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**INFERENCES AND AMERICAN JOURNALISM:
A MATTER OF INTERFACES**

Advisor: Dr. Jorge Campos da Costa

Porto Alegre

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Aos meus pais Randolph e Aurélia,
e ao meu marido, Fábio.

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ABSTRACT

This study illustrates a theoretical research within the perspective of the Theory of Interfaces (COSTA 2007) approximating two discipline areas which are Linguistics on the one side, and Social Communication (written Journalism) on the other side. American online headlines, leads news and images are investigated as communicative acts through an Intradisciplinary approach involving four Linguistics sub-areas, Lexical/Syntactic/Semantics/Pragmatics interface. Grice's Implicatures Theory (1989), Costa's Broadened Model (2004), and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (1995) were the pragmatics theories chosen to apply in the interpretation of the *corpus* which is restricted to news about the 2008 American presidential pre and post election period, related to Obama and McCain. The purpose of this work was to investigate if these pragmatics inferential methodology is adequate to explain the communicative process involving journalism communicators and news readers. The analyses have evidenced that the *inferential* process is adequate for analyzing the issues composed by headlines, leads and complementary images.

Key-words: inference, interface, Relevance Theory, Journalism

RESUMO

Este estudo ilustra uma pesquisa teórica dentro da perspectiva da Teoria das Interfaces (COSTA 2007) aproximando duas disciplinas, a saber, Lingüística e Comunicação Social (Jornalismo escrito). São investigados neste trabalho Títulos, Leads e Imagens de notícias Americanas online sob o enfoque intradisciplinar que envolve quatro sub-areas da Lingüística, numa Interface Léxico/Sintaxe/Semântica/Pragmática. As teorias pragmáticas de Grice (1989), o Modelo Ampliado de Costa (2004) e com maior destaque a Teoria da Relevância foram escolhidas para serem aplicadas na interpretação do *corpus* que se restringe a notícias sobre Obama e McCain no período pré e pós eleitoral Americano de 2008. O objetivo deste trabalho foi investigar se a metodologia pragmática inferencial é adequada para explicar o processo comunicativo que envolve os comunicadores e leitores de notícias. As análises evidenciaram que o tema composto pelos títulos, *leads* e imagens complementares são adequados para essa investigação.

Palavras-chave: inferência, interface, Teoria da Relevância, Jornalismo

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1 INTRODUCTION

This current dissertation intends to approximate two disciplines, which are Linguistics and Social Communication, matching them through the principles of the External Interface. According to Costa (2007), the purpose of approximating different areas is to investigate common aspects related to both, searching for connections that can bring good results for both sides, ending in productive interfaces.

Costa claims that in dealing with two disciplines there may be benefits for both of them with the so called External Interfaces through an interdisciplinary study. Following his point of view, it should be clear that interdisciplinary studies do not establish the subservient position of one discipline to the other.

On the contrary, each discipline keeps its specific tasks, and when they come closer to each other through an interdisciplinary relation, they become an interactive society producing a third object, resultant of their interaction. (COSTA 2007, p. 348) After introducing Costa's perspective as a starting point for the direction this dissertation intends to pursue, it is possible to detail how this study conceives an approximation between the disciplines already mentioned above.

In order to reach a more focused investigation it is necessary the construction of a subsequent linking that may be developed through an intradisciplinary study (COSTA 2007, p.347). Or in other words, if two disciplines have a point where similar aspects are met, definitely, there can be a connection between them, and from there a possibility of an Internal Interface arises.

If the object of Linguistics is natural language, and if through language it is possible to investigate even areas which are not akin to each other, it seems reasonable to say that language is used in communication, and communication is one of the purposes of language. So, these two areas are closely related, and moreover, it is possible to establish that language is the point where to start from to investigate such a related area as Social Communication.

The interest in explaining the communication process has been widely explored since ancient times. Since Aristotle claimed that communication is based on a code model and until recent modern theories of communication this was the model to be followed (S&W 1995, p. 2).

In 1975, the philosopher Paul Grice proposed the *inferential model* of communication in *Logic and Conversation*, and from there on, one of the sub-areas of Linguistics, namely Pragmatics, evolved.

Since the 80's, some theories have been developed in the fields of pragmatics following Grice and trying to improve on his inferential model. In this study, we describe Grice's theory (1989), Costa's Broadened Model (1984, 2004), Costa (2007), and Relevance Theory from Sperber & Wilson (1995 and 2005), Wilson and Sperber (W&S 2002a) including recent works on the same relevance theoretical frame from Wilson and Carston (2006 and 2007).

The pragmatic model of reciprocal communication proposed by Sperber & Wilson (S&W 1995) is based on cognitive psychology and on a fundamental aspect of human cognition, that is, that human beings pay attention to what is relevant to them. On the other hand, in non-reciprocal communication, the situation changes, not all communicators may succeed in their attempt.

Nevertheless, some communicators are in advantage, enjoying a position of authority over the audience, as professors, political leaders and journalists among others, where the success of the informative intention is *mutually manifest* in advance (S&W 1995, p. 63), that is, what they communicate is mutually manifest that the audience will accept their authority or what they think. In effect, what is here suggested by the authors is that journalists and consequently written journalism belong to a credibility zone. Hence, confidence on the source of information is one of the ingredients allowing the communication, because if the audience trusts the communicator, there can be a bond established between reader and writer.

However, in journalistic headlines, texts and also journalistic photographs there are messages to be interpreted that might go beyond trust. That is, there is something in between the lines or coming from the image that has to be inferred by the reader.

Sperber and Wilson (1995) defend the important role of Pragmatics, which deals with the procedure of interpretation and comprehension of something intended by a speaker/writer. The relations among language, inference and also context have been the topics developed in Pragmatics, and are relevant to this study.

To deal with communication processes and trying to explain how the reader/audience interprets and comprehends utterances from journalists and

politicians, we are considering *Inferences* (arising from the propositions and the context) as the object of this study.

Following the inferential principles, this dissertation consists of the analyses of some American online news. In particular, the English Language was chosen to write this study, as part of the learning and facilitating the development of the *corpus*, written in the same language. It represents a social code used as a tool for the interpretations of possible inferences detached from some headlines and complementary text presented in written American Journalism.

As Social Communication covers many types of media vehicles, we have chosen written Journalism headlines from North-American digital news as the *corpus* of this dissertation. An issue that has been of large interest to the media and to politics area is Barack Hussein Obama and also his final opponent candidate, McCain. For this reason, the headlines and comments chosen from different news vehicles vary from the period before the last presidential election (November 2008) and post election are analyzed in this dissertation.

In effect, this dissertation provides the illustration of possible inferences drawn from a reader. Considering the Media view, 16 headlines found in current written American Journalism about Obama are analyzed, in a 2008 presidential pre-election and (2009) pos-election period. Nine headlines include images related to Obama will be described following ostensive-stimuli seen within recent relevance theoretic unified approach. Finally, seven headlines about McCain are also interpreted during the same period.

The headlines were mainly selected from The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, Daily News, Washington Post, CNN and Salon. First of all, the criteria in this selection of these on-line newspapers were motivated by language analysis, although political matters are inevitably exposed because of the issue. However, it is not in the scope of this study to define political support through each particular newspaper enterprise.

Therefore, the main goal is to illustrate the aspects from the press that can be seen from the perspective of Linguistics, more specifically from an Internal Interface (Intradisciplinary) approach, focusing on some sub-areas of this discipline - lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatics.

Composing the language, all these sub-areas cannot be left apart from this study for they allow a closer investigation when operating an explanation of the other discipline, written Journalism.

The theoretical hypothesis of this dissertation is that the Theory of Interfaces allied to the three pragmatics inferential theories already mentioned above, provide together a competent resource for the illustrative demonstration of how the news readers can interpret the *corpus* headlines and complementary *leads* and images. Furthermore, as generally this kind of research focus on semantic/pragmatic analyses, we would like to investigate if the proposal of including syntactic recovery is relevant to be pursued.

On this dissertation, the major attention of the analyses will be on Relevance Theory and Headlines. In order to explain the inferential process calculation from *utterances*¹ and images related to Obama and McCain the following objectives were established:

- a) Provide illustration that may be of interest to both areas, namely, Linguistics and Journalism, on an interface proposal. The analyses are based on the Grice's Theory of Implicatures, Costa's broadened model, Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson) and Theory of Interfaces (Costa).
- b) Analyze 23 utterances through journalistic headlines, related to Obama and McCain based on the perspective of the media.
- c) Include the analysis of lexical narrowing and broadening with hyperbole and metaphor or metaphor expression encountered in the utterances, within the Relevance Theory model.
- d) Some excerpts from the text or even the lead of the newspaper may be considered in order to confirm some of the ideas developed to establish the context, or what is implied.
- e) Illustrate and comment 9 media photographs taken from Obama within the Relevance Theory, as ostensive stimuli images.

This study is divided in five chapters. After a brief introduction, named the **first chapter**, the background knowledge is presented in the **second chapter**, which is

¹ *Utterance* is a piece of evidence which belong to the field of pragmatics interpretation, it differs from sentence, which is a semantic representation and belongs to grammar. (S&W 1995, p. 9 -10)

divided in three sections. The **first section** consists of a brief presentation of Linguistics and its focus subareas for this study, Lexicon, Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics. In the **second section**, the Theory of Implicatures is explained following Grice and Costa's Broadened Model, with a more detailed description of Pragmatics. Moreover, allied to Grice and Costa's approach, Sperber & Wilson's Relevance Theory is thoroughly described as a pragmatic model of communication. All of them highlight the object of this study, namely, *Inference*.

An account of Metaphor interpretation compared to literal, approximation, and hyperbole is also described including Wilson and Carston (W&C 2007) with a lexical pragmatic unified account in the relevance theoretical approach.

The **third section** outlines Costa's Interface Theory, with a complete illustration of lexical-syntactic-semantics-pragmatics possible interface.

In the **third chapter, the first section** presents general aspects of American Journalism (REAH 1998, 2004, VAN DIJK 1996) concerning traditional concepts related to Headlines and Lead. **The second section** illustrates studies on Headlines (DOR, 2003 and INFANTIDOU, 2009) following the Relevance Theory, followed by comments on both author's approach.

In the **fourth chapter** a theoretical application of the pragmatic models is performed by the development of inferential processes from headlines and political transcripts. To explain this interpretive process, we illustrate samples of headlines following Grice, Costa, and focusing mainly on Sperber & Wilson with pragmatic inferential processes and Wilson and Carston, with a unitary approach to lexical pragmatics.

Furthermore the context of the headlines and transcripts are also considered with the identification of the communication of the subjects analyzed. Also, photographs from Obama and family after 2008 presidential election are described according to recent relevance theoretical unified account. Finally, the results of this theoretical research focused on American Journalism are evaluated according to the background on Interface and Implicatures Theories.

2 BACKGROUND

Introducing the Background three sections were developed to support the analyses done in Chapter 3. The first section starts with a short description of Linguistics together with the adequate sub-areas of this discipline which was selected to be the fundamental tools to the investigation of the other discipline already mentioned before, specifically written Journalism.

2.1 LINGUISTICS

Linguistics can be seen as a scientific discipline which investigates human language, within the interdisciplinary or intra-disciplinary perspective, even though not completely recognized as such during the disciplinary era (Costa 2007, p.345-346).

Three linguists have developed and explained the backgrounds of Linguistics and had to carry on the hard task of bringing this discipline to the scientific level:

Saussure (1916) considered the linguistic phenomenon as social, and Linguistics was rooted in Semiology. Chomsky (1957) considered that language is supported by innate properties of the brain, classifying Linguistics within the cognitive sciences, which in turn is linked to Social Psychology.

In 1970, Montague (1970) inserted Linguistics into the field of Formal Sciences claiming that human language has the property of being logical and inferential (COSTA 2007, p. 346).

From their legacy, even if their main concern was in establishing Linguistics as a specialized area, and even if not explicitly, it follows that two main principles arose from their scientific performance. One of them is that Linguistics should be inserted in an area of interdisciplinary relation, and its object, which is the human language, should be seen as a set of properties determined by internal relationship, or intra-disciplinary.

Indeed, considered in a broadened aspect, language involves cognitive, formal, social and cultural aspects, and in its internal nature it is composed of (phonological), (morphological), lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties.

According to Costa (2007, p.347), a general relation may have an interdisciplinary approach. On the other hand, it is only possible to describe its internal constitution through an intra-disciplinary approach. As we pursue the idea of developing an Interface study that includes Lexical/Syntactic/Semantic/Pragmatics connection, next topics are dedicated to the explanation of these Linguistics sub-areas.

2.1.1 Lexicon

Human languages contain an enormous repertoire of expressive elements, namely, the lexicon, and these elements are combined by a syntax with unlimited generative capacities (S&W 2006, p. 173). However, the sentences of a natural language contain referential expressions ambiguities whose values cannot be assigned by decoding alone.

That is, the interpretation of linguistic utterances used to communicate is context-sensitive (dependant), so although a language is formally a code, involving coding and decoding, there is a gap between semantic structure a sentence encodes and the meaning a wants to convey in each situation. In this way, the lexicon is not just an isolated piece of code inserted in language, rather, it is pervasive in all Linguistics 'domains': in syntactic strings, semantic encoding and in pragmatic inferences.

The lexicon is pervasive present in all the recovery processes that are involved in human communication. The next topics Syntax, Semantic and Pragmatics will complement this view, and relate them to the investigated area of Social Communication, the media press.

2.1.2 Syntax

The relation between linguist structure and pragmatics is worth investigating especially through journalistic headlines. News headlines in general do not follow exactly the average syntactic string structure through which people communicate, but even like that there is a semantic procedure which allows communication through them.

The aim to investigate headlines first syntactically is to call the attention to the fact that comprehension process involved in communication can be illustrated through the intradisciplinary interfaces.

Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory holds that a speaker knows a set of principles that apply to all languages, and also parameters varying within defined limits from one language to another (COOK, 1988, p. 1). UG is a theory of knowledge, and its concern is with the internal structure of the human mind. Thus, acquiring a language means learning how these principles apply to a particular language and which value is adequate for each parameter.

The specific principle of UG is *structure-dependency* and it is a principle common to syntax of all languages. The principle asserts that there are structural relationships in a sentence, rather than on the sequence of items. It is a discovery about the nature of human language, it is a property of human language in general, a principle of Universal Grammar.

In this way, speaking of English language, all sentences depend upon the speaker's knowledge of structure.

Assuming that logical forms, like syntactic forms, can be labeled, then the syntactic labels are, among others, the categories N, NP, V, VP, P, PP. N might be regarded as a variable over nouns, NP a variable over noun phrases, V as a variable over verbs, VP as a variable over verb phrases, a P a variable over prepositions, and a PP a variable over prepositional phrases, etc.. (S&W 1995, p. 205)

According to Sperber and Wilson the logical labels should be a set of basic logical categories, maybe from a fixed range which is part of basic human mental equipment, regarded as variables over conceptual representations of different types. For instance, using the pro-forms of English to represent them, *someone* is a variable

over conceptual representations of people, *something* over conceptual representations of things, *do something* over actions, and so on.

Consider the example:

(1) Obama invited McCain

A propositional representation of the fact that Obama invited McCain would carry the information that *someone did something*, or :

Someone: Obama

Did something: invited McCain

Following this approach, it is clear to determine in which the logical category labels correspond to, and state that they are semantic representations of syntactic category labels of natural language. Therefore, a reader who makes the anticipatory syntactic hypothesis that the words 'Obama invited' will be followed by an NP, can by semantically interpreting this anticipatory syntactic hypothesis derive the anticipatory logical hypothesis that Obama invited someone. To sum up, such hypotheses play a crucial role in the interpretation process provided that journalistic headlines are not always syntactically ready-made for further semantic/pragmatic requiring anticipatory recoveries.

2.1.3 Semantics

As the purpose of this study is to illustrate the internal interface which is related to Linguistics sub-areas, the interest in Semantics approach here is to mention that the distinction, or border that is considered by many authors is the following: Semantics will be considered as the encoded concept that is context-invariant, and Pragmatics includes the encoded linguistic meaning and speaker meaning (CARSTON 2007).

Semantics and Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory is rooted in a view of cognitive architecture according to which linguistic semantics is the output of a modular linguistic decoding system and serves as input to a pragmatic processor. The semantic representation, or *logical form* consists of an incomplete representation which functions as a schema or template for the pragmatic construction of propositional forms.

The semantics representation is context-free determined by principles and rules internal to the linguistic system. The semantics representation so generated provides input to the pragmatic processor which is triggered by ostensive stimuli, that is, the ones which are constructed as indicating a communicative intention of the agent who produced them (CARSTON 2004).

Following Sperber and Wilson (1995, p.9) when relating Semantics and Pragmatics, it is important to notice the difference between *sentences* and *utterances*. As stated by the authors, 'by definition, the semantic representation of a sentence assigned by a generative grammar, can take no account of non-linguistic properties as, for example, the time and place of utterance, the identity of the speaker, the speaker's intention, and so on.'

On the other hand, an utterance is used to convey thoughts and reveal the speaker or writer's attitude or relation to the thought expressed. Thus, different utterances of the same sentence may differ in their interpretation. Complementing this comparisons, which are important to have in mind, since the analyses of the headlines will be considered as utterances, it follows that 'the study of the semantic representation of sentences belongs to grammar; the study of the interpretation of utterances belongs to pragmatics' (S&W 1995, p.10).

2.1.4 Pragmatics

According to S&W (Pragmatics, 2000) Pragmatics is the study of how contextual factors interact with linguistic meaning in the interpretation of utterances. Charles Morris (1938) referred to pragmatics in philosophy, defining it as the study of the relations between signs and their interpreters. But it was the philosopher Paul Grice (1967) who developed this field, trying to reduce the gap between the semantics of formal language and natural language.

Distinguishing sentence meaning from speaker's meaning was a way to reduce the gap, and Grice (1989) proposed a general principle for semantic and pragmatic interpretation, showing that schematic linguistic meanings could be used in context to convey speaker's meanings, meanings made up not only of what was said but also of what was implicated.

2.2 BACKGROUND THEORIES

This section presents theories which play an essential role on Pragmatics, which studies the language in use, which in general goes beyond the encoded meaning of words. Starting with Grice's theory (1975, 1989), the next sub-section deals with the concept of what is said following in the fields of Semantics and Implicature placed in the field of Pragmatics. Second, it is presented Costa's collaboration to Grice's theory with the Broadened Model (1984, 2004), and then the third sub-section describes Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, which was conceived based on Grice's principles. All these theoretical constructs establish the necessary knowledge to the analyses done in the Third Chapter.

2.2.1 GRICE: Theory of Implicatures

Grice defended that sentence meaning is a vehicle for conveying a speaker's meaning, and that a speaker's meaning is an overtly expressed intention which is fulfilled when recognized. With this idea, Grice offered an inferential view as an alternative to the classical code model of communication.

Grice provided an analysis of linguistic meaning centered on the speaker meaning, thus settling one of the foundations of current study of Pragmatics. In "Meaning" (1957) his theory of communication is developed, showing two concepts of *meaning* with different approaches: *natural meaning* as capturing similarities between cause and effect applied in a sentence and *non-natural meaning (meaning-*nn*)* which is constantly present in speakers' intentions when communicating something to an audience.

