

Lexical Pragmatic Study of Narrowing in Children's Interpretation: Relevance Theoretic Approach

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Abstract

This contribution studies lexical narrowing in children's interpretation of modified words where by the communicate meaning vary from their linguistically encoded meaning. According to Wilson and Kolaiti (2017), adults and children can understand the meaning of new and unfamiliar words in contexts. The study, then, aims to identify the role of lexical narrowing in children's interpretation of linguistic phenomena as lexical cloning, polysemy, auto-hyponymy and narrowing the adjective in adjective-noun combination which present a challenge to lexical semantics. The study employs relevance theoretic approach to lexical narrowing to account for children's interpretation of certain extracts taken from selected English children's short stories. Based on the data of analysis, it is found that lexical narrowing plays a significant role in the interpretation of these phenomena relying on certain contextual elements that guide children's interpretation.

Key Words: Lexical narrowing, lexical cloning, polysemy, auto-hyponymy and narrowing the adjective in adjective-noun combination

1. Introduction

The core concern of lexical pragmatics is that the linguistic encoded meaning underdetermines the speaker's meaning. As a relatively new pragmatic field, lexical pragmatics studies the lexical pragmatic processes that account for the distinction between linguistically encoded meaning and communicated meaning on the level of words and phrases. They correspond to two types of pragmatic processes of comprehension. Two varieties of lexical pragmatic processes can be realized: lexical narrowing and lexical broadening. These processes have been tackled by different pragmatically oriented approaches based on Grice's principles and maxims as their starting point (Grice 1967). Neo Gricean approaches to lexical pragmatics mostly exemplified by Horn (1989) and Levinson (2000), focused on the interpretation pragmatic phenomena by means of lexical narrowing. Post Gricean approaches, on the other hand, accounted for the two varieties. Yet, they emphasized lexical processes which engaged in the interpretation of non-literal cases as Wilson (2003: 274) argues.

1. Literature Review

It is one of the most prominent fields of research in modern pragmatics that has attracted the attention of many scholars in linguistics, philosophers and cognitive scientists. Blutner (1998:115) states that "lexical pragmatics is a research field that tries to give a systematic and explanatory account of pragmatic phenomena that are connected with the semantic underspecification of lexical items". Huang (2009:118), in turn, considers lexical pragmatics "the systematic study of aspects of meaning-related properties of lexical items that are modified in use, i.e. that part of lexical meaning which is parasitic on what is coded but is not part of what is coded". Moreover, lexical pragmatics is rather recent field of study that vastly developed in

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linguistics during the last decades of the twentieth century as a result of semantics/pragmatics distinction (Sperber and Wilson, 2002:2). Furthermore, it is emerged as a necessity to provide solutions to problems raised in lexical semantics by contextualists especially the distinction between pragmatics and mental lexicon and the phenomenon of *semantic underdetermination*. Thus, lexical pragmatics tries to offer an adequate explanation to different linguistic phenomena relevant to word meanings (Carston, 2002:3).

More precisely, the significance of lexical pragmatics is that it provides an agenda to study pragmatic phenomena involved to bridge the gap between the encoded and communicated meanings of a lexical item. It is justified by two chief observations; different uses people can perform (literally and non-literally) of the same words in different contexts, and that children and adults can understand the meaning of new and unfamiliar words once they uttered in context. This agenda is essentially based on *conversational implicature* (henceforth, CI) to stipulate a plausible representation of contextual and encyclopedic knowledge. In effect, such considerations have led pragmatists to study pragmatic mechanisms on the level of words and phrases (Wilson and Kolaiti (2017:147).

1.1 Words and Concepts

Accounting for logical properties and encyclopaedic entries demand accounting for the relationship between words and concepts which explains how words mean and communicate. Concepts are flexible schemas which are structured together in human mind and vary within individuals. For Carston (2002:321), concepts which are sometimes called 'atomic'; "have an address or node in memory that provides some ordered storage of information and allows for procedural retrieval". Moreover, Eco et al. (1988:101) maintain that concepts are structured bundles of stored knowledge representing human experience concerning events, objects, settings, etc. Arranging these aspects into constant categories, humans would store, remember and recognize them as unique experience. Owing to this fact, one could remember his experience and all the relevant reactions and thoughts. Sperber and Wilson (1986:92-93) argue that being incorporated to the atomic concept view entails an 'address in memory' allowing numerous information categorized in three entries: logical, encyclopedic and lexical. The logical one consists of a set of logical properties of the concept which define its relation to other concepts. The encyclopedic entry encloses the concept denotation in addition to information about cultural beliefs and personal experiences. Its access depends on the time and the frequency of use of the item. Unlike the logical entry, encyclopedic entry is characterized by being open-ended and distinctive among users; no speakers have the same entry. The last entry is the lexical entry. It contains linguistic information about lexical item like its phonetic and grammatical structure. It can be illustrated below by Vega Moreno (2007:46):

