norms, rules and laws, and all its particular conditions of life: economic, social, political and cultural are often referred to as the supporting element for all societal structures and the necessary context for all human activity. Discourse is here taken as a *metapragmatic* condition which not only refers to the immediately perceived context of, e.g., a conversation, a job interview, a medical consultation, a police interrogation and so on; it also comprises the hidden conditions that govern such situations of language use. It raises questions such as: how do people use their language in their respective social contexts? What kind of freedom do they enjoy in their use of language, and how is that use constrained?

In using language for communication, what we can (and actually do) understand is what we can afford to hear. The theory of pragmatic acts does not try to explain language use from the inside out, that is, from words having their origin in a sovereign speaker and going out to an equally sovereign hearer (who then may become another sovereign speaker, and so on and so forth). Rather, its explanatory movement is from the outside in: the focus is on the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordance, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as

well as on what is actually being said.

The emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual (or an individual's) speech act, but on characterizing a general situational prototype, capable of being executed in the situation The Israeli linguist Dennis Kurzon, concludes his deliberations by stating that "any utterance may constitute an act of incitement if the circumstances are appropriate to allow for such an interpretation" (1998:28, quoted from Mey, 2001: 211). In studying pragmatic acts, we are not concerned with matters of grammatical correctness or the strict observance of rules. What can be included in pragmatic act is determined solely by the understanding that the individual participants have of the situation, and by the effects that the pragmatic acts have, or may have, in a given context.

4.7.4 Context in Speech Act Interpretation

Speech act theory focuses on illocutionary acts. It views context both as knowledge of conditions and rules and as knowledge of situation. Speech act theory specifies the object of linguistic description as the act of speaking rather than as a structural system. Consequently, context comes into play in terms of felicity conditions for actions. For examples:

(41) I do (take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife) — as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.

(42) I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth — as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.

(43) I give and bequeath my watch to my brother — as occurring in a will.

There are shared qualities in the above-given examples. They all contain a particular type of verb—a performative verb—which realizes a particular action when uttered in a specific context. Such a context can include setting (a wedding ceremony, writing a will), physical objects (a ship, legal documents), and institutional identities; it may also require a particular response. "Performatives require not only the appropriate circumstances" (Austin, 1962), but also the appropriate language: the performative verb in the above examples in the present tense, each sentence has a first person subject, and the adverb *hereby* may modify any of the verbs. Thus, performatives meet certain contextual and textual conditions.

The analysis of how utterances perform speech acts assumes that linguistic competence includes speaker's and hearer's mastery of constitutive rules—a specific kind of background knowledge (or mutual knowledge). It is mutual knowledge of these rules that allows hearers to discover a speaker's intended speech act, and mutual knowledge of abstract rules that makes possible a sense of coherence across utterance. Thus the utterance:

(44) I haven't got a knife.

without contextual information, is a meaningful declarative sentence. But if it is in a restaurant context, the utterance (44) obviously performs an illocutionary act of requesting: "Please bring me a knife".

Situational conditions play an even more decisive role in the case of indirect speech acts (Searle, 1975), where utterance form and illocution do not coincide. "The phone is ringing", analyzed as an indirect speech act, would not be meant as a statement, but as a request to answer the phone. It would certainly be heard as a request instead of a statement, if the utterance situation were such that the addressee could be assumed to hear the phone him/herself. That is to say, they use contextual information, in combination with their knowledge about general principles (e.g., cooperative principle) of communicative acting, to determine the kind of speech act in question. Another example:

(45) A: Uhoh. (Looking in the refrigerator in which there is nothing to eat.)
     B: Okay.

What A says in (45) requires much attention to the physical context in which it occurs: interpreting "Uhoh" as a request relies almost upon how that remark is situated in its physical context. Thus the request receives a response: B agrees to buy something.

(46) A: Could you give me a lift home?
     B: I'm visiting my sister.
     A: That's OK.

In (46), there is no grammatical or lexical link between A's question and B's reply.

But this dialogue has a sort of connection. Both A and B have a mutual knowledge: B's sister lives in the opposite direction of A's home. The utterance: "Could you give me a lift home?" is a question in form, asking about B's ability of giving A a lift home. But actually, it is a request for a lift to A's home. The utterance: "I'm visiting my sister" is a statement in form, but serves as a response to A's request. As a matter of fact, B does not take A's first utterance as question either. He considers it as a request.

In sum, the central contribution of context to utterance interpretation in speech act applications is its contribution to the knowledge (i.e., the conditions and rules) underlying the successful performance and interpretation of speech act types and to the situations. Thus, context in speech act theory is not only a matter of knowledge, but also a set of social circumstances which provide a framework in which utterances are successfully realized as particular acts, more specifically, social situations and their meanings provide the clues that allow hearers to infer the illocutionary force of specific utterances.

4.8 Context and Inference

Pragmatic inference is the process if inferring meaning in a way that cannot be imagined without taking contextual information into account. In this process, the hearers make use of his/her additional knowledge, which can be included in linguistic and non-linguistic context, to make sense of what is not explicit in an utterance. As has been discussed in 4.4, reference is thought of as an act in which a speaker or writer uses linguistic form to enable the hearer or reader to identify something. For successful reference to occur, the role of inference can never be neglected because there is no direct relationship between entities and words, the listener's task is to infer correctly which entity the speaker intends to identify by using a particular referring expressions.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986: 68) inference is the process by which an assumption is accepted as true or probably true on the strength of truth or probable truth of other assumptions. The inference processes involved in comprehension are non-demonstrative inference. Non-demonstrative inference is generally assumed to be based on inductive rules, but there is no well-developed system of inductive logic. The dominant referential means people apply in verbal communication is induction, which was put into words by Sperber and Wilson: "the only logical rules spontaneously

accessible to the human mind are deductive rules" (ibid., 69) These deductive rules play a crucial roles in non-demonstrative inference. The role of deduction plays in non-demonstrative inference lies in the contextual effects which generally taken as "to modify and improve a context is to have some effects on that context" or "contextual implications are contextual effects" (ibid., 109).

Brown and Yule (2000: 266) argued that inferencing is a process which is context-dependent, text-specific and located in the individual reader (hearer). The hearer has no direct access to a speaker's intended meaning in producing an utterance, he often has to rely on a process of inference to arrive at an interpretation for utterances or for the connections between utterances. Such inferences appear to be of different kinds. It may be the case that people are capable of deriving a specific conclusion (47c) from specific premises (47a) and (47b), via deductive inference, but they are rarely asked to do so in the everyday utterance they produce.