Later on, "Logic and conversation" (1975) brought one of the most important theoretical impacts in the history of Pragmatics research, presenting a conceptual system to deal with complex question involving meaning in natural language (COSTA, 1984 p. 48).

Taking headline **(2)** as an example:

(2) It's all on Obama now

(Los Angeles Times May 3, 2009)

Lead: Political observers say that with the events of the last week, accountability for the nation and its problems has clearly shifted from Bush.

According to Grice's model, the utterance above may have two different meanings. What is said in the utterance is that everything is on Obama, but what is implicit will depend on the context. If we consider the context the Lead right below the headline, we may infer that what is implied is that the headline writer (A) had the intention to convey to the reader (B) that the current president Obama inherited from former president Bush everything related to the American nation (deduced from the lead above). In this way, there are two different meanings, the first one, or *what is said* is the meaning expressed by the utterance literally, or in other words, as the proposition in its semantics value (COSTA 2008). The second one, is implied.

In order to organize an explanatory system to understand that whatever (A) implied is distinct from what (A) said, Grice introduces the verb *implicate* and the related nouns *implicature* (*implying*) and *implicatum* (*what is implied*) with the purpose of facilitating the ability of choosing one or the other member of the family with which *implicate* is associated.

One of the types of Implicatures, which are adopted here is Grice's Conversational implicatures which are connected with general features of discourse. These features include cooperative efforts, where each participant recognizes a mutually accepted direction and also some conversational moves which are unsuitable.

So from there comes his conceived Cooperative Principle(from now on CP): 'Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted or talk exchange in which you are engaged.'(GRICE 1989, p. 26)

In addition, complementing and yielding more results in accordance with the CP follows his system of four Conversational Maxims;

I. Quantity

Maxims:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

II. Quality

Supermaxim – Try to make your contribution one that is true.

Maxims:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

III. Relation

Maxim: Be relevant.

IV. Manner

Supermaxim – Be perspicuous.

Maxims:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly.

Considering the situation that in a talk exchange there can be failures, Grice shows the connection between the Cooperative Principle (CP) and maxims on the one hand, and Conversational Implicature on the other.

If during a conversation, a participant fails to fulfill a maxim in many ways, he may, for example:

1. Quietly and unostentatiously VIOLATE a maxim, and in some cases he will be liable to mislead.
2. Say he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires.
3. Be unable to be as informative as required (failing to fulfill the first maxim of quality).
4. FLOUT a maxim, that is, BLATANTLY fails to fulfill it.

From questioning how can something said by a speaker be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the Cooperative Principle, Grice explain that this kind of situation is what triggers conversational implicatures, and a maxim is being *exploited* (GRICE 1989, p. 30).

2.2.1.1 Conversational Implicatures

The notion of Conversational Implicature² (GRICE 1989, p. 30) is modeled through the hypothetical example: A man who, by saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, provided that (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition in (2) is required.

Grice asserts that conversational implicatures have certain properties (1989:39), that is, they are calculable, cancelable, nondetachable, and indeterminate. Take the examples below, which follow each property:

Calculability

Even though it is possible for the speaker/writer to grasp intuitively what the hearer/reader, if an implicature cannot be recognized by a deductive calculation, the implicature is not considered conversational.

- (3)** (A) We ran out of coffee, and I need some.
 (B) There's a supermarket around the corner.

² This work only considers 'particularized conversational implicature' which depends on special features of the context (GRICE 1989, p.37)

(A) believes that (B) is respecting the Cooperative Principle (CP) and so according to Grice's calculation model, and so if (B) said *There's a supermarket around the corner*, he implied that:

- (A) should go to the supermarket
- There must be coffee in the supermarket
- (A) should buy it.
- (A) should then make some coffee and drink it.

This procedure shows a logical calculation which is necessary for a conversational implicature.

Cancelability

Once that at least the Cooperative Principle should be observed in a conversational implicature, the implicature can be canceled if this principle is optionally not observed. For instance, an implicature can be canceled if an extra information is added, and the speaker alters the first assertion. Take the example:

A doctor is visiting a patient who is in hospital.

(4) (A) Doctor: How are you doing today?

(B) Patient: Better. Well, not so better!

The second part of (B)'s utterance *Well, not so better* cancels the initial implicature that (B)'s health had improved, and shows that (B) reconsiders his first self-evaluation.

Nondetachability

Expressions with the same coded content will tend to carry the same implicatures, that is, if the semantic

(5) (A) The man is still in prison.

(B) The man is still in jail.

Indeterminacy

As an utterance may have various possible specific explanations, the calculation of an implicature may refer to an open list of implicatures which can be indeterminate. In this case, a metaphor seems to be an evident situation (COSTA 2008).

Although the examples are illustrated through dialogues, we would like to call the attention that headlines as a communicative utterance also include these properties: an utterance *U* expresses a proposition *P* which transmits an implicature *Q*.

2.2.2 COSTA: The Broadened Model

Costa's model reformulates the Quantity and Quality Maxims, and elevates the Relevance Maxim to a Supermaxim position, linked to the Cooperation Principle, as it is a general property that manifests together with the other maxims. According to Costa (2008, p. 100) *Relevance* is an essential pragmatic property. In addition, the Relation category where Relevance took the role of a Maxim, takes another Maxim "Be adequate."

Costa's Model (2008 p. 101-102)

Conversation General Rules

General supermaxim – "Be the most relevant"

I – Quantity Category

1st maxim – Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of conversation)

2nd maxim - Do not make your contribution more informative than required

II – Quality Category

a. Supermaxim: Say only what you know

1st maxim – Do not say what you know it is false

2nd maxim – Do not say what you cannot assume as known (or something you know?)

III - Relation Category

Supermaxim: Be adequate

IV – Manner Category

Supermaxim: Be clear

1st maxim – Avoid obscurity

2nd maxim – Avoid ambiguity

3rd maxim – Be brief (avoid prolixity)

4th maxim – Be orderly

Pragmatics Inferences (not said)

Types of Implicatures

Concerning Pragmatics nature

A – Conventional: What is said - lexical relation

B – Conversational: What is said-context-cooperative principle relation

As for the type of cause

A – Standard – respecting maxims

B – Flouting – violating maxims

As for the type of context

A – Generalized – general context (linguistic rules)

B – Particularized – particular context (communicational rules)

Further considerations presented on Costa's broadened model:

- 1- The presentation keeps informal as in the original model. According to Costa, Grice wanted to "implicate," with his explicit informality, the existent problems which Standard Logic face in order to systematize the inferences of conversational implicatures.
- 2- The Supermaxim of Relation – Be the most relevant (possible) – occupies the highest hierarchical position in the model, as it is a general property which manifests along with the other maxims.
- 3- The broadening of a model is done in order to take to the maxim its theoretical potentiality and its logical coherence so that it may be virtually falsely represented.

Although Grice recognized the problems related Standard Logic and conversational implicatures inferences, he considered some mandatory properties of conversational implicatures. For instance, the obligatoriness of being inferred by means of calculation.

The nature of this calculation is not clarified by Grice, but anyway it represents a logical operation done by an individual (A) makes when listening (U) and judging that in context (C), the sender of the message (B) wanted to convey (I) more than what (U) means literally.

Costa (2008, p. 108) claims that this logic that permits calculation is of a special nature as it takes into consideration the utterance and its relations with the conservation of rules and context knowledge.

The concept of context adopted in Costa's model is based on Bar-Hillel (1954) avoiding extra-linguistic character, Gazdar (1979) and Sperber and Wilson (1998) with the following properties:

- a) To be the function of an ordered pair with the sentence, once it is in this relation that the context must be considered, that is, in the pragmatic analysis of the utterance.
- b) To be partially of mutual knowledge, otherwise it will not be possible to have new information.
- c) To be a set of propositions formed by linguistic entities that can be represented.

Thus, the contextual knowledge will be translated by sentences referring to the mutually known propositions or easily acceptable ones. In this way, this set of propositions when paired with the utterance allows the addressee to infer the total significant content transmitted by the sender, that is, (U) + (I).

According to Costa, the context is formed by a set of indeterminate sentences mutually known. However, when inferring an implicature, only some of them are relevant, necessary and determinable. For this reason, he proposes the use of a subset of sentences from the context, in this case, exactly the ones that are essential to the calculation of an implicature.

Furthermore, Costa highlights that the concept of context is given in a flexible way, having in mind that it is the type of function that he represents what really matters.

Costa's Broadened Model (2008) contributes to a theoretical construct giving a more formal rigor to the conversational implicatures calculation. Following Costa's model and introducing the characterization of the symbolic elements performing in the calculation of an implicature, we illustrate the analysis of a headline:

(A) = the addressee

(B) = the sender

(C) = the context (a set of propositions potentially known by (A) and (B) or at least accepted as non-controversial)

(U) = Utterance

(I) = Implicatures (Grice's type of pragmatics inferences)

Consider the example:

(6) Obama wins

(Press-Telegram – November 5, 2008)

(U) Obama wins

(A) The reader

(B) The writer (editor or copy-desk)

(C) Context: 1. The writer is the sender

2. Obama and McCain were the two final candidates for the U.S.A. presidential election of 2008

3.Obama represents the democrat party and his campaign has been more successful than McCain's, proposing a change

4. McCain represents Bush's current republican party

5. Financial crisis and critical policies are serious problems related to republican government

6. Who wins the election becomes the next president of the country

7. Americans voted on the candidates the day before and were waiting for the final result

(I¹) Obama is the new president of the United States (Particularized Conversational Implicature – Flouting – first maxim of Quantity)

This is A's calculation that permits the inference of the implicature:

1- (B) said/wrote (U)

- 2- (B) did not offer all the information required for what he said: Obama wins what? (Obama wins the presidential election of 2008 in the United States of America)
- 3- (B) must be still cooperating
- 4- (B) knows that the reader knows (C)
- 5- (B) will be relevant saying (U) if he intends that the reader thinks (I¹)

This explanation of how these types of conversational implicatures inferences are chained. Nevertheless, Costa's proposal is extremely compatible with Grice's ideas.

From (I¹) it is possible to infer other implicatures, such as:

(I²) Americans do not trust the republican government anymore and elected a democrat president (Particularized Conversational Implicature (Flouting: the first maxim of Manner))

- 1- (B) wrote (U)
- 2- (B) did not offer all the information required
- 3- (B) must still be cooperating
- 4- (B) knows that (A) knows (C)
- 5- (B) will be relevant saying (U) if he intends (A) to think (I²)

(I³) Americans expect Obama to solve problems in America (PCI standard)

(I³) turn (I²) relevant

- 1- (B) wrote (U)
- 2- (B) is cooperating
- 3- In (saying) writing (U), (B) will be as relevant as possible if he intends the reader to think that (I³).

2.2.3 SPERBER & WILSON: Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1995) is based on a concept of relevance and in two principles of relevance: a Cognitive Principle and a Communicative Principle.

Relevance Theory (RT) can be considered as an attempt to develop in details one of Grice's crucial claims that an essential feature of most human communication is the expression and recognition of intentions (W&S 2002a, Introduction). With this claim, Grice established the foundations for an inferential model of communication, as an alternative to the classical code model.

The code model presupposes that a communicator encodes the intended message into a signal, which is decoded by the audience using an identical copy of the code. On the other hand, according to the Inferential model, the communicator provides evidence of his intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided.

According to Wilson & Sperber, an utterance is a linguistically coded piece of evidence, and verbal comprehension involves an element of decoding. However, besides from recovering the linguistic meaning by decoding, there are other inputs involved in a non-demonstrative inference process, leading to an interpretation of the speaker's meaning.

The objective of Inferential Pragmatics is to explain how the audience infers the speaker/writer meaning based on the evidence provided.

Relevance Theory account is also based on another of Grice's central claims: that utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer/reader towards the speaker/writer's meaning. Grice's Cooperative Principles and maxims are meaningful in the role of interpretation: a hearer/reader should choose one that best satisfies those expectations.

Although Relevance theorists agree that utterances raise expectations of relevance, they question the need for the Cooperative Principle and maxims. Moreover, they do not agree with the role of deliberate maxim violation in utterance

interpretation to trigger implicatures, and the treatment of figurative utterances as deviations from a maxim or convention of truthfulness.

Wilson & Sperber (2002a, p. 250) claim that in Relevance Theory, the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise and predictable enough to guide the hearer/reader to the speaker/writer's meaning. Their aim is to explain in cognitively realistic terms these expectations of relevance, and how they might contribute to a plausible account of comprehension.

Cognition

An *input* is relevant to an individual when it connects with stored information he has available, and from the combination of both, he yields conclusions that are meaningful to him. There are many different ways in which these conclusions may arise: by answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a topic, settling a doubt (which might increase curiosity to investigate more about a topic), confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression.

In RT, an input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, a memory, an image) is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a Positive Cognitive Effect (a true conclusion), making a difference in the individual's representation of the world (W & S 2002a, p. 251).

The most important type of cognitive effect is a Contextual Implication, that is a conclusion deducible from the *input* and *context* together. In order to understand what context means in this circumstance, it is crucial to present S&W definition:

The set of premises used in interpreting an utterance constitutes the *context*. The context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world. It is these assumptions, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance. A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation.

(S&W, 1995, p.15-16)

Cost and Benefit

But what if more than one input seems to be relevant? Relevance theory claims that what makes an input worth being selected among other relevant stimuli, is the fact that there is one *more* relevant than any other alternative given at that time. Furthermore, in selecting an input out of the competing stimuli, there is another aspect to consider besides from the cognitive effect, which is the effort of perception, memory and inference required. Thus, Relevance can be assessed in terms of cognitive effects processing effort, in a matter of comparative degree:

- (1) Relevance of an input to an individual
 - a. Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.
 - b. Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.

Being the characterization of relevance comparative rather than quantitative, meaning that it is unlikely to compute numerical values for effort and effect assessment in relevance. This notion provides the best starting point for constructing a psychologically plausible theory.

Therefore, it seems preferable to treat effort and effect as *non-representational* dimensions of mental processes: they exist and play a role in cognition whether or not they are mentally represented; and when they are mentally represented, it is in the form of intuitive comparative judgments rather than absolute numerical ones. The same is true of relevance, which is a function of effort and effect (W&S 2002a, p.253).

To maximize the relevance of the inputs is just to make the most efficient use of the available processing resources. Humans have an automatic tendency to maximize relevance as a consequence of the constant selection pressure demanded

in order to increase efficiency. Thus, it is not simply a matter of choice, rather, it is because of the way our cognitive systems have evolved as a consequence of this demanding processes related to human evolution necessities.

According to S&W this explains why our perceptual mechanisms tend automatically to pick up potentially relevant stimuli, our memory retrieval mechanisms tend to activate potentially relevant assumptions, and our inferential mechanisms tend spontaneously to process them in the most productive way.

So, if there are some kids playing with a ball on the street, and suddenly you notice a sound of a window breaking, you will pay more attention if this sound is closer and signals to you that your window has been broken, and not your neighbor's. This computing process happens because our memory and inference mechanisms identify the sound as something bringing consequences that affects us.

This universal tendency is described in the First, or Cognitive Principle of Relevance (W&S, 2002a, p. 254):

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance.

Communication

If this cognitive tendency to maximize relevance is something universal, it is possible to predict and also manipulate the mental state of others. When producing a stimulus to attract one's attention, we can prompt the retrieval of certain contextual assumptions and direct him to an intended conclusion.

According to Grice, even if someone has the intention to affect other's thoughts, it is necessary to provide evidence of this intention. Inferential communication is a matter of intending to affect the thoughts of an audience and at the same time getting them to recognize that someone has this intention.

Inferential communication (W&S 2002a, p. 255) – what relevance theory calls OSTENSIVE-INFERENTIAL COMMUNICATION for reason that will shortly become apparent – involves an extra layer of intention:

Ostensive-inferential communication

a. The informative intention:

The intention to inform an audience of something.

b. The communicative intention:

To make it *mutually manifest* to audience and communicator that the communicator has this informative intention.

S&W (1995, p 61) state that there is a difference in merely manifesting an informative intention to the audience and mutually manifesting to audience and communicator. To explain this difference they start questioning why would someone who has an informative intention bother to make it known to the audience that he has this intention, that is, they wondered what would be the point in making an ostensive communication.

The gricean approach is that making one's informative intention known is the best way of fulfilling it. However, S&W argue that there is a major reason for engaging in ostensive communication, apart from helping to fulfill an informative intention:

Informing alters the cognitive environment of the audience. Communication alters the mutual cognitive environment of the audience and communicator. Mutual manifestness may be of little cognitive importance, but it is crucial social importance.

(S&W 1995, p.61)

Understanding is achieved when the communicative intention is fulfilled, or in other words, when the audience recognizes the informative intention of the communicator.

In general, ostensive-inferential communication requires an OSTENSIVE STIMULUS to attract attention from the audience. According to W&S (2000, p. 255) Relevance theory states that an ostensive stimulus may raise precise and predictable expectations of relevance, detaching from other stimuli. Following the universal tendency to maximize relevance, an audience will only pay attention to a stimulus that seems relevant.

When the communicator produces an ostensive stimulus, the normal process is to expect that the audience will welcome and consider that stimulus relevant enough to be worth processing. And so we have described the basis for the Second Principle of Relevance, or Communicative Principle of Relevance, which is applied to ostensive-inferential communication:

Every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

The Communicative Principle of Relevance and the Optimal Relevance are the key to relevance-theoretic pragmatics.

An ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience if:

- a. It is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort;
- b. It is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences. (this clause allows some limitations, for no one is omniscient and also because there may be relevant information which communicators are unable or unwilling to provide at the time. (S&W 1995, p. 267)).

Considering that the communicator wants to be understood, it is of his interest to make an ostensive stimulus easy to be captured by the audience, and provide evidence not only for the cognitive efforts he intends to achieve in his audience, but also for further cognitive effects which, by holding his attention, will help achieve his goal. However, as posted in clause (b), this depends on the communicator's abilities and preferences to make an ostensive stimulus.

Utterance **(6)** *Obama wins*, already developed according to Costa's Model, may represent an ostensive stimulus fulfilling the conditions required in (a) above, and (b), despite the fact that in this case it wouldn't be a matter of competence, but more of preference in communicating soon and most of all, Obama's victory.

Implications for Pragmatics

The relevance-theoretical account of cognition and communication has practical implications for pragmatics. Comprehension starts with the recovery of a linguistically encoded sentence meaning which must be contextually enriched to extract the speaker's meaning.

At the explicit level there may be indeterminacies as ambiguities and ellipses, for example, to deal with. And at the implicit level there may be implicatures to identify, metaphors and other tropes to interpret. All these pragmatic processes require an appropriate set of contextual assumptions, which the hearer/reader must also supply.

The Communicative principle of Relevance suggests a practical procedure for performing these subtasks and constructing hypothesis about the speaker's meaning:

- a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
- b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied.

Therefore, when a hearer/reader going through a path of least effort finds an interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance, he achieves the most plausible hypothesis about the speaker's meaning. This hypotheses are developed through an inferential process, which is next explained.

In effect, mental processes are assumed as inferential (S&W, 1995:14). Although inferential processes are different from decoding processes, an inferential process can be used as part of a decoding process. Justifying the procedure that would convey the reader to the syntactic recovery, we provide the calculation that exemplifies this procedure, showing how inference can double as decoding.

