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Navigating language's depths: A detailed examination of linguistic and non-linguistic contexts revealed through context clues

Sonila Daiu^{a1}, Faculty of Computer Science and IT, University Metropolitan Tirana, Tirana, Albania, sdaiu@umt.edu.al

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Abstract

The majority of educators currently acknowledge that students need to understand and know how to use language forms in authentic communication and text environments. The meaning of a language unit becomes clear through linguistic context that consists of surrounding word selection and discourse structures and syntactic and morphological indicators. The practice of contextualizing language learning theory has existed in language education since at least theoretical first principles were introduced. The research discusses various context signals within sentences or sections that assist readers to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary and new words. This study examines the six context clues of definition, logic deduction, synonyms, antonyms, root words and affixes and grammar through document/text analysis which belongs to qualitative research methodologies. Students require context clues to create their own word-learning strategies that lead to more enriched vocabulary comprehension during talks with others as well as while reading.

Keywords: Linguistic context, lexical units, context clues, word, meaning

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Sonila Daiu^a, Faculty of Computer Science and IT, University Metropolitan Tirana, Tirana, Albania, sdaiu@umt.edu.al

1. INTRODUCTION

“Meaning” is as old as human history. Since the dawn of human existence, individuals have continuously sought to interpret and understand the world they inhabit, endeavouring to translate this understanding into language. Humans inherently strive to assign meaning to a wide range of events and cultural transformations that unfold around them, engaging in an ongoing pursuit to investigate and articulate these meanings. In essence, human beings are meaning-making entities, drawn to comprehend and examine the significance of their surroundings and experiences (Çetin, Yiğit, & Karlı, 2011).

1.1. Theoretical and conceptual framework

Language is a system of vocal signs that people use to express their thoughts and feelings (Bonvillain, 2019). A word can be expressed as a sign, a symbol, that is formed by the combination of the sound complex that comes out of our mouth and the meaning of the concept in our mind (Kersenboom, 2020). The main meanings of words are the meanings they take in a sentence and change according to the words next to them. Recognizing a word from its sound, shape, appearance, pronunciation, and various clues, remembering it when seen in writing, finding its meaning, and vocalizing it, are explained as word recognition. However, it is difficult to give a general definition of the word. In linguistic terminology, this is called meaning value (Hamawand, 2016).

The term "context" in current research represents multiple viewpoints according to Beatty-Martinez et al., (2020). Linguistic context describes the language environment surrounding a word. This concept contains an examination of the words along with clauses along with sentences where a word appears and might extend across paragraphs as well as chapters and entire books. The physical environment which comprises people along with time and place and cultural elements where communication happens constitutes the interpretation of context from this perspective while linguistic elements make up the other perspective of context. The framework consists of two main types namely linguistic context representing elements of language at work in discourse as well as non-linguistic context involving external situational factors which determine meaning according to (Sullivan et al., 2022).

According to Yaman and Akkaya (2012) the four systemic elements of phonology and lexis along with grammar and texts form linguistic context but situational context unites with social context and cultural context as part of non-linguistic context. . The two settings operate as linked domains due to established notions about the way contextual influence manifests through linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

1.2. Related research

A substantial body of research has explored language and its contextual influences. In their book, Gregory and Carroll (2018) evaluate language in relation to situational contexts, focusing specifically on language varieties and social contexts. Hassani et al. (2019) focused on the context of language in their research and discussed the conceptual specification, application, and evaluations, related to the context. Toolan (2016) explores how contextualization principles apply to interpreting literary and non-literary texts as well as describing them and developing theoretical frameworks and reading them. University research bridges theory with analysis and text to demonstrate that stylistics avoids text versus context separation as well as linguistic description versus descriptive interpretation and language versus situation distinctions.