(47) a. If he has money, he's happy.

      b. He has money.

      c. So, he's happy.

People are more likely to operate with a rather loose form of inferencing. It may be, of course, that such an inference is wrong, but, as discourse processors, they seem to prefer to make inference which has some likelihood of being justified and, if some subsequent information does not fit in with this inference, they abandon it and form another. As an illustration of this, consider the following example (48):

(48) Diana was doing some housework.

Taking a formal view of the entailments of such a declarative sentence, one would have to accept as entailments a set of sentences which would include the following:

(49) a. Someone was doing some housework.

      b. Diana was doing something.

      c. Someone was doing something.

This view of what one infers from reading (48) will only provide him with a limited

insight into how readers interpret what they read. Most people will respond that they infer from (48) that Diana is a housewife. If sentence (48) is followed later in the same text by sentence (50), they readily abandon their original inference and form another, for example that Diana is a schoolgirl.

(50) Her teachers asked her to help her mother with some housework at home.

In order to capture this type of inference, which is extremely common in the interpretation of discourse, a relatively loose notion of inference is needed based on socio-cultural knowledge.

Comprehension is not only biased by the computation of referents and the production of semantic or pragmatic inferences, it also implies references of a logical kind. The role of context and of order of presentation of information is thus a determining factor in the comprehension of the logical structure of discourse. The pragmatic and logical context of the ongoing action affects the encoding of propositions and their relationships. They had subjects memorize a narrative containing transitive and causal inferences (implicit or explicit).

The processing of polysemic information contained in sentences is also based on inference activity. In the case of ambiguous meanings the reader only determines one of the possible meanings with respect to the context and that he changes meaning later if it proves irrelevant. This fact is shown in the marked rise in mean reading time per letter at the moment when the ambiguity is detected and just afterwards. The context does not diminish the complexity of processing for ambiguous sentences. The role of context is decisive in the interpretation of metaphoric expressions. These writers established the comprehension time for a target sentence for which a prior context of varying length determined either the literal or the metaphorical meaning. Their results revealed an effect of context-induced meaning the extent of which depends precisely on the length of the context.

The relationship between inference and context is primarily one from a pragmatic perspective. However, it is quite natural and reasonable that some discussion will overlap with that of a cognitive view, which was partially discussed in chapter 3. After all, many pragmatists (Sperber and Wilson, 1986; Marmaridou, 2000; Verschueren, 2000; etc.) have been taking psychological and cognitive aspects into account in their works or

theories.

4.9 Summary

It is generally agreed that nobody will doubt and challenge the essential role of context in the sphere of pragmatics as a whole. At the same time, the sub-issues of pragmatics can also hardly be researched without taking context into account. Without context, the study of meaning would shift back to semantics, which is concerned with the study of the conventional meaning of language.

Context serves as a powerful instrument for the pragmatic study of language. It is widely accepted that meaning and context are two fundamental concepts in pragmatics. The former is the ultimate goal of pragmatics or the study of language used in communication. Meanwhile the latter is both an object of and an instrument for pragmatic research. The instrumental function of context lies in that context contribute to the study of the sub-issues within the scope of pragmatics, namely reference, conversational implicature, presupposition, ambiguity, speech act, and inference, and so on. These pragmatic terms will be used to indicate relationships between discourse participants and elements in the discourse. The pragmatic use of these terms is closely tied to the context in which an utterance occurs. Context involves itself in taking an active role of either accounting for these issues or helping solving problems within them.

Most important of all, context functions as an integral componential part of pragmatics Regardless of the fact that there said to be two major approaches concerning pragmatics: one is Anglo-American approach (represented by Levincon and Leech), and the other Euro-Continental approach (represented by Mey and Verschueren). Both approaches are greatly concerned with context and take a considerable effort and extent to cover this topic in their works. One can hardly imagine what pragmatics would be like if context and everything related to it is taken away.

A Pragma-Cognitive Approach to Context

5.1 Introduction

In chapter three and chapter four the notion of context is studied from a cognitive and a pragmatic perspective respectively. However, these two approaches are considerably connected in that they can hardly be applied to account for the study of context without consciously or unconsciously taking the other into consideration when discussing the notion of context via one of the two approaches. It is undoubtedly the case that pragmatic study of language meaning has been being a dominant trend in the study of language meaning in use. However, another trend known as cognitive linguistics, based on psychological theories of language, also is greatly concerned with the study of language meaning. Therefore, the two trends share a lot in common and thus are to be complimentary to some degree in certain aspects which will contribute to the study of cognitive meaning.

A common ground this two trends share is that they both take context into a serious consideration when they turn to the study of language meaning. As has been discussed in the previous chapters, there are a series of concepts concerning context both in pragmatics and cognitive linguistics. This chapter tries to study these pragmatic concepts concerning context in a cognitive approach and the contextual concepts of cognitive linguistics in a pragmatic approach. After that, a new approach to the study of context will be presented: a pragma-cognitive approach, which will involve the consideration of both pragmatic and cognitive perspectives of necessity. As a result, it is possible to reconcile pragmatics and cognitive linguistics by integrating a pragmatic phenomenon in a pragmatic framework.

It becomes necessary to redefine the area of pragmatics as the study of the use of language to structure reality as meaningful experience. This implies a dialectal relation between language and thought. It becomes possible to use this experientialist framework

in order to examine the four major manifestations of pragmatic meaning: deixis, presupposition, speech acts, and implicature. The aim that these four manifestations have in common is to propose a cognitive structure for each phenomenon, in terms of which each is understood and used to structure reality, so that reality is internally experienced and hence reproduced or changed.

5.2 A Cognitive Approach to Pragmatic Concepts Related to Context

Major pragmatic concepts concerning context are the traditional research sphere of deixis, presupposition, speech acts, and implicature. Cognitive linguistics today is represented by three main approaches: the experiential view, the prominence view and the attentional view of language (Ungerer and Schmid, 2001). The experiential view aims to describe what the language users associate with in their minds when they produce words and sentences, and in addition to the words and sentences used, what parts of their experience are involved. The experiential view of language seems to have a superiority over the logical and philosophical view in that it provides a much richer and more natural descriptions of language meanings. This experience involved in language user's mind can safely be regarded as kind of context, or more precisely, cognitive context. This involvement of our experience makes abstract categories like emotions part of the context taken into consideration when accounting for utterance meaning.