Therefore, it is possible to use the standard inference rule (Modus Ponens) as a decoding rule, and so treat utterance "If Obama wins, America will change" as signals,

Premises: If P then Q

P
Conclusion: Q

and thus convey by the use of these signals the message (conclusion) as in "America will change."

2.2.3.1 Inference

Inferential communication and ostension are one and the same process, but seen from two different points of view: that of the communicator who is involved in ostension and that of the audience who is involved in inference.

(S&W 1995, p. 54)

The model of ostensive-inferential communication has been more related to the ostensive nature of the communicator's behavior than at the inferential nature of comprehension. In order to understand the inferential process used in communication, it is important to report to basic claims of RT.

In order to explain the inferential calculation of human comprehension process, RT is based on the deductive system of Formal Logics:

There are two crucial points on RT foundations, which are Logics and Cognition, and they are related to human inferential process. Inference rules guarantee the logical validity of the inferences they govern. Thus, in a valid demonstrative inference the deductive rules applied to true premises guarantee the truth of conclusions. Similarly, in a valid *non-demonstrative inference*, there can be no proof, only confirmation of the assumptions, and hypothesis confirmation could be seen as governed by logical rules. However, the only logical rules spontaneously accessed to the human mind are *deductive* rules, and play an essential role in non-demonstrative inferences (S&W 1995, p.66).

Besides that, another different point from Formal Logics is that in human communication inferences are *non-trivial*, because there is not necessarily a set of rules which applied to a set of premises will result in valid conclusions.

Assuming that the process of inferential comprehension is non-demonstrative, Sperber and Wilson (1995, p. 65) assert that they differ from the kind of the inferences which can demonstrated in traditional Logics. The addressee can neither decode nor deduce the communicator's intention. This means that communication may not succeed. The best he can do is **construct an assumption on the basis of the evidence** provided by a communicator's ostensive behavior. There may be confirmation for this assumption, but no proof.

What the authors explicitly assume is that "any conceptually represented information available to the addressee can be used as a premise in this inference process." This means that the process of inferential comprehension is 'global' (e.g. empirical scientific reasoning), having free access to the conceptual information in memory. It is a momentary construction, not fixed as in Logics. In this way, it is opposed to 'local' process (deductive reasoning from fixed premises) which is either context-free or the contextual information is from a set domain (S&W 1995, p. 65).

Indeed, according to the authors, human inferential successes are more attributed to cognitive constraints on hypothesis formation, than to logical constraints

on confirmation. In other words, hypothesis formation involves the use of deductive rules but is not totally ruled by them.

Comprehension

According to Wilson & Sperber (W&S 2002a, p. 260) the hearer/reader recognizes the speaker/writer informative intention because the utterances encode logical forms, that is, conceptual representations, even fragmentary or incomplete. These utterances are chosen by the speaker/writer and work as input to the hearer/reader's inferential comprehension process.

The decoded logical form of an utterance is important to provide the speaker's intention. Nevertheless, the explicitly communicated content of an utterance contains more than what is linguistically encoded. W&S define as 'explicitly communicated content' a communicated proposition recovered by a combination of decoding and inference, which provides a premise for the derivation of contextual implications and other cognitive effects (W&S 2002, p. 260).

Here we find an important difference between Grice and S&W related to the recovery of decoded logical forms: Grice makes reference of the Cooperative Principle and maxims mainly in connection with the recovery of implicatures. It seems that disambiguation and reference assignment were considered tasks related to the explicit side and determined by sentence meaning and contextual factors.

While implicatures were considered as following pragmatic principles, everything else on the explicit side seemed to have no reference to the speaker's intentions or pragmatics.

As many pragmatists followed Grice on his assumption, there is a tendency now to call the 'primary' processes the ones recovering the explicit content, which are less inferential or less directly dependent on speaker's intentions or pragmatic principles than the 'secondary' processes involved in the recovery of implicatures (W&S 2002a, p. 261).

However, Relevance theory considers the identification of explicit content also as inferential and guided by the Communicative Principle of Relevance as the recovery of implicatures. This means that the explicit content (in relevance-theoretic terms, Explicature) is also a pragmatic procedure.

The relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure ('Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: test interpretive hypothesis in order of accessibility, and stop when your expectations of relevance are 'satisfied') applies in the same way to the resolution of linguistic underdeterminacies at both explicit and implicit levels.

The task of the hearer/reader in the overall comprehension process can be represented by three sub-tasks:

- a. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (Explicatures) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.
- b. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (Implicated Premises).
- c. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (Implicated Conclusions).

As comprehension is an on-line process, these sub-tasks shouldn't be taken as a sequence. The hypothesis about explicatures, implicated premises and conclusions are developed in parallel. Thus, each sub-task above involves a non-demonstrative inference process embedded within the overall process of constructing a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning.

For instance, supposing a situation where John and Mary are friends and John knows that Mary is going to apply for a job in São Paulo. He also knows that she is planning to catch the last flight possible on a Friday, in order to get in time for a deadline interview on the same day. Two days later John meets Mary. Consider the exchange in:

- (7) a. John: How was your trip to São Paulo?
b. Mary: I lost the flight.

Possible relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure to construct hypothesis about the explicatures and implicatures of Mary's utterance:

- A) Mary said to John: 'I lost the flight', where:
'I' is an uninterpreted pronoun;

Disambiguation of the word 'Lose': lose¹: did not catch
Lose²: cannot find

'Lost' can be interpreted as lose 'did not catch' the plane, because that encyclopedic context needed to process this information is more accessible than to process lose²

Flight can be referred to 'a *plane* flying to São Paulo'

Incomplete decoded logical form of Mary's utterance.

B) Mary's utterance will be optimally relevant to John.

Expectation raised by recognition of Mary's ostensive behavior and acceptance of the presumption of relevance it conveys.

Since John wanted to know about Mary's trip to São Paulo, at this point Mary's utterance will achieve relevance with the surprising explanation.

C) Losing (not catching) a flight makes a trip impossible.

First assumption to occur to John, which together with other appropriate premises, might satisfy expectation (B). Accepted as an Implicit premise of Mary's utterance.

D) Mary lost (did not catch) the flight to São Paulo.

First enrichment of the logical form of Mary's utterance to occur to John which might combine with C to lead to the satisfaction of B. Accepted as an explicature of Mary's utterance.

E) Mary did not go to São Paulo.

Mary cannot say anything about her trip to São Paulo since she did not manage to travel.

Inferred from C and D, satisfying B, and accepted as an implicit conclusion of Mary's utterance.

F) Mary cannot say anything about her trip to São Paulo since she did not manage to travel.

G) Mary not only lost the flight, but also lost a job opportunity in São Paulo.

Inferred from E plus background knowledge depicted from context. These are some possible weak implicatures of Mary's utterance, which together with E, satisfy expectation of being optimally relevant to John (B).

According to Relevance Theory, explicatures and implicatures are arrived at by a process of mutual parallel adjustment, with hypotheses being considered in order of accessibility. In interpreting an indirect answer such as 'I lost the flight' the denotation of *flight* has to be processed or *narrowed* (explained in next sub-section) to a specific flight that Mary was going to take, and for some reason, she lost it and

could not manage to travel to SP. In narrowing down the lexical *flight* it becomes possible get to the conclusion in E, and satisfies John's expectation of relevance.

2.2.3.2 Lexical Pragmatics: Narrowing and Broadening

According to Wilson and Carston (2007, p.1) recent work in lexical pragmatics consider that the meanings of words are frequently pragmatically adjusted in context. In this way the proposition expressed after the adjustment, becomes different from the lexically encoded sense found in words.

There are three phenomena given as examples to this lexical adjustment, Lexical Narrowing, Approximation and Metaphorical Extension. In general, they are studied as separated aspects of language with distinct explanation. Wilson and Carston try to show a more unified procedure among these phenomena, claiming that narrowing, loosening and metaphorical extension are only different outcomes of one interpretive process.

Every interpretive process creates an ad hoc concept suitable for each occasion. The ad hoc concept depends on the interaction among encoded concepts, contextual information and pragmatic principles. Within the relevance theory framework, the ad hoc construction brings a different perspective, where either a narrowing or a broadening of the linguistically – specified meaning is possible. In other words, the communicated concept can be more specific or more general than what the encoded concept comprehends.

Through this categorization it is possible to have a unified account on which lexical narrowing or broadening (or even a combination of both) are the result of the same interpretive process used for literal utterances. In a most radical version of this unified approach, the authors argue that there is also a continuum of cases of broadening, and this mechanism ranges from strictly literal use through approximation and other forms of loosening to 'figurative' cases such as hyperbole or metaphor, with no clear cut-off points between them.

Inferential Lexical Adjustment

Wilson and Carston argue that narrowing and broadening are flexible and highly context-dependent processes that a unified account of lexical pragmatics might enhance the explanation.

The *Lexical Narrowing* process happens when the use of a word conveys to a more specific meaning than the encoded one, and so takes a more restricted denotation than the encoded concept. (There can be different degrees and directions in narrowing.)

The modified concept which is sometimes called an 'ad hoc' concept, being fine-tuned to satisfy the expectations of relevance.

Note the examples from Wilson and Carston (2007, p. 6) below:

- (8) a. I'm not *drinking* tonight.
b. Buying a house is easy if you've got *money*.
c. Churchill was a *man*.

According to the authors, depending on the circumstances, the speaker of (8a) might be understood as meaning that he will not drink any liquid at all (if he is on a special diet, or has to go through a medical exam that demands absence of liquids, for example), that he will not drink any alcohol, or that he will not drink significant amounts of alcohol. Each interpretation after the first one becomes narrower and with a more restrictive denotation successively.

Because of the way that the word money is displayed in (8b), the speaker would be making a blatantly false claim that buying a house is easy for someone with any amount of money. In this case, narrowing yields a more informative or relevant interpretation which is that buying a house is easy with a suitable amount of money.

Nevertheless, (8c) exemplifies when narrowing may occur in different degrees and also in different directions. Depending on the situation of the utterance, the audience may interpret that Churchill was a typical man (with all the qualities that identify a male) or Churchill was an ideal man (more than a typical male).

The notion of each particular narrowing in these examples above are all context dependent.

In a pragmatic process, the flexibility and context dependence of narrowing is pointed out by the variety of interpretations that the same word receives in different contexts.

The *Lexical broadening* relates to a more general sense that a word can take, with an expansion of the encoded sense of the word used in an utterance.

Radical versions of the *unified approach* to lexical pragmatics as the one proposed in Relevance Theory, treat approximation, hyperbole and metaphor as

subvarieties of broadening which differ mainly in the *degree* to which the linguistically-specified denotation is expanded.

As this study includes the analyses of some metaphors found in American press headlines and texts, it is appropriate to give a brief definition here of these subvarieties of lexical broadening:

Approximation happens when a word with a relatively strict sense is marginally extended to include items that fall outside the linguistically-specified denotation. For instance:

(9) This T-shirt is *clean*.

The word *clean* (with a relatively strict sense) might be understood as an approximation if uttered by a mother knowing that her demanding daughter wants to change a T-shirt three times a day. In this case, when the mother says that the T-shirt is clean, she would be interpreted as meaning CLEAN*³: close enough to the situation of being kept CLEAN in a closet drawer, after being recently washed and ironed.

Hyperbole involves a further degree of broadening, and so there is a greater departure of the encoded meaning. For instance, the same imaginary mother has a twelve year-old boy who resists changing his favorite T-shirt. After two days wearing the same T-shirt he tries to convince his mother that the T-shirt is still clean.

From the starting with the literal use of the word “clean”, passing through approximation, then through the hyperbole use we notice *gradient* or *continuum* cases which makes it worth looking for a unified account in which the same interpretive mechanisms apply.

Metaphor is seen as an even more radical variety of broadening than hyperbole, and with a greater departure from the encoded meaning. Consider the example:

(10) Sarah is a *doll*.

The encoded meaning of the word ‘doll’ can be represented by the concept DOLL, which denotes a kind of toy that imitates a baby, a young girl or a young lady

³ The starred notation marks ‘concepts not encoded in the language but components of the thought (meaning) that the speaker wants to communicate which may be not encodable in the language or would require a lengthy and, at best approximate, paraphrase’ (Carston, 2006).

with a delicate, sweet appearance, and more than that, with the measures of body and face modeled in a beauty pattern. This image of a doll might be metaphorically used to express that Sarah, who is a human being, and so not literally a doll, has an appearance of someone who is sweet, delicate and beautiful.

This metaphorical view presupposes an expansion from the category of DOLL (a toy made of rubber, or ceramic) to the category of DOLL*, which includes both toys and female babies, young girls or young ladies who share with dolls the encyclopaedic property of having pleasant, good appearance.

This can be case of a relative *conventional* metaphor, with relative little processing effort, and relatively limited and predictable effects.

According to Wilson and Carston (2007, p.11), *creative* or *novel* metaphors allow broader interpretation and might ask for a greater effort of memory and imagination, but yielding richer rewards. To illustrate a poetic, creative metaphor, consider the example from S&W (1995, p.237) taken from Flaubert's comment on the poet Leconte de Lisle: 'His ink is pale' to mean that, for example, there is something weak about his poetry and it may not last.

Echoic utterances: Irony

According to S&W (1995, p. 239) the attitude expressed by an ironical utterance of rejection or disapproval. The speaker dissociates himself from the opinion echoed and indicates that he does not hold it himself. Indeed, it may be obvious in the circumstances that he believes the opposite of the opinion echoed. It is possible to use headline **(10)** to illustrate an echoic ironic situation:

(10) a. John: Sarah is a *doll*.

b. Mary: Sarah is a *doll* (sarcastically). And I am Julia Roberts.

From there follows that Mary does not consider Sarah a *doll* (lovely, beautiful). The recovery of this implicature depends on the recognition of the utterance as echoic, on the identification of the source of the opinion echoed, and finally, on the recognition that the speaker's attitude to the opinion echoed is one rejection or dissociation.

Continuum between literal and other lexical uses

The next examples (WILSON AND CARSTON 2007, p. 11) involve a gradient or continuum of cases between literal use, approximation, hyperbole and metaphor:

(11) The film *made me sick*.

Here, depending on the context, the speaker may be interpreted as meaning that he actually vomited (literal), that he felt nauseous and came close to vomiting and in this case the difference from really vomiting does not matter, it is not significant (approximation), and the third interpretation may be that the film induced some mental discomfort, a disgusting feeling, etc. (metaphorical).

Wilson and Carston claim that if their unified account is correct, all the resulting senses are the outcomes of the frequent and widespread application that can be done to a particular lexical item, passing through a single pragmatic process of ad hoc construction.

Of course, not all examples will go through the same continuum process, and there are cases where only literal and metaphor would be enough to confirm the continuum process.

2.2.3.3 Pragmatics Accounts of Metaphor: RT x Grice

How is metaphor understood? This is the task of a pragmatic account of metaphor. According to Wilson and Carston (W&C 2006, p. 1-2) a general goal of pragmatics is to explain how addressees bridge the gap between the encoded linguistic meaning of an utterance and the speaker's meaning. This gap is pervasive in verbal (written) communication, and even more obvious in cases of metaphorical use.

It is a concern of the pragmatic account of metaphor to show how the move from encoded linguistic meaning to metaphorical interpretation is made. However, these pragmatic accounts differ in some points. One of these differences are in their position of how metaphorical use affects the truth-conditional content of utterances. On a Gricean account, for instance, the communicator in metaphor does not 'say' anything but 'makes as if to say' something that is not itself communicated. In this case, the metaphor is only a vehicle for conveying the speaker's implicit meaning or implicatures (W&C 2006, p. 2).

A second difference is whether a literal interpretation is always considered before a metaphorical one (Grice), or if at a certain stage a particular feature associated with the encoded concept may be activated or suppressed. Another difference is whether to treat metaphor as a distinct pragmatic category, or merely as a part of a continuum that includes hyperbole, approximation and other pragmatic phenomena.

Grice opted for distinct treatments when dealing with metaphor, hyperbole and approximation. In contrast, Relevance Theorists have defended a *continuity view*, claiming that there is no clear cut-off point between 'literal' utterances, approximations, hyperboles and metaphors, and so they can be interpreted in the same way.

Nevertheless, since the metaphorical use involves the derivation of 'emergent properties' (not required in non-metaphorical utterances), it is sometimes seen as a challenge to the continuity view. Wilson and Carston argue that the creation of the emergent properties do not ask for any special interpretive mechanism, and is within the parameters of the continuity view defended in relevance theory.

2.2.3.4 The 'emergent' property

The interpretation of metaphorical utterances often results in the attribution of emergent properties, that is, these properties are neither standardly associated with the individual constituents in isolation nor derivable by standard rules of semantic composition (Wilson and Carston, 2006, abstract, S&W, 2006, p 22). Take the example:

(12) For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness.

According to the relevance-theoretic account of metaphor interpretation, **(12)** should be interpreted above similar lines to utterances in general, that is, by designing reference assignment, desambiguation, and so on.

The utterance above is inserted in Obama's speech while taking the presidential oath. Reference Assignment is context dependant: searching for the reference resolution of the indexical 'we', it is possible for the audience to infer from previous reference given in the same speech 'We, the people,' that the speaker is addressing to all North-Americans, including himself.

Following a path of least effort, even if the speaker (Obama) had, for instance, omitted to say moments before 'We, the people' or give any other clue, the audience could have retrieved from background knowledge of Obama's campaign slogan 'Yes, we can,' that:

We= American people

The lexical entry of 'patchwork' becomes a next task for the audience, in order to reach an explicature of the logical form of the utterance:

PATCHWORK (encoded concept): a type of needlework in which many colored squares of cloth are stitched together to make one large piece.

PATCHWORK* (metaphor usage): immigrants of different places compose a nation.

Encyclopedic memory (the United States of America is a very powerful leading country)

Following a path of least effort again, the audience possibly considers that PATCHWORK* might satisfy the expectation of the presumption of relevance in the first assumption 'our PATCHWORK* heritage.' Now, 'our PATCHWORK* heritage' can be explored as a metaphorical expression, and the next enrichment could be inferred as 'nation composed of people from different places of the world received from our ancestors.'

According to Relevance Theory, a completely inferential interpretation could be as such (WILSON & CARSTON 2006, p. 6):

a. Premise: The speaker (Obama) said that 'We know that our PATCHWORK* heritage is a strength, not a weakness.' (where patchwork can be understood in a broader sense, as a metaphor)

b. Contextual premises:

Small pieces of cloth stitched together become a unity (patchwork)

America is a nation composed of immigrants of different places (origins)

A nation composed of immigrants of different origins could be a reason for segregation

Compared to patchwork heritage a nation becomes stronger when composed of single individuals put together

Being composed of immigrants of different places makes a nation strong

c. Implicated Conclusion: Being composed of immigrants of different places makes a nation strong (Strong Implicature)

Another Implicated conclusion (weaker): Through diversity, strength grows

Relevance and communication

The universal cognitive tendency to maximize relevance makes it possible, at least to some extent, to predict and manipulate the mental state of others. Knowing human's tendency to pick out the most relevant stimuli in the environment and process them so as to maximize their relevance, the writer may be able to produce a stimulus which is likely to attract the reader's attention, to prompt the retrieval of certain contextual assumptions and to point him towards an intended conclusion. (W & S 2002a, p.254)

After presenting the Implicature Theory, the Costa's Broadened Model and Relevance Theory, which are the basic references for the analyses in Chapter 3, the Interface Theory is developed in the third section.

