

The Role of Pragmatic Context in Selected Children's Literature

Elizabeth Tobiloba Mohammed

*Department of General Studies
The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro*

Abstract

Pragmatics is the study of meaning as conceived by the writer or speaker and interpreted by the reader or listener. Authors of children's literature exploit several context features in assisting readers of their texts in the interpretation of encoded messages. Hence, children with poor pragmatics skills regularly misinterpret author's informative aim and experience difficulty in responding suitably either verbally or non-verbally. The problem has spurred the interest of many scholars. Hence, a number of studies ranging from word meaning, author-illustrator and literacy professors' views, and inherent lessons in texts, image and layout were carried out. Nonetheless, studies on the features of context explored by various authors have not been fully examined. Thus, this study investigated how authors of children's literature explore language in constructing different contexts in their stories to provide meaning. The analysis of the selected children's literature is both qualitative and quantitative. Four literary texts were purposively selected based on the age group of eight to twelve years and four different categories of children's literature namely: adventure series, folk-tale series, health series and fairy tales series were selected. However, the excerpts were selected from the first, third and last chapters of each text. The selected texts were analysed and interpreted based on Dell Hymes' theory of context. From the analysis, excerpts from each selected chapter of the selected children's literature were categorised under the physical, socio-cultural, psychological, and linguistic contexts. The analysis showed that the selected children's literature revealed three features of context such as the physical, socio-cultural and psychological contexts are common to all the selected texts. The fourth identified type of context, the linguistic context expressed in proverbs and idioms were not explored by three of the selected children's literature and authors rely on the use of context types in their stories for the children's quick and appropriate understanding of the content. In conclusion, this research has been able to explore how adequate pragmatic contexts of the selected children's literature are in capturing the general interest of children based on the roles played by each context types identified in the selected texts.

Keywords: *Children's literature, Context, Language, Pragmatics, Pragmatic skills*

Corresponding Author: Elizabeth Tobiloba Mohammed

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Background to the Study

Meaning recovery is pertinent in every reading activity. Reading is not just about decoding the message in a text; reading entails understanding. According to Carter (1992:154) “what the reader brings to the text is as significant as what he or she takes from it. The arrows go both ways”. That is, reading is a quest for meaning and a process that requires active participants of both the author and reader. Readers participate by trying to understand their environment through the lives of characters in stories and by trying to understand how authors and their characters think and why they act in the way they do. On the other hand, authors of children's literature participate in the reading process by exploiting several context features in assisting readers to decipher their intended meanings from texts. Researchers have shown that authors make use of different types of context such as the physical, socio-cultural context, psychological context and the linguistic contexts that children are familiar with. Language “use” in this study refers to the use of linguistic codes (words) in the context of social circumstances depicted in the selected texts since pragmatics is the study of language use by individuals in specific social situations and whose actions are actually influenced by these situations. The study of language in its social context began with the rise of popular interests in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and ethnography of speaking in the 1970s particularly as a reaction to purely abstract linguistics. Scholars were concerned with a more balanced way of studying language, other than focus on language structures alone. To them, it was crucial to also examine the relationship between language and how language use is influenced by social context.

Children's literature aims to familiarize students with a representative sample of scholarly materials for children and to furnish them with the skills to judge those materials. Children's literature is any literature that is designed for and appreciated by children. Therefore, the basic relevance of pragmatics in children's literature is the language use. The various levels of language; that is, pragmatics, semantics, semiotics, phonology and syntax are of different areas of study but researchers are merely using literary text, text in use, and other writings to carry out investigations in the various areas of specialisation. However, for the purpose of this study, the basic concern is pragmatics. Thereby, this study tested the power of pragmatics to see its contributions to the reception of children's literature.

Furthermore, the research on children's literature from linguistic perspective of contextual meaning has not been completely directed. Accordingly, Osisanwo (2003) asserts that different situations will attract different interpretations or meanings from the same utterance. Therefore, the research identifies the situation or context of an utterance before concluding on what the language user used it for and the meaning conveyed or encoded by the writers in the selected children's literature. Verschueren (1999) posits that allowing context into linguistic analysis is a condition for precision that is, context contributes to clarity by being subject of negotiation, and uptake or acknowledgement, therefore the process called contextualisation is one of the most important in the verbal generation of meaning. In other words, contextual interpretations are actively indicated and/or used, and it is this fact that makes them most useful in linguistic analysis because it is what makes it traceable.

