Understanding Interdiscursivity: A Pragmatic Model[*]

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Abstract:

The present paper, based on Verschueren's (1999) Linguistic Adaptation Theory (LAT), proposes a pragmatic model for the analysis of interdiscursivity. Specifically, the paper begins with a brief delimitation of the research object so as to distinguish it from any other similar linguistic phenomena. Then the relevant literature on interdiscursivity is reviewed from the diachronic as well as synchronic dimensions. At the same time, a brief outline of the problems in the existing studies on interdiscursivity is presented and the relevant theories that will be applied to tackle these problems are introduced in detail, which will provide a solid theoretical and practical basis for the analytical model. Finally, the pragmatic model of the present study is built up and presented in the form of a flow chart.

In this pragmatic model, the functioning of interdiscursivity is taken as adaptation to variables of the physical, social, and mental world. Interdiscursivity can be understood as the outcome of producers' choice making, dynamic negotiation and linguistic adaptation. The interpretation of interdiscursivity, on the other hand, can be better achieved by tracing the specific ways of meaning generation from the four focal points of context, structure, dynamics, and salience, while at the same time taking into account the variability of interdiscursivity. Various kinds of communicative functions are realized when the interpretation of interdiscursivity is successfully completed. It is hoped that this pragmatic model may shed some light on the understanding of interdiscursivity.

**Key words**: Interdiscursivity, Pragmatic model, Adaptation

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper attempts to generate a pragmatic model based on Verschueren's (1999) Linguistic Adaptation Theory (LAT) for the analysis of interdiscursivity. Specifically, this model will be applied to investigate what mechanism lies behind interdiscursivity, what force prompts language users to choose interdiscursivity in communication and what effects it can achieve. This is an attempt to account for how interdiscursivity is produced and interpreted, and to 'raise the curtain' from the physical, social, and mental dimensions so as to 'reveal the inside story' of interdiscursivity.

Interdiscursivity refers to the mixing of diverse genres, discourses, or styles associated with institutional and social meanings in a single text. This linguistic phenomenon permeates through language use, especially in contemporary institutional settings. A case in point can be found in a mediating event, in which three kinds of activities, namely, the disputing parties' bargaining and inquiring, the mediator's offering of law knowledge and voicing of advice, intermingle in the process to achieve settlement. Thus, it can be seen as interdiscursive through the hybridity of three genres: bargaining, counseling, and therapeutic. In the same vein, the medical interview of today exists in the interdiscursive relations between the standard medical interview genre and counseling, between the discourse types of the traditional Chinese medicine and the Western medicine, which is particularly common in China. All these interdiscursive relations exhibit a fascinating trend of modern language use. Here is an example:
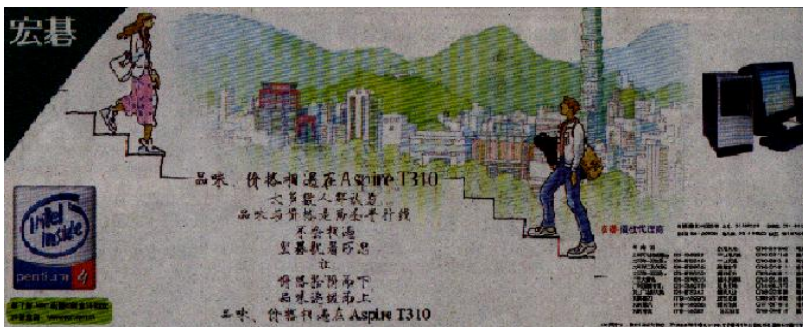
(*Southern Metropolis Daily*, 27 Nov. 2003 A1)

This is a typical advertisement for computer, taken from a newspaper published in China. Its special feature lies in the placing of a beautiful and thought-provoking picture at the salient position. Below is the verbal message about the computer, which is written in the form of a 'poem'. A photograph of the computer and its icon are also placed in the advertising. Thus, the interdiscursivity is produced through the hybridity of literary form and non-literary content, the mixing of verbal message and visual art, and the blending of information and persuasion.

The choice of interdiscursivity as the focus of the present study is based upon the following considerations: Firstly, although interdiscursivity is very popular in modern language use, it has received scant attention in linguistic study. It is hoped that the present study would promote further research on the topic. Secondly, the study of interdiscursivity is of great theoretical and practical significance. Last but not least, a preliminary review of the relevant literature reveals that no systematic analysis of interdiscursivity from a pragmatic perspective has ever been conducted up till now. We believe that the interdiscursive study from a pragmatic perspective can, to some degree, contribute to the intensive understanding of interdiscursivity.