5.2.1 An Experiential Approach to Dexis

Deixis is examined as a pragmatic phenomenon encoded by particular linguistic expressions which establish a relationship between the speaker and various contextual parameters of the speech event such as the addressee, time, place, and discourse point in the speech event. Significantly, person and social deixis are hard to establish independently of each other, whereas place, time, and discourse deixis are often expressed by the same terms. Moreover, deictic terms are sometimes used non-deictically. In view of such problems in the description of this phenomenon, the aim of this section is to propose an experiential framework for the analysis of deixis that can account not only for apparent inconsistencies in the system of deictics, but, more importantly, for the conceptual and social relatedness of the basic deictic categories and their metaphorical extensions.

After a detailed discussion of deictic terms and their use in encoding contextual parameters of the speech event, it is claimed that an experiential account of deixis can explain the close, but problematic, relationship between person and social deixis. it can account for the "polysemy" of deictic terms to express space, time and discourse deixis, and it can smooth away the discrepancies between deictic terms and deictic usages of deictic or non-deictic terms. This claim is substantiated by the analysis of deixis as a pragmatic category which is understood in terms of an idealized cognitive model. This model structures a mental space and is responsible for the prototypical structure of this category, which exhibits prototype effects in the understanding of deictic terms and their deictic usages.

An attempt will be made here to analyze the cognitive structure of deixis with a view to accounting for three types of problems that typically arise in traditional approaches to this pragmatic phenomenon. The first problem relates to the relationship between person and social deixis. An experiential approach to this problem requires an explanation of our understanding of these two aspects of deixis as a single conceptualization of reality. The second problem arises from the examination of certain linguistic forms that are used to express time deixis, place deixis and discourse deixis in different situational contexts. It has become clear that there is a strong interrelation between these three types of deixis, of which place deixis has been considered more basic. Thirdly, a rigid classification of deictic terms and deictic usages is problematic for the analysis of the relevant data in that it obscures the non-deictic use of deictic terms as well as the deictic use of non-deictic terms, or other factors that contribute to the deictic or non-deictic understanding of certain expressions.

In the attempt to address these problems, it will be argued that deixis is conceptualized in terms of an idealized cognitive model, that of "pointing out", which structures a mental space and is responsible for the prototypical structure of this category. The proposed account of deixis is based on experiential realism in some fundamental respects. First, the aim of this analysis is to focus on deixis as an instance of language use which structures reality and provides meaningful experience. This aim is compatible with the overall experiential approach to pragmatics. Second, the proposed account crucially rests on prototype theory. Third, the analysis is based on cognitive semantics and the theory of idealized cognitive models, and conceptual metaphor. It is clear from the above

that this description of deixis is based on an existential presupposition of an entity in space and on the speaker's intention to direct the hearer's attention to it. which is realized by the use of the particular construction. Apparently, then, deixis is a grammatical category which reveals our conceptualization of human beings as objects in space and of human language as an object in time. The center of this conceptualization, relative to which all deixis is oriented, is the human being, or in communication terms, the speaker.

5.2.2 An Experiential Approach to Presupposition

Presuppositions are a notorious concept in pragmatics. Attempt here is made to approach the pragmatic phenomenon of presupposition from an experiential perspective. The experiential perspective necessitates not only an adequate description and explanation of presuppositions, but also the uncovering of the cognitive mechanism in terms of which people construct and make sense of truth and reality. Against a rich philosophical and linguistic literature, the semantic and pragmatic nature of presuppositional phenomena will be examined and the variety of problems emerging in their description will be identified and assessed. Within the framework of experiential realism, it will be argued that presupposition triggers, whether they are words or constructions, frame scenes of experience corresponding to idealized cognitive models of these scenes, parts of which are cognitively back-grounded while others are fore-grounded. Back-grounded parts of scenes constitute presupposed material which is triggered by the speaker's use of an expression and may be brought to the foreground by being explicitly negated or suspended during interaction. Importantly, the proposed analysis reveals that presupposition is often motivated by the interactive structure of a speech event. Moreover, as in Fauconnier (1985), it will be shown that certain linguistic constructions build mental spaces, or "worlds", in which presuppositions may hold, or may be inherited, or blocked, in fairly systematic ways. The significance of this analysis lies in the account it provides for the internalization of a process whereby the speaker creates a reality in the mind of the addressee which is difficult to question or refute, thereby distributing communicative power during the speech event.

Either on semantic or pragmatic grounds, these presupposed propositions emerge or fail to emerge in fairly systematic ways in particular contexts. Presupposition is significant in the development of discourse because it appears to be responsible for its

dynamics by distributing social roles to speaker and addressee in a speech event. Presupposed propositions are available to interlocutors as chunks of information that are handled in particular ways in the unfolding of discourse. it seems reasonable to investigate this phenomenon from a cognitive perspective. Furthermore. it will be claimed that this cognitive structure of presuppositions can explain the relationship between back-grounded and fore-grounded information that characterizes their use in discourse as well as their contribution to discourse dynamics.

This perspective necessitates not only an adequate description and explanation of presuppositional phenomena and associated problems, but also, and primarily so, the exposition of the cognitive mechanisms in terms of which people construct and make sense of reality. In view of the above described aim, the nature of presupposition was investigated within current philosophical, linguistic, and cognitive frameworks. More specifically. the examination of the philosophical origins of this phenomenon within a semantic framework showed why presupposition is a problem for any truth-conditional approach to meaning. Moreover, this examination helped clarify the reasons why this phenomenon encompasses a wider variety of linguistic data than could be addressed within such a semantic framework.

A cognitive approach to presupposition, as advanced from different perspectives, proved to be more promising in addressing a variety of issues that seem to be significant in discussing its nature and role in communication. Thus, it was first shown how presupposition triggers, whether words or constructions, may be analysed as framing scenes of experience corresponding to idealized cognitive models, parts of which are cognitively back-grounded while others are fore-grounded. In terms of this analysis it was then possible to explain how certain uses of these words and constructions serve to differentiate such background and foreground relationships and create or cancel presuppositions. Significantly. all this cognitive apparatus was shown to be able to explain how the internalization of presupposition relates to its use in constructing reality and in constructing aspects of the interlocutors' knowledge. Put differently. the proposed account explains how this phenomenon that arises from the use of particular expressions in context is internalized so as to create. maintain or challenge the interlocutors' views of reality. while at the same time assigning to the speaker the power to do so.