The Interdisciplinary part of the Theory of Interfaces relates Linguistic and Journalism in a more general, and external aspects, and could be an introductory overview of the purpose of this study. However, the reason why Costa's theory was placed in the end of the first Chapter can be justified by the fact that it includes the intradisciplinary description in which the internal relations are explained and exemplified with Linguistic elements previously given.

2.3 THEORY OF INTERFACES

The frame where the approximation of systematic fields of knowledge explains the inter/intradisciplinary context is called Theory of Interfaces. The metatheoretical interfaces correspond to the interdisciplinary relations and the theoretical interfaces correspond to the intradisciplinary ones. In this way, Linguistics and Social Communication can have an interdisciplinary relation, or compose an External Interface.

According to the author, language is a pervasive phenomenon in all areas. It is possible to describe Mathematics, Physics, History and other disciplines through human languages.

Dealing with the construction of an Interface Theory, Campos (2007) claims that:

Perhaps an account already organized by the spirit of approximating the systematic knowledge of this century, may clarify the inter/intradisciplinary context. We will call such an account the Theory of Interfaces. The metatheoretical interfaces are constituted of interdisciplinary relations while the theoretical interfaces are constituted of intradisciplinary relations. Thus, Linguistics and Communication, Linguistics and Cognition and Linguistics and Computer Sciences, etc., are metatheoretically brought together – they are the interdisciplinary relations. Analogously, within Linguistics, Phonology, Morphology, Lexicology, Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics come close – these are the intradisciplinary relations. Both are sets of interdependent relations. Interdisciplinarity and intradisciplinarity are construed in a scientifically interactive manner. It is a metascientific strategy that describes and explains how the two sets of relations work and that overcomes the apparent conflict between specific descriptions and general explanations, in the present case, at the level of language. [...] (p. 347).

Costa observes that through interdisciplinarity it is only possible to approach the broad generality of the phenomenon, and that in order to describe the internal constitution there has to be an intradisciplinary relation. Thus, the author exposes what seems to be the essence of what establishes the directions to follow within the Interface Theory.

So, if Linguistics should be inserted in an area of interdisciplinary relations, its object, human language, should be seen as constituted by a set of properties determined by intradisciplinary relations. Indeed, language in its extent, involves cognitive, formal, social and cultural aspects. But in its internal nature, language is

composed of several properties – phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic.

Therefore, in the specific case of this current study, the External Interface approximates two disciplines, for instance, Linguistics and Social Communication (Journalism), and from this encounter a third element may be born, because not everything is compatible. According to Costa (2007), the purpose of this approximation is to investigate common aspects related to both areas, searching for connections that can bring good results for both sides, ending in productive interfaces.

This means that the Interdisciplinary relation is not enough, and in addition the intradisciplinary connections need to be settled. Establishing these connections means that the sub-theories of Linguistics should be related themselves, and at the same time to written Journalism, with its specific development in following the communication theory through written language.

Even if there are many things in common, it is not possible to mingle everything from two disciplines, because there will always be different aspects impossible to match. It is for this reason that only sub-parts from Linguistics will meet sub-parts of Social Communication; otherwise there would be a mismatch between them or even an odd competition of one trying to engulf the other. From Costa's point of view both areas can benefit when approaching two areas in an interface perspective.

For instance, if you choose the area of Linguistics to describe some aspects from Journalism, first of all you will have to select among the sub-areas from Linguistics. After having selected one or more sub-areas that are suitable for your purpose, you will have to define what aspect of Journalism will be the focus of investigation. This kind of study brings the possibility of enrichment in the area of Linguistics not only while checking out the application of a certain theory, but one might learn more about the aspect analyzed in the other field, and, for instance, investing on 'pragmatics in Journalism' could be contributing for both fields.

Costa's Theory of Interfaces clears up S&W's idea in claiming that they would like to pursue the idea of a natural linkage between linguistic form and pragmatic interpretation. It seems Costa has envisaged this link and established these connections as being part of the intradisciplinary studies, accounting for this particular set of relationship. In this way, the internal interfaces may interact in the study of language.

According to S&W, the syntactic (and phonological) organization of an utterance may directly affect the way it is processed and understood. In their opinion, it is puzzling that even seeing the possibility of a natural linkage between linguistic form and pragmatic interpretation, so many authors interpose intermediate levels of semantic and pragmatic description to link artificially, what could be naturally linked. Sperber and Wilson follow the idea of a natural linkage between linguistic and pragmatic interpretation and explain how it works within the framework of relevance theory (S&W 1995, p. 204- 205).

Thus, S&W develop their idea of this natural linkage based once more on the most economical way of processing an utterance. As an utterance is produced and processed over time, the hearer will access some of its constituent concepts, with the associated logical and encyclopaedic entries, before others. While aiming at optimal relevance, the speaker might phrase an utterance in a way that facilitates early and correct disambiguation.

So, there must be a process which can be followed by the hearer/reader in order to achieve this 'quick' interpretation, and this parsing or process is an explanatory suggestion.

Parsing may be seen as a top-down process: the hearer constructs anticipatory hypotheses about the overall structure of the utterance on the basis of what he heard. In S&W's words (Relevance, 1995 p. 205):

He might not only identify each word and tentatively assign it to a syntactic category, but use this knowledge of this lexical properties and syntactic co-occurrence restrictions to predict the syntactic categories of following word or phrases. The experimental literature on disambiguation suggests that disambiguation and reference assignment may also go through the same process, that is, the hearer makes anticipatory hypotheses about the overall logical structure of the utterance and resolves potential ambiguities and ambivalences.

Thus, the suggestion is that there is a way of constructing anticipatory logical hypotheses on the basis of the anticipatory syntactic hypotheses whose role in comprehension seems fairly well established.

Headline **(13)** gives an illustration of part of this linkage:

(13) Obama: Race not 'overriding issue' in criticism

(CNN – September 18, 2009)

Newspaper headlines present in general a fragmentary grammatical resolution, and in the process of its recovery the syntactic interface takes place.

The syntactic complementation here may be such as:

(13a) Obama said that race is not an overriding issue in criticism.

Assuming that the reader sees the word ‘Obama,’ then he easily accesses the referent for Obama as ‘the current president of the United States.’ On assigning ‘Obama’ to the syntactic category NP, he makes an anticipatory syntactic hypothesis that this referent should be followed by a VP, which probably yields by substitution of the colon (:):

Obama said something.

The lexical entry of the verb ‘said’ which is transitive will allow the reader to go on then with the anticipatory syntactic hypothesis that ‘race is not an overriding issue’ complements the need of the transitive verb said.

Completing all the syntactic labels would result in a propositional representation carrying the information that Obama said that race is not an overriding issue in criticism.

Therefore, through this approach it is possible to notice where the logical category labels correspond, and that they are semantic interpretations of syntactic category labels of natural language. (S&W, *Relevance*, 1995, p206)

Consequently, the reader who made the anticipatory syntactic hypothesis that *Obama said* will be followed by an NP, can interpret semantically this anticipatory syntactic hypothesis derive the anticipatory logical hypothesis that *Obama said something*. These procedures play a crucial role in disambiguation and reference assignment.

But even after the syntactic complementation, there are many other procedures to recover the meaning of the utterance. If it is commonsense that sometimes ordinary conversation people come across with some ambiguous lexical items, let alone in a headline with empty syntactic categories.

The word 'race' might be ambiguous in certain circumstances as it has more than one encoded concept, but curiously, when found in utterance **(13)** it could become striking for some readers due to the fact that at the same time that Obama is being criticized for his governing style, he is overtly involved on intervention in the race for New York governor, as shown in utterance **(14)** below:

(14) White House Takes Aggressive Role in State Races

(The New York Times - September 22, 2009)

So, going through disambiguation process of **(13)** would involve two of the encoded concepts of 'race':

Race¹ - People: division according to the color of their skin

Race² - any contest or competition, especially to achieve superiority: the governor race; the presidential race.

The reader who has access to the encyclopedic entries of Race¹ and Race² can disambiguate the lexical 'race' when considering contextual assumptions to interpret **(13)**:

- Obama is the current president
- Race is not about a presidential dispute
- Obama is a black man

The reader (so far) accepts Race¹ as more relevant for the interpretation process.

However, from all these Linguistics sub-areas, Pragmatics (the study of language in use) is the one dedicated to the study of the relations among language, context and inference. So, even considering all the sub-areas already mentioned, it is natural to elect the Semantic/Pragmatic as the chief, or the most adequate sub-area to carry out the interpretation of what is communicated through journalistic (texts) utterances and political speeches.

The next subsections describe Semantics and Pragmatics separately, to highlight their close connection and justify why they should be focused together in the analyses of the utterances.

Continuing with **(13)**, and complementing it with the idea of the Interface Theory (Costa), in accordance with Relevance Theory approach, we continue the interpretation process:

After the recovery of the empty syntactic categories, **(13)** was recovered as **(13a)** 'Obama said that race is not an overriding issue in criticism.' Then, there was the disambiguation process which was focused on the ambiguous word 'race' within the utterance.

Possible calculation leading to an explicature:

- Racism plays a role in some of the criticism against Obama.

Reader's inference: And yet Obama said racism is not the main reason of criticism

Explicature: **(13b)** Obama believes that being an African American is not a relevant reason of the criticism on his government.

This kind of utterance with a negative assertion might raise a relevant question (S&W, Relevance, p.207) as 'What is an overriding issue in criticism?' This question alone could lead the reader to the text, accomplishing the role of the headline of attracting the reader to the text.

Different possibilities of interpretation may rise then. For instance, Obama's pictures representing 'Obama Nazi' were displayed through fliers and other vehicles, as in the Los Angeles Times (August 6, 2009). So these assumptions together may convey to the implicated conclusion that:

Implicature:

(13c) Besides from Obama's African American origin there are other stronger reasons to criticize him.

The excerpt from actual text would confirm that the inferential calculation process possibly developed by the reader was going in the right direction, following a path of less effort to achieve a positive cognitive effect and the communication process would be successful:

In an interview with CNN's John King airing on "State of the Union with John King" this Sunday, Obama acknowledged that racism plays a role in some of the criticism against him, but added that race is "not the overriding issue."

After the explanatory considerations supported by Costa's Interface theory within the interdisciplinary connections between Linguistics and Journalism, and with the theoretical demonstration of how one discipline can describe aspects of the other through an intradisciplinary relation, Chapter 2 is introduced where the second discipline Social Communication is narrowed to some aspects of Journalism practice, namely written press, and more specifically with the definition of Headlines, Leads and comments on Images that are considered part of the journalistic attractive devices for the audience.

3 JOURNALISM

According to Teun Van Dijk (1996, p.17), the description of news in the media implies three concepts:

1. New information about success, objects or people.
2. A kind of (TV or Radio) program in which journalistic issues are presented.

An item or journalistic information, as a text or discourse (on radio or TV) or in the press, in which new information about recent successes are offered.⁴

3.1 HEADLINES

The headline is a unique type of text. Following some rules that specifically dictates its shape, content and structure, it operates within a range of restrictions that limit the freedom of the writer (REAH 1998, 2004, p. 13). For instance, the space the headline occupies is in general dictated by the layout of the page, and the size of the typeface is similarly restricted. The headline, is rarely written by the reporter who wrote the news story, and so it is a task left for the copy-desk or editor.

Theoretically, the headline should encapsulate the story in a minimum number of words, attract the reader to the story, and if it shown on the front page, attract the reader to the paper.

Newspaper, or on-line news, are ephemeral texts, intended only for the day they are delivering the news. They cater for a wide range of readers with various different needs and interests. Within the readers, some of them may read the paper thoroughly, others skip certain sections, or only one section. And this moves also may change in readers depending on each daily news or private choices.

So the encapsulated story exposed through headlines give the reader the overall picture of the current news (headline content) its relative importance (visual impact and position in the paper), and classification (e.g. sports, political, finance, etc.). From this exposure the reader can skim the headlines and have an outline of the news of the day, and an idea of its impact and importance.

⁴ This News definition was translated from Spanish to English by the author of this dissertation.

However, with all these mixed functions, rules and aims, headlines present a problem, that is, in their attempt to attract readers they also can be ambiguous or confusing. In order to solve this problem, headline writers use linguistic and graphological devices to create effective headlines.

Language and structure of headlines

Headlines writers developed a vocabulary to fulfill the requirements of the headline, using in general words that are short, attention-getting and effective, such as ‘rapping, slamming, probing, and blasting.’ Many of the words that are typical of headlines, are probably not easily found outside these texts.

In addition, headlines writers use a range of language devices to make their headlines memorable and striking (REAH 1998, 2004, p. 17)

- *Word and meaning*: Potential for ambiguity that can exist in the relationship between word and meaning. Note Reah’s example: **(15)** More water money goes **down the drain**. (she considers that water literally goes down the drain, but this expression can be metaphorical meaning ‘was wasted.’)
- *Intertextuality*: familiar phrases and sayings that might come from popular song, book titles, etc. For instance: **(16)** Is Camelot’s future in Obama’s hands? The word ‘Camelot’ was taken from a Broadway show.

Lexical word x Grammatical Words

As space is limited, lexical words (words that have meanings, as nouns, main verbs, adjectives, etc.) are more useful than grammatical words (e.g. determiners as ‘a’, ‘the’, ‘this’, and auxiliary verbs as ‘be’, ‘have’, ‘do’). For this reason, there might be involuntary ambiguity, as many lexical words depend on grammatical words to establish what word class they are (REAH 1988, 2004:19). Note the example already exemplified:

(13) Obama: Race not ‘overriding issue’ in criticism

How the writer reorganize language

In order to yield punchy, economical texts, the headline writer moves around the standard order of words and phrases. (REAH 1998, p. 20)

Opinion Manipulators

Headlines have a persuasive function designed to attract the attention of the reader and interest him in reading the subsequent story. But besides from being persuasive, they can be written to influence the opinion of the reader. Headline can represent this type of headline:

(17) Obama's Popularity Doesn't Mean Much Abroad

*As ever, countries have interests, not friends.
(The Wall Street Journal – April 18, 2009)*

The focus of the story is Obama, and there is a clear interest of the headline to underestimate Obama's prestige outside the country (U.S.A.). As if the headline could be influencing the reader saying 'See, the guy is not so worshiped after all'.

According to Reah (1998, 2004:31) the headlines give the story from a range of apparently different perspectives. For instance, in reading a type of headline such as:

(18) It's do or die for McCain in last debate with Obama, experts say

(Daily News – October 15 2008)

It is easy for the reader to forget, or fail to recognize that the actual perspective is that of the newspaper. They could just consider the perspective of the 'experts' opinion, for example. Moreover, the addressee is assumed to share the perspective that the news offer, which could be in the example above something as 'McCain is in a hard position'. However, the reader may not share this perspective, but still the headline keeps the perspective of addressing to an imaginary receptive reader (who would share the same point of view), and this can be part of the manipulating strategy.

These concepts are seen from a journalistic perspective, and considered part of the general guidelines followed by professional journalists in their daily creative labor

of writing newspaper headlines. The next subsection presents an analysis of headlines in the frame of a Relevance Theory.

Headline and Lead

According to Van Dijk, the *headline* and *lead* are used to global understanding and to summarize the text.

When defining *news* texts, Van Dijk refers to the semantic notion of *local coherence*, meaning that the proposition of texts are linked by relations of time, conditions, cause and consequence. Maybe recalling Grice, Van Dijk reports the difference between sentence meaning from speaker's meaning. If headlines and leads can be called scripts,

Our shared, social knowledge of such scripts provides the numerous missing links between the concepts and propositions of the text, which is, so to speak, a semantic iceberg of which only the tip is actually expressed, whereas the other information is presupposed to be known by the readers.
(VAN DIJK, 1977)

Journalistic Images

News is often composed of the combination of the headline, lead (optional) and text plus image which combined interact in the communication process. Within the frame of the Relevance Theory unified account it is possible to consider that the same process taken to interpret the linguistic input (utterances), can also be applied to interpret the visual input (e.g. an image, a picture).

An image may be an input of immediate comprehension, but it may also be considered as a text (because it can be described) allowing less time in reading than the one required by the written text (SILVEIRA, 2005). Following S&W(1995), Silveira (2005) refers to a visual image as something visually and inferentially processed to be understood, in a cognitive-theoretical communication approach.

3.2 HEADLINES AND RELEVANCE THEORY

As already mentioned before, the priority of this illustration work is to observe if the interpretation of news headlines can be adequately molded in relevance

theoretical frames. The following sub-sections focus on two previous works analyzing headlines through the Relevance Theory, and for this reason they bring an important reference to the kind of theoretical investigation proposed in this dissertation.

3.2.1 Headlines as Relevance Optimizers

Couched within Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory, Dor (2003) suggested an explanatory characterization of the communicative function of newspaper headlines, stating that they are designed to *optimize the relevance* of their stories for the readers. According to Dor, the regular explanation found in literature has been the description of different types of headlines and assign them different types of communicative functions.

Dor (2003, p. 696) provides a functional definition of newspaper headlines which attempts to transcend all the distinctions, and relies on Sperber and Wilson's principle of relevance stating that 'Newspaper headlines are relevance optimizers: They are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers.'

The functional definition above presents the headline role as a textual negotiator between the story and its readers. Furthermore, it reduces the differences between the types of headlines, in the sense that all different types have the same functional goal, that of relevance optimization.

The multiple types and functions of headlines

Following Van Dijk (1988), Dor asserts that newspaper headlines have been functionally characterized as short, telegram-like *summaries* of their news items. Also, many of these headlines have a Lead, which can be marked off in special printing type or not. Together they precede the rest of the news and their structural function is to express the major topics of the text, as an initial summary.

According to Dor, this is a narrow conception, mainly in quality newspapers, headlines do not always summarize their stories. Some headlines *highlight* a detail of the story, others contain a *quotation* chosen to the foreground. And sometimes headlines contain issues that do not appear in the news stories (Bell, 1991; Nir, 1993).

Relevance and headline writing

Professional knowledge about 'appropriate' or 'good' headline is rather practical than theoretical. Instead of a more explicit definition of headlines, they follow a group of intuitions resulted from experience. The intuitive professional imperatives shared by news-editors and copy-editors which dictates the choice of headlines for specific stories can be summarized to: *Make the headline such that it renders the story optimally-relevant for the readers.*

Dor worked as a senior news-editor (1996-1998) and conducted an empirical study in the news-desk of the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv*. From this experience, he outlined the following properties of the '*appropriate headlines*' (p708-716):

- [1] Be as short as possible
- [2] Be clear, easy to understand, and unambiguous
- [3] Be interesting
- [4] Contain new information
- [5] Not presuppose information unknown to the readers
- [6] Include names and concepts with high 'news values' for the readers
- [7] Not contain names and concepts with low 'news values' for the readers
- [8] 'Connect' the story to previously known facts and events
- [9] 'Connect' the story to prior expectations and assumptions
- [10] 'Frame' the story in an appropriate fashion

Dor points out that each of these properties is reducible to a relevance-oriented strategy:

- Headlines can optimize relevance by requiring the *minimal amount of processing effort* by being short, clear, unambiguous and easy to read.
- Headlines can optimize relevance by carrying the *maximal amount of contextual effects* by being interesting and knew.
- Headlines can optimize relevance by making sure that readers construct *the right context for interpretation*, and making sure that their content is compatible with that context, by following items [5]-[10].