Levinson (1983) asserts that pragmatics is concerned with the ways in which language use is designed and how these patterns add to significance or meaning. To further buttress this point, Leech and Short (1987:290) argues that: “the pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into the aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered”. Therefore, this work is premised on how the meaning of linguistic expressions changes based on context in the selected children's literature. Pragmatic skills are crucial for imparting readers' personal thoughts, ideas and feelings. Children with poor pragmatics skills regularly misinterpret other's informative aim and experience issues responding suitably either verbally or non-verbally. The significance of the part played by children's literature in the children's psychological, social and linguistic enhancement and in the improvement of his or her basic academic skills, such as reading and writing, has been affirmed by numerous studies although many researchers have not been conducted in that direction; for instance; (Becher & Wolfans, 1977; Browne, 1996; Pellegrini & Galda, 1992).

However, children's literature has aroused so many scholars interest such that so many studies have been done based on children's literature from both author-illustrators and literacy professors' views, inherent lessons in texts, word meaning, image, and even layout; the use of context in pragmatic language comprehension in typically creating children with Asperger Syndrome/High-functioning Autism which are merely linguistic features. However, this study dwelled on how authors of children literature explore language and different context in their stories in providing meaning and thereby assisting children with poor pragmatic skills in acting appropriately in their various social environments. The main objective of this study is to find out how writers of children's literature explore the features of contexts to create their text and enhance meaning.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework of this study is hinged on Hymes theory of context. Within the framework of what he called the “ethnography of speaking” Hymes (1972) was the first scholar who proposed a theory of context in terms of his famous speaking grid, in which each letter of the acronym is the first letter of one of eight parameters of the communicative situation: Setting/scene: time, place, physical circumstances; Participants: speakers and hearers of different identities or categories; Ends: goals and purposes of a communicative event; Act Sequence: format and order of parts of the communicative events; Key: tone, manner or spirit of a communicative act (e.g., as ironical); Instrumentalities: forms and styles of speech (e.g., more formal or colloquial); Norms: social rules or norms governing the event (example, who may speak to whom); Genre: the kind or type of communicative event (example, a conversation, a story, or a political debate).

Hymes (in Teun Van Dijk, 2008) identified these properties of the communicative situation in order to account for the fact that language users not only need to learn the rules of grammar or discourse, but also need to know in what situation to use text or talk correctly. This approach already suggests that it is not just some objective external social situations

that are the context but the way the language users interpret or define the communication situation is part of their “communicative competence”. Prominent scholars such as Firth (1962), Hymes (1962), Halliday (1978) and Ellis (1966) have given careful consideration to the idea of situational context (Osisanwo, 2003). For the purpose of this study, Hymes approach to the issue of context which are the features of context will be considered as the tools for analysis.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics which focuses on the meaning of utterances in their context of use. Pragmatics is concerned with the significance of articulation, in which the importance depends on the situation where the expression occurs. Leech, in Trosborg, (1994) states that the speaker or the writer must have the capacity to rely upon a ton of shared assumptions, individuals purposes or goals, and the types of actions such as request, offer, apologize, and so forth; that they are performing when they speak. Based on the definitions, it can be presumed that pragmatics is the study of language or expression meaning in which the meaning is influenced by the context. In the context of pragmatics, the communication that occurs amongst speaker and listener should include and require great translation based on context and situation when communicated.

Pragmatics focuses on conversational implicature, which is the process in which the speaker implies and listener infers. Simply put, pragmatics studies language that is not specifically spoken. Instead, the speaker hints at or suggests an importance, and the listener assumes the right expectation. In a sense, pragmatics is seen as an understanding between individuals to comply with specific rules of communication. In ordinary language, the importance of words and phrases are constantly suggested and not unequivocally stated. In specific situations, words can have a specific significance. One may feel that words always have a specifically characterised meaning, yet that is not always the situation. Pragmatics studies how words can be deciphered in various ways based on the situation.

According to Goldstein, Kaczmarek, and English(2002) referred to in Abdoola, Flack, and Karrim, (2017), the term 'pragmatics' is normally used to allude to the ways in which speakers and listeners use language in social cooperation. Asha (2015) defines pragmatics as the system consolidating language components (phonology. Morphology, syntax and semantics) to create functional and socially fitting communication. This definition illustrates the unpredictable idea of pragmatics, as it relies on and comprises numerous language skills (Adams, 2002). Another aspect of pragmatics, which adds to its unpredictable nature is that it is socially and linguistically diverse ((ASHA), 2015). In the South African context, caseloads are to a great extent multilingual and multicultural; speech-language therapists must subsequently know about the social differences in pragmatics while accessing and furnishing mediation to individuals with social communication deficits (McLeod, 2014); (Perry, 2012). Around two years of age, children create language and they try to first figure out how to respond to request for illumination from others (Fletcher, O'Toole & Fourie, 2015). In any case, as their language develops they figure out how to freely make request for illumination at around four to five years of age (Fletcher, et.al, 2015).