Conceptual address: BIRD □□□□

Linguistic entry: Noun; [bɜ: d]

Logical entry: one-way inferential links to other concepts.□□

Encyclopedic entry: information about the denotation: (flies, it has feathers, it typically sings, it can be of different colours, etc.)

It is worth observing that not all words have these three entries. Proper names, for example, are believed to have no logical entries. Likewise, some have no words rather they can be represented by a phrase as UNCLE-OR-AUNT (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:3 and Moreno, 2007:46). Moreover, within RT, words are considered to be heterogeneous. Some determine full-fledged

concepts which can be pragmatically inferred, whereas others encode schematic semantically incomplete concepts 'pro-concepts'. Sperber and Wilson (1995: 185-200) claim that pro-concepts are typically words void of encyclopedic information; they encode procedural meaning as pronouns, discourse connectives, tense, aspect etc. functioning as constraints to pragmatic inference (Carston, 2010:166).

1.2 Lexical Narrowing

Lexical narrowing is a process whereby a lexical expression is used to convey a more restricted meaning than its linguistically encoded meaning. More precisely, Carston and Powell (2006:283) define it as a process whereby the communicated meaning of a word is a proper subpart of its linguistically encoded meaning. This entails that the literal meaning of a word is in fact maintained in narrowing and the logical properties of the lexical concept which the word denotes, have not been dropped, but rather modified. Logical, encyclopedic, and lexical entries of concepts. The following two examples presented by Wilson (2003: 274) to illustrate this phenomenon:

- (1) All doctors drink.
- (2) Bill has a reputation.

The verb 'drink' is frequently used to mean 'drink liquid', but in (1) It is used to mean more specific meanings such as 'drink alcohol' or 'drink a significant amount of alcohol'. Similarly, 'reputation' in (2) is interpreted according to the utterance context to mean either 'good reputation' or 'bad reputation'.

This phenomenon has been differently managed by lexical pragmatic approaches; according to neo Gricean approaches, two types of narrowing are to be realized: Q-implicature-based lexical narrowing and I-implicature-based lexical narrowing. The former signifies the use of 'the superordinate term of 'hyponemic taxonomy'. That indicates the use of a specific narrower hyponym as Horn (2004:541-2) highlights that 'finger' in (3) is narrowed to disregard its hyponym 'thumb':

- (3) I hurt my finger.

The same thing can be said about 'rectangle' in (4) which is interpreted as 'discount square' in:

- (4) a. John folded the newspaper neatly into a rectangle.
- b. +>John did not fold the newspaper neatly into a square.

The latter is often viewed as a case of I-implicature, involving 'a default inference to stereotypical interpretation'. As Levinson (2000:37-8, 112) explicates, narrowing is a type of default inference managed by I-heuristic; "what is expressed simply is stereotypically exemplified". I-heuristic is said to be directed by I-principle guiding the hearer to expand the contextual effects provided. The I-heuristic might account for it by narrowing with a case of stereotypical interpretation as in:

- (5) John's book is good.

+> the one he read, wrote, borrowed, as appropriate.

Wilson and Carston (2007:3) assume that within RT framework, narrowing is far more innovative and flexible than what neo Gricean described as. It involves the construction of occasion-specific concepts on the bases of cognitive and contextual effects that lead the hearer to narrow the interpretation of a lexical item in different degrees and in different directions. They consider the following illustrations:

- (6) Buying a house is easy if you've got money.

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(7) Churchill was a man.

To understand (6) the hearer may suggest that the speaker makes a blatantly false assumption that buying a house is easy for anyone with any amount of money he has. The interpretation of the utterance is narrowed to produce a more reliable and relevant interpretation as claiming that buying a house is easy for someone with a proper amount of money. Considering the interpretation of (7), narrowing is proved to take place in different directions; in different situations and contexts. The utterance can be narrowed to give more than an interpretation depending on the context in which it occurs.