5.2.3 An Experiential Approach to Speech Acts

In pragmatic literatures, speech acts is understood in the way they are within socio-cultural frames of knowledge. However, their experiential foundations of speech acts both at a cognitive and a societal level can also be investigated with a view to explaining both how we act with speech and how we internalize institutional and socio-cultural meanings through acting with speech. Speech acts are understood in terms of an idealized cognitive model that is socio-culturally determined. In the absence of speech act verbs, which is more often the case, an utterance may be relativized to such a space in terms of an institutionally determined speech situation and the role of the interlocutors in it. In this case, the situation sets up this space pragmatically.

A speech act is cognitively experienced as an action performed by socio-culturally and institutionally constituted locutionary agents, whose force of locution is exercised upon an object, a state of affairs in this case, in order to bring about a change. Thus, the understanding of speech as action in this particular way contributes to the internalization of socio-cultural and institutional meanings of power and social force.

Cognitive structure of speech acts emphasizes their experiential character and can also explain the interplay between the conventional, intentional and interactional aspects of this category. The idealized cognitive model (ICM) of this category is a source of prototype effects within it. That is, the most prototypical speech acts are socio-culturally and/or linguistically conventional.

As the name suggests, speech acts are the acts we perform in speaking. The analysis of speech acts proposed in this section focuses on our understanding of this pragmatic category as relating to two domains of our experience, namely the action domain and the linguistic domain. It is claimed that the duality of speech acts is reflected in their idealized cognitive model and handled in terms of a set of conceptual metaphors linking the physical action domain with the language domain in terms of the concept of force. It is further argued that conventionality at the social action and linguistic domains is an essential aspect of the idealized cognitive model in terms of which a prototypicality scale develops. It is shown that prototypical speech acts are maximally conventional linguistically and socio-culturally, whereas less prototypical ones are characterized by the interactional framework which primarily involves the social identities of speaker and addressee as conceived and constructed within discoursally activated frames of

experience.

5.2.4 An Experiential Approach to Implicature

To explore the theory of implicature from an experientialist perspective is to show that conventional and generalized implicature may be approached in terms of cognitive principles affecting linguistic structure such as cognitive salience, iconicity and economy. In this regard the understanding of utterances that have been associated with conventional and generalized implicatures in the relevant literature does not require any special rational calculations to be made after their prepositional content has been recovered. Therefore, their understanding is pragmatically grounded, as all language understanding is considered to be in the experiential paradigm, but not truth-conditionally and rationally calculated in two respective stages as in other pragmatic theories. That rational thought plays a role in assessing situations cannot be disputed, but such assessments constitute only one parameter in understanding inferences. Inferences are formed by a co-activation of assessments of situations, cognitive structure and principles, as well as framings of experience in terms of linguistic, socio-cultural or usage conventions.

The cognitive linguistics approach to their analysis of the experiential grounding of inference starts out from the premise that their meaning is contextually rather than logically defined and hence to be characterized in terms of the pragmatic domains of their use.

(51) It was so hot. I drank tons of water.
(52) I'm hungry. I can eat a horse.

It is common knowledge that tons of water cannot be drunk by a person in the space of a hot day, nor a horse can be eaten by a person no matter how hungry he is. But they can be drunk or eaten by many people during a much longer period of time. When the two sentences are uttered by an obviously shivering speaker, the in-compatibility between the statement and reality is a matter of degree. Degree is often lexically coded (i.e. "a little", "tons of", etc.)—which enhances the role of linguistic convention in understanding overstatements and understatements.

The experiential account of inferences in this section has shown that the interaction

of a number of parameters is involved in their understanding. While it is reasonable to assume the operation of communication principles in understanding inferences, it has specifically been proposed in this section that at least some of them are general cognitive principles motivating linguistic structure as well as use (e.g. iconicity and economy). General cognitive principles on the one hand and convention on the other seem to license and constrain possibilities of creating and understanding reality in specific ways while language is being used. On the assumption that inferences relate to interlocutors' understanding of communication itself, it is worthwhile to explore how communication is conceptualized by interlocutors and how its conceptualization affects the understanding of implicit meaning.

On experiential grounds one may argue against Grice's concept of cooperative communication. This concept involves an idealization which is not simply inherited from a methodological tradition in linguistics, but primarily from our understanding of the concept of communication itself. In many cultural tradition, communication has a positive connotation in that it is believed to achieve a state that favourably affects human life. People are often accused of not being "communicative" if they cannot express themselves adequately. It is probably this positive connotation of communication that links to the concept of cooperation, even though it is clear that communication does not always achieve cooperation. In view of the above, and in the framework of experiential realism, Marmarridou (2000) argues that Grice's construal of conversational implicature is based on an idealized cognitive model of linguistic communication which crucially makes reference to a set of social values as these are reflected in and shape everyday language expressions.

Inferences arise on the basis of such things as the cognitive models of communication people share, the interplay of multiple interaction goals, cognitive structure and linguistic material encoding or highlighting socio-cultural knowledge and common ground. More specifically, inferences arise as interlocutors negotiate meaning through their discourse. Inferences arise from cognitive structure (e.g. idealized cognitive models, metonymic and metaphoric models, image schemas, conceptual framings of physically and culturally motivated experience) and cognitive principles (e.g. iconicity and economy), some aspects of which language may encode or highlight, but does not uniquely specify or determine. Therefore, inferences arising from the use of utterances

are indeterminate, while evidence for their content comes from a variety of sources at the same time. There are two assumptions that may be entertained on the basis of the proposed analysis of inferences. First, inferences have been shown to arise from cognitive structure and lexicalized or grammaticalized conceptualizations of experience. Different languages may choose different ways of structuring experience in a direct dialectal relation to correspondingly evolving cultural patterns. In this regard inferences cannot be formed without reference to such cultural patterns.

The second assumption relates to the internalization of the social meaning of discourse. As already mentioned, inferences make reference to specific cultural patterns that relate to linguistic framings of conceptualizations of experience. Experience is here taken to refer both to the physical and the socio-cultural domain of the human condition at large. On the basis of experimental findings reported in Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and of a connectionist theory of parallel processing networks, it may be assumed that the repeated use of such socio-culturally loaded linguistic framings in forming inferences and the corresponding cognitive co-activation patterns create fairly stable routines of neural activation so that socio-culturally related conceptualizations of experience become neutrally entrenched and are hence maintained and reproduced in the human mind.

Grice's theory of communication and implicature was criticized from two different perspectives. From a cognitive perspective the theory was considered not general enough to warrant its professed universality and, from a societal perspective, it was an idealization that could not handle non-cooperative interaction or cultural diversity. The development of Grice's ideas in Relevance Theory was viewed as an answer to cognitively oriented criticisms, while in neo-Gricean pragmatics an attempt was made to address both cognitive and societal concerns by looking more closely at linguistic structure and data from languages other than English.

