

# Lexical Pragmatic Processes In English Children's Short Stories

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## Abstract

The present paper is concerned with lexical pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening and their contributions to modified words meaning as well as various contextual factors affecting them in English children short stories. It basically aims to identify linguistic phenomena which their understanding requires lexical adjustment of linguistically encoded meaning, context and pragmatic expectations. In this regard, the data of the study comprises thirty extracts of the type (utterance-response) selected of five English short stories written for children aged (8-12 years old). They are retrieved from the English website: (Book trust. Get you read). Thus, the study hypothesizes that broadening cases are more commonly identified than narrowing ones in this genre. It also assumes that contextual factors affecting narrowing cases are different from those effecting broadening cases. To achieve its aim, based on relevance theoretic approach to lexical pragmatics, the present study develops a pragmatic model of lexical pragmatic processes which is intended to analyse these extracts taking into account different types of short stories. The findings statistically reveal significant differences in the number of the linguistic phenomena identified. Yet, no difference is recognized concerning contextual factors. The study, then, suggests that lexical pragmatic processes are important components of the effective interpretation of modified meanings in the targeted data.

**Keywords:** Lexical pragmatic processes; pragmatic principles; contextual implications, children's short stories.

## 1. Introduction

It is a truism that language is characterized by its flexibility, and hence words meanings are flexible too. Undeniably, language users are familiar with the meaning of hundreds of words, still they cannot identify the meaning of certain words in different contexts. Determining words meanings in use is not usually straightforward. Cruse (1986: 68-9) postulates that this difference between linguistically encoded meaning and the communicated meaning has seeded the land for a distinct field of Lexical Pragmatics. It is a rather recent field of

research in modern pragmatics that has attracted the attention of many scholars in linguistics, philosophers and cognitive scientists. Lexical pragmatics essentially studies lexical pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening by which word meanings are adjusted resulting in more specific or more general concepts than the concepts encoded by the words used. At this point, it is worthy questioning that if adult language users sometimes find difficulty in interpreting modified words meanings, then what about children? Do they understand modified cases in hearing or reading different contexts? How can they identify the communicator's

intentions in these modified cases? And to what extent they get use of lexical pragmatic processes in their interpretation? To answer these questions, children's short stories as a discourse is chosen to investigate children's lexical interpretation. It is pertinent now to have a closer look on lexical pragmatic processes and the most common cases in their literature.

## 2. Literature Review

To begin with, narrowing and broadening are two varieties of lexical pragmatic processes which correspond to two types of pragmatic processes of comprehension. Lexical narrowing is usually defined as a phenomenon by which a lexical expression is used to convey a more restricted meaning than its linguistically encoded meaning. Carston and Powell (2006:283) define narrowing as a process whereby the communicated meaning of a word is a proper subpart of its linguistically encoded meaning. This fairly indicates that the literal meaning of a word is in fact maintained in narrowing. The logical properties of the lexical concept which the word denotes, have not been dropped, but rather modified assuming its encyclopedic properties when it is used to communicate an occasion-specific concept. This is what Wilson (2003: 274) suggests when he comments on the use of the word 'drink' in 'All doctors drink. He elaborates that depending on the context it's meaning is narrowed to mean either 'drink alcohol or certain quantity of it'. The most common cases in the literature are **narrowing the adjectives in adjective-noun combinations, auto-hyponymy and hyponymy, lexical blocking, contrastive reduplication and polysemy**.<sup>1</sup>

Lexical broadening, on the other hand, is a lexical pragmatic process where a lexical item is used to convey a more general sense than its encoded denotation. Basically, it is an expansion of the denotation of the linguistically encoded meaning of a word as speakers sometimes choose to use a word that departs the literal meaning in its interpretation. Broadening, then, does not maintain the literal meaning of a word due to the fact that one or more

of its logical properties can be dropped forming a concept that goes beyond the boundaries of the lexically encoded meaning. This phenomenon in the interpretation of figurative uses of language as metaphor, metonymy and hyperbole. For, Wilson and Kolaiti (2017:157), the word 'forever' in 'It took forever to finish this paper', is usually broadened to be interpreted as 'much longer than expected'. Broadening is viewed to be mostly employed in the interpretation of cases like **approximation, metaphor, hyperbole, neologism, pun-like cases and category extension**.<sup>2</sup> Other cases like simile, understatement, irony have constantly been debated as involving broadening cases or not.