Equally, Wilson and Koliati (2017:156) show that narrowing is directly influenced by encyclopedic information and pragmatic expectations without guiding by default interpretation stage. It is a local process in the sense that the narrowed proposition is not necessarily stronger than the one derived from (Sperber and Wilson, 2002:11-5).

1.3 Narrowing Cases

Within lexical pragmatics literature, the following phenomena characterized by neo Gricean pragmatics involved narrowing in their interpretation:

(i) Narrowing the Adjectives in Adjective-noun Combinations

According to the classical view of semantics, the intersectional operation view forms the meaning of adjectives-noun combinations that entails the meaning of the compound expression is resulted from the meaning of the adjective and the meaning of the noun. This view is challenged by lexical pragmatic approaches, Blutner (1998:118) proposes that in deducing the meaning of larger combinations, the meaning of the adjective is loosed and its contribution to the meaning of the compound varies from context to context. The adjective 'brown' in a 'brown cow' is brown on the most of its body's surface, in a 'brown book' it is brown if the color of its cover is brown, in a 'brown newspaper' it is brown if its pages are brown. Basing on such examples, Blutner (2004: 102) resolves that interpreting the meaning of compounds does not necessarily resulted from the meaning of the modifier and the head even though the same adjective is used. Within relevance theoretic approach, it is demonstrated that narrowing in adjective-noun combinations is flexible. They are interpreted differently relied on contextual aspects in a variety of cases. That necessarily means that in the absence of relevant contextual expectations, hearers will narrow the interpretation to some extent or leave it open and do not make the effort to narrow at all (Wilson and Koliati, 2017:156).

(ii) Auto-hyponymy and Hyponymy

Cruse (1986:110) remarks that this case involves the use of a word with its default subordinate reading; general meaning, as in the use of the verb 'drink' in (1) above to indicate general meaning 'drink any liquid' and also can be used as its hyponym with a context-dependent to indicate specific meaning 'drink alcohol'. He further argues that the words used as auto-hyponymy will be narrowed to mean the meaning of their hyponyms. In simplicity, the narrowed meaning cannot be part of the linguistically encoded content of the lexical item. Furthermore, he (ibid:120) maintains that auto hyponymy differs from what he calls 'hyponymic enrichment' or 'contextual modulation'. This type of modulation comprises adding information to make the meaning of the lexical item more specific as in:

(8) John cut his finger, if not his thumb.

By adding 'if not his thumb' the meaning of the word 'finger' becomes more specific. Thus, it is different from auto hyponymy in which the same word can be used to mean more specific and more general sense as in:

'John cut his finger', which may be used to mean 'finger' and 'thumb'.

(iii) Lexical Blocking

As Huang (2017:64) defines it, lexical blocking "refers to the phenomenon whereby the appropriate use of a lexical expression formed by a relatively productive process is apparently prevented by the prior existence of a synonymous but distinct lexical item". This phenomenon can be illustrated by various examples where the proper use of a lexical item which is formed by a quite productive process is blocked by the existence of a more lexicalized item.

(9) a. I ate *pork*. (*pig meat*).

b. I don't eat *beef*. (*cow meat*).

The existence of the specialized noun 'pork', 'beef' blocks the productive process of producing 'pig meat' and 'cow meat' (Blutner, 1998:123).

Moreover, lexical blocking is a pragmatic phenomenon not only morphological one. In (10) below, the presence of 'cow' as 'cow derived substance' is reliable in the context of eating. Hence, it blocks the existence of 'beef' to be synonymy to 'cow meat', this type of blocking is called deblocking by Blutner (2004).

(10) Hindus are forbidden to eat *cow/ beef*.

This blocking may be attributed to the fact that not only cow meat but the whole animal is forbidden to Hindus. By such example, he calls for the important role context plays in narrowing the meaning of the lexical item.

According to Huang (2017: 66), lexical blocking can be explained in terms of Horn's division of pragmatic labour or Levinson's resolution schema. The use of marked expression blocks the unmarked form in the same context due the systematic interaction between the R/ I- and Q/ M- principles. The R/ I- principle allows the speaker to use the more productive form, because it is fairly obtainable. On the other hand, the Q/ M- principle, states that he or she tends to use marked forms to have special effect on the addressee¹.