Context refers to the situation, within which language functions. It may be physical or environmental, social context or institutional situation, as well as events, time, culture or social conventions that can influence language use. The first use of the term “context of situation” is attributable to Bronislaw Malinowski, a social anthropologist, whose study of language is a “mode of action” and as social behavior is closely tied to the relevant social situation in which it is used (Malinowski 1935). The meaning of words was not to be limited to sounds of utterances or their grammatical structure but must include the “pragmatic context” in which they are uttered. Firth (1957) explicates this study and in his contextual theory of meaning argues that context is the foundation of any linguistic enterprise because “normal linguistic behavior as a whole is meaning effort, directed towards the maintenance of appropriate patterns of life”. Since every utterance occurs within a “culturally determined context of situation” meaning is tied to that context about the speaker and the ways he perceives himself, his roles in the society and his relationship with other members of the society.

As pragmatics investigates context-based meaning, it will be impossible to talk about pragmatics without reference to the context in which utterances are made. And as a matter of fact, linguistic codes are actually selected and used according to some social sets of standards. It is contextual considerations that make the difference between structural linguistics and sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. We shall look into the features of context as we examine the various types of contexts. Children's literature aims to familiarise students with a representative sample of scholarly materials for children and to furnish them with the skills to judge those materials. Children's literature is a site for the analysis of social and social factors in literature, while children's story helps shape the ways in which children conceptualize the world.

Children's literature is any literature that is designed for and appreciated by children. All the more specifically, children's literature comprises those books composed and published for youngsters who are not yet interested in grown-up literature or who may not possess the perusing skills or formative understanding for its perusal. Notwithstanding books, children's literature also includes magazines proposed for pre-grown-up audiences. The age scope of children's literature is from outset through the stage of early adolescence, which generally coincides with the sequential ages of twelve through fourteen. Between that literature most suitable for children and that most proper for adults lies youthful grown-up literature. Usually, youthful grown-up literature is more developed in substance and more mind-boggling in artistic structure than children's literature.

Most of the artistic genres of grown-up literature show up in children's literature as well. Fiction in its various forms—contemporary realism, fantasy and historical fiction, verse, people tales, legends, myths, and epics all have their counterparts in children's literature. True to life for children includes books about the arts and humanities; the social, physical, organic, and earth sciences; and life story and collection of memoirs. Also, children's book may appear as picture books in which visual and verbal texts shape an interconnected entirety. Picture books for children incorporate storybooks, letters in other books, tallying

books, wordless books, and idea books. However, examples of the described children's literature will be used for the purpose of this study.

Children's literature was frequently used as a method to educate children with certain social values. Then, the use of context to derive meaning by children in their recommended literary texts is another focus in this field by looking at various author's language use based on the types of contexts present in the selected children's literary text. Looking at past studies in this field; Johnson (2014) works on the trends in children's literature and social ramifications. From her study, she reasoned that some of the materials accessible to kids today are socially minded. Also, as a result, impressionable youthful minds are raised with more awareness. The style remains steadfast; a successful children's book character is relatable and engages in an interesting plot. Inventive storylines, likewise, take after the settled classification of fantasy and realism in which she concludes that children will continue inclining towards books that energize innovativeness, ones that are loaded with surprising storylines and possibly dynamic illustrations.

Loukusa (2007), studies the use of context in pragmatic language comprehension in typically creating children with Asperger Syndrome/High-functioning Autism. His study reveals that it is so useful to use important theory as a theoretical framework as it has been shown in his work how advancement of pragmatic comprehension progresses between the ages of three and nine, how pragmatic processing load affects children's capacity to understand language comprehension, similar formative trends exist in both Finnish and English language context. Be that as it may, there might be some social differences in the use of various answering and clarification strategies. According to McCarthy and Carter (1994), the importance of language usually consists of two unique tiers: one is the semantic meaning that is autonomous from context; the other is contextual meaning that occurs in a specific context. Serafini and Layne (2013) discuss children's literature from both author-illustrators and literacy professor's views and suggested a look at children's literature both from its inherent lessons and its words, image, and even layout. However, most of these researches explored readers' perceptions of children's literature and context meaning in comprehension passages. However, there is little research on the various types of contexts present in the children's literature texts used by the authors to assist children to decipher meaning and for individual development in the society.

Methodology

The design of this research is based upon the pragmatic model of research; the two approaches to the issue of context are that of Hymes (1964) and the general types that subsume most of Hyme's types to make the categorization clearer. These have helped us to find out the different types of context which contribute to the children understanding of how language is used in particular situations in the selected children's literary texts. The research made use of both the primary and secondary data collection. The literature review as demonstrated in the second session of this study was collected from all available libraries, archives and internet which are basically the secondary type of data and most especially the primary data which are the copies of the selected children's literary texts that were purchased from different available bookshops.

