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METAPHOR IN DISCOURSE*

1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to discuss the role of metaphor in discourse comprehension from the standpoint of relevance theory. In spite of many studies on metaphor, there has been little consideration on the real situations in which metaphors are used. For example, in Pilkington (2000), which emphasized the importance of context dependency in the use of metaphor, most of the examples of metaphors are isolated utterances.

(1)   Sally is a block of ice.
(2)   Richard is a gorilla.

(Pilkington 2000:88)

In each metaphor, it is usually considered that the speaker intends to communicate the following thoughts. For example, in (1), they are 'Sally is unemotional, lacking in feeling or the ability to express feeling,' and so on. We might also be able to say in the case of (2), 'Richard is fierce and prone to violence', and so on. These might be typical interpretations which most people might have in their minds. But many analyses on isolated metaphors like these give the impressions that the contexts are pre-given. However, in relevance theory, it is considered that a context is selected, not pre-given.[1] Most studies on metaphors seem to fail to notice this most important point. Considering the frequent use of metaphors in our daily communication, I will suggest that we need to analyze them in naturally occurring discourse in 'real–life' contexts. Therefore, in this paper, I will clarify that how the interpretation of metaphors affect in the discourse comprehension. Relevance theoretic view based on the cognition of human would offer many vulnerable hints for the purpose of clarifying this suggestion.

[1] What we have to note here is that in relevance theory, the definition of the term *context* is very different from other approaches. "Most approaches to context assume that a context is already given, uniquely determined and fixed in advance of when an utterance is processed. For Sperber and Wilson, by contrast, context is chosen along with the course of interpretation, not pre-given.

2   PREVIOUS STUDIES

The study of metaphor has been mainly carried out by rhetoricians. It has been widely claimed that metaphor is a specific use of languages. Although Grice (1989) is a linguist who has considered metaphor from a linguistic view point, he has also emphasized the specificity of a metaphor.[2] He has argued that metaphor is a kind of perceived flouting of (one of) the maxims that form part of the Co-operative Principle which he has suggested.[3] I would like to start to look at one of Grice's examples of the interpretation of a metaphorical utterance.

(3)   You are the cream in my coffee.

In Grice (1989:34), he assumes that the addressee first computes a literal meaning which corresponds to the proposition expressed by the utterance. He then finds that it involves a 'categorical falsity' that it is not consistent with one of the tacit norms, or maxims. In this case, (3) flouts the first maxim of quality which states: 'Do not say that which you believe to be false.' When a maxim is flouted, an interpretation of the utterance on the level of what is said is rejected in favor of an interpretation that is consistent with the maxims on the level of what is implicated. An implicature is then calculated. In the case of (3), perhaps what is communicated, Grice suggests, is something along the lines of 'you are my pride and joy.' According to Grice (1984:34), 'the most likely supposition is that the speaker is attributing to his audience some feature or features in respect of which the audience resembles (more or less fancifully) the mentioned substance.' However, there is a big problem with this approach to an metaphor. Why do we use expressions metaphorically instead of saying exactly and literally what we mean? And what leads us to a metaphorical interpretation? For example, there are many utterances which can be read both literally and metaphorically in a different context, such as the following:

(4)   They roll dice.   (2002/01/13 CNN "Larry King Weekend")
(5)   The matching bag is not the silver bullet all by itself.
                                    (2002/01/16 CNN "Larry King Live")

In actual utterances, both of these are used as metaphors. But it would also be possible for us to interpret them literally if we see them as isolated utterances. So we cannot help but say that Grice's approach is inadequate because it cannot explain this problem well.

In contrast with the view that a metaphor is a specific linguistic expression, it has been claimed from the standpoint of the principle of relevance that a metaphor is a kind of general use of language. Based on this suggestion, various problems which have been unsolved in Grice's approach have been clarified. In this paper we would like to examine the following two mainstream relevance-based approaches.

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[2] See Sperber and Wilson for more detailed discussion (1985: Chapter 1).
[3] Consider on each principle of Grice (1975:45).

First, Sperber and Wilson (1995) have examined metaphor in terms of loosening. According to their observation, metaphorical utterances communicate a range of weak implicatures. The alternative account is Carston (1996). She has argued that metaphors contribute to the proposition expressed, or explicature.[4] In the following sections, I would like to overview each analysis for our later argument.