Partial blocking is referred to by McCawley (1978) as he notices that the use of productive causatives in languages such as English and Japanese is restricted by the existence of more lexicalized causatives in stereotypical situations. Yet, the former tends to be employed in marked situations:

(11) a. Black Bart *killed* the sheriff.

b. Black Bart *caused* the sheriff to die.

(iv) Contrastive Reduplication or Lexical Cloning

Another case of language use in which narrowing is involved, is referred to differently by scholars as 'lexical cloning, contrastive (focus) reduplication, identical constituent compounding'. It is usually found in spoken American English, yet it can be found in a variety of English; British, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and South African English (Walaszewiska, 2015:25-6). Likewise, it is usually found in a certain informal conversational register of spoken English. Still, lexical cloning is less frequently used in written English such as scripts for plays,

¹ See Levinson (2000), to have a clear idea on Horn's two principled theory and Levinson's three principled theory.

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films, and TV programs. Remarkably, it is used as a manifestation of natural spoken language in written form (Huang, 2017: 44).

As a pragmatic phenomenon, it is usually represented by the repeated occurrence of the same word with contrastive stress on the first item of the repeated words. It can be applied by the use of content words; nouns, verbs, adjectives, proper nouns, etc. The effect of using such phenomenon is to narrow down the variety of interpretations of the repeated expressions as in the following example used by (Walaszewiska, 2015:26):

(12) I'll make the tuna salad, and make the *salad-salad*.

It follows that the use of contrastive reduplication represented by 'SALAD-salad' is to indicate a particular type of salad (prototypical plain green salad) not any other type. Huang (2015:3) claims that since lexical cloning functions as lexical entities that associated with the proposition of lexical expressions as exactly, perfectly and precisely, then lexical cloning is a special case of lexical narrowing. He elaborates that the interpretation of lexical cloning heavily relied on the context. Hence, in certain occasions, the speaker expects the hearer would not be able to understand his intention so he adds self-repair as paraphrases or explanations of some sort. It is usually presented in in the linguistic form:

a. Not (just) X but(rather)XX

b. Not (just) XX but (rather) X.

(13) Frank is not just my colleague; he's my *colleague-colleague*. We work in the same department; in fact, we work in the same section.

According to Huang (2009:137), there are four types of contrastive reduplication:

1-Prototypical Meaning: It is typically utilized to signal the default sense of the lexical item as in a.

(14) a. I've got a Job now.

b. What, part time ...?

a. No, no *a job-job!* (a proper Job, full-time, permanent and decently paid)

2- Literal Meaning: It refers to the literal meaning of the lexical item not the loose meaning of it as in:

(15) a. maybe you would like to come in and have some coffee?

b. Yeah, I'd like that.

a. Just *coffee-coffee*. (no double meaning).

3- Intensive Meaning: Concerning this type, adjectives and adverbs and even verbs are usually used to signal strengthening of meaning.

(16) a. Are you nervous?

b. Yeah, but, you know, not *nervous-nervous*. (not extremely nervous).

4. Value-Added Meaning: It is repeated to enrich the meaning of the expressions with the context information use.

(17) a. I hear you guys are, um, living together now.

b1. Well, we're not *living together*-living together.

b 2. Well, we're only *living together*-living together.

The answer of (b1) intends to signal 'living as lovers', whereas, in (b2), the meaning is understood as 'living as roommates'. A last interesting point to be mentioned is that this phenomenon is heavily relied on the context in which it occurs. Phrased differently, it cannot be fully understood out of context. Therefore, it is usually evaluated in terms of the use of marked

or uninformative expressions intended to achieve sarcastic, humor or other rhetorical effects (Huang, 2009:138).

(v) Polysemy

Polysemy is usually defined as a linguistic phenomenon whereby a single word is associated with two or more distinct but related meanings. It is usually classified into systematic and non-systematic. Systematic or regular polysemy is where the relation between the set of senses of lexical items are the same.

(18) a. John put a *glass* on the table.

b. Mary enjoyed a *glass* of wine.