In this study, an objective selection was carried out by purposefully choosing children's literary texts of age group (eight to twelve) years, the grades of the selected children's literature are for basic three to basic six and the selection of stories based on four different categories of children's literature. From each literary texts, the first, middle and last chapters were selected for the purpose of the analysis making the total of twelve chapters. This selection was done due to the fact that the main focus and idea which constitute the theme of the texts are fore grounded in the first and middle chapter, while the resolution is revealed in the last chapter. The titles, names of authors and the categories which the books fall in are listed below:

1. Adventure series – The Medicine Girl and Other Stories by Amina Adams.
2. Folk-Tales series – Lamad and the Golden Chair by Adebayo Fadare.
3. Health series – Ngozi and her Son by Olajire Olanlokun.
4. Fairy Tales series – Stories my Grandmother Told by Ben Akponine-Samuel.

The analysis of the selected children's literature is both quantitative and qualitative. The various types of context exploited by the authors of selected children's literature were identified, the appropriate application of the identified pragmatic tools are in the selected children's literature were examined and the selected children's literature were analyzed and interpreted based on Hymes' theory of context.

However, the various aspects of context found in the four selected children's literature were identified and analysed based on the examples of language use that are centered on the types context explored in the first, middle and last chapters of each selected children's literature. The fourth selected children's literature is not in chapters but grouped into various stories that were considered as first story, middle story and the last story in the analysis of data. The subject matter and the theme of the selected children's literature which is the main idea of the text was identified; then, from the selection, there were excerpts selected from the selected chapters based on the types of contexts such as; physical contexts, cultural contexts, linguistic contexts, and psychological contexts that are featured in the selected chapters were drawn out and analyzed based on the relation of the implied meaning communicated through the identified contexts in the language use of the writers for the purpose of achieving the aim of this study. For instance, all the selected children's literature possesses tools such as; the participants, settings and time under physical context.

Data Analysis

Title of the text: *Stories My Grandmother Told*

Author: Ben Akponine-Samuel

Book series: folk-tales series

Synopsis

The narrator in the story who is named Peter is very happy when he travels home to visit his grandmother whom he had not seen in years. His grandmother tells the children stories and Peter enjoys her stories. Then, one morning he wakes up, his grandmother is gone and he

realizes that behind her stories are some messages that told the children to be nice, kind, unselfish, not to be boastful, not to be envious or jealous, to be careful of friends, to be forgiving, to be polite, never to act when angry and to respect people around.

Content Analysis

1. The Physical Context

a. Participants

Excerpt 1

My grandmother was very old by the time I was born but she still was around for some time as I grew up. In hindsight, she was a very strong woman because I remember how she used to walk my immediate younger sister, Sarah and me to school every morning one certain term when she came to stay with my family. My mother had just put to bed my youngest sister, Margret whom we simply called Meg. (Chapter 1, p.3)

Comment

The underlined words or expressions depict the active participants in the story. Family members/ relationship. The frequency count of the participants in the story is stated below:

Table 1: Tabular Analysis of Participants in Text 1

Participants	Description	Gender	Chronological Status	Social Status	Occupation	Relationship	Number of occurrence
The narrator (peter and first child)		Male	Man	Middle-class	Student	Family to all the named participant	
Grandmother	A very young woman, a sweet old woman, a widow.	Female	Old woman	villager	–	Family member	7
My Mother	–	Female	Woman	Middle-class	–	Family member	9
My Father	–	Male	Man	Middle-class	–	Family member	16
My immediate younger sister (my sister, Sarah first sibling)	Inquisitive sister	Female	Girl	Middle-class	Student	Family member	23

Table 1 reveals the exploration of constant and frequent use of participants that serves as a pointer to its physical context explored by the author for authentic interpretation of the text in revealing the roles of context in their language use.

b. **The Time**

Excerpt 2

My grandmother was very old by the time I was born but she still was around for some time as I grew up. In hindsight, she was a very strong woman because I remember how she used to walk my immediate younger sister, Sarah and me to school every morning one certain term when she came to stay with my family. My mother had just put to bed my youngest sister, Margret whom we simply called Meg. (Chapter 1, p.3)

Comment

The underlined words or expressions describe the time of events or actions made by the participants in the story. This contributes to right meaning because they are expressions and contexts that children who read the story are familiar with.

The underlined expressions in Excerpt 2 are adverbial indicator of time:

Settings

Excerpt 3

It had been my mother's duty to take us to school on foot as we did not own a car. The school was about a kilometer away from home (Chapter 1, p.3)

Comment

The underlined expression depict the settings of the story because it is within children's range and it is what they are familiar with. It is an informal setting basically between a family and their visit to their grandmother's. There are two main settings from the excerpt above for clearer understanding of the text as a whole.

