Immediate contexts and reported speech*

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Abstract

'Context' and 'reported speech' are both ordinary language expressions, and important terms in a theory of verbal communication. In this paper I will argue that a relevance-theoretic treatment of 'context' and the concept of 'immediate context' are useful tools for the analysis of deictic phenomena and reported speech. I will also show that though reported speech in conversation looks quite different from that in fiction, they can be explained by a single pragmatic principle, differing only in the way it is applied.

1 Introduction

Deixis provides pragmatists with interesting topics, since deictic items must be analysed in terms of contextual information. Context plays a crucial role here, but the concept of context has often been insufficiently analysed. Against the traditional view of context Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995²) treat context as chosen rather than as pre-determined. In this paper I reject the traditional passive or static view in favor of the more recent active or dynamic view.

My main concern is with deixis in reported speech, both in conversation and in fiction. When we compare reports of speech in conversation with those in fiction, we may get the impression that they behave quite differently, but I will argue that they are subject to a single pragmatic principle, namely the Second (or Communicative) Principle of Relevance, and only differ in the way this principle is applied.

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2 Context and immediate context

The term 'context' has been frequently used both in linguistics and in everyday language. It has a number of usages. When a teacher says, 'What does 'she' refer to in this context?', he probably means the preceding linguistic information. When we say that the interpretation of a sentence depends on the context, we might intend to include non-linguistic knowledge and/or the situation of utterance. If we are told that an irony in a particular utterance depends upon the context, we have to consider speaker opinions and attitudes.

What seems to be agreed about context is that it has two aspects: linguistic and non-linguistic. The difficulty lies in the treatment of non-linguistic information, which includes any kind of information that may be used in interpreting an utterance: old assumptions, common knowledge, shared knowledge, encyclopaedic knowledge, knowledge of external situations, perceptions, etc. To understand context properly, we have to provide an analysis of these non-linguistic phenomena.

One way to avoid this problem is to treat context as fixed in advance so it is determined before the comprehension process starts. This static or passive view of context fails to allow for expansion to include any assumptions activated by on-going utterances. The initial context needs to be supplemented in some way by access to information about the physical situation, other encyclopaedic knowledge, perceptual information, and so on. This dynamic aspect should be accommodated in an adequate theory of context.

Sperber and Wilson's view of context is rather active and revolutionary. Sperber and Wilson (1986:137-142) persuasively argue that a new notion of context should be incorporated in pragmatic theory. In their view, to explain how the context is determined is to explain how a particular subset of the individual's accessible assumptions is selected as part of interpretation process. When a piece of new information is given, a set of background assumptions is activated. For each item of new information, many different sets of assumptions from diverse sources might be selected as context. The assumptions left over in memory from the immediately preceding thought process, including linguistic information from the previous utterance, constitute an immediately given initial context in which the next utterance may be processed. This may then be extended as the interpretation proceeds, the aim being to find a relevant enough interpretation.

That is to say, it is not the case, as almost all linguists have assumed, that the context is determined before the interpretation process takes place but rather that the context is actively constructed based on the search for relevance. This approach sounds more plausible because our cognitive mechanism seems indeed to search just for appropriate

information as the utterance proceeds. The context selection process is guided by pragmatic principles.

In this paper I follow Sperber and Wilson's dynamic conception of context, and I use the term 'immediate context' (henceforth IC), which Sperber and Wilson use in their book rather frequently but do not define, to mean any context which is most accessible at a given point in the utterance interpretation process. Each utterance will create its own range of IC's, and, at any given point, the IC will contain the most immediately accessible assumptions, drawn from any source, including chunks of related information forming a frame, schema, scenario, or script. The initial context for a given utterance is its first IC's.

In the next section, I will show how the concept of immediate context makes it possible to treat deictic expressions in an easy and natural way.

3 Deixis

3.1 What is deixis?

The term 'deixis' covers 'the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, of tense and of a variety of other grammatical and lexical features which relate utterances to the spatiotemporal co-ordinates of the act of utterance' (Lyons 1977: 636). Among the topics discussed under this heading are person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, social deixis, and so on (cf. Fillmore 1975; Brown and Yule 1983; Levinson 1983). In this paper I focus on the three basic functions of person, place, and time deixis.

Person deixis is concerned with the identification of persons who participate in utterance exchanges: the speaker is designated as 'I', the hearer as 'you', and any third party as 'he/she/they'. This sounds obvious, but notice that every time a new utterance is produced by a new speaker, the whole picture of deixis changes: the referents of 'I', 'you', 'here' and 'there' must change. Our dynamic model, with its range of immediate contexts, is flexible enough to accommodate such changes.

Take an example of place deixis. Suppose that (1) is a telephone conversation.

4 Uchida

(1) A: Do you know about the welcome party for newcomers tonight?

B: Yes, are you going there?

A: What? I can't hear you.

B: Hello, are you there?

It is obvious that B's first 'there' does not refer to the same place as B's second 'there'. The second exchange between A and B constitutes what Schegloff (1972) calls an 'insertion sequence', but on a situation-based view of context, it would remain within the overall situation of making a phone call. It is rather awkward in a single situation to have two occurrences of the same word which refer to different entities. On our dynamic model, B's second utterance involves an independent IC. As a result, 'there' in 'are you there' can be correctly analysed as a deictic adverb, even though the utterance 'Are you there?' is not found in ordinary face-to-face situations. (cf. Are you still in there?).

The telephone conversation in (1) also illustrates an important fact about time deixis. As Lyons (1977: 685) puts it, 'in the canonical situation-of-utterance the temporal zeropoint, t_0 , is identical for both speaker and addressee', but they can be in different places at the same time. Phone-calling is a situation where the speaker and the hearer share real time, but are separated in location. In this respect Partee (1985) is right in saying that the role of time is different from that of place in semantics: time is more primitive and universal. Does the same hold for time in fiction?

It is often claimed that 'now' in fiction is quite different from 'now' in conversation. 'Now' in fiction refers to the present time in the on-going fictional situation, but 'now' in conversation refers to the present moment, which is changing, as often observed in an utterance like (2).