In (a) the word 'glass' is used to suggest 'a container', while in (b) it indicates 'a unit of liquid'. It is used in the same sense of bottle, cup, pot, etc. Though the same lexical item 'glass' is used to refer to two meanings, it establishes systematic polysemy with other mentioned units of liquid. Likewise, systematic polysemy is traditionally used to distinguish between metonymic polysemy and inherent polysemy. Metonymic polysemy is where one of the related meanings is considered the main one and the others are metonymically resulting from it. Inherent polysemy assumes no difference in relation between senses of the lexical item (Dölling, 2018:15).

Polysemy has conventionally drawn a lot of debate in linguistics and language philosophy in relation to lexical meaning representation, compositional semantics, and the semantics/pragmatics distinction. Early approaches dealt with polysemy in terms of sense enumeration: each meaning of a polysemous unit is manifested distinctly in the lexicon. This account has been rejected on the basis that the senses of many polysemous units result from a single meaning representation. Other approaches to polysemy in which meanings might be dealt with through semantic or pragmatic means such as coercion, modulation or ad hoc concept construction (Vincente and Falkum, 2017:1).

Lexical pragmatics approaches generally account for polysemy in terms of semantic underdetermination that the literal meaning of a polysemous expression is used as a starting point for its interpretation based on contextual inference (Wilson and Carston, 2007). The key point of this account, as Sperber and Wilson (1995:197) postulate, is that polysemy is the phenomenon resulted from pragmatic processes as the intended meanings are inferred on the basis of the encoded concept and contextual information. In their interesting study of polysemy, Vincente and Falkum (2017:26) defend this view of polysemy as underdetermined phenomenon against traditional views which are based on context-internal processes. For them, linguistic encoded meaning is an input to more inferential processes which yield the occasion-specific intended meaning. The adjective 'good' in each utterance of the following example has a different meaning in addition to others as 'easy to read', 'beautifully designed', 'useful to kill flies with', and so on:

(19) a. Chomsky's *Aspects* is a *good book* (interesting).

b. That's a *good book* to use as a doorstop (heavy enough).

c. I need a *good book* to put me asleep (boring enough).

The key objective of this view of polysemy, Falkum (2011:24) argues that it explains how such occasion-specific senses can be inferred on the basis of their linguistic representation and contextual information. Besides, it provides solutions to many problems with traditional approaches by virtue of interpretive inflexibility and over-generation. It is a truism that relevance theoretic approach to lexical pragmatics considers polysemy as a communicative phenomenon

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which is the outcome of lexical underdetermination in different contexts. In utterance interpretation, the hearer seeks to find the optimal interpretation through narrowing or loosening the meaning of a polysemous item. In each of the exemplified utterances above, interpreting the linguistic encoded meaning of the adjective 'good' involves a narrowing process which gives rise to the construction of ad hoc concepts which is guided by the hearer's expectations of relevance in each context (Falkum, *ibid*:25).

1.4 Children's Pragmatic Development

Following the wealth of research in developmental pragmatics, children usually learn the meanings of words rapidly. They also learn to use their stock of vocabulary relatively soon after the emergence of productive language as they are exposed to adults' interaction and when words are presented in a supportive context. Children's comprehension of words meaning is one of the outstanding features of human language learning. They have the ability to infer the meaning of words. Their ability is constantly improved alongside the acquisition of other linguistic aspects (Frank and Goodman, 2014:80).

Matching these findings, Zufferey (2010:27) affirms that children's cognitive abilities play a key role in language acquisition and comprehension especially on the lexical and pragmatic levels. Children in pre-school stage are able to acquire a large stock of words with their semantic and structural properties. This stock of words plainly enables them to produce and understand straightforward sentences. However, understanding non-literally sentences is more difficult. Extensive research during the sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century endorsed that children at pre-school could not interpret metaphorical expressions appropriately. Only at age eleven or twelve they are able to do that as their cognitive abilities have not highly developed to process non-literal language. Consequently, studying children pragmatic development engages understanding how children learn to bridge the gap between the encoded meaning of words and phrases and the communicated meaning of the speaker and how this capacity develops throughout their lives. Early studies on children pragmatic development showed that very young communicators were rather insensitive to speaker's intentions and communicated meaning. Nevertheless, the development of new methods and more theoretical research in this field have led to the re-evaluation of previous findings and development of new prospects and theories (Zufferey, 2010:28).