2. The Socio-Cultural Context

Excerpt 4

“When I was a boy, my father said. “My mother used to tell me stories at night of how the tortoise got its cracked back, why the moon and stars went to stay up in the sky.”(Chapter 1, p.4)

Comment

The statement is made in a situation where the speaker who is Peter's father is aware that

the hearers would not only conclude from the form of utterance itself is an information, but also that the information satisfies the specific information conditions as well as grounds for these conditions, as defined by the social structure. Only the hearers or readers who have the information available about the context as specified would be able to judge whether these grounds are sufficient for acceptability of act of informing, and hence whether the information should be complied with or not.

3. The Psychological Context

Excerpt 5

“Once, my mother and Sarah had gone to visit a woman who had just put to bed, then Sarah was just seven years old and Sarah asked the woman why her baby was not fine. The woman had been stunned and my mother had been embarrassed” (Chapter 1, p.6)

Comment

Sometimes utterances made may not easily reflect the state of mind on the surface. The word 'stunned' is a verb and the word 'embarrassed' is an adjective. From the statement made by Sarah to the woman, the state of mind of the woman can easily reveal that the woman must have been very angry, sad and at the same time disappointed. In the first chapter of the text, the exact state of mind of the narrator and his family is well described and identified through the utterances made by the interlocutors especially that of Sarah's when she was really anxious to know about the stories, if they were real or not by asking series of questions just to get answers which led to making her mother irritated by the questions she was asking and that made her mother react by shutting her up. This would have led to Sarah's state of mind which is “anger and sadness” which are nouns that describes the participant's state of mind.

Content Analysis

1. Physical context

a. Participant

Excerpt 6

Mukoro and his friend went together to find the flower. While they were in the forest on their way to the valley, Emina suddenly stopped. He looked at Mukoro. “You are now interested in marrying the princess. I thought it had to do with good looks but now that it's not about good looks, every man is a potential winner,” he said. (Chapter 3, p.17)

Main participants

Grandmother
Grandchildren
Grandaunt

The participants underlined in Excerpt 6 relate to a particular culture in Nigeria 'Benin' which mean 'something' and this names decode the setting of the story.

b. Settings

Excerpt 7

“The king sent the town crier to announce that all eligible young men who were interested in marrying the princess must assemble in his palace on the next market day. Mukoro and Emina heard the announcement and like all the young men in the village, they were interested in marrying the princess” (Chapter 3, p.14)

Comment:

The underlined expressions are what describe where the action or activity or event took place. There is 'the Palace' and 'the village'. The palace appeared three (3) times, while the village appeared four (4) times as seen in the excerpt.

c. Time

The market day was the specific time or day that was mentioned in the story that the event took place and it was mentioned three (3) times.

4. Socio-cultural context

Excerpt 8

“One day, the two friends decided that it was time for them to get married. They decided that it was time for them to get married. They decided to seek for wives. Coincidentally, the king of the village who had a beautiful daughter had decided that it was time to give his daughter's hand in marriage. In those days, it was the king who decided who married his daughter because of the privileges such a man would enjoy.” (Chapter 3, p.14)

Comment

The underlined expressions suggest the exploration of culture familiar to children explored by the author's use of language for derivation of meaning. Children are familiar with the situation whereby the king decides who marries his daughter based on their cultural background and belief. Children are also familiar with having a king who rules his kingdom. These assertions are true based on the fact that these way of life practiced in the contemporary Nigerian society still exists. This context explored by the author has one way or the other contributed to the understanding of the selected literary texts.

Content Analysis

1. Physical context

a. Participants

Excerpt 9

My grandmother agreed to tell us the story. “Once upon a time, many, many years ago, the moon and the stars lived on earth, on a river bank. They were friends with the river. Nobody saw the moon and the stars as they usually ran to hide in a cave whenever people came to the bank of the river. They did not want people to touch them. (Chapter 5, p.25)

Comment

Participants in a speech event plays a contributory role to the context of situation. Finding out who the participants are based on their description, occupation, sex, social status could be the key to right understanding and interpretation of the message being passed across by the author of the literary text.

b. Settings

Excerpt 10

The moon and the stars usually slept all day and did not see the people as they arrived at the riverbank. The people were marveled as they saw the moon and the stars were sad and could not run away.

“These are lovely treasures. Let's go and get sacks so we can take them to the village,” one of the people suggested. (Chapter 5, p.26)

Comment

The place in which a speech event is taking place gives reasonable and right contribution to the interpretation of a message and the author of this text as being able to explore the use of terms or expressions that describe or state places where children relate to. For instance, the underlined expressions in Excerpt 9.

c. Time

Excerpt 11

They agreed and that night, while the river was asleep, the moon and the stars leapt off the earth and shot themselves up into the sky. They stayed there and lit up the night sky. Even people were surprised when they saw the night had turned bright.