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Language research within this field specifically studies contextual methods that exist in speech. Innaci and Sam (2017) explored the use of context clues as vocabulary instruction strategy in language. The results obtained from the research showed that determining the meaning of new words using context clues helped students not only understand the meaning of the words but also retain them in their minds. The study by Ilahude et al. (2021) evaluated the influence of context clue strategy on reading comprehension as their main research question. Research findings showed that context clues improved reading comprehension abilities of students. Liu et al. (2021) conducted research which focused on creating a context-based inference through the study of contextual reasoning for extended content models.

A review of studies conducted in the field reveals that language context has been examined from various perspectives and dimensions. In this study, unlike other studies, the depths of the language were examined and a detailed examination of the linguistic and non-linguistic contexts revealed by context clues was carried out. In this respect, this study was found important because it was thought to contribute to the field.

1.3. Purpose of the research

This research aimed to provide a detailed examination of linguistic and non-linguistic contexts revealed by context clues and to provide a deep exploration of language. This study investigated the following research questions to fulfill its main purpose:

1. What are the types of context in pragmatic linguistics?
2. What are the characteristics of linguistic context?
3. What are the common context clues?
4. How are lexical context, grammatical context, and non-linguistic context explained?

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

2.1. Research method

This study employed the document/text analysis method which belongs to qualitative research approaches to examine the materials. Qualitative research emerges as a method of questioning, interpreting, and trying to understand the form of the problem in its natural environment (Klenke, 2016). Investigating written documents which contain data about study subjects constitutes document/text analysis in the research process. This analysis method saves time and other resources for the researcher. This method assists researchers to arrange the examination of essential phenomena together with data source categorization and new dataset formation (Sargeant, 2012). The document analysis method serves as the basis for the detailed research investigations which have been conducted in this study.

2.2. Compliance with Ethics

The researchers designed this investigation to find answers for the research questions through realistic and effective methods. The research made use of scientific foundations alongside evaluation of anticipated benefits and objective development during findings creation. Throughout the process of writing the research, the principles of research ethics were followed. The sources used in the research process are stated in the research. No conflict of interest was experienced in the research process.

3. RESULTS

In pragmatic linguistics, several types of contexts are recognized.

1. Physical context refers to the objects which pertain to communication combined with its location along with temporal elements

Example: a. My desire is for the book together with its historical background.

b. Please arrive at the specified place at 9.00 pm tonight.

2. The expression of surrounding text refers to what was stated earlier.

Example: a. Linda arrived at home late yesterday evening while expecting no one to observe her.

b. Your language choice would not impress my mother at all.

3. The social context depicts the interpersonal relationships among participants who take part in this communication path.

Characteristics of linguistic context

Expansive verbal language comprises all expressions that directly or indirectly surround a specific linguistic statement which includes words along with sentences along with conversational turns and speech acts. To interpret an expression properly the surrounding verbal information matters directly. Modern studies of language focus on text-based analysis because the contemporary approach to linguistic context examines discourse relationships between sentences and their components (Frawley, 2013).

Authors must first identify particular instances when they need to introduce new vocabulary to their readers according to context clues as explained by Mirza (2016). The writers add ancillary terms and phrases when explaining unfamiliar words found in their content. Context clues are known as supplementary words which appear alongside unfamiliar terms in reading documents. Heightened awareness about linguistic coding around foreign words reduces the need for dictionary references in texts. Knowledge acquired from context analysis allows people to draw accurate interpretations about various terms from their surrounding words.

Linguistic context entails meanings similar to those derived through syntactic and morphologic interpretations of textual elements. The identification of lexical meaning becomes possible only after determining which grammar category the unit represents among noun, verb, adjective and adverb categories in addition to identifying its role in the sentence as subject or verb. Linguistic context generates useful recommendations from the speech meaning although providing complete meaning remains optional. Chomsky (2002) in his "Syntactic Structures" book featured "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" as an example which demonstrates a sentence may possess grammatical structure but its meaning remains illogical. The grammatical correctness of this sentence does not translate into meaningful language so it demonstrates the distinction between grammatical correctness and semantic significance. Language elements alone fail to deliver the proper meaning of a text. Meaning emerges from how people understand the beliefs and their understanding of the world's nature.