Affirming what have discussed above, it is worth acknowledge Sperber and Wilson's (1986:175) claim that communication involves intentional message that requires cognitive inferential abilities to be drawn. As such, Furlong (1995:52-3) maintains that like any form of communication literary discourse involves intentional message. The communicator chooses the right and appropriate medium to convey his message. When the medium is the written text, the writer should provide evidence or clues helping his readers to arrive at his intentions on the basis of contextual factors. Basing on children's psychological and cognitive state, writers use a language that helps children to understand their intentions explicitly and implicitly. The stock of words usually used in this form of literature is restricted. Still, the assumption that the writers would not often enrich their writing with new words and modified words is far from being true. Some of the added words are not straightforward but they can be understood in their context (Shepard, 2000:3).

In effect, children in their literary interpretation exploit the same mechanisms used in adults' spontaneous comprehension. It is likely to say that they differ in the time and the effort the

interpreter expends as literary interpretation is more implicit process which requires more efforts to derive the positive effects (Winch et al, 2010:7, Shepard, 2000:3 and Toolan, 1988:209).

2. Research Methodology

Based on the above discussion, a qualitative analysis will be followed to analyse the selected data. Wilson and Carston's (2007) account of lexical pragmatic processes is to be followed in this study. This account is based on the principles of relevance theory which compromise cognitive (contextual) effects with processing efforts in verbal communication. Based on relevance theoretic approach, lexical adjustment processes of narrowing and broadening are typically considered as part of the overall parallel adjustment utterance interpretation guided by expectations of relevance (Wilson and Carston, 2007:254).

the comprehension procedure, the adjustment process is triggered by clues presented by the communicator. The hearer follows certain pragmatic processes of achieving relevance through inference based on the context to arrive at the interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance (Allott, 2010:166).

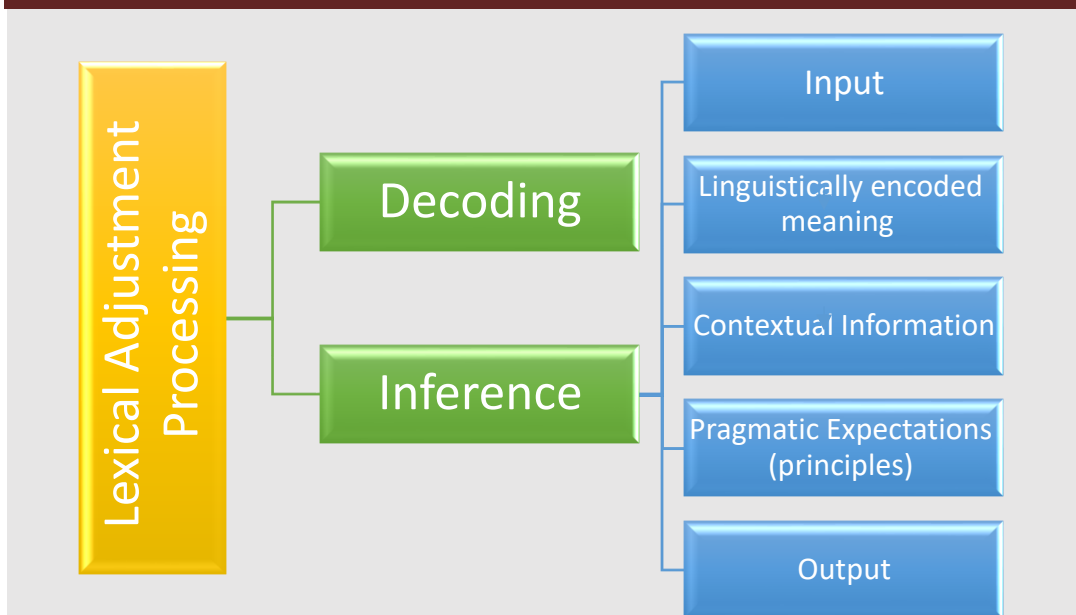
Conforming relevance theory, the search for relevance is the key principle that governs the whole process of interpretation from decoding the lexical item through the choice of the appropriate context to the satisfaction of the hearer's expectations. It follows the same comprehension procedure guided by expectations of relevance. These expectations are raised by the addressee's recognition of communicator's utterance as a communicative act that is worth of processing and conforms to his preference and abilities; it answers questions like 'how' and 'why'. The expectations will activate the logical properties and encyclopedic information which are combined with contextual aspects of the utterance to drive conclusions.