(2) Not now, not now. Now!

The time each 'now' refers to is a different moment. On the other hand, the following is an example of 'now' in fiction.

¹In face-to-face communication it is possible to use body language or gestures to refer to different entities using the same lexical item, but such strategies are impossible over the telephone.

(3) She leaned against the high-backed bus seat and watched the last of the fast-food restaurants and muffler shops fall away. *Now* it was just the countryside — newly ploughed fields and belts of trees that were turning that fabulous cloudy green that belongs only to April.

(S. King, $Rose\ Madder^2$).

'Now' is used here in a sentence in the past tense. We don't use it in conversation that way. I propose to analyse it as follows. 'Now' in (3) should be processed in the immediate contexts created by the preceding utterance. After reading the first sentence, we find that the second sentence represents her judgment. If so, 'now' should refer to the time at which the judgment was made, and in fact this is the optimally relevant interpretation.

3.2 Deixis and immediate contexts

Deixis is a situation-bounded concept and deeply rooted in speech events. Consider (4):

(4) I'll tell you about the matter here tomorrow.

Unless we identify the persons referred to by 'I' and 'you', the place denoted by 'here', and the day specified by 'tomorrow', we cannot interpret utterance (4) correctly. Notice that the noun phrase 'the matter' also refers to something, but the phrase and its referents may remain the same if the speaker changes. On the other hand, the whole picture of reference assignment will be entirely changed when a different speaker utters to a different hearer.

Person, place, and time deixis are firmly anchored in speech situations. In reported speech or thought, two different situations are involved: the situation of the current utterance and the situation in which the reported utterance was originally produced. This suggests that deictic information can be at least dual, in the sense that 'here', for example, can mean 'here' in the IC's of the current utterance or 'here' in the speech situation where 'here' was originally used.

Take utterance (4) again. Suppose that the speaker is directly addressing the hearer, so that 'I' refers to the speaker, 'you' to the hearer, 'here' to the place (4) is uttered, and

²S. King, *Rose Madder*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1995.

6 Uchida

'tomorrow' to the day after the utterance. Suppose, then, that the hearer says (5).

(5) Okay with me, but Bill might say, 'I do want to know right now.'

In (5), it is obvious that 'me' refers to the present speaker, 'I' refers to Bill, and 'right now' does not mean the time (5) is uttered. The point I would emphasise is that the two kinds of deictic information can interact with each other: in (5) the two first person pronouns refer to different entities and 'now' is not the main speaker and hearer's 'now'. That is to say, it is possible that conversationalists are involved in at least two kinds of immediate contexts. Let me call them Primary Immediate Context (PIC) and Secondary Immediate Context (SIC) respectively. The following are tentative definitions.

(6) **PIC**

immediate context anchored to the speech situation in which the present speaker and hearer are deictically involved.

(7) **SIC**

immediate context providing referents for deictic items which do not belong to PIC, deictically dependent on the PIC determined by the utterance.

The most typical case is reported speech. We can say that indirect quotation is based on and closely related to PIC, while direct quotation is influenced by both PIC and SIC. Consider (8):

- (8) a. *Mary*: Bill said he wanted to do it then.
 - b. Mary: Bill said, 'I want to do it now.'

In (8a) the time Bill said [he wanted to do it then] is in the past, because the time reference is determined by the time when Mary spoke. Similarly the word 'then' is chosen based on the speech time of (8a). That is to say, time deixis in (8a) is fixed in PIC. (8b), on the other hand, consists of two parts; one is the reporting clause [Bill said] and the other the reported direct speech clause [I want to do it now]. The former can be analysed in the same way as (8a), but the latter should involve an SIC, because the time there is

³Hierarchical views of context can be also observed in recent work such as Recanati (1996) and Bach (to appear).

determined by the time of Bill's original utterance.

Actual occurrences of reported speech are quite complex, both in colloquial situations and in writing, especially in fiction. But in the following two sections I will show that deictic interaction between PIC and SIC can be pragmatically determined, and the strategy can be explained within the framework of Relevance Theory.

4 Reported speech and Relevance Theory

Direct and indirect speech have been extensively studied in English grammar, where many pages are spent illustrating how to convert direct speech to indirect speech or vice versa. It is generally assumed in such works that direct speech conveys the original utterance literally and faithfully. However, recent work has shown that the situation is not so simple. Sternberg (1982), for instance, discusses what he calls the direct discourse fallacy, demonstrating the technical impossibility of conveying paralinguistic features of the original speech in direct speech quotation. Clark and Gerrig (1990) argue that direct quotation is 'demonstration', just as a tennis coach demonstrates for his students how to serve by performing a service himself. Fludernik (1993: 409-414) mentions Sternberg's direct discourse fallacy and cites a number of examples which support his view.

Sternberg (1991), on the other hand, argues that a number of characteristics of direct speech, which Banfield (1982) regards as non-embeddable in indirect discourse, can also be found in indirect speech. That is to say, direct speech in the sense of traditional grammar is not so direct. Nor is indirect speech so indirect.

It seems impossible to defend the view that direct quotation involves the exact reproduction of the original in every sense. However there do seem to be some constraints on direct speech. We cannot say, for example, that Hamlet said, 'Women are easy to seduce.' It should be, 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' I will return to this below.

Recently the demonstration theory seems to be gaining ground: there has been no counter argument and experimental support has appeared. Its main claims are as follows. Clark and Gerrig (1990) maintain that direct quotations are intended to 'depict', not to 'describe', as in indirect discourse, some aspects of the original speaker's utterance. The

⁴This demonstration theory is experimentally supported against the verbatim theory by Wade and Clark (1993).

difference between depicting and describing is fundamental: depictions, e.g. paintings and sculptures, resemble their referents, whereas descriptions do not. But the distinction leaves many questions unanswered. If, as they say, direct quotations are depicting and indirect quotations describing, how are the former related to the latter? As Clark and Gerrig confine themselves to direct quotations, we do not know. Obviously indirect quotations do resemble the original utterances. Furthermore, they do not make any distinction between the spoken and the written mode and they maintain that the same principles apply to written quotations as well as spoken ones. Are they on the right track? Those questions will be clarified in due course.