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Chomsky (2002) presented "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" in his "Syntactic Structures" book as an example showing a sentence can have proper syntax yet improper semantic meaning. The grammatical correctness of this sentence does not translate into meaningful language so it demonstrates the distinction between grammatical correctness and semantic significance. Language elements alone fail to deliver the proper meaning of a text. Meaning emerges from how people understand the beliefs and their understanding of the world's nature.

The study maintained its primary focus on linguistic contexts regardless of their relationship with phonological context which belongs to phonetic fields. The definition of meaning depends primarily on either the lexical aspect or the grammatical aspect of these two types.

Lexical Context

Shedding vital light on lexical studies is the book "English Contextology" by Amosova as noted in Vlavatskaya, Lazareva 2015. Prof. Amosova defines lexical context as the situation when an indication derives from the lexical meaning of the indicator. The author subdivides this type of context into that of the first degree and that of the second degree. First degree lexical contexts have context elements which directly connect syntactically.

He received arrest for treason.

There exists no direct syntactical relationship between subordinate clauses and contextual elements in the second degree context.

Example: I move that Mr. Last addresses the meeting (Vaugh).

The indicator in a lexical context maintains variable options without altering the semantic meaning of dependent words. The context remains steady when within its unit just one clue expresses a specific meaning of the dependent. The phraseological unit functions as a stable organizational unit.

The main components within lexical contexts include the specific lexical groups that belong to a particular polysemous word. The analysis of polysemous words "heavy" and "take" appears in different lexical contexts to show polysemy.

The isolated usage of "heavy" normally implies substantial weight extent when referring to "heavy cargo" or "heavy book." Heavy receives its contextual meaning shift from specific lexical groups including wind, storm and snow enabling the creation of forceful or abundant associations. The word "heavy" demonstrates semantic variation when it appears in phrases "heavy rain" and "heavy wind" and "heavy snow." In these cases it carries meaning from intensity or substantiality of described phenomena.

The solitary use of "take" in language usually implies "to catch" or "to obtain" as its central meaning. The verb "take" ceases to mean "to catch" or "to obtain" when it combines with expressions about public transit like "tram" and "bus" and "train." Instead it becomes synonymous with "to go" and "to travel by" those specific transportation methods. Usage in specific contexts proves how the verb "take" acquires various meanings which depend on surrounding language elements.

The polysemous word 'make' includes numerous possible meanings and contextual analysis determines the exact meaning selection.

1. He made a lot of money.
2. He made Rome in two hours.
3. The passage covers 60 miles since noon.
4. She will make a good doctor.

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The majority of times lexical context meanings serve as phraseological meanings because these meanings exist exclusively in particular contextual settings.

According to certain linguistic experts standard word analyses should happen through examination of relationships between words. Scientific research indicates that perfect understanding of polysemantic words happens when researchers understand all their connections for usage and application. Collocative meanings represent word meanings generated from their context usage in which words link up with each other.

Grammatical Context

According to Amosova grammatical context functions through sentence syntax to represent semantic meanings of subordination. Contrarily Ginzburg et al. (1966) explained this concept in their book "A Course in Modern English Lexicology" (Leech & Thomas, 2002) through the statement "In grammatical context is the grammatical structure of context that serves to specify the different meanings of polysemantic word".

The word meaning of polysemous words changes according to the syntactic context in which they appear. The verb *get* demonstrates this phenomenon. The phrase holds various definitions throughout different syntactical patterns.

I received a present during this day (verb structure *get*+*n.* shows the meaning "receive").

The food has become cold according to this sentence (meaning "become").

When coupled with an object followed by an infinitive *get*+*n.*+infinitive the sentence mean I will get him to visit a doctor.