### 2.1 Different Accounts of Lexical Narrowing and Broadening

Based on Gricean conversational principle and maxims, two lines of thinking are recognized. Neo-Gricean and Relevance theory approaches. However, they dealt with lexical processes from different perspectives. While much of the former's work focuses on narrowing, the latter's work is concerned with broadening cases. To be more accurate, neo-Gricean approaches usually represented by Horn's (1984) bidirectional model and Levinson's tri-directional model<sup>2</sup>, propose that narrowing, approximation and broadening are viewed as distinct processes, each one of which has its own mechanisms of interpretation. Narrowing, for example, is a type of default inference managed by stereotypical interpretation. As Levinson (2000:37-8, 112) postulates that the hearer is guided by the usual tendency of people to interpret utterances in line with their knowledge of what is normal. Inferences are triggered by the speaker's choice of a simple and unmarked form of utterance. Thus, the hearer interprets the utterance in a stereotypical way assuming it is the speaker's intention. If the speaker's choice is marked or unpredictable, he would provide more information to refer to his point. as in

a. He opened the door. +> in the normal way by turning the handle.

b. He opened the door by turning the handle quickly anti-clockwise. +> not in the normal way (Levinson, 2000:112).

Approximation has usually regarded a case of pragmatic vagueness. It embraces standards of precision as depicted by Lewis 1979 and Lasersohn 1999. Gricean approaches suggested that utterance's interpretation depends on the context of use. The vagueness is dealt with by referring to the immediate context to determine whether the lexical item is approximately or hyperbolically used. Metaphorical extensions or figurative uses of language engage blatant violation of a pragmatic maxim of literal truthfulness to create implicature according to Gricean approaches. It is worth mentioning that neo-Gricean approaches have been criticized as being narrowed the domain of pragmatics and missed valuable descriptions of such related data (Carston, 2002:418). Relevance theory, in turn, introduced a comprehensive understanding of human communication, cognition and language use. The starting point for what becomes one of the most dominant theories in pragmatics is the publication of Sperber and Wilson's (1986) book 'Relevance: Communication and cognition'. The roots of this theory, nevertheless, went to the late 1970s and early 1980s where it has proposed as a cognitive alternative to Grice's theory. For relevance theorists, narrowing is far more innovative and flexible than the previous perspective regards. It interestingly involves the construction of an occasion-specific concepts on the bases of cognitive and contextual effects that lead the hearer to narrow the interpretation of a lexical item in different degrees and in different directions. In fact, Sperber and Wilson (2002:276) afford different explanation to the accessibility of literal interpretation in certain cases without appealing to stereotypical interpretation. In most contexts, the normal interpretation requires less effort and therefore will be selected if it yields implications that best satisfy the addressee's expectations of relevance. Relevance theory come to its fruition that there is no sharp distinction between the comprehension of loose use of language and the comprehension of literal ones. It is

not derived from the interpretation of an utterance, but rather is activated by an optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). Such hypothesis has led some psychologists and lexical pragmatists to propose that the outcome of is either lexical narrowing or lexical broadening. This unified account has greatly been developed to more drastic versions in which there is a scale (continuum) of cases of broadening, ranging from literal use through approximation to other forms of non-literal cases as hyperbole and metaphor with no clear cut-off points between them (Wilson and Carston, 2007:3).