Moreover, it was shown that Grice's conversational implicatures are inferences crucially involving the interlocutors' assessment of a whole situation including their interaction goals against a framework of socio-cultural knowledge and currently negotiated common ground. These inferences were shown to arise from the co-activation of assessments of situations, cognitive principles and structure, and framings of experience in terms of linguistic, socio-cultural and usage conventions. Moreover, inferences were shown to relate to culturally motivated cognitive models in terms of

which communication is experienced. The proposed analysis of inferences was intended to highlight the complexity of the parameters involved in their understanding and to justify their experiential grounding. It was thus aimed at revealing both cognitive and socio-cultural aspects of pragmatic meaning.

Competing theories of implicature assume that what is meant is rationally calculated on the basis of what is said and the application of universal cognitive principles of communication that are distinct from linguistic structure and meaning. In this context implicatures are conclusions that the addressee draws concerning the speaker's intended meaning. While focusing on such principles, these theories are not concerned with the sociocultural variability or the goal orientation of inferencing as these are reflected in specific instances of verbal interaction. Given the position of cognitive linguistics that the meaning of linguistic expressions is contextually derived during communication, implicatures in this framework are not generated to "patch up" basic, literal meanings under the pressure of communicative principles, since no such meanings occur independently of communication anyway. Instead, it will be argued that inferences arise on the basis of cognitive structure and general cognitive principles such as those of iconicity and economy. These assessments are activated on the basis of culturally motivated and socially shared cognitive models of communication which are thus important in forming inferences during interaction.

Aiming to approach a number of pragmatic phenomena from an experiential point of view does not exhaust either the potential of experiential realism in pragmatic research, or the analysis of the phenomena themselves. With reject to the investigation of this philosophical framework a lot of work is under way aiming to enhance its contribution to linguistic analysis. As regards to the pragmatic perspective on the study of language, it seems that, after more than thirty years of research, alternative models of analysis are still useful in the attempt to explain all the diverse and often apparently conflicting elements that we have become aware of concerning the use of language. Such an alternative model can handle aspects of our emerging knowledge in pragmatics, while at the same time it aims to motivate further questions concerning both experiential realism and pragmatics. Such questions may be ultimately answered, reformulated, or rejected so that others take their place in the research field. In this way the approach can contribute to an ongoing dialogue between pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, leading to a better understanding

of language use and the human mind.

5.3 A Pragmatic Approach to Context-Related Concepts in Cognitive Linguistics

Against the above-mentioned framework, and aiming to draw more attention to linguistic meaning in order to focus on as many aspects of linguistic communication as possible, inferences were analyzed from an experiential point of view. Unlike relevance theory and neo-Gricean pragmatics, cognitive linguistics takes a pragmatic, contextual view of linguistic meaning. Grice's conventional and generalized implicatures are treated as instances of pragmatically grounded linguistic meaning, arising from general cognitive principles and cognitive structure and not requiring any special inferential processing after their prepositional meaning has been understood.

As far as the cognitive pragmatics is concerned, the relevance theory put forward by Brown and Levinson can hardly be neglected. They study the linguistic meaning in a cognitive perspective, what is more, they are far more concerned with the function and influences of cognitive context than any previous linguistics. Some cognitive concepts concerning context such as metaphors, cognitive models, schemata, etc. will be discussed in a cognitive approach in the following sections.

5.3.1 Implicature: A Pragmatic Approach to Metaphors

Metaphors are traditionally regarded as a figure of speech. They are based on the notions of "similarity", or "comparison" between the literal and figurative meaning of an expression. However, to cognitive linguists, they are "powerful cognitive tools, for our conceptualization of abstract categories" (Ungerer and Schmid, 2001). Cognitive linguists maintain that the essence of metaphor lies in an interaction between a metaphorical expression and the context in which is used. Metaphors are abundant in everyday language. Therefore, metaphors are not simply a way of expressing ideas by means of language, but a way of thinking about things.

What if this notion of metaphor is not discussed from a perspective of cognitive linguistics, but from a pragmatic one? Could it be that a sentence termed as "metaphor" in cognitive linguistics can be accounted for from a pragmatic approach? When people

hear the utterances such as "time is money" or "she is a block of ice", they definitely know that time in not money and a person is not ice. They still find utterances like these reasonable and acceptable because they know the utterances mean more that the literal words. In other words, they have implicit meaning, or implicature, in a typical pragmatic term. Language in use is at the same time a necessary instrument of cognition and the expression of cognition. Metaphor, as a language user's application of language, is a pragmatic precondition to understanding the user's context; on the other hand, that context (which includes the other language users) makes it possible for that metaphorical language to be understood. In this way, a pragmatic view of metaphor serves to point the way to a better understanding of our conversational partners. In particular, it tells us what things other groups in society, other classes, other nations, attach weight to and prioritize in their interaction with themselves, with their environment and with the others (including us).

From a pragmatic view to metaphor, we see how the biggest risk of using metaphors is not that they may promote a wrong conception of important issues. Pragmatically speaking, all metaphors are somehow wrong, namely, as long as they are not placed within their proper situation of use, and "rethought" continuously with regard to their applicability or non-applicability. Only the total context of the situation that we want to characterize metaphorically can determine the pragmatic usefulness of a particular metaphor. The inherent danger of metaphor is in the uncritical acceptance of a single-minded model of thinking and its continued, thoughtless recycling, leading to the adoption of one solution as the remedy to all evils, whether their origins are in agriculture, economics or governance in general. The only way to neutralize this danger is to continually go back to the metaphor's roots, and possibly broaden its base or supplement it with other suitable metaphors. Unloading the "loaded weapon" of language by deconstructing its metaphors is thus an appropriate task of pragmatics.

The primary function of metaphoric expressions is to represent our world through seeing and wording. Wording by metaphor thus differs from the standard, referential account of representation, according to which words merely refer to, and label, objects in what is called the "real" world. Metaphors are ways of conceptualizing and understanding one's surroundings; as such, they make up a mental model of our world. Moreover, since the metaphors of a particular language community remain more or less

stable across historical stages and generational differences, they are of prime importance in securing the continuity, and continued understanding, of our language and culture.

Metaphors are essential when it comes to explaining how people, despite differences in class, culture and religion, are able to communicate across geographical distances and historical periods. For this reason, the study of metaphors provides a unique understanding of the human cognitive capability, as well as an indispensable tool for solving problems in language understanding and acquisition. Even so, metaphors are not the last word in wording; nor do they provide the ultimate solution to the problem of human cognition.