The following day, when the river woke up and could not find her friends, she went in search of them but could not find them. (Chapter 5, p.28)

Comment

The underlined expressions depict the time the speech acts in the story took place which is a great tool in determining the right message and interpretation. There are other expressions that point at the time in the story for specification and clarity.

Psychological Context

Excerpt 12

And when the moon tried to talk to the river, she really got irritated and splashed water on the moon, drenching it. The moon was very angry. He went away. The following day, the river allowed some people to sail their canoes on it and brought them to see the moon and the stars.

The moon and the stars usually slept all day and did not see the people as they arrived at the river bank. The people were marbled as they saw the moon and many stars. They began to admire them and touch them. The moon and the stars were sad and could not run away. (Chapter 5, p.26)

Comment

All the underlined words and expressions suggest the state of mind of each participants in the text. The expressions or context can be classified as either the positive or negative state of mind.

Title of Book: Lamad and the Golden Chair

Author: Adebayo Fadare

Book Series: Adventure Series

Synopsis

A very poor and sorrowful man wakes up one day to see himself being crowned a powerful king but he can't sit on the golden chair in his palace. For decades, no king has ever sat on the golden chair. Haven tested wealth and poverty he decides to break the norm.

Context Analysis

1. Physical context

Excerpt 13

"How do you know my name, sir?" Lamad asked.

'Don't bother yourself about that, I know everything about you since you were born. I have been working with God for well over a thousand years. I am Salto, a messenger of God.' The old man replied"

"As from this moment, you shall never sit on the golden chair again as long as you want to remain the king of this great kingdom,' Chief Lulu concluded.

King Lamad rose from the golden chair and sat on the wooden one. All the chiefs, the king's new wives and the people in the palace hailed their new king, 'Long live our king!' (Chapter 1, p.3&6)

a. Participants- the underlined words or expressions depicts the participants present in the story and the names are used as reference to the participants for better understanding.

1. The first participant identified is named Lamad who was a poor man and later known as the king at end of the story. Lamad appeared eleven (11) times, king Lamad appeared three (3) times - Lamad + king Lamad = 14 times
2. Salto who is also known as the old man appeared twice (2), while where he was referred to as the old man was mentioned five (5) times – the old man + Salto = seven times.
3. Chief Lulu known as the most senior chief is another active participant in the excerpt who appeared twice (2).
4. The other participants are the chiefs, the king's new wives and the people. The number of times that they were mentioned is just once which showed how minor their characterization or importance is in the whole datum and gives clearer explanation on those who the reader's attention is to be focused on.

b. Age

Excerpt 14

“Lamad was a poor man in the real sense of it. He was so poor that he could not afford to get married at the age of forty”.

“Lamad was afraid on seeing this man, about ninety years with his head completely covered with grey hair. As old as he was, he still had a set of white teeth.” (Chapter 1, p.1&3)

Comment

The underlined expressions describe how old or age group of both participants and the description makes it easier for the readers within children's range because they can easily identify that in deriving meaning from the text.

c. Settings

Excerpt 15

“Lamad was perplexed that all these were happening to him in the forest. The old man asked him to sit on the golden chair”

“Immediately he sat on the golden chair, the old man disappeared. The golden chair he sat on turned round and he saw himself in a king's palace”

“Chief Lulu, the most senior chief who was also the people's spokesman spoke, 'welcome, our new king. This is Boro town, the capital town of Ambara Kingdom. Don't be surprised the way you were brought here. That is the way we normally have our own kings.”

Comment

The identified places where the action took place in the excerpt above gives clue to the situation being talked about because it determines the message or meaning. The author was

able to capture the places of action in story by referring to the places mentioned frequently in the whole chapter specifically for clarity and emphasis to give quick understanding of the message.

2. Socio-cultural context

Different people from different cultural backgrounds tends to have different beliefs, habits, cultural heritage and religion. Example of this is used by the author of this story to capture the mind of the reader and for better understanding or reliance on adequate interpretation.

Excerpt 16

Only strangers directed to them by the messengers of God and equally brought to them by the golden chair ascended the throne in this town. According to their custom, sons of deceased kings cannot ascend the throne. Chief Lulu, the most senior chief who was also the people's spokesman spoke, 'welcome, our new king. This is Boro town, the capital town of Ambara Kingdom. Don't be surprised the way you were brought here. That is the way we normally have our own kings(Chapter 1, p.4-5)

Comment

The underlined expressions indicate how the author explored the use of culture based on the culture, beliefs and norms of a particular society. The expressions are listed below and how frequent they appear gives room for quick understanding for the readers (children).