The approach of Sperber and Wilson (1986/95) to reported speech is both quite similar to and quite different from Clark and Gerrig's. Sperber and Wilson argue that every utterance exhibits one of two types of use: descriptive and interpretive. A descriptively used utterance represents 'some state of affairs in virtue of its propositional form being true of that state of affairs' (228). An interpretively used utterance, to which reported speech belongs, represents 'some other representation which also has a propositional form — a thought, for instance — in virtue of a resemblance between the two propositional forms' (228-29).

This notion of 'representation by resemblance' is similar to Clark and Gerrig's notion of 'depiction'. The crucial difference between the two approaches is that Clark and Gerrig claim that direct speech and indirect speech fall on different sides of the distinction, which Sperber and Wilson would deny. In Sperber and Wilson (1986/95), all types of reported speech, both direct and indirect, are seen as involving representation by resemblance, either of content or of form. Suppose (10) is a response to question (9).

- (9) And what did the inn-keeper say?
- (10) a. Je l'ai cherché partout!
 - b. I looked for it everywhere.
 - c. That he has looked for your wallet everywhere.

If the original utterance was given in French, (10a) is a direct quotation very similar in form to the original, though it may lack paralinguistic information such as the voice quality and the accent of the inn keeper. (10b) is an English translation from the original French, based on similarity of semantic representation. We can say (10c) is a kind of indirect speech if 'he' refers to 'I' and 'your wallet' to 'it', and it is similar in content to the inn-keeper's response.

Sperber and Wilson (1986/95) say, 'Direct quotations are the most obvious example of utterances used to represent not what they describe but what they resemble' (228) and 'Identity is a limiting case of resemblance; reproduction is a limiting case of interpretation' (229). Maintaining Sperber and Wilson's basic assumptions, I claim in this paper that both indirect and direct speech in general are, basically, interpretations of the speaker, and argue that reported speech in general can be dealt with in a unitary way. Before proceeding to the next section, I will introduce some important theoretical notions of Relevance Theory.⁵

The basic assumption of the theory is that human cognition is relevance oriented: we pay attention to information that seems relevant to us. Relevance is achieved not at random but when new information interacts with existing assumptions in one of the following three ways: contextually implying, strengthening, and contradicting and eliminating.

Suppose someone tells you that the food at a restaurant near Covent Garden is very nice and you would like to visit there if you can find a friend to go with. If you eventually succeed in finding one, you will conclude that you can go there, which is a case of contextual implication.

Suppose now that you try a starter and a main dish, assuming that the food is very good. If you in fact find them exceptionally good, your original assumption will be confirmed, which is a case of strengthening. If, instead, you find the food terrible, your old assumption and new evidence will contradict each other, and the weaker of the two, in this case the assumption that the food is good, will be abandoned and replaced with the new information that the food is terrible. This is a case of contradiction and elimination. Sperber and Wilson call these three types of interaction contextual effects. New information is relevant if it achieves contextual effects, and the greater the contextual effects, the greater the relevance, other things being equal.

However, the effort of processing new information is also crucial in assessments of its relevance. Just as we have to pay to obtain some benefit from a product, we need to expend some effort to process an utterance to recover the contextual effects. The factors affecting processing effort include linguistic complexity, logical complexity, accessibility of the context and so on. Of course, it is desirable that the effort spent is as little as possible. Thus, the smaller the processing effort, the greater the relevance, other things being equal.

⁵For a recent introduction to the theory see, for example, Wilson (1994).

Relevance, then, is defined in terms of contextual effects and processing effort. Sperber and Wilson propose two principles of relevance.⁶

Cognitive Principle (11)

The human cognitive system is looking for relevant information, and the more relevant, the better.

(12) **Communicative Principle**

Every utterance creates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

Optimal relevance is defined as follows:

- (13)An utterance on a given interpretation is optimally relevant if and only if:
 - it is relevant enough to be worth the hearer's attention; a.
 - b it is the most relevant one the speaker is able and willing to produce.

Clause (a) implies that the utterance should have enough contextual effects at a low enough processing effort, and clause (b) implies that the hearer should be able to get adequate effects for no gratuitous processing effort. Notice that it also follows from the Communicative Principle and the definition of optimal relevance that if extra processing effort is demanded of the hearer, compensating contextual effects should result. In the rest of the paper I will show how Relevance Theory can shed light on reported speech.

5 Reported speech in conversation

5.1 Direct or indirect quotation?

It is often argued in grammar books that in reported speech some particular time reference in the original can be converted into the corresponding time reference from the viewpoint of the current utterance time. For example, 'tomorrow' in (14) can be changed to 'today' if 'tomorrow' at the speech time of 'I'll leave here tomorrow' corresponds to

⁶Sperber and Wilson (1995) propose *two* Principles of Relevance instead of *one* in their 1986 version. For this revision see the Postface to Sperber and Wilson (1995), and Higashimori and Wilson (1996). (11) to (13) above are from Wilson (1996).

'today' at the reporting time:

- (14) Bill said, 'I'll leave here tomorrow.'
- (15) Bill said that he would leave there today.

And if the place denoted by 'here' in (14) is also the place where the current utterance is produced, 'there' in (15) will be replaced by 'here', as in (16):

(16) Bill said that he would leave here today.

I argued above that each utterance creates its own immediate contexts, and that direct speech involves two utterances, or speech acts, a reporting clause and a reported clause. The reporting clause in (14) is 'Bill said' and the reported clause 'I'll leave here tomorrow.' The former is interpreted in the current PIC. The latter is interpreted in an SIC containing information available at the time of Bill's original utterance. So 'I', 'will', 'tomorrow', and 'here' in (14) are determined in the domain of the SIC, while 'he', 'would', 'here', and 'today' in (16) as well as 'Bill said' are interpreted in the PIC.