2.1 Metaphor as Loose Talk

In relevance theory, it is claimed that humans automatically aim at maximal relevance, i.e. maximal cognitive effect for minimal processing effort. This is the single general factor which determines the course of human information processing.

Presumption of optimal relevance
(a) The set of assumptions I which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus.
(b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate I.

(Sperber and Wilson 1995:158)

Any utterance addressed to someone automatically conveys a presumption of its own relevance. This is called the principle of relevance.

Principle of relevance
(a) Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance.
(b) Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

(*ibid.*: 260)

It is reasonable to consider that every speaker aims at optimal relevance. The principle of relevance is not one that must be followed, but is the one that should be introduced as the natural result, focused on the cognition of people and the communication among us. Then what determines 'relevance'? It is the relation between effort and effect. Human information processing requires some mental effort and achieves some cognitive effect. In relevance theory, it is considered that there are three cognitive effects: contextual implication, strengthening and revising an existing assumption. As for the processing effort, it requires the effort of perception, memory and inference to represent the input, access contextual information and derive cognitive effects. What we have to note next for relevance is a matter of degree. What makes an input worth attending to is not just that it is

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[4] An explicature is a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features (Sperber and Wilson 1995:182). About other analyses on the distinction between explicature and implicature, see Carston (1988, 1996). And in Wilson (2002), the necessity of an ad hoc concept construction has also been suggested.

relevant, but that it is more relevant than any alternative input available at that time (Wilson 2001:2). So the greater the cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the smaller the processing effort required to achieve these effects, the greater its relevance is. For an utterance to be understood, it must have one and only one interpretation which is consistent with the fact that the speaker intended that it would be relevant to the hearer; adequately relevant on the effect side and maximally relevant on the effort side. The speaker's task is to make sure that the thought she intends to convey is consistent with the principle of relevance. The hearer's task is to find an interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance. According to this principle of relevance, utterances are not necessarily restricted to a representation of the state of affairs.

> From the standpoint of relevance theory, there is no reason to think that the optimally relevant interpretive expression of a thought is always the most literal one. The speaker is presumed to aim at optimal relevance, not at literal truth. The optimal interpretive expression of a thought should give the hearer information about that thought which is relevant enough to be worth processing, and should require as little processing effort as possible.
>
> (Sperber and Wilson 1995:233)[5]

Therefore in relevance theory, it is claimed that the relationship between utterances and thoughts is one of interpretive resemblance.[6] We may say that a great many representations used by us interpretively represent a thought entertained by the speaker – the very thought that the speaker wants to communicate. For example, suppose the situation where one who earns £797.32 pence a month is asked about her salary by her friend at lunch time. Even if she could give the exact figure, it would be much preferable to make a less literal statement (6b) than to choose the strictly literal and truthful answer (6a).

(6) a.   I earn £797.32 pence a month
    b.   I earn £800 a month.

(Sperber and Wilson 1995:233)

Both (6a) and (6b) will enable the hearer to derive exactly the same conclusions about the speaker's status, standard of living, and so on. According to the principle of relevance, built upon cognitive effect and processing effort, the speaker should therefore choose the reply which will convey the same conclusions as economically as possible. The utterance in (6b) can be seen as an economical means of encouraging the hearer to access these assumptions. Furthermore, the search for an

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[5] Along with this idea, an utterance is strictly literal if it has the same prepositional form as the speaker's thought. It may more usually be the case that an utterance that shares some, but not all, of its contextual assumptions with the thought communicated is the most economical way of communicating that thought (or the particular set of further assumptions/implicatures that constitute that thought). See Pilkington (2000:91) for more detailed discussion.

[6] Compared with the descriptive resemblance, the interpretive resemblance is referred to in more detail in some analyses, for example, in Blakemore (1992:102-108) and Sperber and Wilson (1995:Chapter 4).

interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance leads the addressee (e.g. the hearer) to the subset of the contextual and logical implications of the propositional form of the utterance that might have been intended not by the speaker, but by the addressee. So, by using a single expression loosely, a very wide range of indeterminate and acceptable weak implicatures may be derived. Based on this suggestion, Sperber and Wilson (1995:231-237) discuss metaphors in relation to more general examples as loose talk. They say that in metaphor, general examples are loose talk. They say that in the case of metaphor, the degree of looseness is much bigger than the literal expression. Let us examine the following metaphor:

(7)   This room is a pigsty.   (Sperber and Wilson 1995:236)

The process of the interpretation of this metaphorical expression as follows: Sperber and Wilson say that the metaphor in (7) gives access to an encyclopedic schema with one or two dominant and highly accessible assumptions; pigsties are stereotypically filthy and untidy. When (7) is processed in this stereotypical context, it will yield the implication that the room is filthy and untidy. In addition, the speaker must have intended to convey more weak implicatures derived in the interpretation of this metaphor. For example, it might be that the filthiness and untidiness goes beyond the norm.