3. Psychological context

From chapter 1 of the second story, there are nine (9) words or expressions that describe the state of mind of the character named Lamad, who was so poor that he could not afford to get married at the age of forty.

Content Analysis

1. Physical context

a. Participants

Excerpt 17

“His wives noticed his recent behavior but no one could easily approach him. He was not approachable to his wives, children and chiefs. There was another kingdom called Zogo kingdom. It was not as big as Ambara kingdom. The paramount ruler of this kingdom, king Zua, was a friend of king Lamad” (Chapter 4, p.22)

Comment

The underlined words or expressions in the excerpt above are references to the participants while their number of occurrences in datum five as a whole are present in Table 4:

Table 2: Tabular Analysis of Participants in Text 2

Previous participants	New participant	Number of occurrence
King Lamad	_	10 times
The chiefs	_	3 times
His wives	_	2 times
_	King Zua	3times

Comment

Based on physical context, the author has been able to maintain the use of participants and settings that were discovered earlier in the fourth datum apart from few participants and settings that were added for more emphasis in his language use in order to avoid misinterpretation and confusion in understanding the message.

b. The Linguistic Context

Excerpt 18

How could he be transferred to a better kingdom? Has he not learnt at his age that a bird in the hand is worth a thousand in the bush? Another adage says, 'the devil you know is better than the angel you don't know'. (Chapter 4, p. 19 & 22)

Comment

The author decided to add another aspect of context which is the linguistic context in order to show how important the conversation is by making use of figurative language such as the use of proverbs that are underlined in the excerpt above so that the meaning would not be lost. Altogether, there are four (4) linguistic contexts in the datum. The syntactic representation of some underlined expressions:

1. //A bird/ in/ the hand/ is/ worth a thousand in the bush//.- Adverbial clause.
 S A C^E P C^E
2. //The devil/ you know/ is/ better than/ the angel/ you don't know//.- Nominal clause
 S C^E P C^I C^E C^I

Content Analysis

a. Settings

Excerpt 19

The truth of the matter was that as soon as he sat on the chair, it really took him to another kingdom. The chair landed him in the palace of the most wretched kingdom in the world. He was brought there as their king. Ah! Everything about that kingdom was poor, wretchedness was written on the faces of all the inhabitants of this kingdom...
 ... They lived in houses built with sticks and palm leaves as roofs. People looked for plantain or bananaleaves to spread on the floor to sleep.(Chapter 7, p. 37)

Comment

The author made use of the underlined expressions to describe the new setting in which the new speech events have taken place and these show the physical relations of the participants with regard to their reaction which contributes to the interpretation.

b. Psychological Context

Excerpt 19

On hearing this, king Lamad fell down and began to cry, 'had I known! Had I known, I wouldn't have done it. Please help me out, old man,' king Lamad begged. (Chapter 7, p.41)

Comment

The excerpt above describes king Lamad's state of mind. The first underlined expression shows how sad, depressed and disappointed king Lamad was. His utterances show that he was full of regrets. Other expressions under psychological context that were discovered are listed below based on the negative and positive state of mind of the participants or utterer that are present in datum six (6).

c. Socio-Cultural Context

Excerpt 20

Whatever happens, all his wives and children will not suffer because they will automatically become the responsibility of the next king to take good care of them as their custom demands? (Chapter 7, p. 36)

Comment

The excerpt above is a perfect example of socio-cultural context explored by the author by showing the cultural background of the people of Ambara kingdom. This shows their habit value system, cultural heritage and their religion. This explains that speech acts that are socio-culturally based will need a reliance on adequate interpretation and this is seen in the author's use of language in the excerpt above.

Title of Book: Ngozi and Her Son

Author: Olajire Olanlokun

Book Series: Health series

Synopsis

Ngozi's new born baby is the family's bundle of joy. Being her first child, Ngozi ensures that she follows to the letter the rudiments of proper child upbringing. Her son's healthy disposition is a proof to her friends that she is doing the right thing.

Content Analysis

1. Physical context

a. Participants

Extract 21

“Charles Ndem received a telephone call that his wife Ngozi had been delivered of a baby boy in hospital. He was wild with joy. 'Can I come right away?' he asked. 'No, please wait till the visiting time which is 5pm. Your wife asked me to phone you and tell you the good news,' said the nurse. Mr. Ndem rushed to see his father and mother and he broke the news to them. His mother was very happy.” (Chapter 1, p.1-2)

Comment

The author has been able to capture the relationship between a family with the use of the participants that captures what children are familiar with by making references to members of family.

b. Settings

Excerpt 22

By 4.45p.m, Mr. Ndem was already in the hospital. He waited like others who came to visit their friends and relations in the hospital. They all had to wait till the visiting time. The hospital was very clean and the fresh air around the entrance of the ward was quite welcoming. (Chapter 1, p.2)

Comment

The underlined expression in the excerpt states and describes the settings of the story which is basically in the hospital and it occurred five (5) times and the home was briefly mentioned once in the excerpt. Definitely, the physical setting, that is the place, hospital, home, are clues to the type of meaning or right interpretation that the author expects the children (readers) to have in their minds.

