The Role of Context in Utterance Interpretation

in Discourse Analysis

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Dedication

To the fountain of hope

Our parents

To the people who paved our way of science and knowledge,

All our distinguished teachers

\   *To the taste of the most beautiful moments with our friends*

We dedicate this research

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Abstract

Discourse investigation is foremost in the transaction and development of importance of the social world. Discourse cursive analysts trust that fact is a verbose development and that the world can be spoken to in a boundless number of ways. Context is a focal idea in the examination of discourse and collaboration in all the real research conventions in connected and sociolinguistics. Early linguistics did not show much affectability to it and tended to examine articulations in detachment and without reference to context.

This paper consists of two chapters . Chapter one deals discourse analysis, definitions of context , classifications of context and utterances interpretation. Chapter two fouces on the role of context.

Finally the conclusion sums up the findings of this study.

Chapter One

1.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is characterized as the analysis of language 'past the sentence'. This stands out from sorts of analysis more average of present day etymology, which are primarily worried about the investigation of punctuation: the investigation of littler bits of language, for example, parts of words (morphology), sounds (phonetics and phonology), which means (semantics), and the request of words in sentences (grammar). Discourse investigators examine bigger parts of language as they stream together (Johnstone ,2002:21).

Some discourse experts look at the bigger discourse setting with a specific end goal to see how it influences the importance of the sentence.Two sentences taken together as a solitary discourse can have implications not quite the same as every one taken independently. Quickly , one can envision two autonomous signs at a swimming pool: "Please utilize the latrine, not the pool," says one. Alternate declares, "Pool for individuals as it were." If one respect each sign freely, they appear to be totally sensible. Be that as it may, taking them together as a solitary discourse makes one backpedals and update his elucidation of the main sentence after he has perused the second (Tannen,2005:142).

Discourse analysis might be characterized as the investigation of language

saw informatively as well as of correspondence saw linguistically.Any more itemized explaining of such a definition normally incorporates reference to ideas of language being used, language above or past the sentence, language as significance in association, and language in situational and social setting (Ibid.).

It appears to be extremely sensible to scrutinize the requirement for such an approach since it has turned out to be common to depict language in phonetic formal or utilitarian terms and since there has been a long convention of investigating systematicity inside language and deciding regularities at all its levels. The appropriate response lies in what constitutes 'learning of language'. It is plain to each one that any language client intuitively has the bent for building sentences out of their minor segments, i.e. sounds, morphemes, words… , and in addition conceivable the inclination for deciphering them. This grammatical information of sentence structure, in the Chomskyan sense, is a component one can't manage without while using language (Schiffrin,1994:20– 39).

Carter (1993:36) outlines that as a rule of normally created language, arrangement of grammatical sentences may not be vulnerable to comprehension, while grammatically wrong ones might be effectively interpretable. At the end of the day, there are parts of language that can't be represented in grammatical terms: some sort of systematicity is thought to rise above the syntax of sentences. "The sentences that make up a content should be grammatical however grammatical sentences alone won't guarantee that the content itself bodes well" (Nunan, 1993:2).

This exhibits a few standards unmistakable from syntax rules are grinding away. Yule (1985:68) presumes that accomplishing a translation of the messages one gets and making his possesses messages interpretable doesn't involve semantic

shape and structure alone. Language clients know more than that: they know 'discourse' rules.

١.٢ Definitions of Context

A word, when used in a piece of text, usually indicates only one meaning out of multiple meanings it inherently carries. Although it is still unknown to us how does it happen, the general observation is that it is the context that determines which meaning of the word should be considered. This observation, as a logical consequence, leads us to identify the context responsible for meaning variation of a word. The general conviction is that identification of context depends heavily on intuitive ability of a language user(van Dijk,2008:352).

Context refers to an immediate linguistic environment (rarely detached or isolated) in which a particular word occurs. Since it is not always explicit, it may be hidden within the neighboring members of a word used in a piece of text. If we cannot extract the information relevant to the meaning of a word from its immediate linguistic environment, we need to take into account the topic of discussion as a sphere of necessary information (Ibid.).