2. TERMINOLOGICAL ISSUE

It must be admitted that the phenomenon of interdiscursivity exists in many different forms and the ways of understanding vary a lot amongst researchers. The relevant literature shows that the key notion of interdiscursivity remains quite vague in the previous studies. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish it from other similar linguistic phenomena as a starting point to keep away from being confused.

2.1 Interdiscursivity versus intertextuality

Generally, intertextuality refers to the phenomenon that other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, which is typically expressed through explicit surface textual features such as quotations and citations. Actually, all texts are constituted of elements of other texts and use such intertextual resources to varying degrees and for various purposes. Interdiscursivity, however, operates on a different dimension in that it refers to how a text is constituted by a combination of other language conventions (genres, discourses and styles). Thus the difference between these two concepts is that intertextuality refers to actual surface forms in a text, 'borrowed' from other texts; whereas interdiscursivity involves the whole language system referred to in a text. In this sense, interdiscursivity is more complicated because it is concerned with the implicit relations between discursive formations rather than the explicit relations between texts.

2.2 Interdiscursivity versus generic intertextuality

Some scholars (e.g. Xin 2000: 191) have used the term 'generic intertextuality' to cover what interdiscursivity actually refers to. However, these two notions do not always have the same connotation in the sense that interdiscursivity does not always refer to the mixing of different genres. In some cases, it is the articulation of discourses or of styles that makes sense in the formation of interdiscursive relations. Although genre is an overarching term among the three elements (genres, discourses and styles) and the relationship between them is dialectical, it needs to be clarified that generic intertextuality cannot be equated with interdiscursivity.

2.3 Interdiscursivity versus heteroglossia

Interdiscursivity is grounded on Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) notion of heteroglossia. Bakhtin (1981: 291) holds a heteroglossic view that any text is a combination of one's own voice and the voices of others. Thus we can see heteroglossia is a phenomenon that produces social heterogeneity. Later on, heteroglossia was recontextualized by Fairclough (1992) as interdiscursivity, with the ideological flavor highlighted at the same time. For Fairclough, interdiscursivity is more ideological than heteroglossia in the sense that the tracking of ideology is a more specific task for interdiscursivity than in Bakhtin's works. For Bakhtin, every speech act betrays an ideology or ideologies issuing from individual speakers in the context of a given dialogue.

2.4 Interdiscursivity versus dialogicality

The Bakhtinian notion 'dialogicality' is closely related to interdiscursivity and sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably in the literature of discourse analysis. According to Bakhtin (1981, 1986), all texts are dialogic and must be understood against the background of other texts on similar or related topics. Texts and utterances are not the writer or speaker's own products; they usually contain other 'voices' — explicit or implicit elements from other sources, including genres, discourses and styles from other language conventions, through which interdiscursivity can be formed.

Nevertheless, in application, these two notions should preferably be differentiated: dialogicality is a property of the subject matter of human being and cultural sciences, while interdiscursivity is a property of text that takes dialogicality systematically into consideration. A tendency to dialogicality, taken as the ability to indulge in dialogue, is an innate human property since man is a semiotic animal. Therefore, dialogicality is a much more general property or principle of language use, discourse and cognition, whereas interdiscursivity is a relatively specific linguistic phenomenon that bears social significance. Moreover, these two notions are used in different situations. Dialogicality is perhaps most familiar in the analysis of the literature, arts and scholarly texts, in which we can talk about not only dialogical relations within a given text or piece of art or music, but also dialogue between generations of texts and authors (artists, composers, etc.). By contrast, interdiscursivity is generally applied to both literary and nonliterary texts, which focuses on the dialogical relations between different language conventions related to certain social tendencies or ideological significances.

3. A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

Interdiscursivity is a notion of the Bakhtinian tradition in literature (also made available, e.g. in France, by Kristeva), with piecemeal researches in stylistics and CDA, more usually as a special kind of 'intertextuality'. In this part we will briefly trace the origin of interdiscursivity so as to better understand its modern manifestations. We will also review in brief the different approaches of the study and try to present an objective comment on each of them. This will help to achieve a clear model from a pragmatic perspective for the present study.

3.1 Interdiscursivity as a special kind of intertextuality

The term 'interdiscursivity' was coined by Fairclough (1992) when he accounted for the more overarching concept of 'intertextuality'. He defines intertextuality basically as 'the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth' (Fairclough 1992: 84). Drawing upon Bakhtin's (1986) work, Fairclough (1992) further introduces the classification of intertextuality by French discourse analysts, namely, 'manifest' intertextuality and 'constitutive' intertextuality. Manifest intertextuality refers to the explicit presence of one text in another through the techniques of discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and/or irony. Constitutive intertextuality refers to the mixing configuration of discourse conventions such as genres, activity types, and styles associated with different types of discourse. In order to emphasize that the focus is on discourse conventions rather than other texts as constitutive, Fairclough introduces the new term 'interdiscursivity' to replace 'constitutive intertextuality'.