In a relevance-based approach, a speaker is aiming at optimal relevance and a hearer is expected to believe that this is what the speaker is doing. So the only way of establishing the relevance of metaphor like (7) is to look for a wide range of very weak implicatures. In short, by uttering (7), the speaker encourages the hearer to look for a range of further contextual implications not shared by a direct expression such as 'This room is very dirty.' Conveying such a range of partly weak, partly strong implicatures is a typical effect of figures of speech. Then, what about more creative metaphors? They require of a hearer a greater effort in building an appropriate context, and in deriving a wide range of implications. In general, the wider the range of potential implicatures, the greater the hearer's responsibility for constructing them, the more creative the metaphor. This extra effort may consist in creating a metaphor of the hearer's own. As a result, different hearers with different background knowledge and different imaginations will follow somewhat different routes. However, they are all encouraged and guided by context and proceed by exploring contextual implications as relevantly as they can.

In conclusion, Sperber and Wilson (1986a) have mentioned that hearers merely expect there to be an interpretative resemblance between the proposition expressed by the utterance and the thought that the speaker intends to convey. The principle of relevance may be sufficient to explain how contextual information can be brought to bear on a linguistically underdetermined utterance, underdetermined in particular as regards its degree of literalness or looseness, and uniquely determine its interpretation. The search for optimal relevance leads the speaker to adopt, on different occasions, a more or less faithful interpretation of her thoughts. The result in some cases is literalness, in others metaphor. Metaphor thus requires no special interpretive abilities or procedure. In short, it is a natural outcome of some very general ability and procedures in verbal communication. And the search for a wide

range of weak implicatures is also justified by aiming at optimal relevance.

2.2 An ad hoc concept in metaphor

An alternative account of metaphor interpretation may argue that metaphor provides a contribution to the proposition expressed by the utterance. Within relevance theory, two local pragmatic processes of enrichment and loosening of linguistically encoded conceptual material have been suggested. The view that argues that metaphorical utterances communicate a range of implicatures as we have seen in the previous section could consider the enrichment and the loosening as an asymmetrical process. This view argues that enrichment including logical strengthening of a lexical concept contributes to the proposition expressed by the utterance, hence to its truth-conditions.

    (8) a.   He wears rabbit.
       b.   I want to meet some bachelors.

<div align="right">(Carston 1996:63)</div>

In (8a), the noun 'rabbit', which encodes something like *rabbit stuff*, is narrowed to *rabbit fur/skin*. In (8b), the *bachelor* concept would be a subset of the set of unmarried men. A crucial component of the narrowed concept would be *eligible for marriage*. In both cases, the enrichment targets a particular lexical item and strengthens the concept it encodes, keeping the logical (definitional) properties. It may contribute to the explicit level of communication, specifically to the propositional form of the utterance. On the other hand, it is claimed that the alternative pragmatic process, in the case of loosening, including metaphorical uses , do not enter into the proposition expressed by the utterance, or affect its truth-conditions.

    (9) a.   This steak is raw.
       b.   France is hexagonal.

<div align="right">(Carston 1996:65)</div>

The process of interpreting loose use is considered as follows. The hearer decodes the lexically encoded concept, thereby gaining access to certain logical and encyclopedic properties. As he treats an utterance as a rough guide to what the speaker intends to communicate, the hearer may reject some properties that are not relevant in the particular context and accept other properties as reflections of the speaker's view. For instance, in the case of 'raw' in (9a), the definitional property of *not cooked* would be rejected while the encyclopedic property of *difficult to eat* would be maintained. The lexical concept *raw* is non-identical resemblance with the concept that figures in the speaker's thought regarding the state of the steak; that is, they share some logical and contextual implications so that the loosened concept cannot contribute to the proposition expressed. This means that a metaphor does not also contribute to the explicature.