## **2.2 Wilson and Carston's (2007) Unified Account**

In their thorough study of lexical modification in different contexts, Wilson and Carston (2007:26) propose a unified account, based on the general mechanism and principles of relevance theory. Wilson and Carston's (2007) model is founded on RT and its principles. Relevance theory is based on the notion of relevance and the balance between cognitive (contextual) effects and processing efforts in verbal communication. Both the principles of cognition and communication along with the relevance theoretic comprehension procedure are automatically activated by the hearer while communicating. Following the comprehension procedure, Sperber and Wilson (1986) claim that the hearer needs to use certain pragmatic processes of achieving relevance through inference, mutual manifest and context to arrive at the most optimal interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance (Allott, 2010:166).

### **I. Relevance**

On the basis of Wilson and Sperber (1995: 272), the notion of relevance refers to non-representational property of inputs including external stimuli (e.g. utterances, actions) or internal representations (e.g. thoughts and memories) to cognitive processes that can be evaluated in virtue of the number of contextual effects they have. Based on the principle of relevance, relevance theory postulates the communicative principle of relevance.

Sperber and Wilson (2004:610), hypothesize that the pragmatic expectations which trigger the adjustment process are represented by the presumption of optimal relevance as explained below:

**a.** The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort.

**b.** The most relevant one is that compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

To achieve its aim of relevance, a proposition activates a number of contextual assumptions in minimal processing effort.

**Extent Condition 1:** An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in that context are large.

**Extent Condition 2:** An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent the effort required to process it in that context is small (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:125).

## 2. Inference

Adhering to Sperber and Wilson's (1995:65-6), comprehension process is global and non-demonstrative. It is essentially based on the idea of construction of assumptions by deduction. Assumptions are viewed as structured range of concepts which consist of three types of information in memory: **logical**, **encyclopedic** and **lexical**. The representation of a proposition in terms of these types of information, and the context in which it occurs gives rise to a number of assumptions. Thus, the utterance produced by the communicator will be processed in virtue of their concepts information. Contextual aspects of the utterance that are based on the semantic and encyclopedic information will be inferentially deduced to arrive at the most relevant interpretation (Allot, 2010:69). Sperber and Wilson (1995:29), further, elaborate that the ability to make inferences about people's intention is an essential feature of human pragmatic competence that it demands a mindreading process on the communicators that any utterance hold two types of intentions; the informative intention and the communicative intention. The former represents the hearer's awareness of the

speaker's thoughts about different situations. It is traditionally termed First-order mindreading ability. The latter type of intention or Second-order mindreading ability denotes the mental states of others (their desires, thoughts, beliefs, intentions, etc.) about different situations. It is fairly associated with comprehension of non-literal use of language such as irony and sarcasm. Nevertheless, it is also necessary for the comprehension of straightforward use of language. Papp (2006:143-5) sheds some light on children's mind reading abilities as he claimed that they can distinguish peoples' propositional attitudes and emotions from 'natural signs' via facial expressions and eye gaze and other non-verbal signs in face to face interaction. This factor can be analyzed differently; as a conscious process, part of general purpose reasoning abilities that employs 'semantic, logical and statistical characteristics of the input'. Within RT, it is analyzed as a special component of the mind which is dedicated to inferential processes of communication.

## 3. Mutual Manifest

To describe the nature of the common knowledge shared by communicators in interaction, Sperber and Wilson (1986:38) introduce the notion of cognitive environment to be "a set of facts that are manifest to him". But what did they mean by manifestness? Carston (2010:378) clarifies that manifestness is "the degree to which an individual is capable of mentally representing an assumption and holding it to be true or probably true at a given moment". More importantly, Sperber and Wilson (1995:39) highlights that the cognitive environment of the addressee involves the facts that he is able to represent and that he could be able to represent of a similar context. The same facts and assumptions may be manifest to a group of people. Thus, these people share the same cognitive environment as they have access to the same assumptions. In effect, any shared cognitive environment that is manifested to a group of people is called 'mutual cognitive environment'. In the same token, any fact manifest to two interlocutors is mutually manifest.