In addition, Dor claims that headlines do not achieve these criteria at once, and it is part of the copy-editor and news-editor construction, which takes some time in arranging and rearranging the headline until it fulfills the maximal number of the above conditions. The resulting headline will then provide the reader with the *optimal ratio* (my emphasis) between contextual effect and processing effort.

Thus, for the optimization of relevance to be successful, the right material should be chosen for the story. Considering the scenario where John Kennedy Jr., his wife and sister-in-law were found dead 10 kilometers away from Martha's Vineyard Island, and then comparing the headline from the newspaper Ma'ariv:

(19) 'John Kennedy Jr.'s body found' ,to other alternatives as

(a) 'Caroline Kennedy's (John Junior's wife) body found'

(b) 'Sen. Edward Kennedy arrived at the crash site'

(a) and (b) are as not more difficult to read then the actual one, however thy do not carry the same contextual effects as the original.

According to Dor, there is a better function of the newspaper headline, characterized as a relevance-based *selection* mechanism which goes beyond the semantic-referential function of the headline to attract the attention of the reader and induce him read the whole story.

The fact that readers do not always read the whole story, and most readers spend more time scanning the headlines then reading their stories allows the assumption that this reading pattern manifested by scanning readers is exactly what the headline is supposed to achieve (DOR 2003, p. 718).

The characterization of the headline as relevance optimizer means that when finishing reading a headline the ordinary reader had *already* received the optimal amount of relevance for its story. Thus, going on through the whole text would bring a gradual *reduction* of the relevance of the story to the reader.

Nevertheless, the author complements this point of view, stating that readers who go on reading the story are part of a second type of readers who spends an extra effort even if the contextual effects would does not justify it, for instance, avid readers.

3.2.2 Ad hoc concepts in ad hoc contexts

Also focused on newspaper headlines interpretation using the framework of Relevance Theory, Infantidou (2009) suggests that reader selects headlines guided by expectations of relevance and interpret them by creating ad hoc concepts (occasion-specific) and ad hoc contexts in an attempt to optimally ration processing effort with cognitive effects.

Infantidou questions Dor's above properties, with the exception of [3], as whether they can safely give rise to effective headlines from the reader's point of view. A headline can be interesting regardless of being short (5-6 words) or long (9-10 words), or information conveyed. For instance, quotation headlines may sacrifice short length at the expense of specific information:

(20) Obama's a genius - just like those villains in the Bond
Movies.

(Fox News Blogs – February 18, 2009)

A wide range of affirmative headlines may be intriguing by violating rather than complying with properties [1-10]. Moreover, they may contain semantically underdetermined information by being vague and obscure in various degrees. As Infantidou states, 'Headlines writers often violate property [2] to create memorable headlines by being purposely ambiguous, and hence less clear and less easy to understand.' (2008, p. 701)

Infantidou (2009, p. 702) affirms that effective headlines may really aim at triggering the reader's optional ratio between contextual effect and processing effort, although not through the way outlined by Dor. It might occur that the 'easy to read' headlines are not intriguing or interesting enough.

Infantidou agrees with Dor's observation about scanning headline readers, which reinforces the 'autonomous-text' idea of headline adopted in her work. But on the other hand, it makes question Dor's affirmation about the role of headline as textual negotiator between the story and its readers.

The perspective Infantidou adopted was to change the emphasis from mediating between story and reader, to reader-effective headlines and the role of inference in headline interpretation. Infantidou claims that they are both related because a definition of reader-effective headline is one where inference has a key-role to play.

An empirical study was used to observe reader's intuitive reaction to pre-selected headlines and the reader's own corpus of headlines to provide a descriptive account of 'effective' headlines from their point of view and to give *an account of the highly inferential process required for headline interpretation* (author's emphasis).

Following the relevance-theoretic unitary approach to lexical pragmatics (WILSON AND CARSTON 2007), the headlines were analyzed as fragmented meanings requiring the construction of *ad-hoc concepts*, or occasion-specific senses, in *ad hoc contexts* created by the encoded concepts and pragmatics expectations together.

When designing headlines, the clash between 'clarity + information' and 'brevity + vagueness + curiosity' generates a dilemma and when having to decide whether information is to be explicated or should be inferentially retrieved, both run parallel to a number of related issues (INFANTIDOU, 2009, p. 703)

In Journalism literature, far from addressing the issue of pragmatic inference in headline interpretation, ambiguity and implicit meaning have been considered 'confusing' and 'problem raising' (REAH 1998, p.13)

Infantidou's study views headlines as a type of linguistically *underdetermined* meaning, where the linguistically encoded meaning may underdetermine (not fully determine) the proposition a writer expresses by a particular linguistic string. Semantic underdeterminacies may include (from CARSTON 2002, p. 28):

(a) multiple encodings (i.e. ambiguities)

(e.g. scope ambiguity: *Everyone isn't hungry* [not everyone] or [no one])

(b) missing constituents:

(e.g. *He is too young* [for what?])

(c) underspecificity or weakness of encoded conceptual content

(e.g. *Ann wants to meet a bachelor* [BACHELOR* narrowed to a particular subset: heterosexual, youngish, single, etc.]

This illustration used by Infantidou is related to enrichment processes which are frequently done in particular discourse contexts and were discussed in Wilson and Carston's paper (2007). What differentiates ordinary cases of pragmatically fine-tuning the meanings of words in context from headlines is that the contextual information may be rudimentary in the latter. Take the example:

(21) Enough With the 100 Days Already

(The New York Times - May 2, 2009)

[With respect to what? Although the text is related to Obama's government, and comments that some are already criticizing him, there is no clear reference to the president, or to what would be the criticism about]

According to Infantidou (2009, p. 717), headline interpretation involves similar lexical adjustment processes of narrowing and broadening from Wilson and Carston (2007, p 231) with the difference that contextual information is often impoverished for readers to rely on a combination of encoded meaning and background knowledge, assumptions, an interests to retrieve a plausible and relevant interpretation.

Elliptical semantic content and fragmented or vastly underspecified discourse context in headlines ask for a radical inferential lexical adjustment process for addressees to retrieve the proposition expressed, additional explicatures or any contextual implications conveyed.

3.2.3 Comments on Dor and Infantidou's concepts of headlines

Infantidou's conception of ad hoc contexts used in headlines comes from the assumption that contextual information may be rudimentary, for instance, elliptical and unspecified, and headlines are interpreted in the absence of discourse context (2009, p.704).

Nevertheless, that is not necessarily so. Unlike the author asserts, not all headlines are completely disconnected to previous background knowledge, as it is shown in this dissertation study. It may be true that headlines do present ambiguous, elliptical and unspecified elements. And it is also true that the reader cannot count on the previous utterance that could be part of the context, but as S&W (1995, p. 15) claim, a context is not limited to information about the immediately preceding utterances, and general cultural assumptions *inter alia*, may play a role in interpretation.

One can say that in the case of this study, where the subjects are undoubtedly familiar references for Americans, it is plausible for the reader to achieve a

psychological construct with his assumptions about Obama and McCain. That is, the context is not so impoverished that the reader has to construct an ad hoc context. There is old information possible to interact with new information.

Another aspect Infantidou concludes that headlines are autonomous texts instead of being a tool to attract readers to the text, as seen in traditional Journalism. Also in Dor's opinion, headline are relevance-optimizers, what means that after reading a headline an ordinary reader has already received the optimal amount of relevance for its story. For other readers, the headline may serve as selection-device directing to the stories that may justify the investment of additional effort in search of further cognitive effects. (DOR 2003, p. 718-719)

It may be true that there are scanning readers who do not spend their time going further than checking headlines, but stating that headlines are autonomous texts or that they are relevance optimizers in the sense that reading beyond the headline would be a process of gradual reduction (DOR 2003, p. 718) of the relevance is somehow a reductionist view about the press function. What would be the sense of the media press, then?

Maybe there is the possibility to consider that headlines as utterances are relevance optimizers, they are inferentially processed, they yield implicatures, but these implicatures may be not enough to satisfy the reader. From headline reading there can be an ongoing process. Thus, engaged in further complementary reading directed by the search of relevance, the reader invests some more cognitive effort looking forward to obtain more cognitive effects.

4 ANALYSES

The analyses of the *corpus* are based on the Theory of Interfaces (COSTA, 2007) through the intradisciplinary perspective applying the theories described in Chapter 1, which are based on an inferential approach. Illustrating Grice and Costa's broadened model, the main focus stands on Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, which seems to have a plausible account of the journalistic online news dynamics used in written texts to attract the addressee and communicate the intended message.

As headlines and leads summarize the text (VAN DIJK 1977), attract attention to the full-text newspaper article (REAH 1988). Some of the interpretations also focus on images, which communicate immediately (SILVEIRA, 2005), and the combination of these three inputs play the role of 'capturing' the reader's attention. Thus, the development of the interpretation on this study is restricted to these three kinds of text considered as important ostensive-stimuli. The analyses include, when necessary, excerpts from further story text in order to reinforce and corroborate the reasoning followed in interpreting the *corpus*.

It is important to mention that the illustrations are taken as a possible way of developing an interpretation, as other interpretations could also be considered, depending on individual's perceptual skills and world knowledge (S&W 1995, p. 16).

The headlines, and complementary corpus references are annexed with their electronic links. In the Annexes they were kept in their original printing type to reinforce the idea that highlighting is part of their ostensive stimuli.

4.1 ANALYZING HEADLINES (AND LEADS)

The headlines and leads are displayed in order according to their dates corresponding to the 2008 presidential pre and post election period.

4.1.1 Obama

On this section headlines and some leads (not always included) are analyzed. They were chosen in two different periods, pre-election and the period after Obama was elected the president of the United States, in 2008.

Presidential Pre-election period:

Headline:

(22) Obama's crime? Acting too presidential

Lead: So the pundits' verdict is in: Obama is too confident. It all would be funny if many people didn't seem to be inhaling this multimedia stink bomb as if it were fragrant truth.

(Los Angeles Times - August 04, 2008)

Trying to accomplish the designated role of relevance optimizers, headlines are different from journalistic text, as they frequently present a syntactically incomplete form, and the empty syntactic categories can be recovered:

Obama's crime?

Syntactic enrichment: What is Obama's crime?

Acting too presidential.

Syntactic enrichment: He (Obama) is acting too presidential.

The anticipatory syntactic hypotheses are linked to the pragmatic processes which follow from the syntactic adjustment. (S&W 1995, p. 204-205)

PRAGMATIC PROCESSES: Following Sperber & Wilson, this headline presents an ostensive-stimulus in the question form 'Obama's crime?' which may catch immediately the audience's attention, who are led by the curiosity of relating the lexical 'crime' to Obama's name, since he was a presidential candidate at the current time.

According to the authors, the pragmatic procedure will need to be developed starting with an enrichment process. First of all, the referent Obama is already known as a presidential candidate, and Obama is a kind of celebrity, so there is no problem in reference assignment, rather, the referent himself may already be an ostensive stimulus for the reader.

Another initial procedure is disambiguation, since the lexical entry of 'crime' may lead to the interpretation of the semantic *encoded meaning*, defining crime as 'illegal activities in general.' The other possibility, would be another common usage of the word, used to say that you think something is quite absurd or a pity, as for instance, '*It is a crime to waste all that good food*'. Thus, the reader may interpret that

it is a kind of wrong attitude and a pity that Obama was acting as if he were the president before being elected.

Choosing it as an appropriate lexical expression for this situation, 'hasty attitude' may fulfill the expectations of disambiguation solution for the question 'Obama's crime', and it might be enough satisfactory after going through the answer of this question in the same headline 'Acting too presidential', if the reader is following a path of least effort (in which no one would consider the possibility of linking 'too presidential' to someone dishonest) would interpret that presidential is everything concerning to a president, so the development of the logical form could be:

Explicature (Communicated assumptions which are developments from a logical form encoded by an utterance):

Obama's hasty attitude is that he is already acting as if he were a president.

In addition, we can say that from the answer 'Acting too presidential' it is possible to consider that the choice of the word 'crime' involves *lexical narrowing*, that is, it involves the use of a more specific sense than the encoded one, with a more restricted denotation, in an ad hoc content (or occasion-specific sense) built, as for instance, restricting 'crime' to denote 'hasty attitude' only related to a kind of 'a too much self-confident' attitude, for someone who is not even the president yet. After conquering a dignified image through a correct campaign, his attitude could be interpreted a case of haste, and considered a pity.

Possible implicature considering explicature and contextual assumptions would be:

Implicature: Obama is arrogant.

GRICE'S VIEW: According to Grice, the literal interpretation 'Obama's crime. Acting too presidential' would be considered blatantly false (considering background knowledge about Obama), the lexical entry of the 'word' crime could not be literal, since it does not make any sense to accept that having a presidential characteristic means being a criminal, and that is what a literal information may suggest. So, in this case, violating the Quality Maxim (Do not say what you believe to be false), an implicature can be generated:

What is said: **(22)** Obama's crime? Acting too presidential.

Context: (mutually known) Obama is a presidential candidate.

Implicature: Obama is arrogant⁵.

Although S&W and Grice's conductive processes may differ in some aspects, the inferences of **(22)** might lead to the same conclusion, what shows the compatibility of both theories.

Pos-election period:

(23) Obama wins election; McCain loses as Bush legacy is rejected.

(New York Times – November 4, 2008)

This headline can be considered a relevance optimizer, as stated by Dor (2003, p. as an autonomous text for the audience just for the initial information that can be complemented 'Obama wins, McCain loses.' From there further cognitive effects may result in the sense that it is confirmed that Obama is the first African American chief executive, and McCain was defeated. The complementary information that McCain loses because he represented Bush Legacy, adds to the communicator's informative intention also his opinion about the reason why McCain did not win.

The next illustration is an outline of how the reader might use the relevance – theoretic comprehension procedure to construct hypotheses about the explicature and implicature, represented in a step by step description of the pragmatic processes to understand headline **(23)**:

- a. The writer has uttered the headline with logical form: Obama wins election and McCain loses as Bush legacy is rejected (*Output of linguistic decoding accepted as an explicature*)
- b. The writer's utterance is optimally relevant to readers. (*acceptance of the presumption of relevance it conveys*)

⁵ This conclusion was purposely taken from one of the communicator's further utterances to headline (22), and is included in the Annexes.

- c. The headline writer's utterance will achieve relevance by explaining why Obama won and McCain lost election (*expectation of relevance created by the ostensive stimulus using together both presidential candidates names and the name of the current president at that time*)
- d. Obama wins election in the United States and McCain loses as Bush legacy is rejected (*first accessible enrichment*)
- e. Representing Bush republican party, McCain loses the United States presidential election as Bush legacy is rejected (*first accessible assumption accepted as an implicit premise*)
- f. Obama represents the democrat party (*from background knowledge, on accepted as an implicit premise, which together with c and d might satisfy expectation of relevance*)
- g. Obama's policy is accepted, McCain's is rejected (*inferred from c, d, and e as an implicature*)
- h. Obama is the next president of the United States (*implicature inferred from c and e partially satisfying expectation of relevance*).

In this description it would be possible to infer extra implicatures, but what is important here is to remind that these steps are not to be considered as sequential. In fact, the interpretive hypothesis of explicit and implicit derivations are made on-line and adjusted in parallel (W&S 2002a, p. 263). Furthermore, the partial satisfaction raised by headline **(23)** may guide the reader to the story text who might invest extra effort in search of more cognitive effects.

Taking again headline (6):

(6) Obama wins

(Press-Telegram – November 5, 2008)

Logical form: Obama wins

Pragmatic development of the logical form (CARSTON 2003, p. 5)

Obama wins [what?] [where?]

Contextually supplied constituents appears in the explicature (free enrichment):

Explicature: Obama wins the 2008 presidential election in the United States of America

Implicated Premise: If someone wins the presidential election he becomes a president of the country

Implicated conclusion: Obama is the next president of the U.S.A.

According to Relevance Theory, the logical form 'Obama wins' has to be interpreted in order of accessibility, following a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects (W&S 2002a, p. 258). The interpretive hypothesis are made on-line and in parallel, which means that the reasoning involved in going through the mechanisms of constructing hypothesis does not request a step by step sequence from premises to conclusion. However, following Wilson and Sperber's model (2002a, p.261-263) it is possible to illustrate a non-demonstrative inference process which represents the construction of hypotheses about the writer's meaning.

The table below outlines how a reader might use the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure to construct hypothesis about the explicatures and implicatures of the writer's utterance. The reader's interpretive hypotheses are on the left, and his basis for arriving at them are on the right (W&S 2002a, p. 261-262):

(6) Obama Wins

a) Obama wins the 2008 presidential election of the United States of America Obama= presidential candidate for 2008 election	Embedding of the logical form of writer's utterance allows first enrichment of the logical form and accepted as an explicature
---	--

(b) The utterance will be optimally relevant to the reader	Expectation raised by recognition of the writer's ostensive behavior and acceptance of the presumption of relevance it conveys
(c) Who wins the election becomes the president elected and after a certain period takes oath and becomes the president (of USA)	First assumption to occur to the reader, which can be accepted as an implicit premise of the writer's utterance.
(d) Obama is now the new president elected.	Inferred from (c) and accepted as an implicit conclusion
(e) Obama's campaign was better than McCain's	Inferred from (a) and (d) together plus background knowledge about the presidential race and accepted as a weak implicature, which together with (d) satisfies expectation (b)

This is a simplified schematic outline of the comprehension process, where explicature and implicatures (implicit premise and conclusions) are arrived at by mutual parallel adjustment, and hypotheses about them were considered in order of accessibility. In other words, the tentative hypotheses about explicatures, implicated premises and implicated conclusions are mutually adjusted in order to satisfy the expectations of relevance raised by the utterance (S&W 2005, p. 370).

The next headline involves a metaphorical interpretation and is framed on the relevance theoretical unified account (WILSON AND CARSTON, 2007) of utterances interpretation:

(24) Obama elected President as racial barrier falls

(The New York Times – 05/11/2008)

Syntactic complementation:

Obama is elected as President as racial barrier falls.

Relevance Theory states that the recovery of the explicit content of an utterance (as disambiguation and reference assignment) is also considered inferential, differing from Grice's approach who thought of them as determined by sentence meaning, and contextual factors alone without reference to pragmatic principles. That is, the comprehension procedure is the same to the resolution of linguistic underdeterminacies (not fully determined) at both explicit and implicit level, following a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects (WILSON AND SPERBER 2002a, p.260-261).

Thus, following the sub-tasks in the comprehension process, the hearer constructs an hypothesis about explicit content, via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.

Reference resolution: In this case there is mutual knowledge, from writer and speaker, that the U.S.A. president elected Barack Hussein Obama, who is an African American, and frequently referred to as Obama, and here there is a first sign of evidence that the communicator is following a path of least effort to define the referent.

Although barrier has more than one encoded meaning, as described below:

Barrier

- 1- A type of a fence or gate that prevents people from moving in a particular direction.
- 2- A rule, problem etc that prevents people from doing something, or limits what they can do (more psychological view).