In Carston (1996), this asymmetric treatment is questioned. She has suggested that the relevance concept is constructed out of logical and encyclopedic information, which is made accessible by the encoded lexical concept from the pursuit of optimal relevance; whether the construction process is a loosening or an enrichment does not matter. This is shown in the following metaphorical utterance:

(10) Engelbert isn't a human being; he's a wild beast.   (Carston 1996:78)

In (10), while Engelbert is in fact a member of the human species, what the speaker is denying is that he belongs to a narrower positive and stereotype category which consists of thoughtful, compassionate, and civilized human beings. The former part is thus a case of negated enrichment. And in the latter part, the enriched concept is loosened to include some actual human beings. In this case, two processes of enrichment and loosening show the compliment. There are other cases where the ad hoc concept construction approach would be better.

(11) a.   Engelbert isn't a 'human being'; he's a wild beast*.
     b.   Huckleberry isn't a 'human being'; he's a Buddha*.

(ibid.)

'*A human being*' in (11b) is meant to indicate that the ad hoc concept, which is derived by a process of enriching the linguistically encoded concept *human being*, is distinct from *human being* in (11a), derived by a process of enriching that linguistic encoding. In other words, the process of enrichment of the same lexical word is not always stable. Third, in the next example, whether it is a metaphorical loosening or an enrichment is ambiguous.

(12) Caroline is our princess.   (Carston 1996:79)

When the Caroline in question is in fact a princess, the intention of the speaker does not concern her status in a royal family but rather such properties as her haughty, spoilt ways. In this case, the logical (definitional) property of the word *princess* has to be kept. But in another case, when Caroline is not a princess, the logical property of the princess is dropped. In other words, the ad hoc *princess* concept might or might not include the logical property of the lexical concept, depending on the context. This means that a metaphor is not always interpreted through the loosening of a word. Therefore Carston (1996) suggests the ad hoc concept construction as an alternative approach. Forming ad hoc concepts can only follow a better understanding of the identity conditions on concepts and the relations between encyclopedic entries and the concept that feeds into on-line utterance interpretation. Let me give you the analysis in detail.

(13) Sam is a pig.

In the case of (13), what is communicated is a concept close to, but not identical with, PIG. If we wish to communicate a thought which contains a non-lexicalised

concept, we have to use a lexicalised concept which shares some of its properties with the concept we 'have in mind' and also take advantage of other features of the context to encourage the communication of the thought we intend. (13) may be used literally, when 'Sam' is the name of a pig. But if it is clear from the context that Sam is a human being then that piece of contextual information will indicate that a concept is intended that can be constructed from information that the lexical concept PIG makes available. Indeed in a metaphor like (13), it may be that one can speak of two lexical concepts, both lexicalised by 'pig'. It always remains possible, however, to exploit the connection with the original concept and use the metaphor more creatively to make salient other properties of pigs.

Next, we could argue why the ad hoc concept construction is favored from a relevance-based standpoint, which is built upon a cost-benefit relation. We can think of many thoughts that our utterances do not encode, and communicate many thoughts that our utterances cannot encode. Strictly speaking, virtually no sentence encodes a complete thought. It follows that there are many more concepts than there are words in the language (Carston 1996:61). Let us consider the next example.

(14)   Bill is a bulldozer.   (Carston 1996:75)

In a metaphorical statement such as (14), the lexical concept *bulldozer* is used to represent the non-lexicalised concept that figures in the speaker's thought about Bill. An ad hoc concept is derived through the encyclopedic entries and the contextual information. So the ad hoc concept which is derived by such a process gives the hearer an easy access to gain the contextual assumptions. Furthermore, this idea is grounded on fundamental facts about cognitive processing. This is because the non-literal interpretation of the speaker's thought may be better on some occasions than a strictly literal one. As Carston (1996:84) says, this 'better' means that the hearer derives the intended interpretation with less processing effort than it would take to first derive the propositional form of the speaker's thought and derive the intended effects from that. In other words, we want effects, so we are prepared to expend effort to get them, but we want them as cheaply as we can get them, so we do just enough work that is necessary to achieve them. Carston has also pointed out that the ad hoc concept might be formed 'later', after the derivation of implicatures, when the hearer wants to store what was communicated in a manageable form. This would be a case of constructing an ad hoc concept in pursuit of an interpretation consistent with the second (communicative) principle of relevance: Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance. Later we would learn that the process of an ad hoc concept construction like this is valid to state the influence of a metaphor in discourse. This 'metaphor-as-ad-hoc concept structure' view is also supported by the standpoint of psychology. Gibbs (1994:230-232) points out that the psycholinguistic evidence clearly shows that listeners do not ordinarily devote extra processing resources to understanding metaphors compared with more literal utterances. Furthermore, Gibbs also criticizes the 'metaphor-as-loose-talk' view for assuming that the propositional form of an utterance resembles the thought of a communicator rather than being a direct reflection of ideas actually constituted by metaphor.