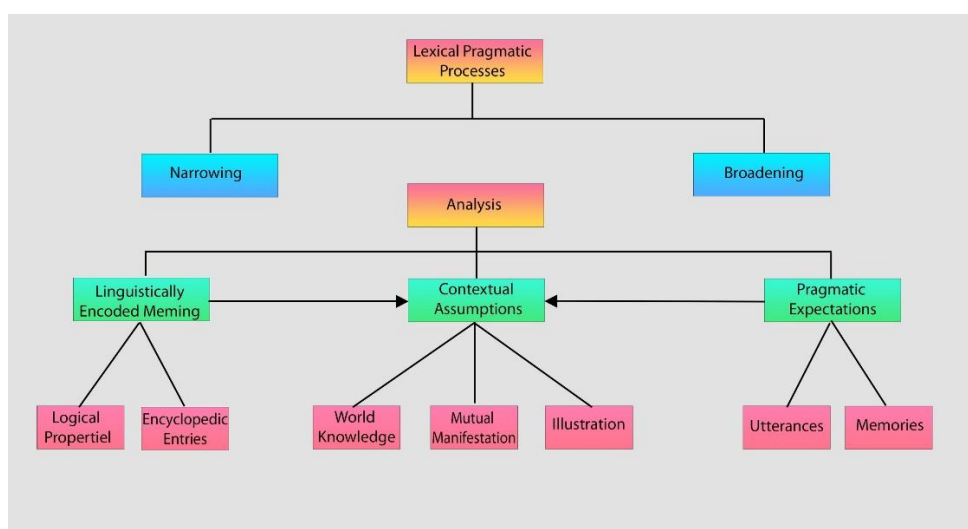
#### 4. Context

The notion of context is usually accounted for in terms of linguistic and the non-linguistic aspects affecting the use of language. However, in relevance theory, the notion of context is rather psychological. Sperber and Wilson (1995:15) describe it as “the psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world”. Accordingly, the context is part of the cognitive environment of the addressee that are utilized in the process of utterance interpretation which is guided by the expectation of relevance. It does not involve only the linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects of the text but also expectations about personal memories and beliefs about the mental state of the communicator and so on. In verbal communication, certain facts are manifest to the addressee who will select the right context, as they (ibid:141) put it: “the selection of a particular context is determined by the search for relevance”.

Remarkably, the selection is determined by the memory of the deductive device as well as the short-term memory, encyclopedic information and non-linguistic environment which provide a set of possible contextual assumptions which are selected by virtue of expectations of relevance. Consequently, successful communication hinges on the potential contexts which the addressee and the communicator share (Zhao and Jiang, 2013:44).

#### 3. Method of Analysis

The analysis is conducted in terms of the eclectic model developed of analysis proposed in this study to identify the lexical pragmatic processes cases of narrowing and broadening, and the contextual differences between them in the data under scrutiny. It employs both the qualitative and the quantitative methods of analysis: First, the qualitative analysis is to be taken place following the model which is simply sketched in Figure (1) below:



**Figure (1) The Proposed Model of Analysis**

Six representative extracts of the data are illustrated in this study. Adhering to the proposed model, the case which involves lexical pragmatic process of narrowing or broadening is identified, then the underdetermined word is analysed through adjusting the linguistically encoded meaning; identifying the logical properties and the relevant encyclopedic entries of the word, contextual assumptions; mutual manifest, world knowledge and illustration

and pragmatic expectations; utterances and memories. Secondly, the qualitative analysis is supported by a statistical analysis. It is also made in the light of the aims and the hypotheses of the present study using statistical means.

