UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

KHALIL WALKER

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CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

By

KHALIL WALKER

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved children:

Omar, Safiyyah, and Ruqayyah
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2007

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This research adapts a methodology for the analysis of context for pragmatics research and explores the dimensions of contextual variation of texts associated through previous research with conversational implicature production. The study adapts the activity types analytical framework for the categorization and interpretation of linguistic contextual markers as part of the adaptation of the corpus-based multidimensional approach to register analysis to the study of aspects of pragmatic context. The methodology was used in this study to determine the pragmatic contextual characteristics of registers classified according to their expected adherence to Grice's cooperative principle (CP) and maxims of conversation.

These registers were represented by sample texts of a grammatically annotated corpus of approximately 21 million words, 1094 texts, prepared for the study. Frequency counts for 37 linguistic markers of context were obtained through the use
of a parser written in the Perl computer programming language, developed as part of
the study. These frequency counts were then converted to normalized frequencies
based on 1000 words of text. Factor analysis was done on the frequency counts
following multidimensional analysis procedures.

The factor analysis resulted in an eight-factor solution. These factors were
interpreted as contextual dimensions which were defined through the analysis of the
salient linguistic features (markers) loading on each factor. Functional interpretation
was based on the activity types functions. All of the 37 features were found to be
salient. Results describe the contextual characteristics of sample groups of text
representing seven registers. Relations between the registers were used to verify the
dimensional interpretations, as well as to examine their contextual relationships on
the dimensional scales. Internal coherence of the registers and the power of the
dimensions to determine register distinctions were measured. Results largely
supported the accuracy of the method in determining pragmatic characteristics of the
sample texts.

Non-parametric statistical comparison was made on two groups of text based on their
association with conversational implicature production—one corpus representing
registers in which Gricean maxims may be observed, and one in which they may be
violated. Results of the statistical comparisons suggest that the two groups show
significant differences on several contextual dimensions determined through the
study. Thus, the study identified functionality associated with constraints on
utterance production associated with non-observance of Gricean maxims through empirical quantitative analysis.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

Oleh

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Februari 2007

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Shameem Mohd Rafik Khan, PhD

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Daftar tersebut diwakili oleh sampel-sampel teks dari korpus kira-kira 21 juta perkataan dan 1094 teks yang disediakan untuk kajian ini. Kiraan frekuensi untuk 37 petanda linguistik konteks didapati menggunakan sejenis parser yang ditulis menggunakan bahasa program komputer Perl yang dibangun sebagai sebahagian


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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 2 February, 2007 to conduct the final examination of Khalil Walker on his PhD thesis entitled “The Contextual Dimensions of Conversational Implicature” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

_________________
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Date: 15 MAY 2007
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