As we have ever seen, in the process of an ad hoc concept construction, both information arising from the concepts encoded and form context which is derived from is integrated. Of course it follows the consideration of relevance. This also means an immediate process of various information.

2.3 The Problems

In this section, on the basis of relevance theory, it has been suggested that a metaphor is a means of expressing the speaker's thought, or non-lexicalised concept as economically as possible in the given context. At the same time, the process of the interpretation of a metaphor is explicable from an ad hoc concept construction approach. However, as we have pointed many times in this paper, there is a major problem in the previous analyses. That is, almost all the metaphors that have ever been observed are isolated ones. This is quite unnatural. We often use and hear metaphors in our everyday communication. We can also immediately use and interpret very creative, poetic and original metaphors though we are not gifted poets. I think this fact suggests that the metaphor has some important influence on the interpretation of the whole discourse. To make this question clearer, I would like to consider metaphors in discourse, say, the relationship between metaphors and discourse in the next section.

3   WHAT IS THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN DISCOURSE?

Here I hope to clarify the question of what role a metaphor really plays in communication. Before discussing this in detail, we should first consider relevance in discourse. Sperber and Wilson (1986) say that discourse comprehension is the recognition of the relevance which are relations between the content of an utterance and its context. Blass (1990) also points out how relevance theory provides a better theoretical foundation for comprehension and textuality than coherence models which have been the mainstream in discourse analysis. Let us begin with a discussion of Blass's approach.

3.1 Relevance Theory and Discourse

What Blass (1990) has emphasized most in her work is that relevance is the key to communication. In short, although the importance of coherence or topic continuity has been claimed in discourse analysis, the only thing that is important in discourse is relevance. To provide evidence for this claim, I will look at a few examples which do not exhibit obvious coherence or 'topic continuity,' but would be handled in a relevance-based framework in the next section.[7]

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[7] Following Blass (1990:10), I intend to use 'discourse' as a general term to refer to all acts of verbal communication and to reserve the term 'text' for the 'explicit', or 'recorded part' of discourse.

3.1.1 Coherence and Relevance   Coherence is connectivity of semantic or pragmatic content (Blass 1990:17). Coherence relations in discourse have been emphasized in discourse analyses. However, there are a number of reasons for rejecting coherence-based approaches to comprehension. Particularly, isolated utterances such as (15) would pose a problem for coherence-based approaches.

> (15)   Parking is prohibited for non-customers.   (Blass 1990: 21)

Although they do not exhibit any coherence relations, it is unrealistic to think that isolated utterances like (15) are interpreted by entirely different principles. It is also difficult to see how the first utterances in a text would be accounted for on a coherence-based approach. Consider the following examples. Discourse-initial utterances such as (16), and beginnings of books, such as (17), are expected to be properly be understood.

> (16)   Hello, you look well.   (*ibid.*)
> (17)   To Sherlock Holmes she is always the woman.
> (*Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*)

The next problem is about referential ambivalence. Consider (18):

> (18)   John can open Bill's safe. He knows the combination.

Hobbs (1979:83-87), who has taken a coherence-based approach, makes the suggestion that referential ambivalences are resolved by an appeal to coherence relations; the actual interpretation chosen will always be the one that maintains coherence with preceding text. Thus in example (18), he argues that the hearer interprets the pronoun *he* as referring to John because on this interpretation the text exhibits the coherence relation. However, Blass (1990:21) points out that this can be shown not to be the case. Look at the following example:

> (19)   The man who has made a bomb may use it.

The utterance is ambiguous as to whether it may refer to a particular known man or any man of the set of men who have made bombs. However, all these problems which could not be handled in a coherence-based approach can be solved in a relevance-based approach; all communications are aimed at pursuing optimal relevance. Therefore it is explicable that the first interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance can be expected to be the one the speaker intended to convey.

3.1.2 Topic and Relevance   Next, let us view the evidence to consider that it is relevance relations, rather than coherence ones, which underlie judgments of textual well-formedness. First, let us look at examples which do not exhibit obvious coherence or 'topic continuity.'