However, the concept of interdiscursivity can be traced to Bakhtin's dialogized 'heteroglossia' (see Bakhtin 1981, 1986). For Bakhtin, language is essentially composed of utterances rather than sentences, and utterances are always, except in some imagined ideal conditions, dialogized in the sense that each is viewed from the perspective of the others. Such a dialogization of utterances is always going on, and utterances are always changing and result in what Bakhtin calls 'hybridization' — the mixture of different utterances within a single piece of language. Bakhtin describes this complex mixture of utterances as heteroglossia. What Bakhtin holds in terms of the concept of dialogized heteroglossia brings us to the issue of interdiscursivity, and Bakhtin is more concerned with the language in specific social situations.

During the 'transitional period' from structuralism to poststructuralism (in the late 1960s), Kristeva introduced Bakhtin's theory into France and coined the term 'intertextuality' (see Kristeva 1986, actually written in 1966). For Kristeva, intertextuality implies 'the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history' (1986: 39). Here, the Bakhtinian notions of dialogism and heteroglossia have been rephrased within Kristeva's attention to text, textuality and their relation to society and history.

Based upon Kristeva's expression of intertextuality, the French discourse analysts draw a distinction between 'manifest' and 'constitutive' intertextuality. The latter is highlighted by Fairclough as 'interdiscursivity' in order to echo Pêcheux's notion of 'interdiscourse'[1], and to foreground various elements of 'orders of discourse'[2], such as genres, discourses, and styles.

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[1] 'Interdiscourse' can be understood as configuration of different elements of discourses (i.e. discursive practices), within, e.g. a social field or a social institution. This is a very important notion in that it allows us to understand more specifically the textuality of hegemony, or in other words, the discursive processes by means of which subjects are produced and the common sense maintained.

[2] This term originates from Foucault, referring to networks of social practices in their language aspect, or the social organizations of linguistic variations. We can also see it as the abstract social counterpart of 'interdiscursivity'.

Thus, Pêcheux's 'interdiscourse' and Foucault's 'the order of discourse' can be seen as precursors of 'interdiscursivity', and they constitute the two theoretical bases for interdiscursive study in CDA, which will be discussed in detail in Section 3.3.

From this rather brief diachronic review, we can see that all texts are intertextual, in the sense that each utterance is a link in a chain of speech communication, or that each text contains within itself evidences of the histories of other texts. As a special kind of intertextuality, interdiscursivity is related to the whole language system involved in a text. As Allen (2000) suggests, it (intertextuality, or interdiscursivity in particular) is a term by no means exclusively related to the study of literary works or to written communication in general. So in what follows, we will review how interdiscursivity is approached in literary and non-literary texts, both written and oral.

3.2   Interdiscursivity in literary texts: the stylistic approach

Interdiscursivity in literary texts, which manifests itself more usually as genre mixing or genre switching, has been widely studied from the stylistic approach. These studies can be said to have their origins in twentieth-century literary stylistics, particularly in the seminal essays of Bakhtin. The major concerns of this approach are how literary texts are formed through interdiscursivity and what aesthetic as well as social significances are achieved through this text-forming scheme.

Bakhtin (1981, 1986) explores the reasons for genre mixing by examining the artistic and ideological resonances of literary and non-literary styles in a text. For him, poetry's formal and stylistic difference from the context-influenced style of non-poetic language indicates a thinking and behavioral pattern that is free from the dangerous contamination of ordinary life. He further emphasizes that novel is a pluralistic discourse. It intentionally mixes many different genres which are widely separated in time and social space. And this conscious genre hybridization (or interdiscursivity) is a major device for creating artistic language-images in the novel (see Bakhtin 1981: 358-366). However, to Bakhtin, this genre hybridization is not an easy process; it implies friction and struggle.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, there have appeared quite a few broad studies on interdiscursivity in photographs and films. For example, Collins (1989) and Hutcheon (1989) have explored the political dimensions of postmodern texts by focusing (in part) specifically on the ideological significances of genre combination in films. Knee (1994), however, takes genre compounding or hybridizing in films as a means of weaving together the plots.