#### 4. Data Identification

Literature has been interestingly employed as a vehicle through which children can develop their language skills, social

awareness as it is basically dialogue-structured and events-directed. The concept of 'childhood' typically indicates to the early span of humans' life. Beside infancy and adolescence, childhood is one of the three stages that a person passes through to adulthood. As Kagan (1982:359) postulates, it is in turn divided into four stages based on psychological foundations. These stages are: The Toddler Stage from (18 months and to 3 years), the Preschool Years from (3 to 5 years), the Early School Years from (5 to 8 years) and the Pre-teen Age Years (preadolescence) from (8 to 12 years). Linguistically, this period of human life has especial attention. Much theoretical and empirical research has been devoted to examine how children acquire and develop language and how they produce and understand others effectively and properly (Cekaite, 2012:2). The language in children's literature is precise, simple and rhyming. Authors intentionally write in simple clear words. The rationale lies in their belief that opaque words might deprive children of their interest of reading as Mohamed (2007:24) affirms. Short stories are widely known as a modern genre of literature. Hansen (2020:2) posits that short stories are traditionally, distinguished on the basis of their single event that one could read in one sitting. More recent, definitions rely on the maximum word considered. Most regularly, the optimum word count of a short story is ranged between 1000 and 10000 words. While shorter forms of stories are called short short stories, longer ones referred to as novellas. Broadly speaking, they are usually concerned with a specific event expressed in only one or more major episodes or scenes. They are narrated in an economic setting and in less complicated plot. The characters are few and their development are not full. Nonetheless, they represent a complete form with a unified treatment of subject and characters. For, Barone (2011:59), the most common types of this genre are traditional literature; myths, fables, legends and ballads, fictional stories; historical, adventure, mystery, speculative, science fiction and defective, biography, poetry and non-fictional stories of information books. At the heart of the matter, children's short stories differ from adult's stories in certain

aspects as vehicle, mood, style and purposes. Shepard (2000:37) reports that writers of children's stories take into their consideration the child's age and their cognitive abilities. Therefore, they use language help children understand their intentions explicitly and implicitly. However, they also seek to enrich their vocabulary stock with words to be understood in their contexts. Moreover, a distinctive feature of children's short stories is illustration. Colourful pictures and cartoons are used for enjoyment. They also help children to enhance their understanding especially very young readers who cannot read by themselves. A significant point to be stressed, as Winch et al (2010:7) depict, that the use of dialogues between characters is a salient vehicle to describe the events and feelings. The description, most frequently, involves descriptive words; adjectives, adverbs and verbs especially dynamic verbs and in contrast to less use of functional words.

#### 4.1 Collections

Five children short stories are selected to be the data of analysis. The analysed extracts having the underdetermined words (highlighted by being italicized) are talk exchanges between two characters in utterance-answer form. The stories are: 'Mowgli's Brothers' (1894) to J.R. Kipling, 'Half a Creature from the Sea' (2007) to David Almond, 'Wasters' (2009) to Linda Newbery, 'Learn to Die' (2014) to Marry Hoffman and 'God's Eye' (2016) to Frances Hardinge. They have transcribed PDF forms published on the website "Book Trust: Getting Children Reading". No change or manipulation has been made to any story to guarantee the authenticity of the stories. The stories are written by a group of eminent English writers of children stories and books. The standard length of a short story is typically counted by the optimum word count which is ranged between 1000-10000 words. Hence, the approximate length of the selected stories conforms that standard; 'Mowgli's Brothers' (7423) words, 'Half a Creature from the Sea' (5708) words, 'Wasters' (3514) words, 'Learn to Die' (3094) words and God's Eye (5800) words. The selected stories signify five different types of

stories; classic, fairy, speculative, historical fiction and mystery respectively.

## 4.2. Data Analysis

### I. Narrowing Cases

**Extract (1)** from ‘Mowgli’s Brother’ (1894) by J. R. Kipling.

**Father Wolf:** “Enter, then, and look, but there is no food here.”

**Tabaqui:** “For a wolf, no, but for so mean a person as myself a dry bone is a good feast. Who are we, the Gidurlog [the Jackal People], to pick and choose?”