The lexical entry of 'racial' would prevent the disambiguation sub-task, because in this case it is inserted in the lexical combination of 'racial barrier' the sense that 'barrier' is being considered in a psychological view. (W&S 2002a, p. 260)

Following a path of least effort, summing up, a possible **explicature** would be:
Obama is elected the president of the United States because racial barrier falls.
Considering the **contextual assumption** (from encyclopedic memory):

- North-Americans were considered racist
- An African American has never been elected as president of the country

The unitary approach adopted by RT would take the lexical entries of 'barrier falls,' and in appropriate circumstances, would be considered as a literal interpretation. For instance, if a concrete wall is constructed to contain the flooding and suddenly falls, as it was the case of Katrina hurricane in New Orleans, 'barrier falls' would be literally 'a concrete wall that was knocked down because of weather conditions'.

Nevertheless, the particular set of encyclopedic assumptions (WILSON AND CARSTON 2007, p. 30) above and the lexical entry of 'racial' changes the direction of the interpretation into a metaphorical extension, where the reader may infer with a little bit of imagination that racial 'barrier falls' means 'prejudice collapses'. This metaphor usage is a conventional, with little processing effort and the **implicated conclusion** would be such as:

Obama has changed the course of the American History

RT treats metaphor interpretation like other utterance interpretation in general as guided by expectations of relevance, with the same mechanism used in interpretation.

Corroborating the continuum process

As claimed by Wilson and Carston (2007) that if their unified account is correct, all the senses of a lexical item are the outcomes of the frequent and widespread application that can be done passing through a single pragmatic process of ad hoc construction.

Headline **(25)** in appropriate circumstances can have different senses, passing from literal to metaphor use, and would be enough to confirm the continuum process. Take the example:

(25) Mr. Obama and the neighborhood

(New York Times 18/4/2009)

The linguistically encoded meaning of the lexical item 'neighborhood' is the concept which denotes a small area or town, or the people living around there. So, from background knowledge and context the reader would take from granted that the 'neighborhood' of president means the surroundings to the White House, and that

Obama is the current president of the United States. From there, the expectations of relevance would be linked to literal interpretation.

Now, if taking the same headline in the construction of a different context, as the one actually developed by the news and found right from the beginning of the news text, the reader would need to make a shift from the encoded concept of 'neighborhood' to interpret metaphorically (S&W 2006, p. 20) as *Latin America*.

As asserted by S&W (2006, p. 18) more important than the lack of clear boundaries, is the fact that the same inferential procedure is used in interpreting these different types of utterances.

With the next headline, it could be asserted that headline writers are intuitively following the idea of balancing cost and benefit. Headline **(26)** seems to show a *relevance* principle of economy in the lexical choice of the headline writers and illustrates a similar example to Reah's claim that 'words such as 'rapping, slamming' (see this work, p. 56) to function as attention-getting and be effective, are typical of headlines, and probably not easily found outside of these texts.'

Note the example:

(26) Obama's latest challenge: The *graying* of a President

(Daily News – June 17, 2009)

The word 'graying' is an example of an attention-getting and it seems more effective and shorter than saying that 'the president's hair is becoming gray.' So there is an agreement with W&S's (2002a, p. 252) claim that RELEVANCE may be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort: 'other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.'

The next section includes the illustration of some images to the interpretation of headlines and leads, and the purpose is to investigate if the visual image is directed under the same unified approach (WILSON AND CARSTON 2007) stated by RT. Another interest is to observe media's communicative intention evolved since Obama became the president of the United States.

4.1.2 Verbal and Visual Inputs

Taking headline **(16)** again for analysis:

(16) Is Camelot's future in Obama's hands?
(CNN August 26, 2009)

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Sen. Ted Kennedy's son Patrick has kept low profile in Congress

Community service is the bedrock of Kennedy legacy

President Obama similar to Kennedys in political focus, experts say

Sen. Kennedy was early endorser of Obama's presidential bid

CNN



Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy meets with President Obama in March 2009.

Explicitly providing context with the 'story highlights' it looks like the writer has prepared a calculation process to lead the reader's inferences. This presentation form seems to corroborate with relevance theoretical approach (S&W 1995,p. 15-16) in which the *context* is a set of premises used in interpreting an utterance (the headline), and it is a psychological construct, a subset of assumptions about the world. In this particular case what happens is that instead of phrasing the utterance and expect the reader to supply a context which allows the interpretation of an utterance, the writer himself supplies the context which was supposed to be mutually manifested. (S&W 1995, p.40)

The communicator's initiative can be inserted in the definition of *Relevance* (S&W 1995, p.125) with its economy principle, offering a path of least effort to the addressee helping him to derive more benefits.

Furthermore, the so called 'story highlights', can also be compared with the pragmatic model of context (COSTA 2004, p. 108):

- a. It functions as a pair ordinated with the utterance, to facilitate the pragmatic analysis of the utterance
- b. It is partially of mutual knowledge to make new information possible (the reader needs to have some previous knowledge in common with the writer to infer the content from the utterance)
- c. The 'story highlights' are helping the reader as formed propositions

However the 'story highlight' does not bring information about 'Camelot'. And maybe this is the strategy left for attracting 'scanning' readers to look for further information in the text. In other words, utterance **(16)** in a question form this time does not bring an immediate answer as in **(22)** but it is an intriguing question in the sense that arouses the audience's curiosity by settling a doubt, and so it is a relevant input (W&S 2002a, p. 251).

Visual Input (photograph)

An image may be an input of immediate comprehension, but it may also be considered as a text (because it can be described) allowing less time in reading than the one required by the written text (SILVEIRA, 2005).

Considering that the same process is taken to interpret the linguistic input (utterances), can be applied to interpret the visual input, we illustrate utterance **(16)** now combined with the image below, which communicates to the reader that there might be a link between Camelot's legacy and Sen. Edward Kennedy.

The description of the picture gives the idea of temporality, and triggers from encyclopedic memory the friendship relation between both personalities before Sen. Edward Kennedy died. From the image, there can be another description:

- Obama puts his hand on sen. Ted Kennedy's shoulders
- And further inferential process generating an implicature:
- Obama's gesture suggests proximity

There is an important role of the visual input in communicating something which combined with the headline and 'story highlights' as a kind of a Lead,

Picking up clues from the headline with the lexical entry 'Camelot legacy' plus the 'story highlights' Kennedy legacy and looking at the photograph which was described as "Obama puts his hand on sen. Ted Kennedy's shoulders", plus another

background information about the senator's recent death, the inferential process of the reader would be enriched by all these elements mixing inputs and encyclopedic memory to his calculation.

The role of the photograph may be to complement the missing information, which is suggested but not explicit, that is, to help the reader infer that Camelot is the Kennedy's legacy. And it could be an interface between linguistic input from the headline and visual input.

According to S&W, an input (utterance) is relevant to an individual if together with background knowledge he comes to conclusions that are important to him in different ways, as for instance, finding the answer for a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, etc.. In RT it is said that the processing of a relevant input in a context of available assumptions yields a POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECT.

Reference assignment is dependent on encyclopedic memory:

Camelot: the castle where King Arthur's legendary story took place during the middle age.

Plus context of mentally represented information: (Wilson & Carston, 2006, p. 7)

CAMELOT*: Kennedy's presidency is remembered as 'Camelot' because of a Broadway show about an idealized King Arthur's Court that started a month after John Kennedy won the presidency in 1980.

Two possible inferential moves could arise from the metaphorical word CAMELOT*:

First of all, the 'available assumptions' may be depicted from the headline alone if the reader has enough cultural, historical and political background knowledge that permits the process of retrieve the referent designated by 'Camelot'.

John Kennedy's presidency was called 'Camelot' in resemblance of the Broadway show about an idealized King's Arthur Court which started soon after Kennedy won the presidency in 1960.

After the enrichment processes and going through the lexical pragmatic adjustment of the literal encoded concept of 'Camelot' to the metaphorical extension Camelot* (Kennedys) there results a possible hypothesis construction (S&W 2005, p.368):

Explicature: The communicator is asking the addressee if the Kennedy's legacy is going to be handed down to Obama.

From the headline, visual input and story highlight some information may be accessed from encyclopedic memory

Implicated Premises: (hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions):

- Ted Kennedy (John's youngest brother) died recently
- Obama is the current president of the United States
- Obama and John Kennedy have similar characteristics

Implicature: Obama might be considered the next CAMELOT*

If the reader is acquainted with the 'Camelot's legacy' referring to Ted Kennedy who died recently, then it is possible for him to infer that the writer's question is relating Obama as someone (a friend) out of the family to be next follower of the Kennedy's legacy. Although the only positive cognitive effect may be the settlement of a doubt (which 'makes a difference to the individual's representation of the world'. (S&W, RT article p251)), the reader might be motivated enough to continue in search of a more concise 'cognitive effect' since his relevance expectation could be fulfilled through the text next utterance(s).

On the other hand, 'Is Camelot's future in Obama's hand?' still could be a relevant input to the audience who does not know what this more creative metaphor 'Camelot' means, but knows the referent Obama. Maybe because the main strategy that guided the writer to produce the utterance is to settle a doubt. The reader may be intrigued with the relation established between Camelot (legendary Castle in England) and Obama, the president of the United States. Not having enough context available, the reader may be attracted to continue his investigation through the text offered by the writer, that in this case will be the path of least effort to yield more Cognitive Effects, which should compensate the reader's extra effort.

In this attempt, the reader will gather more information about the usage of the referent Camelot*, which has been adopted to refer to the Kennedy's legacy.

According to Wilson and Sperber (2002a, p. 251) a conclusion is deducible from the input (linguistic and visual, in this case) and context together (but from neither input nor context alone): considering both, it is being suggested that Obama may be the next substitute for the Kennedy's legacy.

GRICE'S VIEW: On a Gricean approach, the reader should test the literal interpretation first of what is said in the utterance 'Is Camelot's future in Obama's hand' and consider a figurative interpretation when realizing that it does not make any sense to say that Camelot could possibly be in the hands of the president of the United States, and this would be blatantly false violating the maxim of truthfulness (WILSON 2003, p. 356). The next step would be to consider 'Camelot' as a metaphor, and from this moment on this interpretation would not be taken as 'what is said', but as if the writer merely 'made as if to say' (GRICE 1989, p. 34).

From violating the Maxim of truthfulness, there rises a not standard, and so, particularized implicature requiring pragmatics interpretation, because the explanation could not be found in the linguistic structure only. So, also context is necessary for interpreting the utterance.

Excerpts from the text that corroborate to this kind of reasoning:

One magazine characterized him as having a "quick charm, the patience to listen, a sure social touch, an interest in knowledge and a greed for facts."
Those words could have been written about Barack Obama's rise to the presidency last year but actually come from coverage about the ascendancy of John F. Kennedy to the White House.

Kennedy's presidency is remembered as "Camelot," for the Broadway show about an idealized King Arthur's Court that opened the month after Kennedy won the presidency in November 1960.

After JFK's assassination in 1963, the Camelot legacy was handed down to younger brother Robert Kennedy, who served as John Kennedy's attorney general and was later elected to the Senate from New York.

There are certain ostensive stimuli that may have a greater repercussion outside the country. In the case of 'Camelot legacy'(Obama's inheritance) in particular the visual input has an important role in the communication process, and together with the context of old information (The Kennedys) they convey to conclusions, that though cannot be proved, but can be acceptable. The next photographs, headlines and other texts were taken from American sources but used as news in The United Kingdom to illustrate that besides from local repercussion, the abroad exploration of Camelot legacy could be an example of relevance, and perhaps mainly because of

the visual input, which corroborates to Sperber and Wilson's claim that 'an ostensive stimulus may create precise and predictable expectations of relevance not raised by other stimuli' (W&S 2002a, p. 255):

(27) Photo: President Obama rekindles Kennedy moment in Oval Office
(*Caffeinated Politics*- September 3, 2009)



(27 a) The US White House has released a photograph of President Barack Obama's daughter Sasha sneaking up on her father as he works in the Oval Office.

(27 b) The image has drawn comparisons with the famous 1963 image of John F Kennedy Jr playing underneath the Oval Office desk as his father reads documents.

(27 c) That picture helped create the image of "Camelot" associated with the Kennedys.

The original text sequence may be seen as the writer's an informative construction: First, through the description in **(27 a)** which could be an explication, then followed by the context in which the inputs (image and utterance **(27 a)**) and finally, providing the appropriate hypothesis construction in **(27 c)** which can easily lead the reader to an implicated conclusion.

Of course, when referring to this textual sequence that follows headline **(27)** as a kind of relevance optimizer, the idea is to suggest that the journalist may be following either intuitively, or from traditional techniques, to attract, inform, and whatever extra intentions he may have, he is in a certain way guided by the Communicative Principle of Relevance (S&W 2002a, p. 261).

The next pictures and stories corroborate the idea of comparing Obama with the Kennedy legacy, seeming as a purposely created similar image, allowed by Obama and spread by the media:

(28) Will Camelot return in an Obama White House?
(*Cleveland.com* – November 15, 2008)



AP, FileThis April 14, 1963, photo shows President John F. Kennedy and family as they pose outside the Palm Beach, Fla., home of the president's father after a private Easter service. From left are first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, John Jr., 3, President Kennedy, and Caroline, 5.

And on that night, it wasn't hard to see why some have been tempted to make the comparison with another highly telegenic first family who fascinated and inspired the country nearly a half-century ago: the Kennedys. Youth, style, optimism -- all those hallmarks of Obama's ascension to power remind Ted Sorensen, the speechwriter and adviser to John F. Kennedy, of his former boss. And, he says, an infectious sense of confidence. That's something few of us who watched Obama on that balmy Chicago night could have missed: The sense of calm and assuredness, though not cockiness, that he projected as he accepted the mantle of the most powerful job in the world.



AP, FileThis Nov. 4, 2008, photo shows President-elect Barack Obama, left, his wife Michelle Obama, right, and two daughters, Malia, and Sasha, center left, as they wave to the crowd at the election night rally in Chicago. "Kennedy had that confidence, too," says Sorensen. "And it carries over. Just as Kennedy's election restored confidence to a nation, Obama's will have the same results -- confidence of Americans in our leadership, of consumers in our economy, of other countries in America."

(29) Obama, Caroline Kennedy play in Oval Office (*Huffington Post* / *Katharine Zaleski* / 05/ 1/09)

To mark the President's First 100 Days, the White House released a ton of behind the scenes photos taken by Pete Souza. ... It shows President Obama playing in the Oval Office with Caroline Kennedy. Is the President pretending to be John Jr. when he played in his father's desk? Is he trying to figure out how John got into the desk? Check out the photos to see for yourself.



Copyright, Estate of Stanley Tretick



(30) Dad-in-Chief: Barack and his daughters, Malia and Sasha



Obama's daughters have been his priority both before and since moving into the White House and Bam's father-daughter moments have shown a softer side of the President. Check out pics of the dad-in-chief and the Obama girls. Michelle and Barack are always careful parents. The pair assist Malia and Sasha down the stairs of Air Force One.

(Daily News – 07/07/2009)

Observing one of the linguistic inputs, headline **(31) Dad-in-chief** could possibly be enriched to the proposition:

The figure of a father inserted in the figure of a chief

Communicative intention through visual (image) input

Following S&W's perspective in which ostensive stimuli are used to communicate, images are also considered ostensive stimuli. When used in the media there is a stronger intentional communicational purpose which in general it attracts the reader and communicates immediately, increasing the amount of information contained on the headline and lead. So there is a combination of ostensive stimuli on the news above, with the emphasis on the photograph.

The cognitive processes which combine the visual input (image) with context to construct hypotheses and achieve some conclusion is similarly used to interpret headlines or other utterances: the cognitive process gets started at the moment that

the addressee sees the image, an immediate description of scenario arises. So, analyzing photograph (30) alone, what comes first from the visual input is that:

- Obama traveled with the whole family
- Obama assists one of his daughters down the stairs of the plane

The reader can infer that the photograph's author has the intention to inform that Obama is the type of man who takes care of the family.

With this new information resulting from visual input and inferences, the encyclopedic memory of the reader might be accessed (SILVEIRA, 2005, p.5)

P₁ - A father who is careful with his children is a good father.

P₂ - A family chief who is a good father must be a good governor to the people.

Implicated conclusion – If Obama is a good father then he must be a good president.

The next photograph communicates that Obama is a kind, attentive father:

(31) Dad-in-chief: Barack and his daughters, Malia and Sasha



The whole family comes out to celebrate two special birthdays: Malia, who turned 11, and America who turned 233.

(Daily News, 07/07/2009)

After reading the description of the photograph:

'The whole family comes out to celebrate two special birthdays: Malia, who turned 11, and America who turned 233' it could be inferred a similar but even stronger implicature:

Obama is a good father to his daughters and Americans.

Although the image could be interpreted separated from headline and textual description of the photograph provided by the communicator, it is obvious that the combination of the three is composing an interface, and so for a complete interpretation there is an integrated complementary process triggered by the image and written stimuli.

From encyclopedic memory, the addressee might retrieve the proposition above because, this idea of relating Obama, the father, with Obama, the president, is 'old' information, as it shown in the next headline **(32) Father in Chief**.

Although there is not a written description below the image complementing headline **(32)** it can be noted again the idea of a loving father (ostensive stimuli) depicted in the picture of same headline) taken from another news source. It reinforces the image of someone who is supportive and kind. Headline **(32)** paraphrases headline **(31) Dad-in-chief**:

(32) Father in Chief



(The New York Times.com – February 19, 2009)

An excerpt from the article summarizes what could be the natural reasoning from the combination of the headline 'Dad-in-chief' and similar father in chief and the series of photographs:

He seems like such a good father, in fact, that many of us began expecting him to be our parent, too. What is good governing if not good parenting — what with providing a moral compass, negotiating bickering between red and blue siblings

and making sure the spinach gets eaten before we indulge in dessert? (LISA BELKIN)

W&S (2002a, p. 251) claim that in relevance theoretic terms, inputs (e.g. utterances and photographs) are relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a positive cognitive effect, which makes a difference to the individual's representation of the world. The fact that the addressee receives a massive ostensive stimuli with the figure of a careful father president, and they can connected with the positive impression Americans had about Obama as a candidate and voted on him expecting for a good guidance may reinforce the relevance in processing that input suggested in **(30)** and **(32)**.

The fact that there is so much interest in showing repeatedly Obama's images with family and specially attentive with them may become stronger ostensive stimuli to communicate to the reader or maybe manipulate the readers' opinion about this aspect of good parenting qualities, and in addition maybe create a collective projection over the figure of a father in chief.

(33) *First 100 Days*



Day 53

(Tribune photo by Zbigniew Bzdak / March 13, 2009)
[President Barack Obama's](#) family photographs are displayed near the president's desk in the Oval Office, as Obama meets with Economic Recovery Advisory Board Chairman [Paul Volcker](#) at the [White House](#) in Washington D.C.



Day 85 (Tribune photo by Nancy Stone / April 14, 2009) [Malia Obama](#), left, and sister Sasha run with Bo, their new puppy, on the South Lawn of the [White House](#). Bo is a Portuguese water dog.



Day 84

(Tribune photo by Nancy Stone / April 13, 2009) President Barack Obama gives advice and encouragement to daughters Sasha (bending) and Malia (right) at the annual White House Easter Egg Roll.

If the addressee sees a sequence displayed of photographs above, he might infer that Obama's life is like a 'perfect American style' movie scenario. The question that rises is what could be the communicator's intention here? In trying to find the

answer for this question, the reader might conclude that people can identify and feel comfortable with this friendly governor.