Different linguists seek to define context from different point of view in order to answer questions encountered in their own fields, and to support their own ideas and theories. Widdowson (2000:126), when focusing his study on language meaning, thought "context" as "those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning." He further pointed out, "in other words, context is a schematic construct... the achievement of pragmatic meaning is a matter of matching up the linguistic elements of the code with the

schematic elements of the context." (Ibid.).

When Cook was studying the relationship between discourse and literature, he took "context" into consideration as well. In his definition, context is just a form of knowledge the world and the term can be used in a broad and narrow sense. In the narrow sense, it refers to (knowledge of) factors outside the text under consideration. In the broad sense, it refers to (knowledge of) these factors and to (knowledge of) other parts of the text under consideration, sometimes referred to as "co-text". (Cook, 1999:24).

When studying reference and inference, George Yule also took "context" into account. He provided us with a somewhat general definition, "Context is the physical environment in which a word is used." (Yule, 2000, :128)

1.3 Classifications of Context

Opinions on how to classify context vary from one to another. Some linguists divide context into two groups, while some insist on discussing context from three, four, or even six dimensions. According to different circumstances mentioned in the above definitions, context divides into linguistic context, situational context and cultural context.

1.3.1 Linguistic Context

Linguistic context refers to the context within the discourse, that is, the relationship between the words, phrases, sentences and even paragraphs. Take the word "bachelor" as an example. One can't understand the exact meaning of the

sentence "He is a bachelor." without the linguistic context to make clear the exact meaning of this word (Dash,2005:12).

Linguistic context can be explored from three aspects: deictic, co-text, and collocation. In a language event, the participants must know where they are in space and time, and these features relate directly to the deictic context, by which one refers to the deictic expressions like the time expressions now, then, etc., the spatial expressions here, there, etc., and the person expressions I, you, etc... Deictic expressions help to establish deictic roles which derive from the fact that in normal language behavior the speaker addresses his utterance to another person and may refer to himself, to a certain place, or to a time (Ibid:13).

A Linguistic Context is the context defined purely in terms of what follows or what precedes a particular segment afford sound change. In other words, a linguistic context will not take into account the social, situational aspects, or the psychological aspects. A linguistic change (for e.g. a sound change) is explained solely in linguistic terms, without explaining why a sound change is taking place, or what prompts the change. But such changes do take place, irrespective of the speaker's social standing, or educational status, or the psychological state of mind. Every language shows changes in all aspects of its structure as time passes (Pennycook, 1994:116).

There are changes that require a social motivation, which means those that lack that social motivation will not show that change in their speech.In recent years, some linguists began to pay attention to the previous discourse co-ordinate. Levis introduces this co-ordinate to take account of the aforementioned sentences. It is the case that any sentence other than the first in a fragment of discourse, will

have the whole of its interpretation forcibly constrained by the preceding text, not just those phrases which obviously and specifically refer to the preceding text. The interpretations of the words which occur in discourse are constrained by their co-text (Widdowson, 1995: 160) .

1.3.2 Situational Context

Situational context, or context of situation, refers to the environment, time and place, etc. in which the discourse occurs, and also the relationship between the participants. This theory is traditionally approached through the concept of register, which helps to clarify the interrelationship of language with context by handling it under three basic headings: field, tenor, and mode (Khabou et al ٢٠١٢:٣٠).

١.٣.٢.١   Field of Discourse

Field of discourse refers to the ongoing activity. One may say field is the linguistic reflection of the purposive role of language user in the situation in which a text has occurred. Tenor refers to the kind of social relationship enacted in or by the discourse.

١.٣.٢.٢   The Notion of Tenor

The notion of tenor, therefore, highlights the way in which linguistic choices are affected not just by the topic or subject of communication but also by the kind of social relationship within which communication is taking place(Ibid.) .

Situational context describes the reason why something is occurring and the appropriate behavior and actions associated with the situation. It is one of the types of context that influence communication. Context is the situation, circumstances, or specific setting in which an event occurs. Typically used in regards to communication, the situational context of speech influences what is considered socially appropriate and how the message is received.

١.٣.٢.٣Mode

Mode is the linguistic reflection of the relationship the language user has to medium of transmission. The principal distinction within mode is between those channels of communication that entail immediate contact and those that allow for deferred contact between participants (Ibid:5) .