The lexical pragmatic case involved is narrowing the adjective in adjective-noun combination. In this extract, what the writer intends by employing the adjective good in ‘good feast’ will activate the reader’s (child) expectation by encoding it in a relevant utterance to achieve relevance. The child raises questions like: how a dry bone could be a good meal for someone. This activation will be guided by logical properties as: HAVING WHAT IS WANTED OR NEEDED and the encyclopedic entries of: AS IT SHOULD BE: PROPER, SUITABLE AND CORRECT.

Other activation will be activated by items of the context as information about this animal which is manifested: he eats a dry bone and thank them for that, world knowledge of the life of jungle. The writer presents a text illustration on this animal which eats rubbish and leftover. Through narrowing the concept GOOD to mean GOOD\* ‘appropriate enough only for a jackal’, the child arrives at the most relevant interpretation that satisfies his preferences and abilities: A dry bone is appropriate enough for a jackal.

**Extract (2)** from ‘Learn to Die’ (2014) by Linda Newbery.

**The narrator:** “Why are you so bitter about him? Did he harm you?”

**Jane:** “Not me. But he was my guardian and he should have protected my reputation.”

The lexical pragmatic case involved in this extract is auto-hyponymy.

The utterance will activate the child’s expectations to attain relevance by qualifying what the word reputation refers to: ‘Is it good or bad reputation’. This expectation triggers the word’s logical properties as: THE WAY THAT PEOPLE LOOK AT SOMETHING OR SOMEONE, and encyclopedic entries as: HAVING GOOD REPUTATION. HAVING BAD REPUTATION. to have more relevant assumptions. Other expectations are activated by contextual items of mutual manifest: she is a prince and he is her guardian. He is not a good man. And world knowledge: the aristocratic life of royal families. Through narrowing the concept REPUTATION to mean REPUTATION\* ‘good reputation of a princess’, the child arrives at the most relevant interpretation that meets his preferences and abilities: Thomas Seymour as a guardian should protect her good reputation as a princess.

**Extract (3)** from ‘God’s Eye’ (2016) by Frances Hardinge.

**Ben:** “But the brandy you gave Mr. Cork wasn’t just brandy.”

**Mr. Whyte:** “If you know all that, then you know how I treat those who try to blackmail me”.

In this extract, the lexical process of narrowing is reduplication. The utterance is expected to be relevant to the reader (the child), so that, he will achieve relevance by identifying what the word ‘brandy’ indicates. Based on this pragmatic expectation, the logical properties as: A STRONG AL-COHOLIC DRINK MADE FROM WINE AND SOMETIMES FLAVOURED WITH FRUITS., and encyclopedic entries as: MAKE SOMEONE GET DRUNK. CAN BE BLENDED WITH OTHER FLAVOURS will be activated to yield more relevant assumptions. These assumptions will be sustained or refuted in light of contextual items available as mutual manifest: Mr Cork drunk the brandy before he got to the balloon, soon he fell down of it. The inspection found a poison in his blood. And world knowledge: the effect of poison on human life. Through narrowing the concept BRANDY to mean BRANDY\*

‘poisonous brandy’, the child arrives at the most relevant interpretation that meets his preferences and abilities: The brandy you gave to Mr. Cork was poisonous.

## 2. Broadening Cases

**Extract (4)** from ‘Mowgli’s Brother’ (1894) by J. R. Kipling.

**Akela:** “It was well done. Men and their cubs are very wise. He may be a help in time.”

**Bagheera:** “Truly, a help in time of need; for none can hope to lead the Pack forever.”

The lexical pragmatic broadening case in this extract is approximation. To be relevant, the utterance raises expectation as what the word wise in such context indicates. Expectations lead to activating logical properties of: HAVING INTELLIGENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING and encyclopedic entries: TO JUDGE WHAT IS RIGHT AND wrong to have more relevant assumptions. Likewise, other expectations are raised by means of the context as mutual manifest: ‘time in need’ to lead the pack, and world knowledge about the different state of mind between animals and humans. Out of these pragmatic expectations, the child comes up with the most relevant interpretation that conform his preferences and capacities: Mowgli is very intelligent in comparison with other members of the pack, he can wisely lead them after Akela’s death.