Excerpt 23

By 4.45p.m, Mr. Ndem was already in the hospital. He waited like others who came to visit their friends and relations in the hospital. They all had to wait till the visiting time. The hospital was very clean and the fresh air around the entrance of the ward was quite welcoming. At the dot of 5p.m., the visitors were allowed to come in. (Chapter 1, p.2)

Comment

The author tried to be specific with the time a speech act takes place because it can also contribute to determining what language is being used for. The underlined expressions are good examples used by the author to assist the children in derivation of meaning. Other examples from the datum are;

1. No, please wait till the visiting time which is 5p.m
2. Fifteen minutes to the closing time for visitors
3. I will expect you same time tomorrow.

Generally, the expressions that give information about the time occurred six (6) times in the datum.

2. Psychological context

Excerpt 24

'Yes, it is a thing of joy. When I was safely delivered of the baby I decided that you should be phoned immediately. I knew you were full of anxieties.' (Chapter 1, p.3)

Comment

The state of mind of the participants was well described in the datum and examples are underlined in the excerpt above. Other examples are:

Content analysis

1. Physical Context

a. Participants

Excerpt 25

Charles and Ngozi Ndem had a neighbor whose child had polio. The boy called Sunday, was not immunized when he was very young. Hence, when he had polio attack he had no resistance. He was even lucky that he was not crippled. Sunday could not run or walk freely like other children. (Chapter 3, p.18)

Comment

The underlined words or expressions describe the participants and so they are relevant to meaning or understanding.

b. Time

Excerpt 26

'Please, note that if your child is ill at the time your 'shot is due' that is to say when your immunization appointment is due, we will immunize him or her. This does not complicate the illness. If your child gets the immunization today and he reacts to it, call on us immediately. The reaction can be in form of fever, restlessness, loss of energy, we will immunize him or her. This does not complicate the illness. If your child gets the immunization today and he reacts to it, call on us immediately. (Chapter 3, p.20)

Comment

All the words or expressions that are underlined indicate the time a speech act takes place or will take place in the excerpt. These items can be used in determining what language is being used for in a particular situation for right interpretation and understanding. Other references to time in the datum provided are listed below:

1. Ngozi had started the immunization for Ugo when he was two months old.
2. The shots were given at two months interval.
3. The nurse spoke about the booster shots which would be giving at about 18 months and four years.
4. The experience of Charles and Ngozi on their son, Ugo, reminded Charles of what he learnt in his Biology class in school several years before.
5. He felt happy that children of Ugo's generation were very lucky.

Generally, there are twelve (12) cases that words and expressions were used in the story for specifying the time a particular event took place or is to take place and this contributes to right interpretation or meaning.

c. Settings

Excerpt 27

Before they returned home, go had slept. Fortunately for him, he had no reaction to the immunization but the child of a neighbor was not so lucky. The parents complained that he had fever, loss of appetite and even a lump. The mother had to take the child to the hospital. (Chapter 3, p.22)

Comment

The place where a speech act is going on can be a major determinant of its meaning. The underlined word and expressions gives clues to the place (hospital setting) what meaning the expressions implies and it assists the reader in understanding and it how it agrees with physical settings.

Conclusion

The analysis carried out in the previous chapter have presented the various types of context exploited by the authors of the selected children's literary texts to see how authors explore context types to assist children to decipher meaning. The extent at which these contexts have facilitated the interpretation of the selected texts has been examined, the research has also revealed how appropriate the application of the identified pragmatic tools are represented and finally, the instances where the basic types of context are explored in the selected children's literary texts were investigated. With the effort made by this research in respect of roles of context in selected children's literature, the findings show that more researches can be done on topics in pragmatics by examining Dell Hymes' theory of context in order to function in other areas in literary and non-literary texts. Authors of children's literature should still explore the use of mild or simple proverbs or idioms that is common and would be easily understood by the children. Teachers should be equipped

with the knowledge of pragmatic contexts so as to give accurate teaching based on the recommended texts for the children's level. More studies on adult's literary texts and what differentiates it from that of children's literary text can be considered by upcoming researchers since there are lots of explorations on types of contexts that authors use in differentiating children's literary texts from that of adult's literature.

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