Although the relation between direct and indirect speech is one of the standard topics in any grammar book, it seems that no one has thought of asking which is more commonly used, or preferred, (14), (15), or (16)? I will argue that (15) and (16) will be preferred to (14) according to a pragmatically determined principle.⁷

Take another example from a note on a professor's door, saying:

(17) Back in two hours.

We cannot predict when s/he will come back unless the time s/he wrote the note is explicitly stated. Here the anchored IC is clear, i.e. the time of reading the note, but the time of the secondary IC is not specified. Hence we are unable to calculate when the professor will be back.

Back to (14). (14) looks perfectly grammatical, but the fact is that it is as unhelpful

⁷A choice between (14) and its 'genuine' indirect version 'Bill said that he would leave there the next day' may depend on another factor, which I will not discuss in this paper, but the same argument, I believe, will hold there as well.

concerning time as (17), since there is no way the hearer can identify the referent of 'tomorrow'. A tentative reason for selecting (15) or (16) rather than (14) would be something like:

Speakers/writers tend to choose lexical items interpretable in PIC rather (18)than SIC, if possible, in order to make it easier for the speaker or hearer/reader to identify the time and other referents concerned.

Below I try to confirm (18) from corpora of actual conversation.

5.2 Reported speech in face-to-face conversation

In actual conversation more complicated phenomena are observed. Uchida (1994) discusses various aspects of reported speech in conversation, using examples from Svartvik & Quirk (1980), which is a transcribed version of recorded spoken conversation. Here I summarise the points concerning deixis, adding some more examples from the book.8

First, it is difficult to find utterances in the corpus, in either direct or indirect speech, which strictly follow the rules of conversion. Many of the examples are more or less 'mixed' speech, with characteristics of both direct and indirect speech. The reason that genuine direct quotation is rarely found is probably because it is practically impossible to reproduce the linguistic form of the original utterance exactly. 'Sort of', 'that sort of thing', 'words to that effect' and so on are the speakers' excuses for inaccurate quotation, as seen in (19) - (22). Notice also that a hesitation marker 'well' prefaces the quotes in (19) and (21).

⁸The examples below are quoted without paralinguistic markers such as stress, intonation, pause, and so on. The figures in the round brackets at the end of the examples show the locations in the corpora.

⁹There are a number of examples from interviews in the corpora, where the interviewers, who knew that the conversation was being recorded, tend to observe the conversion rule rather strictly, as (i) and (ii) show.

and you said that you liked Steinbeck's style (S.3.5-649).

can I ask you if you take a an interest in in in literary criticism in general in this country (S.3.6-1092).

- (19) they said well sort of what would you like next (S.1.12-12).
- (20) she said sort of I did notice Poppy sort of taking her engine to pieces (S.1.12-347).
- (21) she says well after all the boys aren't left to do the washing-up and that sort of thing (S.1.12-370).
- (22) I thought the ghost's first speech said leave her to Heaven or words to that effect (S.3.5-454).

Nonetheless, there are constraints on quotation, especially when deictic items are involved. Let us check other examples, keeping in mind the principle I proposed in (18) above.

- In (23) the utterance is in indirect speech, and follows the norm until 'and'; the rest is in present perfect tense, which implies that the situation is also coterminous with the present moment:
- (23) I said that I didn't really know except that we had cast around as widely as we could over the last seven years and have not come up with anything that's in our book (S.3.2-1149).
- (23) is a standard case in which what was true at the reference time still remains true at the speech time. The following is a similar example where the time mentioned after 'but' is still in the future:
- (24) he said he happened to mention that Oscar was away for a couple of days but will be back on Monday or thereabouts (S.1.2-366).
- In (25), too, the time adverbial 'today' is included, but it is not the case that 'he' actually used the word 'today' at the time he spoke:
- (25) he first of all came up to my room and said would I please come at four o'clock today (S.1.4-30).

The reason the speaker used 'today' is that the referent is easy for the hearer to identify because it is fixed in the present situation, PIC. Thus (23) - (25) are all subject to the principle in (18).

Notice also in (25) the word order and the personal pronoun 'I' in 'would I please come at four o'clock'. This is a typical mixed speech: the word order is as in direct speech but the pronoun is in indirect speech. This 'I', of course, refers to the speaker of (25). Why 'I', not 'you'? It might be because 'you' is ambiguous in referring to either the speaker or the hearer(s) of (25), while 'I' is not ambiguous because of the preceding information and the word 'please', which implies request.

Personal pronouns 'I' and 'you' sometimes cause problems because speaker and hearer are always present in face-to-face communication. They are also deictic items, so principle (18) may be applied to person deixis too. Along the same lines, I may be right in saying that a PIC bounded 'I/you' is preferred to an SIC bounded one, to make it easier to identify the persons concerned. (26) is a shortened version.

(26) A PIC bounded 'I/you' tends to be selected unless otherwise restricted.

Now consider (27).

(27) I said I must see you (S.3.2-200).

In the corpus, (27) follows (28):

(28) Lyle just sort of gave me a sort of you know just said one thing (S.3.2-197).

From the preceding linguistic context alone, it is impossible to decide whether (27) is direct or indirect speech. But principle (26) predicts that 'you' in (27) is PIC bounded in the unmarked case, and this is confirmed by the fact that 'you' received nucleus and was pronounced with falling intonation in the original text.

Consider the italicised phrases, 'as I knew' and 'did she mean' in (29):

(29) the president said she had gathered from my some of my remarks over lunch that I wouldn't want to live in the college and *as I knew* this was a residential fellowship would I be prepared because it was part of the life of college to come in fairly regularly and I said *did she mean* for lunch or dinner (S.1.3-886).

In the direct quote counterparts, those phrases would have been realised as 'as you know' and 'do you mean'. The reason 'as you know' and 'do you mean' were not selected is perhaps because these 'you's are not PIC bounded, which is correctly predicted by principle (26).