The "to force" interpretation of the verb "make" appears as the sole meaning when the verb forms the grammatical sequence "to make somebody do something." The particular interpretation of *make* requires the verb "make" to appear between a noun and an infinitive verb form of a second verb ("to make somebody laugh" for example). An alternate interpretation of the verb "make" reflects the meaning "to become" or "to turn out to be" because it appears in different sentence structures that include the verb followed by an adjective and noun (such as "to make a good wife" and "to make a good teacher"). The grammatical contexts alongside semantic frameworks determine what makes up the multiple meanings of polysemantic words including "make."

We discover in multiple circumstances that both lexical elements and grammatical elements need equal attention for analysis. While the context's grammatical structure signals the difference between word meanings inside particular structures versus other grammatical patterns it does not clearly specify which particular sense of the word gets used. The specific usage of "to take + noun" and "to take to + noun" in different contexts reveals that they have unique meanings of the verb "to take." Defining the particular meaning becomes possible only through identifying the lexical context which consists of specific combinational groups connected to "to take + noun" structures ("to take tea," "to take books," "to take the bus"). The particular meaning of polysemous words emerges through the combination of surrounding words that create context around verbs thus demonstrating the crucial role of word combinations in understanding word meanings.

The accurate understanding of a linguistic unit depends primarily on lexico-grammatical context which serves as a mixed contextual approach to interpret textual meaning. The method uses lexical meanings along with grammatical functions of contextual indicators to form its analysis. The two phrases demonstrate opposite meanings with the first sentence stating "He ran a horse" while the latter shows "He ran the risk." Lexical meanings within the indicators reveal "ran" implies "make move" for the first phrase but "expose oneself to a possibility of danger" during the second. The grammatical framework of the sentence structure takes equal importance while complementing the lexical content in the examples "He ran the risk" and "He ran a horse."

Grammatical context becomes relevant because some grammar functions provide the signifying role. The interpretable meaning of 'ill' arises from how it contributes to each utterance. The predicative function

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indicates that a person should understand the meaning as falling ill or becoming sick. The semantic interpretation of the analyzed textual segment consists of bad health conditions. When the function is attributive (ill luck, ill will), the analyzed unit represents bad while being hostile. The two meanings clearly differ from one another. Taking into account grammatical context stands as an essential requirement when researching a linguistic expression.

Modern linguistic scholarship makes constant usage of pattern and structure as parallel terms for grammatical context analysis. Procedures exist to show these patterns through standard symbols which utilize "take + n" to indicate "to take something" alongside "take to + n" representing "to take to somebody."

Researchers maintain that the way the word appears in various parts of the text reveals the different meanings behind it. Although all distribution patterns remain identical the meaning remains different. The structural pattern to take + N represents various meanings of the verb to take which depend primarily on the nouns' lexical group classifications.

Non – Linguistic Context

Current investigations about general classification of non-linguistic context divide scholars into three groups who adopt different frameworks such as situational context, social context and cultural context. The authors Eckert and Rickford in their US-based publication *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation* state "Linguistics has proven that the proper interpretation of language units requires examining the specific usage conditions combined with their distinctive features during discourse interactions and all elements determined by various factors such as historical, cultural, sociological, situational contexts, etc" (Eckert & Rickford, 2001).

To properly interpret a polysemous word in its linguistic context multiple non-linguistic factors need analysis. A full interpretation of polysemous words demands examination of communication surroundings and their temporal framework together with speaker attributes and cultural elements. To comprehend the statement "I don't want to be an albatross to you" (J. Warren. *The Nobel Prize*) one must analyze it against the poem S. Colridge created. An understanding of this text (*The Nobel Prize*) requires comparison with the work by S. Colridge.

According to the poem a sailor murdered an albatross which serves as a sacred symbol to seamen. He receives his retribution by being forced to hang the dead bird from his neck. The cultural background of the origin phrase "to be an albatross for somebody" demonstrates that this expression means causing trouble or feeling like a burden for someone else.

The concept of Non-linguistic context which Leech explains in his book *Semantics* includes the additional elements that derive from both physical surroundings and cultural settings during language use according to his definition. The complete framework consists of people, time, place, mode of transmission together with the cultural background of the surrounding environment. The two components of non-linguistic context include situational context together with cultural context known as cultural knowledge (Leech & Thomas, 2002).

