The Integrated Cognition of Pragmatic Presupposition and Dexis

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It is maintained that pragmatics is simply the eclectic extension of linguistic structuralism in this paper, which is covetous of simplistic combination of structure and single units, while cognitive linguistics aims to look into the development and integration of linguistic competence in actual use, and pays more attention to dynamic analysis of language as a whole. And then its exemplification is made with reference to the lasting issues, presupposition, and dexis, in pragmatics.

Keywords: pragmatics, presupposition, dexis, cognitive linguistics

Introduction

The pragmatic and cognitive dimension intertwines too much in current linguistic study. There is too little comprehensive argument at home only with several good pieces left now, for example—"The Complementarity of Cognitive Linguistics and Relevance Theory" (Zhang & Cai, 2005), "The Cognitive View of Pragmatic Explorations" (Jiang, 2006), "The Kindred and Complement Nature of Pragmatics and Cognitive Linguistics" (Guo, 2008), or the like.

Literary Review

Derived from logical positivism, pragmatics is based on experientialism, pragmatism and is the daily branch of analytic philosophy in Britain and America, whose essence still remains static or inductive, being limited in prescribed authoritative areas as widely as possible while covering as many tasks as possible without changing its original intent (Stamenov, 2003). Altogether different the cognitive linguistics is based on a whole-new view of language, embodied philosophy. Thus everywhere in it the dynamic derivation and process are emphasized, and the value of all semantic functions is subject to embodiment, construal depending on contexts. The literary meaning is only a substitute for default construal. Likewise we hereby employ the idea of dynamic integration to reconsider the two discrete units, namely presupposition and dexis, in pragmatics.

Presupposition

Here the common practice involved is to classify presupposition into two types, semantics and pragmatics. In the former, it is activated by some triggers like the definite expressions, factual verbs (realize), temporal clauses, cleft clauses, comparative constructions, counterfactual conditionals, interrogative clauses, and so on. The criterion on which the value of a clause's presupposition is true depends on the fact when the embedded is negated its presupposition which still functions as usual. Pragmatically, presupposition pertaining to the background knowledge sanctioning the felicity of an utterance cannot be disabled only by the negation of its carrier, either.

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The classification thus made is sufficient to satisfy the needs of the meaning of a whole which is the sum of its component parts, in accordance with the structural reductionism engendered by "semantics + contexts = pragmatics". It seems that presupposition is specifically designed for certain phrases or constructions; all the left can be added or derived through contexts, so presupposition, whether intra-or extra-clausal, is often cancelled. For example,

(1) a. Mary didn't manage to impress her examiners, in fact she didn't even try.

b. Mary claims to have seen Helen of Troy, but of course there isn't any such person. (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 129)

Here in Clause a the presupposition does not exist for the sememe "try" implied by "manage" is blocked. In b the first half is in conflict with the second; its background information has to be amended. Intra-clausal cancellation is true when the projection problem arises. For example,

(2) a. *Mary believes that she has developed an ulcer. (Mary believes/knows that she has developed an ulcer again.) (Marmaridou, 2000, pp. 131-132)

b. *Mary died before she got her Ph.D. (Mary found a job before she got her Ph.D.) (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 119)

In (2), compared with those in parentheses, either of the floating presuppositions in the first two is made impossible. Sometimes such intra-clausal cancellation is brought about by meta-linguistic negation, going against its survival premise, logical test, for example,

(3) a. Close the door.

b. Don't close the door. (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 137)

(4) a. John will regret doing linguistics.

b. John won't regret doing linguistics.

In (3) b the first half of presupposition "the speaker wants the door closed, or the door is not closed" disappears in a. In (4) b the negation produces wide scope or narrow scope ambiguities, when the contextual information does not clear up or intervenes at all. It means that John does not have any regrets, but he is doing/will do linguistics (presupposition preserved), or John will not regret because he is not doing linguistics (the whole frame collapses). All these prove the fallacy of logical test. Thus most of the semantic presupposition ought to fall within the pragmatic category with their logical components left belonging to semantic implication, and the additional or attached meanings of linguistic expressions only contain semantic implication, implicature, and pragmatic presupposition.