Of course there must be other factors affecting the choice in (26). Ambiguity is one. If there arise no ambiguities or confusions when an SIC governed 'I/you' is used, then the SIC 'I/you' may not be replaced by a PIC governed 'I/you'. The following, for instance, was heard on the TV programme Panorama.¹⁰

(30) He said to me I'll see you tomorrow.

According to principle (18), 'I', 'will', 'you', and 'tomorrow' should be interpreted in the PIC, but in fact they involved an SIC. That was because the topic of the discourse was a scene chronologically quite distant from the time (30) was uttered; as a result, there was no risk of misinterpreting those SIC items as PIC governed.

Now let me amalgamate (18) with (26) into (31):

(31) **Principle**¹¹ of Deixis in Immediate Context (face-to-face situation)

PIC bounded deixes tend to be selected unless otherwise restricted.

This principle provides us with a new perspective on reported speech: a choice of direct or indirect or mixed speech is not random but subject to principle (31). (32a) and (32b), for instance, are not always in free variation.

- (32) a. Bill said, 'I saw Mary on Oxford Street.'
 - b. Bill said he saw you on Oxford Street.

If the hearer's first name is 'Mary', then the speaker will address Mary with (32b), not

¹⁰Broadcast on 16th February, 1992, in Japan.

¹¹The word 'principle' does not have the sort of normative connotation here that it sometimes has, for instance, in the case of Grice's Cooperative Principle. It is also not meant to have the kind of generality that the term has as it is used in the 'Principle of Relevance', which applies to every utterance without exception. The 'principles' I propose in this paper concern certain cognitive regularities or patterns which we tend to follow in linguistic communication. (I owe this note to Dan Sperber).

with (32a). This is intuitively clear and is readily explained by (31). Similarly we can argue that (15) and (16) above, repeated below as (34) and (35), will be preferred if the referents of 'tomorrow' and 'here' in (33) are determined by their PIC's in (34) and (35) respectively:

- (33) Bill said, 'I'll leave here tomorrow.'
- (34) Bill said that he would leave there today.
- (35) Bill said that he would leave here today.

Where does principle (31) come from? The most straightforward situation for deictic words is that first person pronouns refer to the speaker and second person pronouns to the hearer, the time denoted is easily traced in terms of the current situation, and the place denoted is anchored where the speaker stands. As there are no visual clues such as quotation marks in conversation, the more straightforward the structure of deixis is, the less complex the interpretation becomes.¹²

Recall the cost-benefit analogy in Relevance Theory: other things being equal, the smaller the processing effort the greater the relevance. Now it is clear that the principle of deixis in conversation follows from the principles of Relevance Theory.

6 Reported speech in fiction

6.1 Direct and indirect speech in fiction

As noted above, there is no clear boundary in oral conversation between direct and indirect quotation: rather, there is a gradience from literal resemblance in form and content to loose interpretation. Notice, however, that those conclusions were obtained from the analysis of conversation. There are a number of differences between conversational and literary communication. In this section I will focus on direct speech in fiction and move to narrative in the next section.

Many direct quotations in fiction differ from those in conversation and mass

¹²It is, of course, possible to employ prosodic features such as stress, intonation, voice quality, and so on for the visual conventions.

communication such as newspapers in that there is no original utterance. That is to say, conversations embedded between quotation marks are 'presented' as if reported by the author or narrator, but in fact they are not 'reported' in the same way as the speaker in conversation reports someone's opinion, statement, or thought.

Direct quotations in fiction¹³ are often perfect in every sense: precise wording, no repetition, no hesitation, no meaningless fillers, no redundancy, for example. They don't share many characteristics with natural conversation. Even if various reporting verbs are scattered around,¹⁴ this kind of reporting is not quoting per se, but a kind of narration.

In conversation we can in turn report to someone else what has been reported, which, of course, need not be on a word-for-word basis. Utterances in fiction, however, are generally strictly quoted when we cite them: we cannot directly quote Hamlet's words by saying, 'Hamlet said, 'Women are easy to seduce," although we can, of course, summarise them in this way.¹⁵

According to Sperber and Wilson, indirect speech in fiction, like its real-life counterpart, can be classified as interpretation. Generally speaking, indirect speech is more complex in structure than direct speech, since deictic changes are required, so the effort required to process indirect speech will be greater than for direct speech. We can therefore expect compensating contextual effects.

Consider (36):

(36) John asked me to dance with his hysterical wife.

The direct quotation counterpart of (36) would probably be (37a) not (37b).

- (37) a. Will you dance with my wife?
 - b. Will you dance with my hysterical wife?

¹³What I mean here by 'directly quoted utterance in fiction' is the direct speech presented within quotation marks, not the direct speech produced by a character and attributed to another character.

¹⁴In conversation the type of reporting verbs are very limited in number. *Say* among others is overwhelming (Uchida 1994). Sometimes a wide variety of reporting verbs are discussed, but that is only applied to the world of fiction, not to oral discourse. The reason may be that in face-to-face situations prosodic information can cover what various reporting verbs represent.

¹⁵Strict citation in the spoken mode is also possible if the words 'quote' and 'unquote' are used.

The new information that John's wife is hysterical is added by the speaker and assures more contextual effects. Similarly, consider (38):

(38) I asked him if my cousin Georgia was home (J.C. Oates, Small Avalanches¹⁶).

'Him' is 'I's uncle, and 'I' would not use the phrase 'my cousin Georgia' when addressing him directly, as in (39).

(39) Is my cousin Georgia home?

In normal circumstances (40) would be more natural:

(40) Is Georgia home?

The information that Georgia is 'I's cousin is added by the speaker, and again we can expect extra contextual effects. This is one possible justification for the switch from direct to indirect speech.

Summary is also a type of interpretation. The following passage involves summary in the form of an indirect quotation:

(41) He told her about his encounter with the man and the switchblade and their family portrait. Normally, she or any mother, would have been shocked. But for Dianne, it was just another event in this horrible week (J. Grisham, *The Client*¹⁷).