1.3.3 Cultural Context

Cultural context refers to the culture, customs and background of epoch in language communities in which the speakers participate. Language is a social phenomenon, and it is closely tied up with the social structure and value system of society. Therefore, language can not avoid being influenced by all these factors like social role, social status, sex and age, etc (Pennycook, 1994:118).

Cultural context is the context one hears about most. It represents what the majority of employees believe about the organization. It can be tightly aligned with the structural context or in can be wildly out of sync. While structural context reflects what the organization says about how it works, cultural context typically is

a better reflection of how it really does work. Cultural context can also be difficult to understand because most large companies are made up of many subcultures (Martin and Rose,2003:53).

1.3.3.1 Social Roles

Social roles are culture-specific functions, institutionalized in a society and recognized by its members. By social status, we mean the relative social standing of the participants. Each participant in the language event must know, or make assumptions about his or her status in relation to the other, and in many situations, status will also be an important factor in the determination of who should initiate the conversation.

1.3.3.3 Sex and Age

Sex and age are often determinants of, or interact with, social status.

1.3.3.4 Social Status

The terms of address employed by a person of one sex speaking to an older person, may differ from those which would be employed in otherwise similar situations by people of the same sex or of the same age (Martin and Rose,2003:53).

1.4 Utterances Interpretation

In spoken language analysis, an utterance is the smallest unit of speech. It is a continuous piece of speech beginning and ending with a clear pause. In the case of oral languages, it is generally but not always bounded by silence. Utterances do not exist in written language, only their representations do. They can be represented and delineated in written language in many ways (Cameron, 2001:10–13.).

In oral/spoken language utterances have several features including paralinguistic features which are aspects of speech such as facial expression, gesture, and posture. Prosodic features include stress, intonation, and tone of voice, as well as ellipsis, which are words that the listener inserts in spoken language to fill gaps. Moreover, other aspects of utterances found in spoken languages are non-fluency features including: voiced/un-voiced pauses (like "umm"), tag questions, and false starts when someone begins their utterances again to correct themselves. Other features include: fillers ("and stuff"); accent/dialect; deictic expressions, which are utterances like "over there!" which need further explanation to be understood; simple conjunctions ("and," "but," etc.); and colloquial lexis which are everyday informal words (Dey,2001:5).

Utterances that are portrayed in writing are planned, in contrast to utterances in improvised spoken language. In written language there are frameworks that are used to portray this type of language. Discourse structure (which can also be found in spoken language) is how the conversation is organized, in which adjacency pairs - an utterance and the answer to that utterance - are used. Discourse markers are used to organize conversation ("first," "secondly," etc.) (Dourish,2004:19).

Chapter Two

The Role of Context

Contexts resemble other human encounters at every minute and in every circumstance such encounters characterize how we see the present circumstance and how one act in it. It is a major assignment for the humanities and sociologies as a rule, and for talk examines specifically, to demonstrate how precisely individuals content and talk relies upon and impacts such contexts (Van Dijk,2008:4).

A. Taking out Ambiguity

As Song(2010:2) vagueness alludes to a word, expression, sentence or gathering of sentences with in excess of one conceivable translation or importance. There are two sorts of ambiguities: lexical vagueness and basic equivocalness. Lexical uncertainty is for the most part caused by homonymy and polysemy. For instance, these four words, right, custom, compose and wright, are altogether articulated as [rait], yet they are very unique in relation to each other. Let"s likewise observe the accompanying sentence:

– They passed the port at midnight.

This sentence is lexically questionable. In any case, it would regularly be clear in a given setting which can demonstrate the significance of "port", which means either harbor or a sort of invigorated wine. Basic uncertainty emerges from the linguistic investigation of a sentence or an expression. For instance, the expression young fellows and ladies can be examined as either "youthful/men and ladies/" (i.e. both are youthful) or "/young fellows/and ladies" (i.e. just the men are youthful) (Ibid.).

For instance following sentence:

I like Bill more than Mary.

This sentence can signify "I like Bill more than Mary does." or "I like Bill more than I like Mary." In such cases, a given setting can show what the sentence precisely implies.