In a nutshell, the decoding process of a word uttered activates a string of logical associated properties of the concept it stands for. This activation gives rise to deductive inferences to be drawn. It also activates a range of accessible encyclopedic information enabling further inference to be drawn. Here comes the role of contextual information items to be processed such as the world knowledge with the activated encyclopedic and logical properties which enables contextual assumptions and implications to be driven. The address will follow a path of the least effort to yield the best relevant conclusions which are guaranteed by narrowing, broadening or the combination of the two. According to RT, the adjustment process stops when the addressee arrives at the first comprehensive cognitive effect with the least effort. (Wilson and Carston, 2007:258). In effect Wilson and Carston's account of lexical pragmatic processes can be figured below:

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Lexical Adjustment Process

3. Data Analysis

The data of this study is represented by five extracts of narrowing cases. They are taken from two selected English short stories written to children ranged (8-12) years old: *Mowgli's Brothers* (1894) by Joseph Rudyard Kipling, *Half a Creature from the Sea* story by David Almond (2007) and *God's Eye* (2016) by Frances Hardinge. One extract of each mentioned story is analysed. The modified word meaning is highlighted by being italicizing.

Extract (1)

Mowgli: "Akela! Akela! Let the Lone Wolf show his strength. *Room* for the leader of our Pack! Spring, Akela!" (Kipling, 1894: 62).

The case in this extract is polysemy. The writer activates the reader's (child) expectation to achieve relevance by inquiring what the word 'room' refers to in such utterance. This expectation activates logical properties as: A SPACE OR AREA THAT CAN BE FILLED BY SOMEONE OR SOMETHING, and encyclopedic entries as: A PART OF A BUILDING SEPERATED BY WALLS. ALL THE PEOPLE IN A ROOM. A GAP THAT GIVES AN OPPORTUNITY OR CHANCE. The activation of logical properties and encyclopedic information together in addition to other contextual items such as chance to show Akela's strength, enables the following assumption to be attained: *Room indicates a chance to show his strength as a leader.*

Extract (2)

Mum: "He cupped his hands and *drank the sea.*" (Almond, 2007:89).

As a pragmatic phenomenon that involved narrowing, 'drank the sea' is an *auto-hyponymy case*. The utterance is expected to be relevant to the reader (the child) by achieving relevance through trying to understand what the phrase 'drank the sea' means. This expectation activates logical properties as DRUNK THE BODY OF SALTY WATER THAT COVERS LARGE AREAS OF EARTH SURFACE, and encyclopedic entries as THE MOVEMENT AND ACTION OF THE WAVES OF SUCH A BODY OF WATER. Then, the activation of logical properties and encyclopedic information together leads the following assumption to be attained:

salty water. Other expectations are raised by contextual items as 'he was a strange creature'. As such, relevance expectations lead the child to arrive at the most relevant interpretation that satisfies his preferences and abilities: He drunk sea salty water.

Extract (3)

Mr. Pother: "You'll be laughing on the other side of your *smug face* by tomorrow!" (Hardinge, 2016:101)

As a pragmatic phenomenon that involved narrowing, 'smug face' is a *narrowing the adjective in adjective-noun combination case*. The utterance is expected to be relevant to the reader (the child), so that, he will achieve relevance by qualifying what the word smug signifies. This expectation activates logical properties as: ANNOYING TO OTHERS BY BEING PLEASED WITH ONESELF, and relevant encyclopedic entries as: TOO PLEASED OR SELF CONCEITED ABOUT SOMETHING ACHIEVED OR KNOWN. The activation of logical properties and encyclopedic information together enables the following assumption to be realized: Annoyed someone by being pleased with himself. In addition, other expectations are activated by contextual items. Accordingly, the child arrives at the most relevant interpretation that satisfies his preferences and abilities: Annoyed someone by being too pleased.

4. Conclusions

Children' short stories involve modified word meanings, new and unfamiliar words that demand utilizing lexical pragmatic processes in their interpretation. Thus, narrowing as a lexical pragmatic process is involved in children's interpretation of different pragmatic phenomena or cases as auto-hyponymy, narrowing the adjective, reduplication, polysemy and lexical blocking. The qualitative analysis reveals that children heavily relied on their encyclopedic knowledge and contextual items in crystallizing the deduced contextual assumptions. Like adults, children are guided by their expectations of relevance based on their cognitive abilities and contextual accessibilities to arrive at the communicator's intended meaning.

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