Such a view is not only limited; it is also extremely limiting in that it constrains the depth of our metaphoric understanding as a way of wording the world. Even if metaphors can provide some of the solutions to our problems certain pragmatic questions will have to be asked. It is the entire context of our lives that determines which metaphors are available and what our wordings are going to be like; hence metaphors, in order to be pragmatically relevant, should include and respect their own context. An uncritical, purely descriptive view of metaphor may be outright dangerous from a pragmatic point of view.

The way we deal with the world is dependent on the way we structure it metaphorically; conversely, the way we see the world as a coherent, metaphorical structure helps us to deal with that world. Put in another way, metaphors are not only ways of solving problems: they are, in a profound sense, ways of setting the problems. As Donald Schon remarks, in an important early study: "When we examine the problem-setting stories told by the analysts and practitioners of social policy, it becomes apparent that the framing of problems often depends upon metaphors underlying the stories which generate problem setting and set the directions of problem solving" (1979: 255).

A pragmatic approach to metaphor will be based on the assumption that the metaphorical content of utterances will not be derived by principles of semantic interpretation; rather the semantics will just provide a characterization of the literal meaning or conventional content of the expressions involved, and from this, together with details of the context, the pragmatics will have to provide the metaphorical interpretation.

To claim that metaphor is in part pragmatic in nature is not to denigrates or isolate it, but merely to place it firmly among the other more straightforward usages of language that has been described in this thesis that metaphors are exploitation or flouting of the maxim of Quality. Similarly (53) could be both literally and metaphorical true, if said of a place where it was both the case that Freud lived there and also the case that his theories were kept alive there after his death:

(53) Freud lived here.

So we shall have to say that metaphors taken literally either violate the maxim of Quality or are conversationally inadequate in other ways, especially with reference to the maxim of Relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Moreover, it leaves obscure the motivation for, and the expressive power of, metaphors.

More concrete suggestions for a pragmatic theory of metaphor simply do not exist. Sperber & Wilson (1986), experiencing the same sort of difficulties with other figures of speech, conclude that the theory of implicature does little to explain how such utterances are decoded and that the problems lie largely beyond pragmatics in an essentially psychological theory of rhetoric. This is, however, to undervalue the role that the maxims play in the location and recognition of tropes and in the selection of interpretations relevant to the context. It may be conceded, though that the theory of implicature alone cannot produce or predict such interpretations. One important consideration with respect to metaphor is that, it is, perhaps, too much to ask of a pragmatic theory that it should actually give us an account of what is clearly a perfectly general, crucial, and psychological capacity that operates in many domains of human life, namely the ability to think analogically. Taking such a view, there is much in the existing literature on metaphor that could be drawn upon to give an account of metaphor.

The weakness of any paraphrase of a metaphor is much more than any mere omission of the literal semantic content of the term used metaphorically (Searle, 1979: 123); such a paraphrase is talk within a single domain, while a metaphor links two domains in potentially elaborate parallelisms of indefinite depth. Sperber & Wilson (1986) argue that the interpretations of tropes are fundamentally non-propositional and one way of construing this claim is precisely in terms of such domain correspondence.

The correspondence theory of metaphors therefore has the virtue of accounting for

various well-known properties of metaphors: the non-propositional nature, or relative indeterminacy of a metaphor's import, the tendency for the substitution of concrete for abstract terms, and the different degrees to which metaphors can be successful. Let us now, in summary, consider the broad outlines of a pragmatic account of metaphor. First, we need an account of how any trope or non-literal use of language is recognized; and here Grice's maxims, or some reworking of them, may be expected to play a central role. Then we need to know how metaphors are distinguished from other tropes, and here the search for a possible corresponding domain, relevant to the conversation in hand, may be a crucial element; another heuristic may be the absence of all the features associated with other tropes like irony or understatement (e.g. ironies seem typically used to make criticisms).

In short, just as the theory of implicature itself reflects the impingement of general properties of cooperative interaction (not in any way specific to language behaviour) on language structure and use, so a theory of metaphor will crucially involve the impingement of a very general cognitive ability, the capacity to reason analogically, on language structure and use. Just as we may look to empirical studies of interaction to refine our understanding of implicature and pragmatic inference, so we may look to psychological studies of analogical reasoning to provide the basic understanding of metaphorical processing that we currently lack. In both cases of implicature and metaphor, pragmatics is greatly concerned with the interpetation between a linguistic and an essentially independent domain of human experience.

5.3.2 Presupposition: A Pragmatic Approach to Cognitive Models

Cognitive models represent a cognitive, basically psychological view of the stored knowledge about a certain field, and the psychological states of people which are always individual and thus private, descriptions of such cognitive models necessarily involve a considerable degree of idealization. In other words, descriptions of cognitive models are based on the assumption that many people have roughly the same basic knowledge about things like sandcastles and beaches. Cognitive models depend on the culture in which a person grows up and lives. The culture provides the background for all the situations that we have to experience in order to be able to form a cognitive model.

Cognitive model, as the sum of the experienced and stored mental context for a

certain field by an individual, covers the range of immediate context and associated context. Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47) argue that the cognitive context does not remain an isolated mental experience, but is immediately associated in at least two ways with related knowledge stored in long-term memory. They are context-specific knowledge about the categories involved is retrieved and the currently active context calls up other contexts from long-term memory that is somehow related to it. The knowledge people gain from what they experience in everyday life are stored in the mind as interrelated contexts. The knowledge is termed as "cognitive model" by Ungerer & Schmid (2001: 47). According to Ungerer and Schmid (2001), there are two important properties of cognitive models. Firstly, the cognitive models are basically open-ended. As a result, it is very difficult to describe the cognitive model of a domain and that descriptions of cognitive models are never exhaustive, but always highly selective. On the other hand, just as the cognitive models are made up of a series of contexts, cognitive models themselves are not isolated but interrelated.

However, there might be a third property that cognitive models are omnipresent. They are everywhere because in every act of categorization we are referring to one or several cognitive models that we have stored in our mind. Even when we are in a totally unfamiliar situation or come across an unknown object, we are able to form a cognitive model by calling up a similar experience. Just as cognitive models are omnipresent, their influence can never be avoided and they are always there ready to offer help.