Anecdotes involving these three definite noun phrases have already been presented to the reader, where 'he' encountered 'the man', 'the man' threatened 'he' with 'the switchblade', and 'their family portrait' went missing. Mere repetitions here would be redundant, so the narrator or author gives a summary or reminder, so that the reader does not have to spend gratuitous effort.

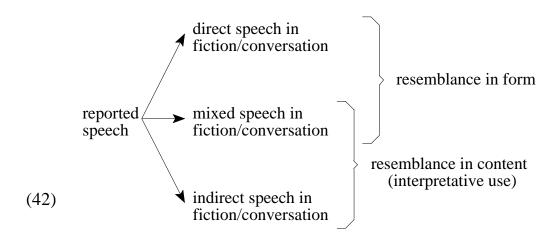
In this subsection I have argued that direct speech in fiction is generally quite different from that in face-to-face conversation in its form, as well as the lack of any original

¹⁶In E. Jones (ed.) (1988), *American Short Stories of Today*. Published by Penguin.

¹⁷J. Grisham (1993), *The Client*. Published by Arrowbooks.

utterance with which to compare it. In both cases, however, direct speech presents itself as resembling the original utterance primarily in form, while indirect speech presents itself as resembling the original primarily in content. We can say, then, that while both involve representation by resemblance, only indirect speech can be treated as interpretation, both in fiction and in conversation.

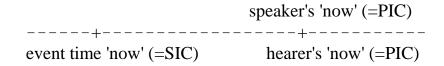
Bearing in mind this perspective, we can divide reported speech in fiction and in conversation as in (42). Thus, mixed speech shares the properties of both direct and indirect speech, i.e. resemblance in both form and content.



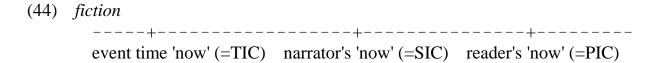
6.2 Deictic situations in fiction

Let us consider now how fiction in general is presented to the reader. In face-to-face communication the speaker's 'now' corresponds to the hearer's 'now' and, as we have seen, the event time 'now' is bounded in SIC and the speaker's and the hearer's 'now' in PIC.

(43) face-to-face communication



In written fiction, however, the reader never shares time of utterance with the narrator or the author, and the narrator describes events in the past. Thus, fiction theoretically consists of three immediate contexts: primary, secondary, and tertiary immediate contexts correspond to the reader's 'now', the narrator's 'now' and the event time 'now' respectively. Tertiary immediate contexts, or TIC's, are not theoretically important and can be ignored, as will be explained below.



Broadly speaking, in fiction everything is 'reported' by the narrator or the author: here 'everything' means not only direct or indirect speech by the characters but also the descriptive or narrative part. There are, of course, potential readers in the writer's mind, but the reader's 'now' is not generally linguistically assumed at the time of writing. Thus, figure (44) above is seen from the viewpoint of the reader. From the author's viewpoint, the reader's PIC can be ignored: the narrator's 'now' becomes primary. Then within the inner structure of the novel (44) can be modified to (45), where the event time 'now' and the narrator's 'now' are marked as SIC₂ and PIC₂ respectively, and distinguished from SIC and PIC in (44).

That the reader's PIC is not assumed by the author can be illustrated by the fact that it is possible, though exceptional, to accommodate the pronoun 'you' in a story where 'you' refers to someone other than the reader.

¹⁸In fact, we have to consider the possibility of a fourth immediate context, because direct quotations which are supposed to reflect the speech of the characters are presented in the characters' immediate contexts.

(46) While you levelled the caravan I explored the site.
'Don't be long,' you called.
'Okay, Dad.' (R. Burns, *Perfect Strangers*¹⁹).

(46) is the beginning of the story. The reader may get confused at first,²⁰ but it is clear that 'you' here refers to the narrator's father, as is confirmed by the following passage.

'Which way's your parents?' Rebecca asked.
'My dad's,' I corrected. I lived with mum, went on holiday with you. It seemed a normal arrangement to me then. 'That way,' I told them, pointing. 'In the trees.'

The extra processing effort required is rewarded later. When 'I' went on holiday with his dad, he was thirteen years old and barely knew him at all. There must have been a psychologically complex state of mind behind the reasons why 'I' used 'you' to refer to his father in the narrative part. Towards the end of the story when 'I' cleared 'your' effects, he found a card with no address or stamp on, but there was a message. The story ends by citing the message:

(48) 'Stephen called it the best holiday he's had. I'm so proud, so happy!'

There are two main types of narration: first person and third person. The following excerpt is cited from the beginning of a short story involving first person narration.

(49) It has been my habit for many years to take a nap after lunch. I settle myself in a chair in the living-room with a cushion behind my head and my feet up on a small square leather stool, and I read until I drop off. On this Friday afternoon, I was in my chair and feeling as comfortable as ever with a book in my hands — an old favourite, Doubleday and Westwood's The Genera of Diurnal Lepidoptera — when my wife, who has never been a silent lady, began to talk to me from the sofa opposite. 'These two people,'

¹⁹In D. Minshull (ed.) (1994), *Telling Stories 3*. Published by Sceptre Books.

²⁰This is a phenomenon I call 'suspense'. For details see Uchida (forthcoming).

she said, 'what time are they coming?'

I made no answer, so she repeated the question, louder this time.

(R. Dahl, My Lady Love, My Dove²¹).

The first paragraph and the inserted comment clause in the second paragraph, 'who has never been a silent lady', are written based on the narrator 'I's 'present' standpoint, which is PIC₂ bounded according to (45). The second paragraph is narrated in past tense, which means 'I' describes the past event from 'I's present time, but the immediate context the sentences evoke is not primary but secondary. 'This Friday', for example, is not 'this' Friday from 'I's present point of view but the Friday of the past event described. Thus, the second paragraph, except for the inserted clause and the direct speech, is bounded in the SIC₂. The crucial evidence is that we cannot substitute 'this Friday' and 'this time' in the last sentence by 'that Friday' and 'at that time', viewed from 'I's present time.