(20) a.   Pierre: What are you doing after eight o'clock?
     b.   Marceline: Let's talk business.

(Blass 1990:75)

(20b) is neither obviously coherent nor topic-preserving. Despite a topic split like this, communication will succeed in most cases. Blass (1990:75) says that relevance theory will provide the reason for this: the fact that Marceline has refused to answer Pierre's question would, given a set of contextual assumptions which any socially adept speaker could supply, be highly relevant. Thus the intuitive connection between (20a) and (20b) is not explainable by a coherence-based approach, but it is explainable in a relevance-based approach. Let us look at another example which does not exhibit the connectedness between utterances, but is considered as textual well-formed utterances.

(21) a.   He: Tomatoes have been cheap this year, haven't they?
     b.   She: Look who's coming.
     c.   He: Tony! Well I never.

(Blass 1990:75)

As Blass also has pointed out, such exchanges can happen all the time, and would not normally be regarded as either uncooperative or defective. Within relevance theory, exchanges such as above type can also be properly explained. The speaker of (21b) knows that the fact that Tony is coming will be relevant enough to be worth the hearer's attention, more relevant in fact than any other information she can give him. It is the aim of the speaker to optimize relevance over a discourse, that is, to achieve adequate contextual effects for the minimum justifiable processing effort (Blass 1990:77). So it might be safe to say there is not a requirement for topic continuity. Then how are intuitions about topics explained in relevance theory? Sperber and Wilson (1986:216-217) says that a 'topic' merely gives access to an encyclopedic entry which plays a relatively central role in comprehension, drawing on the interpretation of each utterance in a stretch of discourse. So intuitions about topic can be seen as intuitions about the homogeneity of context. Each part of a narrative must be either relevant in its own right or contribute to the relevance of later stretches of discourse. So considering 'relevance' in discourse is the most important. In the next section, we discuss the role of a metaphor in discourse.

3.2 The Use of Metaphor in Discourse

In this section, I will analyze the role of metaphors in discourse. First, let us consider the following example:

(22) For years, Saddam ruthlessly milked bination of terror and reward. "He
      will make you a millionaire or kill you," says Francis Brooke, an
      American adviser to the Iraqi National Congress (I.N.C.), the London-
      based, U.S.-funded, main Iraqi-opposition group. Sometimes the two
      are applied almost simultaneously, as when an individual tortured in
      prison is welcomed home with a new Mercedes.

In (22), the article says how cruel Saddam is. Actually, in this article, a metaphor is
used in its middle part. Let us look at the original article with a metaphor.

(23) For years, Saddam ruthlessly milked bination of terror and reward. "He
      will make you a millionaire or kill you," says Francis Brooke, an
      American adviser to the Iraqi National Congress (I.N.C.), the London-
      based, U.S.-funded, main Iraqi-opposition group. **"Both are effective
      levers."** Sometimes the two are applied almost simultaneously, as when
      an individual tortured in prison is welcomed home with a new
      Mercedes.

What is communicated in metaphor? In (23), it would be the speaker's criticism for
the cruelty of Saddam. Here what we have to note is what is written in the rest of the
parts of the article. Actually, what is stated there is likely to evoke what the
metaphor represents as we show in (24).

(24) a. For years, Saddam ruthlessly milked bination of terror and reward.
         "He will make you a millionaire or kill you," ...
         metaphor; **Both are effective levers.**
     b. Sometimes the two are applied almost simultaneously, as when an
         individual tortured in prison is welcomed home with a new Mercedes.

We could know that both (24a) and (24b) is elaborating on the background of the use
of the metaphor. This leads to the fact that what is communicated by 'Both are
effective levers.' is strengthened by the contents which are stated in the article
before and after the metaphor such as (24a) and (24b). (24a), preceding the
metaphor, says the general opinion drawn from the acts of Saddam. Then, the
metaphor is used in order to put the contextual information together. Further, by
(24b), following the metaphor, the concrete fact that supports the cruelty of him is
described. Here the metaphor must be reinterpreted in order to achieve the
interpretation which arrives at optimal relevance.

        As we have ever seen, all the contextual information in the article works to draw
the interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance. Therefore we
might be able to hypothesize that the interpretation of a metaphor in a discourse has
something to do with the relevance in the whole discourse.