**Extract (5)** from ‘Half a Creature from the Sea’ (2007) by David Almond

**Annie:** “What’s there?”

**Mum:** “Nowt, my little minnow,”

The lexical pragmatic case is metaphor. The reader (the child) interestingly expect the utterance to be relevant through inquiring what the phrase ‘little minnow’ indicates. This expectation activates logical properties of A VERY SMALL FRESH WATER FISH, and encyclopedic entries like SMALL EURASIAN FISH USUALLY LIVE IN Britain AND SPAIN to have more relevant

implicit assumptions. Other expectations are raised by contextual items as mutual manifestation: Annie likes swimming and she always dreams to be fish, and world knowledge: the lovely way people use to talk to little children. At last, the child arrives at the most relevant interpretation that satisfies his preferences and abilities: for her mother, Annie is like a lovely fish.

**Extract (6)** from ‘Half a Creature from the Sea’ (2007) by David Almond.

**Annie:** “The man?”

**Mum:** “He was slender .... He cupped his hands and drank the sea.

The lexical pragmatic broadening case in the sixth extract is neologism. The utterance achieves relevance through understanding what the word cupped refers to, and hence an expectation is raised. The child is familiar with the word cup rather than ‘cupped’. As such, this expectation activates the relevant logical properties as: A VERB FROM THE NOUN CUP, and encyclopedic entries as: TO PUT HANDS AROUND SOMETHING SO THAT THEY MAKE THE SHAPE OF A CUP to have more implicit assumptions. Further expectations are raised by contextual items as mutual manifest: He is a strange creature from the sea, and world knowledge as using hands to drink with when no cup is available, leading to the most relevance interpretation that satisfies his preferences and abilities: The strange man got his hands together to drink sea water.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The above analysis might be a prominent evidence of the utility and effectiveness of relevance theory comprehension model in children’s communication. The items of the model have proved to be applicable. The idea that children use lexical pragmatic processes to interpret undetermined word in different especially in literary texts which require a deeper apprehension on the part of the reader comes to be consistent with the results of the present study. The statistical analysis, as Table (1) shows, reveals that broadening cases are more frequently used in all the selected stories than narrowing cases as they score the



percentage (65.3%) and (33.3) respectively. Broadly speaking, broadening cases are more frequent than narrowing ones in fictional stories due to the fact that they characterized by the heavy use of figures of speech. Likewise, the analysis shows that broadening processes are identified in the speculative fiction story

'Wasters' (12) times and hence more than that in any other types of the selected data and their use score the percentages of (80%). However, narrowing processes are found to be more common in the classic story 'Mowgli's Brother' as they score (44.4%).