From the embodied view of semantics in cognitive linguistics, they both owe a lot to the subjectivity of presupposition. The language itself is not qualified for being autonomous; the denoted cannot be linked with the word symbols directly; what is needed in between is the process or treatment given by thoughts in human mind. The presupposition is no exception, and is endowed with the information carried by speakers but not the sentences, phrases, or words alone. What is more, those so-called semantic presuppositions are not uniform models; their survival depends on pragmatic factors or subjective preference every now and then. The origin of presupposition's cancellation lies with the subjectivity's ad-lib function, which makes the former over-sensible to its surroundings. But the subjective scope is lop-sided, often preferred, and such contradiction between the reflector and the reflected embodied in the linguistic messages engenders the fight between the messages on stage and those off stage, focus and presupposition or background, and in the end between holistic single scope, or, to be more exact, between scope interior and inter-scope for lack of the holistic monitor. Etc.….

(5) a. Mary's not stingy > > she's really generous.

    b. Mary's not stingy > > she's thrifty. (Marmaridou, 2000, pp. 143-145)

In a the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM henceforth) comprises the dimension of stingy—generous to be in interior parallel; in b another dimension of ICM, thrifty—wasteful, is activated in exterior series. No contradiction is found in between, and the stronger power of utterance attains to the upside down turn of the presupposition in latter half of b, which is akin to the wide scope negations in the preceding (3) and (4).

Cognitively speaking, the negation of "stingy" makes one either look for the opposite in one and the same mental space or explore the solutions in some other mental space. This is termed space shifts or swifts; the communicative turn of utterance rounds is always in dynamic change.

Generally speaking, projection may float smoothly from the space being built to the base space, but if in this process it comes across symbol sequences showing their literal meanings or their antonymic meanings in public, its floating has to come to a halt. This is called the principle of projection float, in other words, the trigger-off or shift of projections is much related to the optimization of space, and is not in direct link with actual words chosen there in nature. For example, the influential version of holes, plugs, and filters proves that they are not the inherent properties in themselves, but bearings of their users. None linguistic factors in cognitive contexts such as the psychological representation of knowledge etc. … are substitutes for filters of space, for example,

(6) a. Mary married/didn't marry before she got a promotion. > > Mary got a promotion.

    b. *Mary left the company before she got a promotion. > > Mary got a promotion. (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 126)

In b the paraphrase of "left the company" is in conflict with that of the other elements in base space of the overall frame. The projection "Mary got a promotion" has to suspend its mission, giving one sense of intra-sentential cancellation. Take one more example,

(7) I imagined that Kelly was ill and nobody realized that she was ill.

The projection P^1 and P^2 are in opposite to each other, namely $P^1 = {\tilde{}}P^2$, or $P^2 = {\tilde{}}P^1$, so $S_1 \& S_2 > > {\tilde{}}P$. The example listed here reveals the urgency and necessity of space optimization when being built. On this basis, once it forms the natural tendency, the original model or conclusion will surely be toppled down with the emergent meanings entrenched and established. So whenever there are uncertain factors embedded in base space, all the relevant items in building space eschew their appearance in time waiting for relocation.

(8) a. Mary believes that it will not stop raining until tomorrow.

    b. It is raining and Mary believes that it will not stop raining until tomorrow. (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 150)

The projection "it is raining", meeting the fictive space (a) halfway, turns to the real space in coordination (b: It is raining.), thus gaining its survival.

Pragmatists affirm that projection is an implied meaning in pursuit of its being reflected by the literal, as a result it falls into the unbounded state, indistinct with each other. In cognitive terms, presupposition is part of the situations hidden in conceptual frame designed by ICM, pertaining to background information, correlated with focus information on stage. Online operations being made in mental space, the amount of background information offered by presupposition varies with the shift of focus. The larger the scope of focus, the less volume covered by presupposition, or vice versa. And along with the movement of focus, it becomes interchangeable with the latter. When the old comes to the front emergent, serving as the newly eye-catching information, some other elements back-grounded immediately follow up. In conversation rounds, such procedures keep going repeatedly until its intention reached or being suspended on time for the moment, proving that presupposition is not a

hidebound role covetous of static deduction with passionate devotion. It seems to be a station of transfer for information layout or switch in cognitive currents for its dynamic, hierarchical, and heterogeneous nature.

Deictic Terms

Dexis includes some elements in linguistic structure employed to address, denote, or reflect interlocutors, things, and messages like time or space taking place in conversations. Deictic indices are very important for one to understand utterances smoothly, which can be seen in the following case whereby one picks up a bottle on the sea with a sheet of paper that reads,

(9) Meet me *here* a week from *now* with a stick about *this big*.