From a pragmatic point of view, one of the basic concepts contributing to the study of presupposition is "mutual knowledge (or common ground, or joint assumption)" (Levinson, 1983: 205). In this way, presupposition to a considerable extent is the knowledge mutually known by both parties of the communication, or putting in a cognitive term, cognitive models. In pragmatics, presupposition exists within the whole process of communication, and thus is an essential portion of context. While it is generally acknowledged that the mutual knowledge of participants is a fundamental component of context. What is more, both cognitive models and presupposition can be regarded as the already known and familiar information to the participants, they will undoubtedly necessary in accounting for interpretation of an utterance, conveying of new information, and after all, in achieving a successful communication.

5.3.3 Extra-linguistic Knowledge: A Pragmatic Approach to Schema

Pragmatic context includes linguistic knowledge (co-text) and extra-linguistic knowledge (non-linguistic context). Extra-linguistic knowledge that constitutes context falls into three categories: background knowledge, situational knowledge, and mutual understanding of the participants. In this sense, extra-linguistic knowledge in pragmatic context share a great deal in common with the cognitive notion of schemata, which are said to be "higher level complex (and even conventional or habitual) knowledge structures" (van Dijk, 1981, quoted from Brown and Yule, 2000: 247). It can also be seen as the organized background knowledge which leads people to expect or predict aspects in the interpretation of discourse.

Schemata predispose us to using our socio-cultural background knowledge, which leads us to expect or predict what a speaker really intends to express in our utterance interpretation. Beginning in the 1960s, the role of meaningfulness and organization of background knowledge was particularly emphasized by cognitive psychologists. Communicators are clearly relatable to existing knowledge that they already possess. Furthermore, this existing knowledge base must be organized in such a way that the new information is easily assimilated, or "attached" to the learner's cognitive structure. In the second-language comprehension process, at least three types of background knowledge are potentially activated: (1) linguistic information, or one's knowledge of the target-language code; (2) knowledge of the world, including one's store of concepts and expectations based on prior experience; and (3) knowledge of discourse structure, or the understanding of how various kinds or types of discourse (such as conversations, radio broadcasts, literary texts, political speeches, newspaper and magazine stories, and the like) are generally organized.

The schema theory is using background knowledge to enhance the language comprehension process. The role played by background knowledge in language comprehension is explained and formalized in a theoretical model known as Schema Theory. One of the basic tenets of this theory is that any given text does not carry meaning itself. Rather, it provides direction for listeners or readers so that they can construct meaning from their own cognitive structure (previously acquired or background knowledge). The previously acquired knowledge structures accessed in the comprehension process are called schemata (the plural of schema). The role that one's

previous experience and knowledge has on perception and memory. Other closely related terms are scripts, frames, expectations, and event chains.

When a schema represents a whole situation (such as going to a movie, repairing a car, going on a picnic, buying groceries, doing laundry, etc.) a chain of stereotypic events or features is called up in an individual's mind in association with the situation. This phenomenon using the term script is defined as a structure that describes in a predetermined, stereotypic fashion appropriate sequences of events in a particular context. Comprehension depends, in part, on the schema that is instantiated as one listens. Comprehension, therefore, is not a matter of simply processing the words of the message, but involves fitting the meaning of the message to the schema that one has in mind.

Any one individual's interpretation of a message will be heavily influenced by his or her personal history, interests, preconceived ideas, and cultural background. For second-language learners, distortions in comprehension may be due not only to misunderstandings of the linguistic aspects of the message, but also to mis-readings of the script or schema due to cultural differences. However, still further clarification of the situation is needed since the introduction of a context may involve both focal elements (new information) and presupposed (old information). Most often old information tends to precede new information and the tendency is to answer questions by putting old information before new. The comprehension of a sentence could be expected to be facilitated when the information it contains is presupposed in it although it was focal in the context.

5.4 An Ideal Approach: Pragma-Cognitive Approach to Context

From what has been studied previously in chapter three and chapter four, it is evident that pragmatics and cognitive linguistics share many areas of common interest, especially in that they are both greatly concerned with context and meaning derived from context. The involvement of context in both principles has been contributing to the accounting for the interpretation of meaning within them, the two principles, in return, help and enrich the systematic study of the notion of context.

However, the respective study of context from a pragmatic approach or a cognitive one will find it insufficient in that neither covers all realm and thus work out a ideal and practical solution to the long-term and old problem of exhausting all possible meaning of

an utterance.

For a pragmatist, context they are concerned with includes mutually shared linguistic knowledge, and extra-linguistic which consists of background knowledge, situational knowledge, and mutual understanding of the both sides of communication. The advantage of pragmatic context has been proved that not only language itself but also language users are considered thus pragmatic inference become possible and feasible. Yet its problem seems to be that it fails to cover the inner world of the language users which is inevitably involved in language communication and has a tremendous pact on the efficiency and result of communication.

For a cognitive linguist, context is a mental phenomenon, a cognitive representation of the interaction between cognitive categories or concepts. For them, context is used primarily to account for such cognitive concepts as category, prototype, cognitive model (and cultural model), metaphor, frame and script, etc. The contribution of cognitive linguistics to the study of context is that it provides explicitly the inner world, or psychological aspects of the language users, which are scarcely considered in literatures concerning pragmatic context. Just contrary to the pragmatic approach, problem of cognitive linguistics seems to be that they are less concerned with linguistic context and the external world around the language users.

As a result, pragmatic context and cognitive context is to some degrees complementary to each other, and the combination of a pragmatic approach and a cognitive approach is necessarily put forward as a pragma-cognitive approach to context. In its study of context, a pragma-cognitive approach will take into consideration both the pragmatic factors and cognitive factors that influence the determination and choice of context, especially those factors specific to either pragmatic context or cognitive context. These specific factors are, for example, the mutual understanding of the participants of communication, which is crucial to pragmatic inference, and the psychological or cognitive process in interpretation and understanding of language, which is basic to various cognitive linguistic concepts.

Just as the fact that though a man is able to apply either of his hands to do most things, it is also equally possible for him to make advantage of his right hand to achieve a efficient way and result in doing some of the things, while the left hand in doing others, if the of cognitive approach and pragmatic approach to context are compared to the right hand and the left hand of human being, linguists can apply either cognitive approach or

pragmatic approach to the linguistic phenomenon concerning context. However, it is a common sense that more often than not men prefer to involve both hands in doing things. That is, they often do things with the cooperation of the right hand and the left hand.

This is definitely the case as far as cognitive approach and pragmatic approach are concerned in accounting for language use in context. On the pragmatics specific or cognitive linguistics specific occasions, pragmatic context or cognitive context will be respectively preferable. While on some other occasions the approach chosen to account for some linguistic units, though different in terms, might be quite flexible. These concepts have been discussed previously in the two sections in this chapter. Therefore, it is advisable to put forward a pragma-cognitive approach to the study of context, which will involve the consideration of both pragmatic and cognitive perspectives of necessity.