But as the influence of the media is not unilateral, there are other kinds of manipulation attempts which may be subtle, may be embedded in between the lines, and could be pragmatically inferred as a case of Irony. The next images are analyzed again combined with the headline and picture description, but in a different perspective because sometimes it is not so clear that the communicator has an ironic intention.

They follow the same line as 'dad-in-chief' or 'father in chief' also include the idea of a common citizen who likes to eat fast food, drinks beer, goes to a stadium like almost every male does. So it is added the idea the he is a common kind of man to whom the Americans can easily get identified. Different from the image that a president is someone at the top and distant, the current president is at the top and near. The next illustrations analyzed are showing the steps that lead to this interpretation:

(34) He's just like us



(34 a)

Health care, the federal deficit, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the fiscal crisis: it's lucky President Obama seems to know how to kick back and relax, even if it's not for very long.

Credits: Souza/Pool

Published: 05/16/2009 15:33:05

Isolating the headline and image description, the image above could be described as (SILVEIRA, 2005):

- Obama is playing with his dog Bo in a garden running with a ball on his hands.
- Obama is formally dressed in a white shirt, tie and suit pants.

From the visual input from the image besides from the description, it can be accessed from encyclopedic memory that:

- Obama is the current president, the biggest authority in the country

Possible Implicature:

Although the president has so many responsibilities in governing the country, he still finds time to play with his dog.

The interpretive procedure of the image does not differ from the inferential process adopted in the recent RT unified account approach. However, the linkage that suggest an interface between image, headline and description of the picture below the image, has to be considered as a combined input that should be interpreted together.

If it were not for the fact that the lexical entry of 'just' meaning 'exactly' and other comments, as the one described below some of the pictures, there would be no reason to suppose that there can be some kind of subtle irony.



(34 b)

Barack Obama may be President, but that doesn't mean he doesn't mean he doesn't know how to have a little fun, like playing with new pup Bo.

After his trip overseas for the G-8 economic summit, Obama took some time off to spend the Easter holiday with his family...

Credits: PETE SOUZA

Published: 05/16/2009 15:33:05



(34 c) Sometimes you just feel like a burger. And so President Barack Obama traveled with his motorcade to "Five Guys" burgers and fries restaurant on May 29, 2009 in Washington, DC.

Click for more scenes of our superhuman president looking a lot like you or me.
Published: 05/16/2009 15:33:05

Checking **(34 c)** the audience would even considered the chance of identifying with this common human being who likes fast food, except for the subtle detail evidencing the presence of body guards around, which could be a covert form of irony because of the description that he went to 'Five Guys' with his 'motorcade,' which definitely differentiates anyone from a common citizen (contextual assumption). Headline **(34 d)** plus image and its description would combine the ostensive-stimuli would lead the reader to infer that the communicator is being ironic, although not possible to consider in S&W's frame (1995, p.239-240) as it is not echoic.



(34 d) Plenty of options made the commander in chief think carefully about his decision.

Credits: Smialowski/Getty
Published: 08/29/2009 13:57:47

Maybe more ambiguous to interpret, possibly two interpretations could be explored from **(34 d)**.

Interpretation 1:

As Obama has been considered cautious in his decisions, the reader would infer from **(34 d)** this quality of prudence even if it is for trivial choices, as a burger.

Interpretation 2:

It could be an intentional joke, or another possible case of irony, where image and image description reminds the criticism that Obama is cautious in taking decisions. Excerpts below taken from headline **(34 e)** The two Obamas (*Salon, Apr. 21, 2009*) supports Interpretation 2 providing reference from where this idea comes from:

The assertion that domestic Obama is too cautious, incrementalist and deferential...

Quietly and undramatically, but thoroughly and systematically....

Despite the fact that S&W consider Irony as an echoic manifest, and Interpretation 2 does not consider it echoic, but triggered the photograph **(34 d)** and description of it, it still follows the same kind of interpretation process: input as ostensive-stimuli, contextual assumptions possibly retrieved from **(34 e)** as old information, leading to the conclusion commented in Interpretation 2.

4.1.3 John McCain

Presidential Pre-election period:

(35) If elected ... McCain's fiscal mantra becomes less is more

(New York Times – January 26, 2008)

Lead: WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Senator John McCain said that, if elected, he would do what other presidents had tried but failed to do: cut government spending sharply enough to reduce the budget deficit while lowering taxes at the same time.

According to the new field of lexical pragmatics, the meanings of words can be pragmatically adjusted and fine-tuned (changed a bit in order to fit well) in context. With these modulations (adjustments) their contribution to the proposition expressed is different from the encoded concept. (W&C 2007, Abstract)

One known example is metaphorical extension. Following the relevance theoretical view that metaphors can be a case of lexical broadening, and that the interpretation of metaphorical utterances often results in the attribution of emergent properties (not associated in a standard way with the individual constituents in isolation nor derivable nor derivable by standard rules of semantic composition) headline **(35)** illustrates these possibilities:

Scenario: The United States is facing one of the most severe financial crisis and a huge budget deficit during Bush's government and McCain is one of the presidential candidates for next election.

Following Sperber & Wilson's lexical-pragmatic processes:

Reference Assignment: The familiar name (to Americans, at least) McCain connects the reader with encyclopedic information, that he is one of the candidates for next presidential election.

Encoded concepts of *Fiscal* and *Mantra*:

Fiscal: connected with money, taxes, debts owned and managed by the government

Mantra: a word or sound that is repeated as a prayer or to help people meditate in the Hindu and Buddhist religions.

The encyclopedic knowledge of 'mantra' is unlikely to inform that McCain will start having religious procedures when it comes to financial affairs. So mantra, except metaphorically may be concerned with financial matters (W&C 2006, p. 19).

The combination of two words as 'fiscal' and 'mantra' not standardly connected or making sense, suggests that if the reader intends to follow a path of least effort in order to reach a plausible conclusion of the utterance **(35 c)**, the 'short cut' in processing the would raise a question (W&C 2007, p.28) in the reader's mind about why the speaker would relate 'mantra' to 'fiscal' and 'less is more' which will lead to the comprehension that MANTRA* is being used in a metaphorical broadened way, conveying a more general sense than the encoded one.

Encyclopedic Assumptions about MANTRA:

- used during Yoga practice to become balanced, centered and powerful
- in order to have a positive effect the mantra has to be exhaustively repeated

Thus, in this case, an ad hoc construction which will still keep some of the characteristics of the encoded sense of MANTRA 'bring power as repeated' is probably selected instead of one the exact encoded concept, for the simple reason that 'mantra' as an imported lent Hindu word retrieved as a kind of sacred sound that is repeated to yield some spiritual benefit.

Of course, the contextual assumption in **(35b)** below is unlikely to be stored ready-made in the encyclopedic entry for 'mantra' and the interpretation involves the derivation of an emergent property (methodic, constant repetition).

However, this feature should be derivable in the course of the mutual adjustment process (W&C 2006 p. 27) by a combination of forward inference from existing encyclopedic features of 'mantra' (e.g. used to increase balance) and backward inference based on the expected type of conclusion in **(35 c)**.

(35) a. Explicit content: If elected the next president of the United States McCain's fiscal MANTRA* is less is more

b. Contextual Assumption: *MANTRA is a constantly repeated word

c. Contextual implication: If McCain becomes the next president he will constantly apply less is more to solve government crisis.

Although there is a pragmatic process involved in the recovery of the explicit content, which is linked to context, this analysis has been a little simplified to emphasize the Emergent Property issue related to the metaphorical use of MANTRA.*

Considering the context above the reader may interpret "Less is More" as 'spending less money means having more profits'.

Explicature: If elected the next president of the United States of America, McCain's repeated commandments referring to the government finances will be to spend less money in order to have more money left.

Implicated Assumptions: If the government spends less money there will be more money to face the financial crisis.

Implicated Conclusion: McCain's strategy to overcome the financial crisis in the United States is to cut the government excessive expenses.

Through this whole process, the reader constructs a hypothesis about the writer's meaning, satisfying the presumption of relevance conveyed by the utterance. Of course, there are different possible interpretations, and this one represents one of them.

The next headline **(18)** analyzed was already illustrated in p. 56, this work:

(18) It's do or die for McCain in last debate with Obama, experts say.

(Daily News – October 15 2008)

The ostensive stimulus used by the headline writer in a *quotation* headline type is the expression 'do or die' which it is not supposed to be interpreted literally. Recalling that Lexical Pragmatics is a branch of Linguistics that investigates the process by which linguistically-specified ('literal') word meanings are modified in use. According to the unified approach to lexical pragmatics treats hyperbole as a subvariety of broadening (W&C 2007, p.8) with a great departure from the encoded meaning.

In utterance **(18)**, 'DO' (to perform something) and 'DIE' (to become dead) involve a departure from the encoded meaning to become a hyperbolic expression, where 'DO*' means 'convince electors' and 'DIE*' means 'lose electors'.

Relevance Theory treats the identification of explicit content as equally inferential and guided by the Communicative Principle of Relevance, as the recovery of implicatures. In order to construct an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content of utterance (18), one of the sub-tasks involves decoding, reference resolution and other pragmatic enrichment processes. So the reader might use the following procedure to construct hypothesis about explicatures:

Scenario: Two North-American citizens, McCain and Obama, are racing for 2008 presidential position.

Reference resolution: McCain = United States 2008 presidential candidate

Experts = people who are experienced on political matters

Last debate = last debate before 2008 presidential election

Obama = opponent presidential candidate

As suggested by Relevance Theory, the lexical-pragmatic process apply 'on line' (in parallel with other inferential processes) in a flexible, creative and context-dependent way (e.g. McCain is not going to die literally), and may contribute to the truth-conditional content of the utterance, what is asserted or explicated (or in Grice's terms, 'what is said') as well as to what is implicated (W&S 2002, Wilson and Carston 2007:3-4).

Explicature: The headline writer said that experts [on politics] say that it is DO* or DIE* in last debate [before 2008 presidential election] with [opponent candidate] Obama.

[Note: Small caps area used to distinguish proposition explicitly expressed from the logical form encoded by utterance (following Carston's model 2004)]

Implicature: It is the last chance for McCain to convince electors to vote on him.

The utterance above may be accepted as an implicit conclusion inferred from the explicature, background knowledge about election debates and context, all together. This implicature triggered by the headline may be confirmed through further text, where the writer seems to 'offer' the reader the same kind of implicit conclusion, although a weaker implicature:

The final 2008 presidential debate at Hofstra University in Hempstead is McCain's last, best chance to climb out of the hole that the nation's economy and his own faltering campaign have put him in, experts say.

Now interpreting the same utterance (21) under Costa's Broadened Model, the characterization of the elements considered in the analysis process are the following:

- (A) = Addressee (readers)
- (B) = Sender (headline writer)
- (C) = Context (a set of propositions potentially known by (A) and (B) or at least accepted as non-controversial)

(U)= Utterance (It's do or die for McCain in last debate with Obama, experts say)

(I) = Implicatures (Grice's model of pragmatic inferences)

Interpretation procedure:

(18) (U) It's do or die for McCain in last debate with Obama, experts say.

According to Grice this utterance has a different treatment, because there is a metaphorical expression 'do or die' that instead of being considered as what is said, it should be considered that the sender 'makes as it to say'. In this case the literal interpretation would be considered a blatant violation of the maxim of truthfulness, conveying a related implicature. (Wilson, 2003: 347)

- (A) readers
- (B) headline writer

- (C) 1- The headline writer is the sender
- 2-McCain is a presidential republican candidate
- 3- Obama is a presidential democrat candidate
- 4-The reader should vote on a candidate
- 5- McCain's image related to the current republican Bush's government seems to be discredited
- 6- McCain's campaign was not successful
- 7- Obama seems to be the favorite candidate
- 8- (B) stated that experts on politics have given their opinion on McCain's political situation

(I¹) McCain has to put all his effort towards the last debate. (Particularized conversational Implicature (PCI), resulting from violating a maxim of truthfulness ('Do not say what you believe to be false'))

This is A's calculation that permits the inference of the implicature:

- 1- (B) wrote (U)
- 2- (B) did not offer all the information required with his utterance
- 3- (B) still must be cooperating
- 4- (B) knows that (A) knows (C)
- 5- (B) will be relevant 'making as if to say' (U) if he intends (A) to think (I¹)
- 6- (B) used a metaphorical expression in (U) and implied (I¹)

From (I¹) there may rise other implicatures, which can then be inferred one from the other. Take another example:

(I²) Experts' opinion is that McCain is not in a privileged situation. (PCI consequent of flouting the first maxim of quantity (Make your contribution as informative as required))

Calculation of (I²)

- 1- (B) was not as informative as required
- 2- (B) is still cooperating
- 3- (B) knows that I know (C)
- 4- (B) will be relevant if he intends me to think that (I²)
- 5- (B) wrote (U) and implied (I²)

And another implicature:

(I³) If it is the last debate, so it is the last chance for McCain - (I³) is a Standard PCI, respecting maxims. (I¹) and (I²) were generated when violating (flouting) maxims, and (I³) merely makes (I¹) and (I²) more relevant.

S&W and Costa's analyses might have differences in their calculation approach, but nevertheless, we have noticed that they are still compatible, leading to similar results.

(36) John McCain, flexible aggression

(New York Times - October 26, 2008)

On the inferential approach, utterances are pieces of evidence about the speaker/writer's meaning, and comprehension is achieved by inferring the meaning provided not only by the utterance but also by the context. So to interpret the logical form 'John McCain, Flexible Aggression' it is important to report to the fact that in Relevance Theory an input is relevant to an individual when it connects with available contextual assumptions to produce POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECTS.

The referent John McCain, as Obama's opponent republican candidate would be relevant enough to be worth processing, but something else was elaborated to fulfill the presumption of relevance (S&W 2005, p. 360). The arranged descriptive definition seems intentionally intriguing enough to call the reader's attention and make the headline an ostensive stimulus worth of being processed. Thus, the apparently weird connection or normally considered a kind of disconnected relation between the lexical entries of 'flexible' followed by 'aggression' reinforces the potential relevant stimulus of the referent McCain, in the sense that triggers the inference of someone who 'is tough, but not so tough'.

As S&W claim, an explicature is a proposition communicated by an utterance if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by the utterance. This process may involve more than reference assignment, that is, it may involve other types of pragmatic enrichment.

Thus, in the utterance 'John McCain, flexible aggression' inferential enrichment is necessary to complete a fragmentary sentence meaning into a fully propositional form (S&W 2005, p. 364). For instance, the reader may construct an ad hoc

hypothesis about the expression 'Flexible aggression' inferring that it gives an idea that it is possible to negotiate and minimize the effects of his (McCain) aggressive behavior.

A possible interpretation for an explicature after considering the process of free enrichment would be:

(36) Appropriate hypotheses (Explicature) (S&W 2005, p.368):

This is a case where the only explicature possible is: The writer suggested that though there is a trace of aggression in John McCain's behavior, there is a possibility of minimizing his aggressiveness.

Contextual assumptions:

1. John McCain is a presidential candidate.
2. John McCain has shown an inconsistent behavior over the years, alternating the tough guy with the not so tough image.
3. Someone who is flexible gives the idea of being open minded.
4. Someone aggressive who presents flexibility cannot be considered only aggressive, or aggressive all the time.

Once (b) is derived from background information (c) follows deductively from the explicature (a) and (b) together:

(c) Implicated Conclusions:

5. This candidate alternates his behavior
6. If McCain is elected, his government will show traces of his dual behavior

Note that (d) follows deductively from (c) and from the assumption that if McCain wins the presidential election he will be an unstable governor.

If **(36)** leads the reader to the text above (the *lead*), he will confirm his hypotheses with extra similar information about McCain, and then confirming the conclusions already inferred from the input (utterance) and background (what he knows about McCain), a Cognitive Effect might be the 'Settling a doubt type': 'Should I vote on McCain?'. If this intuition about the conclusion a reader might get is

plausible, then the intention of the communicator can be to weaken McCain's candidature.

(37) McCain attacks Los Angeles Times over its refusal to release '03 Obama Video

(New York Times – October 30, 2008)

In order to have a low processing cost to interpret utterance (36) lexical item 'attacks' is fine-tuned to satisfy the particular expectation of relevance raised by the utterance:

Disambiguation process:

Attack¹: an act of using violence to try to hurt or kill somebody.

Attack²: a military strike; an act of trying to kill or injure the enemy in war.

Attack³: verbal attack, criticize.

In these circumstances, although there are several interpretations to the word 'attack', possibly attack³ satisfies the reader's expectation of relevance by contextually implying that McCain (who did not attack Los Angeles Times (building) in a military way, or in a physical way) manifested a criticism against the newspaper Los Angeles Times' staff decision.

Explicature: McCain criticizes newspaper Los Angeles Times for refusing to release Obama's video [about something].

The lead below clarifies and may complete the information of the explicature:

Alleging media bias in favor of Democrats, Senator John McCain and Gov. Sarah Palin seized Wednesday on The Los Angeles Times's refusal to release a five-year-old videotape of Barack Obama at a dinner honoring a Palestinian rights advocate.

Unspecified Information

Following Wilson and Carston (2007, p.231) Infantidou (2009, p. 717), considers that headline interpretation involves similar lexical adjustment processes of narrowing and broadening with the difference that contextual information is often impoverished for readers to rely on a combination of encoded meaning and background knowledge, assumptions, an interests to retrieve a plausible and relevant interpretation.

Elliptical semantic content and fragmented or vastly underspecified discourse context in headlines ask for a radical inferential lexical adjustment process for addressees to retrieve the proposition expressed, additional *explicatures* or any contextual implications conveyed.

The next headline leaves unspecified an important information:

(38) McCain campaign accuses L.A. Times of 'suppressing' Obama video

(Los Angeles Times - October 29, 2008)

When the reader finishes reading (38) the question that may come into his mind is 'what video'? But this may be an intentional mechanism of the headline writer provoking the curiosity of the reader, and functioning as an ostensive stimulus. Thus, in this aspect, the reader couldn't have retrieved from background information that the video which shows Obama praising Palestinian activist Khalidi at a 2003 banquet.

Different from Infantidou's opinion, maybe because the issue is Obama, we cannot say that the context is impoverished. If there are semantic ellipses asking for recovery, couldn't it be related to the fact that the headline's goal is to fulfill the headline writer's intention to lead the reader into to a deeper search in obtaining more cognitive effects through reading other textual information that compose the news?

Syntactic Recovery

The next headlines will be described focusing on syntactic recovery borrowing the idea of 'lexical adjustment' (W&C 2007, p. 5) using the expression 'syntactic adjustment' as a possibility, making then an analogy with pragmatic process. What we would like to suggest is that some headlines present on their logical form a

previous syntactic task which requires from the reader a mental process, which involves more than decoding.

Following Costa's model of Theory of Interfaces, we can integrate this language analysis connecting the sub areas already described in this study (p. 47) illustrating this linkage of linguistic form and pragmatic processes, within the frame of Relevance Theory (S&W 1995, p. 204). According to the S&W's definition, on the inferential view utterances comprehension is achieved by inferring the meaning of evidence provided and the context. But then they continue asserting that "An utterance is, of course, a linguistically coded piece of evidence, so the comprehension involves an element of decoding". (2005, p. 355)

From the statement above it seems suggested that there is a relation between 'linguistically coded' and 'involving an element of decoding.'