B. Demonstrating Referents

To stay away from redundancy, one as a rule utilize such words like I, you, he, this, that, and so forth to supplant some thing expressions, or words like do, can, should, and so on. to supplant verb expressions, or at that point, there, and so forth to supplant word intensifying expression of time and place. Accordingly, setting is of incredible significance in understanding the referents of such words (Werth,1999:31).

The accompanying discourse is composed by the notable language specialist, Firth:

– Do you figure he will?

– Well, his siblings have. They maybe figure he needn't.

C. Identifying Conversational Implicature

The term conversational implicature is utilized by Grice to represent what a

speaker can infer, propose, or mean, as unmistakable from what the speaker truly says and it is concluded based on the conversational importance of words together with the specific situation, under the direction of the Cooperative Principle and its four adages, i.e., Quantity, Relation and Manner (Gumperz,1981:23).

At the point when individuals speak with each other, they don't generally hold fast to the four adages. The infringement of a proverb may bring about the speaker passing on, notwithstanding the strict importance of his utterance, an extra significance, which is conversational implicature (Ibid.).

(The husband has quite recently completed dinner and needed to stare at the TV, allowing his wife to sit unbothered to gather the dishes and wash dishes.)

Wife: Shouldn't you enable me to do some housework?

Husband: I have labored for nine hours.

Externally, the husband's answer has nothing to do with the wife's inquiry. He abuses the adage of significance. As a matter of fact, one must accept that the husband is sticking to the Cooperative Principle and means something more than the strict importance. The extra significance, in particular, conversational implicature, is that he has labored for an entire day, so he is excessively worn out, making it impossible to help his wife to do any housework (Ibid.).

Once the examination of planned importance goes past the strict significance of an utterance, an immense number of issues must be considered. In talk examination, conversational implicature is realistic and is incompletely gotten from the conversational or strict significance of an utterance, created in a particular

setting, which is shared by the speaker and the listener, and relies upon their acknowledgment of the Cooperative Principle and its proverbs. Presently let us see another case (Grice,1975:35).

(The manager of an eatery gives two pennies to an impermanent laborer who does washing for him.)

Supervisor: Here is your compensation, kid!

Laborer: I have labored for nine hours.

In this conversational piece, one can find that the second utterance is the same as the past illustration, in particular, they have a similar strict significance. In addition, they both appear to be unimportant to the utterance of the primary speaker and we can likewise accept that the saying of pertinence is intentionally damaged. At that point would we be able to infer that the two utterances have the same conversational implicature? No. It is preposterous for the laborer to tell his manager that he is excessively worn out, making it impossible to work for him, when his supervisor gives him the compensation that does not coordinate his nine-hour diligent work (Ibid.).

The genuine conversational implicature of his utterance is that the manager ought to have given him more pay since he had worked such quite a while. One must focus on the changed setting: the relationship of two speakers has changed from wife-husband to supervisor specialist; the status has changed from equivalent to predominant second rate; and the pre-etymological setting has changed from

words for a demand of doing housework to that for an activity of giving pay. The conversational implicature is changed as the setting changes. The impression of a conversational implicature can not let aside the particular setting where the talk happens (Ibid:36).

Conclusion

Moving starting with one layer of language then onto the next, etymologists consider the discourse level the zenith of semantic depiction. The undertaking of discourse investigation is to reveal the regularities of language that outperform the sentence the conventional 'most noteworthy' unit of portrayal and that include the

setting of its utilization. Discourse Analysis is interdisciplinary in nature and has applications in a few fields to which language has a specific pertinence.

In linguistics, context conveys gigantic significance in disambiguation of implications and in addition in understanding the genuine importance of words. In this manner, understanding the setting turns into a vital undertaking in the region of connected linguistics, computational linguistics, lexical semantics, intellectual linguistics, and additionally in different territories of linguistics as s context triggers variety of significance and supplies profitable data to comprehend why and how a specific word shifts in importance when utilized as a part of a bit of content.

In a word, context assumes a vital part in discourse investigation. A discourse and its setting are in cozy relationship: the discourse explains its specific circumstance and the setting translates the importance of articulations in the discourse. The information of context is a preface of the examination of a discourse. When one ponder and break down a discourse, one should remember that no unique circumstance, no discourse and one ought not disregard the related context of a discourse.

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