        Next, I would like to show that this hypothesis is explainable by considering how
an ad hoc concept is constructed in the interpretation of a metaphor. In (23), 'levers'
seems to be used as representing a non-lexicalised concept like the speaker's thought
or attitude to the cruelty of Saddam. So the hearer would construct an ad hoc

concept [lever]* through the encyclopedic information for 'lever', which is based on his experience and knowledge. Furthermore, the contextual assumptions must be considered in order to add the most salient encyclopedic information in the context to an ad hoc concept. So it is very clear that an ad hoc concept cannot be constructed without any connection with the context, in other words, the flow of the whole discourse. Here we will see another example in order to ensure this suggestion.

(25)   **All the world's a stage. And all the men and women merely**
         players...And one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being
         seven ages. At first the infant,...Then, the whining school-boy...And
         then the lover...Then, a soldier...And then, the justice...The sixth
         age...the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,...last scene of all, ... second
         childishness and mere oblivion.   (*As You Like It,* II.vii)

In (25), two metaphors are used in order to represent the writer's feelings about life of a human. It would be very hard for a reader to understand what is communicated by the metaphors. So it would be very valid that we think that he must depend on the following part of the discourse in order to search for the interpretation of metaphors which reaches optimal relevance. Now we have to note the contents of the following parts of the metaphors. It is clear that they state concrete facts to clarify the uses of metaphors. They are elaborating on the grounds for justifying the uses of metaphors. That is, what is intended to communicate by metaphors is backed up with concrete descriptions which follow. Furthermore, in (25), 'a stage', and 'players' seem to be used as representing non-lexicalised concepts such as speaker's thoughts or attitudes to life. So the hearer would construct an ad hoc concept, [stage]*and [player]*, through the encyclopedic information for them and the contextual assumptions in order to reach the interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance.

As we have seen in both (24) and (25), it will be clear that the rest parts of discourse except metaphors play a role in elaborating on what is communicated in metaphors. That is, by adding more concrete and credible assumptions, what the speaker intends to communicate by metaphors is strengthened. Furthermore, at this point, a metaphor, whose interpretation has been ambiguous, must be reinterpreted. This also brings various contextual effects. Pilkington (2000) has pointed out that the assumptions which are drawn from encyclopedic entries as the most salient one will depend on the presence of other concepts and the contextual assumptions in their encyclopedic entries. The more poetic or creative the metaphor is, the more it depends on contextual assumptions available from the encyclopedic entries attached to other concepts to achieve its effects. From this fact, I wonder if the existence of a metaphor in a discourse and the process of its interpretation will have some influence on the discourse comprehension.

Here we have to consider what the topic in a discourse is again. As we have stated, a 'topic' merely gives access to an encyclopedic entry which plays a relatively central role in comprehension, drawing on the interpretation of each utterance in the stretch of discourse (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 216-217). Blass (1990:76) also says that the topic can be seen as being the conceptual address at which the required encyclopedic information is store. I wonder if we could say that a

metaphor in discourse plays this very role. As we have ever seen, we could find that much information which is based on encyclopedic entries is stored in a metaphor in a discourse. This means that a metaphor is the conceptual address of the contextual assumptions, that is, encyclopedic information which is required to reach the interpretation which satisfies optimal relevance in the whole discourse.

What we have to direct our attention to next is that the speaker's thought or attitude can be attached to a metaphor. It depends on the fact that an ad hoc concept is constructed through the encyclopedic knowledge and contextual assumptions. Therefore, we might be able to say that a metaphor in a discourse works as a relevance focus. We could also say that this leads to many cognitive effects: enriching the proposition expressed, the strengthening the existing assumptions and the derivation of weak implicatures. As a result of the use of a metaphor, relevance in a discourse is achieved. This is why I suggest that a metaphor works as 'a discourse relevance focus' for achieving optimal relevance in a discourse.

Let us look at very creative Japanese example in order to support this suggestion. If it is treated as an isolated utterance, it will be very difficult for us to understand what the speaker intends to communicate.

(26) **Comedy-wa   gyosho.**
      Comedy-Nom the semi-cursive style of writing

      Sutoletople-wa   kaisho.
      Straight play-Nom   the basic, block style in writing.

      'Comedy is the semi-cursive style of writing. Straight play is the basic, block style in writing.'