**Table (1) Results of Narrowing and Broadening in the Selected Data**

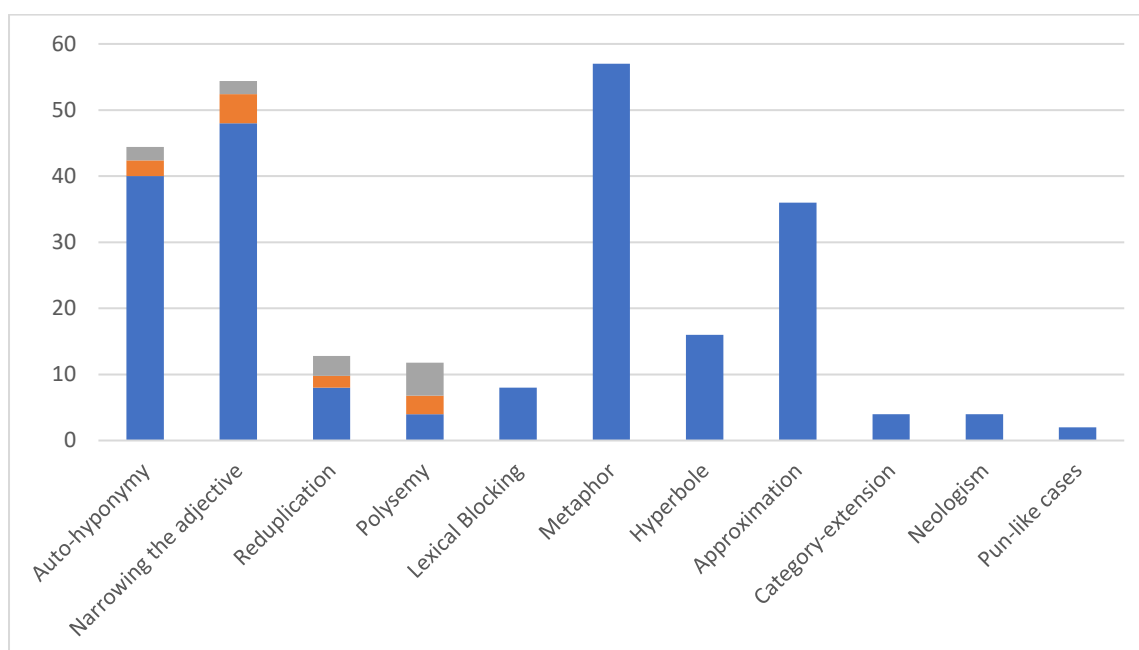
Types of stories	Narrowing		Broadening	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Mowgli's Brothers	8	44.4	10	55.5%
Half a Creature from the Sea	4	26.6	11	73.33%
Wasters	4	26.6	12	80
Learn to Die	5	38.4	8	61.51
God's Eye	5	35.75	9	64.28
Total	26	33.3	49	65.3

It is also evident that metaphor case is the most broadening case commonly recognized in all the data as the identified in a rate (58%). Narrowing the adjective in

adjective-noun combination is the most narrowing case frequently identified in all the data as in a rate (48%) as shown in Table (2).

**Table (2) The Frequency and Percentage of Narrowing and Broadening Cases**

Narrowing Cases	Frequency	Percentage	Broadening Cases	Frequency	Percentage
Auto-hyponymy	10	40	Metaphor	18	57
Narrowing the adjective	11	48	Hyperbole	8	16
Reduplication	2	8	Approximation	18	36
Polysemy	1	4	Category-extension	2	4
Lexical Blocking	2	8	Neologism	2	4
			Pun-like cases	1	2



**Figure (2) The Overall Percentage of Narrowing and Broadening Cases**

It has been found that context has an essential role in literary interpretation. This fact has been proved by the need of using context in the interpretation of all the selected extracts. As for the contextual factors, both mutual manifest and world knowledge are the most affecting factors in

all cases in a rate (100). Illustration has no such influence in the interpretation of the data. However, the results show that it has more influence in narrowing cases than broadening ones as it scores the percentage (16) and (34.6) respectively as Table (3) displays.

**Table (3) Contextual Factors Percentage in Narrowing and Broadening**

Contextual Elements	Percentage of Narrowing Cases	Percentage of Broadening Cases
Mutual Manifest	100	100
World Knowledge	100	100
Illustration	34.6	16

## 5. Conclusion

On the basis of the above findings, it can be concluded that both narrowing and broadening processes are involved in the interpretation of underdetermined words and phrases in children short stories. Yet they differ in the type and frequency of use. However, contextual factors play a significant role leading the child to the most relevant interpretation. The most predominant ones are mutual manifest and world knowledge which are combined with logical properties and encyclopedic entries in communication. Pragmatically speaking, lexical pragmatic processes are employed by children to yield the writer's intentions.

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