The reader is not capable of figuring out who writes it, when, and to whom, not making clear the abstract referents of the italics. Thus one comes to realize that the dexis involves the relationship between linguistic structure and world of experience, more or less constituting the backbone of pragmatic attention. The only regret is that it is treated roughly structurally in pragmatic practice. According to the conventions, deictic phenomena are usually classified into simple branches of person, time and place deixis. Later on two more types are added by Levinson, namely discourse and social deixis (1983).

But the three problems passing down are still waiting for solution throughout the pragmatic analysis of dexis. Firstly some overlapping is usually found in common uses especially when the tax collector meeting her lawyer and client says,

(10) Mrs. Jones should apply by tomorrow the latest. (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 75)

Apparently the speaker is confused with the double identity of the lawyer, both hearer and addressee. It is true of both cases of "we", with one meeting the solidarity strategy often including the hearer; the other deference excluding the addressee, sometimes even to some extent of being purely in textual needs, i.e.,

(11) a. In this chapter we have outlined an experiential view of deixis.

b. Now we are going to put our pyjamas on. (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 76)

Secondly certain linguistic forms perform different functions of time, place, or discourse on various occasions. Thirdly the too rigid classification of dexis may blur the demarcation of the non-deictic uses of deictic terms or the deictic ones of non-deictic terms when dealing with relevant data (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 96).

So it suggested here that we reconsider and reevaluate the complications and efficiencies of deictic phenomena in the cognitive light of language study. Metaphors are everywhere in the common daily speech; according to the statistics conducted by Lakoff and Johnson, more than 70 % of English expressions find their roots in them (1980). Up to one metaphor it appears every three utterances on the average in verbal communications. The conceptual metaphor is the precious means by which human beings live in daily encounters, especially the motivation of semantics to form and extend in major majorities, so to speak. The four compositional principles of ICM are propositional constructions, image schematic constructions, metaphorical and metonymic mappings. Categories and vertical scenes are attained to by container scheme and part/whole scheme, while focus/background attended by front and back scheme. Lakoff terms it as *Spatialization of Form Hypothesis*, in which metaphorical mapping is acquired projected from physical into conceptual domain for spatial structure correlates with that of concepts. Image schemes set rail to abstract configurations defining concepts, conceptual structure being imagined as image schemes + metaphorical mapping (Lakoff, 1987). The vertical up and down in spatial scenes are compared to past and present in temporal domain, and its basic principles can be illustrated in the following diagram.
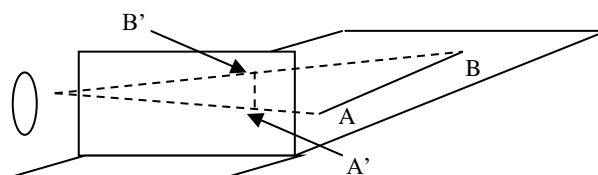
Figure 1. The mapping principle of up and down onto front and back.

Thus we can see from it that the spatial dexis is the origin of deriving all the other deictic devices. Space is expressed by two forms, those of directional feel and distant feel. The temporal flux in direction is respectively said to be up and down in parables according to one's personal experience. See,

(12) a. *Up* to now they've had very little to say.

b. It had been occupied as a palace by all our kings and queens *down* to James I.

In distance we may employ the past tense to describe the scenic process bearing some distance to the current speech event in case, and it makes the past tense morphemes similar to deictic terms, being typical of deictic usage. The practice of distance accompanying time is quite popular in linguistic representations. Similarly, the textual dexis is also the reflection of spatial dexis meta-linguistically. All the threes intersect and overlap. The formation and combination of personal and social dexis does not get away from metaphorical mapping of direction and distance. Direction reflects and sets the ontological direction of the hearer; distance tends to cover how far the relationship between both interlocutors is. And the choice is difficult between simple address and appropriateness of dexis.

Conclusions

To sum up, only by means of the strategies like frame scheme, space shifts, and space optimization can we solve the problem to determine the life or death of presupposition as a whole whose boundaries are just the real reflection of the cognitive typicality. The case is true of deictic terms serving only to different extent of typicality in identity key-tone or attributes.

Notes

> > = entails;

* denoting illogical or ungrammatical sentence, presupposition, or proposition;

˜ denoting the negative form of propositions.

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