Situational context describes "the real-life communication environment during which words along with utterances and speech events occur. Chinese researcher Zhang Yunfei states in Subon (2018) that "Situational context is understood to be the physical, relatively easily identifiable level related to such factors as whom the participants are and what their relationship entails: parent and child, friends, employer and employee or strangers."

Language meanings derive their definition mostly from the real-life interaction context where words appear as in 'to give somebody a ring' with the noun ring or 'I've got it' with the verb get.

The noun ring can mean either a circlet of precious metal or a phone call but the verb get will require interpretation as either possess or understand based on the particular words' usage. The stated situations occur sparingly in modern contexts. Contextual information in language acts as a vital component for word meaning definition.

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The discursive event context generally qualifies as part of social context. Contextual determination emerges from relocating linguistic along with cognitive aspects that make up the entire context system including all discursive event elements. Event discourse relies on social context components which involve micro context (environment immediate concrete and physical including time and place) together with macro context (institutional and non-institutional areas). According to Leech & Thomas (2002) "social context represents a common usage for non-linguistic context that involves accomplices along with their physical and psychological provisions and specific knowledge or assumptions regarding participating persons and understanding language types and their normal routines and communication goals and overall background knowledge."

According to Geoffrey Leech in his study of English research cultural context features an abstract overview of human social conduct. Human society contains and shares all its elements that constitute cultural aspects. Cultural context encompasses material elements such as cities along with organizations and schools alongside non-material aspects like ideas and customs and family traditions and relationships and languages" (Vlavatskaya& Lazareva, 2015).

4. Discussions

Most dictionary meanings relate to the lexical perspective and become understandable only through a portion of the lexical context. Asher (2011) also examined lexical meanings in context and put forward the opinion that the meaning can be found in context, in a sense. Yee and Thompson-Schill (2016) examined examples of context-dependent conceptual activation across many different time scales and demonstrated that the pervasive effects of context across all these time scales suggest that conceptual representations are constantly changing rather than static and inextricably linked to their contexts. Ünay and Gürlek (2020) discussed the use of the context-based vocabulary teaching method in reading texts. In the study, it was stated that contextual vocabulary teaching is a method that requires high-level thinking skills and is used consciously or unconsciously by many individuals. In addition, it was observed that the books examined within the scope of the study were insufficient in terms of effectiveness and the number and quality of examples in using the contextual vocabulary teaching method in vocabulary teaching.

The idea that language remains interconnected with its environment, society and culture makes up social and cultural context. Based on this, it is emphasized in the studies conducted in the field that the relationship between socio-cultural context and language is revealed and that it is an element that should not be ignored in language teaching (Wang et al., 2017; Pathan et al., 2018). McCarthy and Carter (2014) also stated in their research that social and cultural contexts are among the main factors affecting how languages are taught. Socio-cultural context describes the combined social and cultural developments which disclose artistic, literary, economic and political activities in a specific historical period. In parallel with this view, Özmenteş and Adizel (2017) evaluated the effect of socio-cultural contexts on music development and learning. In the study, it was stated that the socio-cultural layers surrounding the individual interact with each other. In their research, Çetin and colleagues (2011) stated that the place of meaning in language is important and that context controls every stage of meaning in language. In the research, it was stated that context is accepted as culture, that knowing the context in foreign language teaching ensures that the meaning is taught correctly and that knowing the context (culture) in translation studies will prevent loss of meaning and prevent possible gaps in meaning.

5. CONCLUSION

Lexical context-based meanings represent the predominant type of meaning that spring from lexical perspectives (or phraseological) since these meanings require specific lexical settings to be visible.

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The idea that language exists together with its social and cultural environment defines the concept of social and cultural context. Socio-cultural context refers to the mixture of social and cultural events at a definite time that gives information about artistic, literary, economic, and political activities.

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