As in (49), a first person narrative can take both deictic viewpoints of PIC₂ and SIC₂. In other words, it is possible for the narrator 'I' to switch his/her deictic center freely from PIC₂ to SIC₂ and vice versa.²²

In third person narrative the basic tense is past; i.e. SIC₂ bounded. If present tense is used, it implies generic or historical present interpretation. The following short story narrated by a third person character, as is revealed later, begins with a paragraph of generic descriptions.

(50) The commonest kind of missing person is the adolescent girl, closely followed by the teenage boy. The majority in this category come from working-class homes and almost invariably from those where there is serious parental disturbance. There is another minor peak in the third decade of life, less markedly working class, and constituted by husbands and wives trying to run out on marriages or domestic situations they have got bored with. The figures dwindle sharply after the age of forty; older cases of genuine and lasting disappearance are extremely rare, and again are confined to the very poor — and even there to those, near vagabond, without close family. When John Marcus Fielding disappeared, he

²¹In R. Dahl (1979), *Tales of the Unexpected*. Published by Penguin.

 $^{^{22} \}rm{There}$ is another type of first person narrative, where the narrator's deictic center is fixed to \rm{SIC}_2 throughout the story.

therefore contravened all social and statistical probability.

(J. Fowles, *The Enigma*²³).

Usually third person narrative does not take the viewpoint of PIC₂, so hearsay information, which can be conveyed in present tense in first person narrative, will also be SIC₂ bounded as seen in (51). Note there the phrase 'They said' instead of 'They say'.

(51) They said²⁴ that Rhys was burning his baby when a gorse bush broke into fire on the summit of the hill (D. Thomas, *The Burning Baby*²⁵).

Suppose that Figure (44) is assumed in the tense system in fiction. Then the present time is attributed to PIC and the past time to SIC (= PIC_2 in(45)). Accordingly, events in TIC (= SIC_2 in (45)) are supposed to be described in past perfect tense, which is clearly not the case. When past perfect tense appears in the narration, two causes are conceivable: one derived from present perfect tense and the other resulting from the 'past' of past tense. In either case the basic tense is registered at SIC_2 .

(52) A month *had passed* since she *had left* the house eight hundred miles east of here, and things were a lot better (S. King, *Rose Madder*).

It is apparent that 'had passed' originates in the present perfect form 'has passed', and 'had left' in the *since* clause in the past form 'left': both the original forms are based on SIC₂. Consider the deictic words, 'now', 'ago', 'this', and 'here' in (53) to (55).

- (53) I'd wanted to watch 'Doctor Who' with Larry and Rebecca but it was too late for that *now* (R. Burns, *Perfect Strangers*).
- (54) The date scribbled at the bottom was 4/17, two days *ago* (S. King, *Rose Madder*).

²³In M. Bradbury (ed.) (1987), *The Penguin Book of Modern British Short Stories*. Published by Penguin.

²⁴Italics in (48) to (52) are mine.

 $^{^{25}}$ Ibid.

(55) *This* was the view he had been thinking of. Vaguely, without really directing his walk, he had felt he would get the whole thing from *this* point. For twelve years, whenever he had recalled *this* scene, he had imagined it as it looked from *here*. *Now* the valley lay sunken in front of him, utterly deserted, shallow, bare fields, black and sodden as the bed of an ancient lake after the weeks of rain (T. Hughes, *The Rain Horse*²⁶).

Notice that these lexical items occur in the descriptive part of the narration. They are generally considered to be connected with present tense, but, as is evident here, they freely co-occur with past tense in fiction. The reason is that the events are described from the narrator's point of view, i.e. in PIC₂.

6.3 Free indirect speech in fiction

Generally speaking, fiction consists of direct quotations and narration, and the latter is mainly composed of description, indirect quotations, and free indirect discourse. I suggested above that direct quoting in fiction involves resemblance of form and indirect speech involves interpretive resemblance. I will argue that free indirect speech, like mixed forms, involves both resemblance of form and resemblance of content.

Free indirect speech has been known as a literary technique of a particular school, 'the stream of consciousness' school, and nowadays it is widely found in any genre of literature from modern fiction to crime novels. As the word 'consciousness' suggests, the main concern of this type of speech is with expressing what characters are thinking.²⁷ The formal features of free indirect speech include identity of tense and person pronouns with the narrative part, retention of time deixis such as 'now' and 'today' or place deixis such as 'here' and 'this side', and so on. It is often suggested in the literature that those characteristics are markers of free indirect speech, but as I argued in the previous sub-

²⁶In M. Bradbury (ed.), op. cit.

²⁷There are, of course, other uses of free indirect speech, as of indirect speech: both can be used for representing a particular character's utterances. Leech and Short (1981) distinguish between Free Indirect Speech, which represents utterances, and Free Indirect Thought, which represents thought. In this paper the main focus is on free indirect speech as representing characters' thought, or Free Indirect Thought in Leech and Short's terms.

section, they are quite general features of the narrative part.²⁸

In first person narrative it is quite natural for the narrator to express his or her own thought even in the narrative part, while in third person narrative, the narrator, whoever he or she is²⁹, has to enter into the inner mental life of the characters as it were. How naturally can this be done?

Let me take a cognitive approach to the problem. It is a delicate question whether we are exploiting language while thinking, but what is clear is that not all thought can be faithfully and literally expressed in words. In this sense Sperber and Wilson (1986/95: 231) are right in saying that 'every utterance is an interpretive expression of a thought of the speaker's.'

Thought is a spontaneous process which could be prefaced by the phrase 'I think', where the subject is first person and the verb in the present tense. If the narrator wants to report a character's thought, the most straightforward way is to use something like 'direct' speech, which is of course possible. Another way is to embed the thought in the narrative part. If it is presented on a first-person present-tense basis, i.e. in the format of direct speech, it is quite easy to detect that it is a representation of a thought.