Noticing that some of the utterances (headlines) from American Newspaper present an incomplete syntactic form, designing to the reader and previous task, we cannot say that it is merely a case of decoding, requiring an 'extra' cognitive effort (which is dependant from the context provided by the utterance itself), but then overcome by the cognitive effect.

As a matter of fact, if we pursue the idea that linguistic decoding, perception and encyclopedic memory play an important role in the *inferential* process, so it is possible to possible to assert that the reader has to 'inferentially decode' the indeterminate syntactic form.

Notice that it will become salient to the reader that the syntactic string becomes grammatically odd in the utterance below, retrieved from The Washington Post, during the presidential pre-election period:

(39) In final stretch, McCain **to pour**⁶ Money Into TV Ads

By Matthew Mosk
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, October 31, 2008

How the reader notices the oddness of the syntactic string in **(39)** may be explained by Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG).

⁶ The infinitive form was purposely highlighted to call the attention of the syntactic recovery.

As well as syntactic principles (see this work, p. 16), UG emphasizes the lexicon. Stated briefly, speakers know what each word means in the language, and how it behaves syntactically. Thus, the theory integrates the syntactic description of the sentences with the properties of lexical items via the *Projection Principle*: syntax has to accommodate the characteristics of each lexical item. (COOK 1988, p. 8)

Each lexical item in the language has idiosyncratic properties of its own recorded in its lexical entry: “such entries reflect the speaker’s knowledge of the occurrence restrictions for large numbers of words.” (COOK 1988, p. 10).

The first recovery in question here is the one referring to the use of the infinitive form ‘to pour’ which requires a mental effort to yield idea of future and replace ‘is going to,’ giving then a new structure form to the utterance that becomes ‘In final stretch, McCain is going to pour money into TV adds.’

The notion of a future reference is triggered by the encyclopedic memory related to grammar rules, that is, the reader might identify each word and using his knowledge of its lexical properties and syntactic co-occurrence restrictions he can predict the syntactic categories of following words and phrases (S&W 1995, p. 205). This assumption about the syntactic recovery’ may be confirmed through further text related to the same headline:

Sen. John McCain and the Republican National Committee *will unleash* a barrage of spending on television advertising that *will allow* him to keep pace with Sen. Barack Obama’s ad blitz...

Thus, the reader first has to give a solution to syntactic recovery, making in this case a ‘syntactic adjustment’ which is fundamental for the next inferential processes or steps that will lead him to the implicated conclusions and possible cognitive effects.

In effect, mental processes are assumed as inferential (S&W, 1995:14). Although inferential processes are different from decoding processes, an inferential process can be used as part of a decoding process. Justifying the procedure that would convey the reader to the syntactic recovery, we provide the calculation that exemplifies this procedure, showing how inference can double as decoding.

Consider **(40)** where it is possible to use the standard inference rule (Modus Ponens) as a decoding rule, and so treat utterance **(40 a)** as signals and thus convey (by the use of these signals) the message as in **(40 c)**:

(40) Premises: If P then Q

P
Conclusion: Q

(40) (a) If the writer uses the infinitive form, *then* he means future tense.

(b) The writer uses the infinitive form.

(c) He means future tense.

In this example we have an inferential process simultaneously functioning as a decoding process which can be used to make the syntactic adjustment needed in **(39)**. Furthermore, the same premises and conclusion in other similar syntactic construction can be shared by the writer and the reader, but they must share the inference rule **(40)** in order to succeed.

Some other examples **(41, 42)** may confirm this assumption. However, before showing these examples we would like to return to the idea of taking 'syntactic adjustment' as similar to 'lexical adjustment':

Lexical adjustment can be a one-off process (used once and then forgotten) creating an ad hoc concept tied to a particular context that may never occur again. But some of the senses constructed may become popular on the communicative interactions between writer and reader of a community.

Wilson and Carston (2007, p. 15) claim that "The pragmatic process of concept construction becomes progressively more routinised and may spread through a speech community and stabilize as an extra lexical sense".

What we would like to show is that a similar process may happen in the scope of Syntax construction, with examples of same 'syntactic adjustment.' In other words, comparing to other headlines, every time the reader sees a proper noun followed by infinitive form the reader processes a future tense form. So, instead of being an ad hoc usage of a linguistic form, it results in a routinised convention leading to the same kind of interpretation. The examples below in which the headlines present a syntactic reduction may confirm the frequent use of the infinitive departure of its syntactic function to represent a future tense, and suggest that the reader is already

used to this kind of construction and infers the correct assumption in each different context (Notice that they belong to the presidential pos-election period):

(41) McCain to Introduce Amendment Calling for McChrystal Testimony

(FoxNews September 30, 2009)

Excerpt from the text:

Sen. John McCain *plans to introduce* (my highlights) a measure calling on Gen. Stanley to testify before Congress on the Afghanistan war.

'Plans to introduce' is the usage of the present simple tense but with a near future intention (which is one the usages of Present Simple in English language) because if someone plans to do something, this means that it is not done yet, and the expectation created is that it *will* be done, maybe in a close future time, but anyway in a future time.

(42) McCain to host Romney fundraiser

(CNN- September 25,2009)

Lead: Sen. John McCain *is co-hosting* a fundraiser for his former 2008 Republican primary rival Mitt Romney *next Wednesday* (my highlights) in Phoenix.

Note again the same construction *proper noun + infinitive form*, different writer, different on-line news source, and the reader still can rely on the inference rule (40) which is necessary for the syntactic recovery. The *lead* already confirms the intention of the speaker of referring to a near future time, with the present continuous form (also used for future tense) *is co-hosting* and also the lexical entry of the adjective *next*, with a time reference, indicating that McCain 'is going to' host Romney next Wednesday, what indicates that he is not hosting him at the moment uttered.

5 CONCLUSION

This study illustrated linguistic analyses related to *meaning* which were considered within Costa's Internal Interface theory. They were based on Lexical/Syntactic/Semantic/Pragmatic Linguistic sub-areas showing the adequacy of linking the intradisciplinary interface approach, to interpret headline news.

Furthermore, choosing an inferential view, where utterances are pieces of evidence about the writer's meaning, and through compatible pragmatic theories from Grice, Costa's broadened model and Sperber and Wilson it was possible to illustrate similar calculation processes that headline readers may use even in elliptical semantic content, or syntactic incomplete sentences.

The Implicature Theory was presented in the first chapter to give support to the illustration of the interpretation of the *corpus*, developing Grice's studies on a new proposal of meaning, introducing the idea of intention and inference related to the communicative act. Grice considered that there is a gap between what is said by the speaker and what is understood by the hearer, creating the concepts of *Implicatures*, Cooperation Principle and Maxims which motivated a series of pragmatics studies trying to deal with communication in human language.

Collaborating with Grice's studies, Costa (1984, 2004) improved Grice's Implicatures Theory, reformulating the Maxims, highlighting the role of *Relevance*, and clarified the notion of context, which had remained unclear in Grice's study. Finally, Sperber and Wilson (1995) have also considered Grice as a departure point from some of his claims, i.e. that an essential feature of human communication is the expression and recognition of intentions. Also trying to improve the inferential model, they developed the relevance-theoretic approach. Adopting the Relevance theoretic frame and recent Unitary Approach of the same theory, Carston (2007) is also an important reference to this work.

Provided that the *corpus* for the analyses was a selection of texts which included first of all, headlines but also *leads* and some images from online news, following Reah (2004) and Van Dijk (1988) the second chapter described definitions

of journalistic news, headlines and leads. Added to this description, there was a brief comment on Images (SILVEIRA, 2005).

It is important to mention that the way editors conceive 'good, attractive, and appropriate' headlines to the readers seem to be intuitively based on *relevance* tenets. In addition, chapter two presented two previous works analyzing headlines (DOR 2003, INFANTIDOU 2009) couched within Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory.

Dor first makes the claim that headlines are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers, directing the latter to construct the optimal context for interpretation. This point of view seems to coincide with the development adopted in this dissertation. Moreover, an important collaboration of Infantidou's work was that she stated that headlines are interpreted through an inferential process, corroborating the object of this study. In addition, her interpretation followed the unified account, in accordance with some of the analyses developed in this dissertation.

The *corpus* analyzed in this work has shown that when the addressee reads a novel assumption, he will always interpret relying on a context or psychological construct. The importance of the context could be also observed in the behavior of some headline writers who are interested in collaborating with the audience (e.g. headline **(16)**), giving some elements, clues for the reader's hypotheses but cleverly keeping their curiosity activated to go after some more information brought in further text. . Thus, the writer might provide contextual elements to help the reader in the calculation process, strengthening the idea of cognitive cost-benefit, following relevance principles and stimulating him to go for extra cognitive effects.

The resources that accompany the headline, for instance, leads, images, and images descriptions have an important role on the hypotheses construct, and sometimes may even be satisfactory for the scanning reader type. So, to a certain extent agreeing with Dor, it can be said that News headlines are *relevance optimizers* because they are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories, but we do not share Dor's idea that 'headlines are textual *negotiators* between the story and its readers.' But on the other hand, Dor suggests that most modern readers have the

tendency to scan headlines, and the role of the headlines would be that of autonomous texts. Although Infantidou does not agree to label headlines as negotiators, she also supports the idea that they are autonomous texts.

What it was possible to observe is that although there may be cases of autonomous headlines (e.g. quotation headline type as **(16)**), not every headline carries enough information to fulfill the addressee expectation of relevance. In general it involves the reader raising even more expectations of relevance, which with some effort will be compensated by the complementary textual information, which results in more cognitive effects. Of course, this expectation carries the risk of being frustrated, if the reader does not get enough cognitive from the whole process, and this can be a case of falling into 'trap' headlines. This could be the case when the text does not add anything to the headline, and is not worth processing.

The point here is not to affirm that unless the addressee reads the whole story text that comes after the initial linguistic input he will increase his knowledge about that topic, but there should be a further interest in the audience activated to pick up some more linguistic input and only then the reader would stop, for instance when confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression (W&S 2002a, p. 251) accomplishing the procedure that was motivated by the search of relevance. To investigate this issue, it would be necessary to research more on scanning readers, but the ones that go beyond headlines, that is, the kind of 'further text scanners.'

Another significant point to reinforce the idea that headlines are not so autonomous is that similar to verbal communication, where the speaker uses besides from the utterance, his intonation, gestures and maybe other complementary resources to communicate, also the written press may provide further inputs that like a set of ostensive-stimuli (headline, lead, and image). The fact is that there has to be more empirical studies in this direction, to note the reaction of subjects.

In the third chapter, the subjects of the analyses were the two final American presidential candidates, Obama and McCain, where Obama's issue had more attention because of his election. As the new president of the United States, the media would have a natural focus on him, or in other words, Obama is news.

Despite some media's opinion for or against, it is undeniable Obama's positive projection and the fact that he recently received the Nobel Prize confirms the media force. However, the story which follows the headline **(34 e)** 'The two Obamas' (see appendix, p. 117) with a description below Obama's double photograph 'Obama is a better foreign-policy president than domestic-policy president' (*Salon, Apr. 21, 2009*) meaning that he has a more positive image when it comes to external matters related to the planet, than to the country he governs. And maybe this could explain the necessity of investing so much on this 'Camelot' image, good parenting image.

This procedure is explained in *Relevance* (1995, p. 75 -77) where S&W assert that factual assumptions are entertained with greater or lesser confidence, and they can be believed to be true or false. The strength of assumptions depends on the way it is acquired, and if it is accepted based on the acceptance of someone's word it depends on the confidence on the speaker. Our assumptions can include knowledge about politics and history, and it may be stored in the individual's memory.

This argumentation may be relevant to understand the covered strategy that could underlie behind the constant media insinuation about the 'similarities' between John Kennedy and Obama's government. During Kennedy's presidential period, The White House was compared to Camelot, and the Kennedy's legacy became known as the Camelot legacy.

Headline **(16)** Is Camelot's future in Obama's hands? certainly is not the starting point to the ongoing process of suggesting through several inputs that Obama and family remind the way of life of former president John Kennedy and family. The stimuli were perhaps so ostensive, that it was easily inferred that it could be forged (as seen in this work in headline **(27)**).

Whether it is forged or not, this attempt could have worked and can be explained in relevance theoretic terms. That is, if the strength of this assumption is connected to cognitive processes activating the access to the historical memory about the Kennedy's and the image of a good father, a good president, in short, a trustworthy public personality, leading to a possible implicated conclusion that 'If Obama is like J. Kennedy, he is trustworthy.'

So it is possible to say that all these media procedures are suitable with the inferential calculations of the Implicatures Theories, especially with the Relevance theoretical account, adopted as the major approach: relevant input plus context of available assumptions yields a contextual implication, that is, 'a conclusion deducible from input and context together, but from neither input nor context alone' (W&S 2002a, p. 251).

Another important point that has to do with relevance and communication (W&S 2002, p. 254) is Sperber and Wilson's claim that 'the universal cognitive tendency to maximize relevance makes it possible, at least to some extent, to predict and manipulate the mental state of others'. If the communicator knows the tendency of the reader to pick out the most relevant stimuli and process them so as to maximize their relevance, He may be able to attract the reader's attention and point him towards an intended conclusion.

This might have been the case of influencing over Obama and McCain's electoral dispute. Through lexical selection seen in some of the headlines about McCain as *attacks, it's do or die, flexible aggression maybe were provoking* the reader's perception of encyclopedic memory about his warlike profile. And this could be an unfavorable point against him. If history could be written in headlines, the ostensive stimuli presenting an explanation which is almost a complete explicature, headline **(23)**, would be selected to communicate the reason why Obama won the 2008 presidential election: Obama wins, McCain loses as Bush legacy is rejected.'

The analyses of the journalistic inputs could be well elaborated within the pragmatic perspectives of all the theories presented here, becoming evident that the code process would not be *enough* to represent the interpretation of this *corpus*, highlighting that the *inferential* process is more adequate and effective.

Furthermore the syntactic recovery was relevant to the analyses of the headlines, corroborating with Costa's Theory of Interfaces and also to S&W's claim (1995, p. 204-205) that there is a possibility of a natural linkage between linguistic form and pragmatic interpretation, because the reader constructs anticipatory hypotheses about the overall structure of the utterance he reads.

To conclude, referring again to the Interdisciplinary studies between Linguistics and Journalism it is possible to say that Costa's claim that there is a common point to

be met in two disciplines has been achieved in this work, and further investigation may be profitable for both areas. Along this Linguistic theoretical investigation of written Journalistic news there is a point where the two disciplines merge, as for instance when one starts understanding that language induces the formation of opinions, and information has different ways to go through language. The selection of lexical items to inform and form opinion, is not only language business, is also media's business, and the main common point of both sides is still *communication*.

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APPENDIX

(22) Obama's crime? Acting too presidential

(Adopted from THE NATION
ON THE MEDIA / JAMES RAINEY

(Los Angeles Times - August 04, 2008))

http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=132x6583239

(23) Obama Wins Election; McCain Loses as Bush Legacy Is Rejected

By [ADAM NAGOURNEY](#)
Published: November 4, 2008

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/05/us/politics/05campaign.html?_r=1

(6) Obama Wins

(Press Telegram – November 5, 2008)

<http://obama2008.s3.amazonaws.com/headlines.html>

(24) Obama Elected President as Racial Barrier Falls

By [ADAM NAGOURNEY](#)
Published: November 4, 2008

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/05/us/politics/05elect.html?>

(25) Mr. Obama and the Neighborhood

April 18, 2009

President Obama wisely began trying to improve the United States' extremely sour relations with Latin America this week.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/18/opinion/18sat2.html>

(26) Obama's latest challenge: The graying of a President

Wednesday, June 17th 2009, 10:04 AM

http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/06/17/2009-06-17_obamas_latest_challenge_the_graying_of_a_president.html?print=1&page=all

(16) Is Camelot's future in Obama's hands?

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Sen. Ted Kennedy's son Patrick has kept low profile in Congress
Community service is the bedrock of Kennedy legacy
President Obama similar to Kennedys in political focus, experts say
Sen. Kennedy was early endorser of Obama's presidential bid

updated 2:12 p.m. EDT, Wed August 26, 2009
Next Article in Politics »

(27)

Photo: President Obama Rekindles Kennedy Moment In Oval Office

2009 September 3
by dekerivers

<http://dekerivers.wordpress.com/2009/09/03/photo-president-obama-rekindles-kennedy-moment-in-oval-office/>

(28)

Will Camelot return in an Obama White House?

By Bill Meyer

November 15, 2008, 12:15AM

http://www.cleveland.com/nation/index.ssf/2008/11/will_camelot_return_in_an_obam.html

(29)

Obama, Caroline Kennedy Play In Oval Office

Huffington Post | Katharine Zaleski | 05/ 1/09 03:53 PM

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/29/obama-caroline-kennedy-pl_n_192905.html

(30) (31)

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/galleries/barack_obama_and_his_daughters_malia_and_barack_obama_and_his_daughters_malia_and_.html#ph0#ixzz0Ky4pWP6&D

Dad-in-Chief: Barack and his daughters, Malia and Sasha

12345678910111213...45NextPrev

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⌂

(32) Father in Chief

By [LISA BELKIN](#)

Published: February 19, 2009

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/22/magazine/22wwIn-lede-t.html?_r=1

(33) *First 100 Days*

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/chi-090123-obama-first-100-days-photogallery.0,2761919.photogallery>

(34)

Barack Obama: He's just like us

1...34567891011121314...71NextPrev

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/galleries/obama_barack_before_the_white_house_hes_just_like_us/obama_barack_before_the_white_house_hes_just_like_us.html#ph8

(34e) The two Obamas

Obama is a better foreign-policy president than domestic-policy president. Unfortunately, so was Jimmy Carter. Time to be bold.

(Salon, Apr. 21, 2009)

<http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2009/04/21/obama/index.html>

(35)

IF ELECTED ...

McCain's Fiscal Mantra Becomes Less Is More

By [DAVID LEONHARDT](#)

Published: January 26, 2008

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/26/us/politics/26mccain.html?_r=1

(36)

John McCain, Flexible Aggression

By [DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK](#) | Published: Oct. 26, 2008 | Updated: Nov. 6, 2008

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/john_mccain/index.html

(37)

McCain Attacks Los Angeles Times Over Its Refusal to Release '03 Obama Video

By [RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA](#)
October 30, 2008

<http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-video29-2008oct29,0,7568849.story>

(38) *McCain campaign accuses L.A. Times of 'suppressing' Obama video*

The Times says its promise to a source prevents the paper from posting the video, which shows Barack Obama praising Palestinian activist Rashid Khalidi at a 2003 banquet. The story first appeared in April.

By a Times staff writer

October 29, 2008

<http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-video29-2008oct29,0,7568849.story>

(39) In Final Stretch, McCain to Pour Money Into TV Ads

By *Matthew Mosk*
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, October 31, 2008

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/30/AR2008103004167.html>

(41) McCain to Introduce Amendment Calling for McChrystal Testimony

By Trish Turner FOXNews.com

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Sen. John McCain plans to introduce a measure calling on Gen. Stanley McChrystal to testify before Congress on the Afghanistan war.

(42)

McCain to host Romney fundraiser

Posted: September 25th, 2009 11:07 AM ET

September 25, 2009

From CNN Political Producer Peter Hamby

<http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2009/09/25/mccain-to-host-romney-fundraiser/>