5.5 Summary

In some areas either pragmatic context or cognitive context may be proved as equally effective and successful. In these cases, they both are able to serve the purpose of accounting for language interpreting and understanding. However, there are problems. On some occasions, only if a pragma-cognitive approach is taken, can the proper context be chosen and thereafter contribute to the achievement of a successful language communication.

An experiential approach to the pragmatic phenomena of deixis, presupposition, speech acts and implicature can account for pragmatic aspects of their meaning and their use in communication. Conversely, a pragmatic approach to the cognitive phenomena will also account for their cognitive aspects of meaning and their interpretation and understanding. A pragma-cognitive approach to language use in context appears to be delimited by the concept of a mental representation of objectively existing reality and the definition of cognitive processing as a deductive mechanism. Linguistic meaning in cognitive linguistics is contextually derived by definition. It has also been supported that understanding meaning is essentially constrained by cognitive structure and principles that all human being share. Therefore, human cognition creates the potential for various conceptualizations of experience which are thus motivated rather than determined by cognitive structure. It is hoped that the cognitive grounding of pragmatic meaning and pragmatic grounding of cognitive meaning will contribute to a better understanding of language use and the human mind.

Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The final decades of 20th century witnessed great achievement in context in linguistic research. In the new century of 21st, there is a tendency that linguists will show growing interests in the study of context. There might not be so many new theories being put forward, but different angles can always be found to view the same issues. Apart from the traditional approaches to the study of context such as the anthropological, pragmatic approaches, some linguists tried to study context from a psychological and cognitive perspective. Context is a dynamic, not a static concept: it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, it enables the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction become intelligible. Being user-oriented, contexts can be expected to differ from user to user, from user group to user group, and hence also from language to language.

Context studied in cognitive linguistics provides a new approach to the study of context. This makes the study of context with a cognitive approach a prosperous expectation. Although context has been studied from various perspectives other than cognitive linguistics, it will undoubtedly benefit a great deal if being put on a cognitive basis. Recently there has been a converging tendency in text linguistics, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics to think of context first and foremost as something that takes place in our mind, as a mental process or even mental activity. From a cognitive point of view, context is something inside, lying in the mind. Pragmatic inference does not necessarily rely on the concrete context because the related concrete context has been internalized and cognized by language users via their experience or mind, and the consequence of the internalization and cognition of contextual factors is the cognitive context in the mind.

Context studied from a pragmatic perspective, though traditional to some extent, can

never be neglected. A pragmatic view has a big advantage: it eliminates a number of potentially irrelevant factors from the scope of our investigation since it limits the context to some relatively fixed issues that are grammatically expressed, to the exclusion of any wider, extra-linguistic contexts. Context is about understanding what things are for; it is also what gives our utterances their true pragmatic meaning and allows them to be counted as true pragmatic acts. Context is vitally important not only in assigning the proper values to reference and implicature but also in dealing with other pragmatic issues. Pragmatically speaking, the decisive importance of context is that it allows us to use our linguistic resources to the utmost, without having to spell out all the tedious details every time we use a particular construction. However, the observation that language operates in force of contextually implied conditions and assumptions is by no means restricted to the above cases.

6.2 Application: Left-Right Hand theory

What if cognitive context and pragmatic context are compared to both hands of human being? Since context functions as an instrument to the interpretation of meaning in language, it can be argued that cognitive context and pragmatic context to language is what the left hand and right hand to human. There are some things that can be done with either left hand or right hand, without much difference in effects and efficiency; there are some other things that can be done more effectively and efficiently with left hand than with right hand, or vice versa; but there are a great many things that can be most effectively and efficiently done with the cooperation of both hands. This is the case as far as cognitive and pragmatic contexts are concerned.

For some utterances, cognitive context may work, or pragmatic context may as well work. On the one hand, cognitive context focuses on the internal and implicit factors. If an utterance is put into a cognitive context, or in other words, apply cognitive context to the interpreting of the utterance. all the knowledge or information stored in the cognitive world related to this utterance will be activated and then chosen. On the other hand. if pragmatic context is applied to the interpretation of an utterance, many external and explicit parameters will be involved. For example, parameters such as participants and their identity. role, status. the atmosphere and surroundings of the utterance. time and place of the conversation. ethnographical and cultural background. assumptions about

what the participants know or their counter-part know, and so on, will be inevitably taken into consideration.

For some utterances, cognitive context may be preferred and it accounts for the interpretation of this utterance efficiently; while for others, pragmatic context will be chosen and turned out to be more satisfactory. When pragmatics was not on the horizon, linguists apply semantic analysis in language interpretation only to find that there are some aspects of meaning in front of which they are disabled. They did not find the way out until the notion of context is introduced in and since then the study of meaning in context is known as within the sphere of pragmatics. But before long linguists find the context are not always explicitly there together with the utterance. Some contexts are stored implicitly in the mind and they do contribute to the interpretation of the language. This is perhaps the reason why cognitive linguistic finds its popularity in the world of language. Under this condition, the language interpreters will be free to choose between cognitive context and pragmatic context according to their preference as long as what they choose will contribute to the interpretation of utterances they produced or heard.

However, for most utterances in many cases, the combination of cognitive context and pragmatic context may work best to account for the interpretation of language. It is self-evident that the stressing of one aspect of the two will necessarily cause the weakening or even a thorough neglecting of the other. If the utterance interpreter intentionally consider only those aspects such as participants' identity, status, role, and the time, place, surroundings, and so on, he will not realize that he can apply what he has experienced and stored in his mind. On the contrary, if an interpreter interprets every utterance with the help of his experience and knowledge in the mind, without taking other pragmatic factors into consideration, he is destined to misinterpret and hence misunderstand the utterance.

The fact is that many people in communication, in most cases, are able to interpret and understand what is being conveyed from the other party. This is probably because they consciously or unconsciously apply both cognitive and pragmatic context to their interpretation. Pragmatic context is changing to a certain degree with the progressing of the verbal communication. Yet, cognitive context changes in a more dramatic way. It is magically surprising that cognitive context seems to be self-activated and "present" itself to the interpreters when it is necessary in the course of communication. After all, the

cooperation and combination of cognitive context and pragmatic context in language interpretation is like the cooperation of human's both hands: the left hand knows when and where it must reach out to offer an aid to the right hand in order to achieve a perfect performance; and it is absolutely the case as far as the right hand is concerned.

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