This metaphor was actually uttered in a radio program by an actress. Next let us look at the actual discourse which metaphors were used.[8]

(27) **Comedy-wa gyosho.   Sutoletople-wa kaisho.**

      Kaisho-ga   deki-nake-reba
      the basic, block style in writing-Nom   can-not-if

      Gyosho-wa   deki-nai.
      the semi-cursive style of writing-Nom   can-not

      **'Comedy is the semi-cursive style of writing. Straight play is the
      basic, block style in writing.** If you cannot master the basic, block
      style in writing, you will not be able to master the semi-cursive style of
      writing.'

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[8]Abbreviations used here are as follows: Nom = nominative

In (27), it is very clear that what the speaker wants to communicate most through these metaphors is the difficulty of playing comedy. This is because it is clear that the following utterance after the metaphors plays a role in elaborating on metaphors. That is, the part clearly states the reason for using those metaphors. A hearer who is searching for the interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance must reinterpret the metaphors 'Comedy is the semi-cursive style of writing. Straight play is the basic, block style in writing.' at this point. As a result, the hearer would be able to gain not only the interpretation of the metaphor but also the comprehension of the whole discourse with minimum effort. Of course, it depends on the ad hoc concept constructions where information arising from the encoded concept, both *the semi-cursive style of writing* and *the basic, block style in writing* , and from context is integrated. From this fact, we could say that the metaphor works as a discourse relevance focus in order to establish relevance over the discourse. Metaphor in discourse works as such. So a hearer could reach the comprehension of the whole discourse which is consistent with the principle of relevance. This leads to the result that a hearer can process the various information most economically for the minimum effort. The last example also clearly shows the fact that a metaphor works as a discourse relevance focus. It may be considered as a metaphor in some context, but it is also possible to interpret it as a literal one.

(27)   'Bag-match' is not the silver bullet all by itself.

But in the following exchanges, this utterance works as a discourse relevance focus.

(28)   Larry King: The matching-bag concept. If you're on the plane and if you're not on the plane and the bag is on the plane, the bag comes off. ... You don't have a lot of suicide bombers. It is a lot of window dressing, a lot of trouble without any big increase in security. How do you respond?

Norman Mineta: Well, first of all, **'bag-match' is not the silver bullet all by itself.** As I indicated earlier, security is a multilayered approach. And the law is itself that Congress passed gave us a blueprint in terms of mandates of how we should screen baggage.
                                   (2001/01/16 CNN 'Larry King Live')

Used in a particular context like (28), (27) could be interpreted as a metaphor. What the speaker really intends to communicate here is how important the rigorous security system is. The following utterances after the metaphor support it in more detail. By using the metaphor, however, this is stated more clearly and briefly. Furthermore, relevance in the whole discourse is enhanced because the word which is associated with the contextual information, 'silver bullet', is used as a focus of metaphor. Therefore the use of the metaphor leads us to provide enough contextual access for the hearer for the minimum processing effort.

From these arguments we have seen, as the conclusion of this section, one might be able to say that a metaphor in a discourse works as a 'discourse relevance focus.' for an addressee (e.g. a hearer). The interpretation of a metaphor requires of an addressee to construct an ad hoc concept. This is achieved through the encyclopedic information together with the contextual: words and contextual assumptions. So interpreting a metaphor is the best way for an addressee to comprehend what the communicator intends to communicate in the whole discourse. Such metaphor's function for the process of an addressee's interpretation leads her to the achievement of optimal relevance in the whole discourse: achieving the maxim contextual effect for the minimum processing effort over a discourse. This is why I would like to suggest that a metaphor in discourse works as a relevance focus in order to enhance the accessibility to the contextual information for an addressee.

4   CONCLUSION AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

In this paper, I have paid particular attention to the influence of a metaphor in the interpretation of a discourse from the viewpoint of relevance theory. To achieve relevance in discourse comprehension, we would have to try various means. The use of a metaphor and its interpretation will be one of the best means for that. In other words, it is the cheapest way to communicate various information. In this paper, by observing the relationship between a metaphor and the rest part of discourse, we have noticed that the interpretation of a metaphor which satisfies an addressee's expectations of relevance also greatly affects the comprehension of the whole discourse. The process of an ad hoc concept construction on the basis of encyclopedic information and contextual assumptions, which is strongly constrained by the consideration of optimal relevance, leads to the interpretation that achieves relevance in discourse. Therefore, as a conclusion on this paper, it might be safe to say that a metaphor in a discourse works as a discourse relevance focus; it works as the conceptual address of the contextual assumptions and encyclopedic information which are required to reach the interpretation which satisfies optimal relevance in the whole discourse

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