If the thought is embedded in the narration using the format of indirect speech, the boundary between narration and embedded thought becomes obscure. From a formal point of view it is difficult to distinguish free indirect speech from the rest of the narrative. What is needed is some way to bridge the gap between the two. The verb 'think' is, of course, a literal marker to evoke a thought process, and human perception is another candidate: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling something can trigger a thought. As a matter of fact, there are lots of cases where free indirect speech starts from descriptions of perceptions of characters. (56) and (57) are typical examples:³⁰

²⁸Cf. Fludernik (1993: 332-38).

²⁹Some novels have more than one narrator. Our model of immediate contexts smoothly accommodates multiple narrators.

³⁰Example (3) above can be also included here.

- (56) Liking him she opened the door and looked out. It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the cafe. The cat would be around to the right. Perhaps she could go along under the eaves (E. Hemingway, *Cat in the Rain*³¹).
- (57) Late in the afternoon, when she had given him up and had even changed out of her pink dress into her smock and jeans and was working once more at her bench, the doorbell rang. William had come, after all. It was in the nature of their love affair that his visits were fitful: he had a wife and children (V.S. Pritchett, *A Family Man*³²).

In (56) after 'she looked out', what she sees follows. Then she thinks about 'the cat': the result is expressed in free indirect speech in the last two sentences. (57) is an auditory example, which triggers the free indirect thought 'William had come, after all.'

Bearing in mind the above discussion, let me analyse free indirect speech in terms of Relevance Theory. (58) and (59) below are examples of 'direct' free indirect speech and 'indirect' free indirect speech respectively, from the same short story.

- 148 have time to think, he told himself. 2 More important still, he must have time to compose himself thoroughly before he said another word. 3 Take it gently, Boggis. 33 4 And whatever you do keep calm. 5 These people may be ignorant, but they are not stupid. 6 They are suspicious and wary and sly. 7 And if it is really true no it *can't* be, it *can't* be true ...
- (59) ₈But that was not all. ₉There was a chair there as well, a single chair, and if he were not mistaken it was of an even finer quality than the table. ₁₀Another Hepplewhite, wasn't it? ₁₁And oh, what a beauty! ₁₂The lattices on the back were finely carved with the honeysuckle, the husk, and the paterae, the caning on the seat was original, the legs were very gracefully turned and the two back ones had that peculiar outward splay that meant so

³¹In E. Hemingway (1958), *In Our Time*. Published by Macmillan.

³²In M. Bradbury (ed.), op. cit.

³³Boggis is 'his' name.

much. 13It was an exquisite chair (R. Dahl, Parson's Pleasure³⁴).

Sentences 3 to 7 in (58) are easily detected as free indirect speech because they are presented in present tense: more accessible to the inner part of the mind. We must note that the present tense here is not the reader's 'now' but the narrator's 'now'. Sentence 2 is a little ambiguous, but prefaced by 'he told himself' in the previous sentence, it most probably belongs to the same speech.

In (59) past tense is used and the situations are a bit complicated, but sentences 10 and 11 are unmistakably free indirect speech because of the tag question and exclamatory forms. It is safe to say that sentence 8 is purely descriptive but the other sentences are subtler than sentence 2 in (58). Sentences 9 and 12 reflect the visual image of the character, Boggis: that chair should be just in front of him. As noted above, visual description is one of the most popular ways to lead to free indirect speech, but there is no crucial evidence there. The last sentence is also indeterminate as to whether it is Boggis' evaluation or a descriptive utterance.

What is important here is not to decide whether this is free indirect speech or not, but to acknowledge that the boundary between the narrative part and the speech is obscure. The most salient characteristic of free indirect speech is this ambiguity.

'Direct' free indirect speech like (58) does not require much processing effort to recognise as such. So in that sense it is relevant enough. 'Indirect' free indirect speech, on the other hand, requires some extra effort to process, and should offer compensating effects. For instance, if the reader goes on to interpret the passage as a description of a state of affairs and later realises that this interpretation is wrong, the contextual effect would be that of contradiction. If the takeover is so subtle that the reader cannot detect that a passage represents the mental process of a character, this is a case of indeterminacy, which may be a kind of 'deliberate ambiguity'. It is this indeterminacy that enables the reader to enter from the descriptive narration into the characters' mind quite naturally.

Recall principle (31) of reported speech in conversation, repeated below as (60).

(60) Principle of Deixis in Immediate Context (face-to-face situation)
PIC bounded deixes tend to be selected unless otherwise restricted.

³⁴In R. Dahl, op. cit.

We could posit a similar version for the narrative part in fiction.

(61) Principle of Deixis in Immediate Context (fiction)

SIC₂ bounded deixes tend to be selected unless otherwise restricted.

I explained above that principle (31)/(60) is nicely accommodated in the framework of Relevance Theory. Principle (61) differs from (60) in that the deixes are anchored in SIC₂, not PIC or PIC₂. SIC₂ is not reader-oriented, so if principle (61) is applied especially to free indirect speech in fiction, it demands more processing effort from the reader, but the principle of relevance guarantees compensating contextual effects. So principle (61) also fits with Relevance Theory.

Notice that the principle in conversation activates the effort side of relevance and that in fiction the effect side of relevance. That is to say, reported speech in general can be explained by a single principle of relevance, but the same principle is applied to reported speech in conversation quite differently from free indirect speech in fiction.

7 Conclusion

According to Sperber and Wilson, the context is the set of assumptions actually used in interpreting an utterance, and those assumptions are dynamically determined by the hearer in the process of searching for an optimally relevant interpretation. In the present paper we have adopted this dynamic view of contexts, rejecting the traditional static view and developing the concept of immediate contexts.

We have demonstrated that immediate contexts can nicely accommodate deictic phenomena in a theory of linguistic communication. It has become evident that immediate contexts and deixis are crucial if we want to provide a comprehensive account of reported speech. Based on pragmatic principle (31)/(60) within the framework of Relevance Theory, we have explained the preference for one type of reported speech over another, and the behaviours of reported speech both in conversation and in fiction.

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