Later on, Allen (2000) holds that historical events — be they of personal, social, psychological or cultural in nature — merge into each other, with all their ideological conflicts and divisions, in the narrative. He touches upon this linguistic phenomenon in literary texts and attributes the significance to the social context. Thus the clash articulated in the interdiscursive phenomenon sounds, to Allen, a conflict between different ideological, class and literary positions.

But the most detailed exploration of interdiscursivity is found in Bradford's (1997) *Stylistics*, where Bradford applies his theory of 'double pattern'[3] to the analysis of genre mixing and/or genre switching in poetry, novel and drama. For him, this interdiscursive feature of poetry is a main factor that gives rise to the tension between the two poles of the 'double pattern'. Bradford ascribes this kind of interdiscursivity to the political and social disorders at that time. This mode of interdiscursivity, however, is more clearly shown in Shakespeare's dramas. Bradford even thinks that this genre mixing in Shakespeare's dramas maps the distinction between European civilization and the savages of the new world. For Bradford, the novel is an all-inclusive framework of genres and linguistic styles; the unskillful use of interdiscursivity, which leaves uneasy relations of elements and clumsy traces in texts, can mirror the immaturity in some of the eighteenth century novels. Correspondingly, the maturity of the nineteenth century novel lies in the novelists' polished and confident interdiscursive tactics.

In short, the stylistic approach has successfully introduced the social and cultural factors into the analysis of linguistic structures. This view helps us better understand the macro relationship between literature and social/historical context. However, such analyses from the stylistic approach are focused on the surface level and fail to reveal in depth the operating process of interdiscursivity, for they do not take the dynamics of communication and the cognitive elements into consideration. Furthermore, no satisfactory theoretical model for the understanding of interdiscursivity has ever been offered in the stylistic approach.

3.3 Interdiscursivity in non-literary texts: the CDA approach

Ample studies on interdiscursivity in non-literary texts have been made from the CDA approach. These studies are mainly concerned with the interdiscursive relations in texts, with a view to understanding social change or conducting social research. As a mediating link, this approach bridges the gap between linguistic analysis and social research by scrutinizing the social and critical significance of interdiscursivity. This attempt has brought the dynamics of communication back into the studies of interdiscursivity through analyzing the relevant discursive practices.

Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2010) thinks that interdiscursivity is more than a stylistic phenomenon; rather, it has important implications for social practice. Thus, interdiscursivity, as well as the constantly changing interdiscursive relations in texts, is central to an understanding of the process of social change. Fairclough's study combines the constitutive view of discourse illustrated by Foucault and the dynamic view of discursive practice as well as its relationship with social practice. He accounts for this phenomenon with Gramsci's conception of hegemony and Habermas' theory of colonization of the 'lifeworld' by social systems. Fairclough (1992: 200-224) also holds that the interdiscursive relations in texts can reflect the three interlocking

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[3] As Bradford (1997) proposes, this double pattern consists of two poles, namely, the pole of 'cognition' and the pole of 'literary convention', which interact with each other and produce a dynamic tension between the real and unreal dimensions of literature. It is through this dynamic tension that literature achieves its unique charm and aesthetic value. For more information, see also Wu & Qin (2004).

tendencies of contemporary public discourse, namely, the 'democratization' of discourse, the 'commodification' or 'marketization' of discourse, and the 'technologization' of discourse[4]. All these changes in language use are part of wider processes of social changes affecting the development of postmodern society.

Many researchers have carried out their studies by using Fairclough's framework. Musson and Cohen (1996), for instance, in a study of medical practice in Britain, have noted a progressive colonization of medical discourse by the discourse of enterprise. This colonization has formed a significant interdiscursivity between medicine and enterprise, which reflects the society-wide transitions from state supported medicine to privately organized medical practice. Likewise, Candlin and Maley (1997) have probed into the mediating texts and account for the interdiscursive relations between bargaining, counseling, therapeutic, and legal genres. To them, this interdiscursivity of different social practices reveals an attempt to incorporate strategies from diverse related professional arenas and an adaptation to the requirements of different ideological orientations.

Bhatia (1995, 2004) explores the cases of interdiscursivity in business advertising, news reporting and legal documents, as well as in public administration and bureaucratic communications. According to him, the phenomenon of mixing 'private intentions' with 'socially recognized communicative purposes' is characteristic of and widely used in a number of professional domains, resulting in a 'mixing' and often 'blending' of genres (see Bhatia 1995). A great deal of such instances of mixed genres are becoming established and are being given innovative names such as *infomercial, infotainment or advertorial*[5]. Against this background of intense interdiscursivity, Bhatia (1995: 1) explains that "this dynamic complexity of professional communication is the result of several factors, including the ever-increasing use of multi-media, explosion of information technology, multi-disciplinary contexts of the world of work, increasingly competitive professional (academic as well as business) environment, and the overwhelmingly compulsive nature of promotional and advertising activities". In *Worlds of Written Discourse*, Bhatia (2004) puts forward a multi-perspective four-space model of discourse analysis as a development of his own theory. Taking the generic variation and dynamism into consideration, he offers a detailed account of interdiscursivity and its application potential in terms of the increasing hybridization of organizational life.

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[4] The 'democratization' of discourse is a tendency towards equality in discursive practice and language use through removing power asymmetries; the 'commodification' or 'marketization' of discourse is pervasive under the impact of the colonizing movement of advertising, marketing and managerial practices to professional and public service domains; and the 'technologization' of discourse involves the more or less self-conscious application of social scientific knowledge for purposes of bureaucratic control.

[5] These three terms in italics, namely, *infomercial* (information + commercial), *infotainment* (information + entertainment) and *advertorial* (advertisement + editorial), are usually called portmanteau words, which are created by combining portions of two or more separate words. Bhatia (2004) often uses these portmanteau words to describe the widespread hybrid features of heterogeneous worlds of discourse. Similar words are *advertainment*, *docudrama*, *edutainment*, *faction*, and *fictomercial*, etc.

Scollon (2000, 2002) combines interdiscursive analysis with ethnographic research that locates discourse as a part of a wider set of social practices in the familial local context of Hong Kong. In his study of news discourse and identity, he applies the 'methodological interdiscursivity' as a means of paralleling or engaging directly in the interdiscursive relations. He suggests that the social practices in news discourse produce complex levels of interdiscursivity. In view of these complexities and polyvocalities, he points out that the social construction of identity in news discourse is a highly interdiscursive process (Scollon 2002).

According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), the pervasive discoursal hybridity (or interdiscursivity) in interactions and texts has been widely seen as a significant characteristic of postmodern social life in that late modernity entails a radical unsettling of the boundaries of social life. They hold that interdiscursive analysis is an important aspect of analysis of field relations. In their updated five-step analytical framework of CDA (ibid.: 59-66), Chouliaraki and Fairclough take interdiscursive analysis as an effective key to identifying obstacles to the resolution of social problems.

Sarangi (2000) studies interdiscursivity between various discourse types in the case of genetic counseling. According to him, genetic counseling is constituted in three critical moments: information giving, advice seeking, and decision making, each of which is related to certain discourse types. He claims that there are strategic motivations behind appropriations and conflations of these different discourse types and we should appeal to institutional contexts and sociopolitical changes to account for them.

Wodak (2001) touches upon interdiscursivity from what she calls 'the discourse-historical approach', studying the interdiscursive relations in texts in order to shed light on her critical analysis of social problems such as racism, bureaucratism, and sexism, etc. She proposes to tie interdiscursivity to transformational recontextualization and historical change and at the same time to focus on the potential interdiscursive relations through mixing of new genres.

In addition, some other scholars have carried out studies on interdiscursivity from the perspective of 'colonization and appropriation'[6]. For instance, Lemke (1995) explores the spread of technocratic discourse into new domains; Fairclough and Mauranen (1997) investigate the 'conversationalization'[7] of political discourse; Bernstein (1996) studies the spread of pedagogical discourse beyond educational institutions.

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[6] The term 'appropriation' comes from Chouliaraki and Fairclough in their account for Habermas' theory of the colonization of 'lifeworld' by social systems. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) use the dialectics of 'colonization and appropriation' to refer to the bidirectional movements of genres or discourses from one social practice to another within the social order. These movements can be articulated as one social practice colonizing (and so dominating) another, or as the latter appropriating (and so dominating) the former.

[7] 'Conversationalized', 'conversationalization' and 'discourse conversationalization' come from Fairclough's coinage: 'conversationalization of discourse'. He uses this term to refer to the fact that conversation is colonizing the media, various types of professional/public discourse, education, and so on, so that the discourse is taking on an increasingly conversational character (see Fairclough 1992).

The CDA approach to interdiscursivity has several advantages over the stylistic approach. Firstly, it goes beyond surface analysis and can help explain how and why interdiscursivity takes shape as it is and what social changes it is meant to reflect. Secondly, unlike the stylistic approach, the CDA approach takes the dynamics of communication into consideration. Thirdly, the data in CDA are rather empirical and are tied more closely to real language use in that they are mainly collected from the authentic non-literary discourse. However, it still needs to be improved in some aspects. For instance, the CDA approach does not take cognitive factors into consideration. Furthermore, the unilinear understanding of the power relations in the CDA approach is rather partial. Unluckily, as the theoretical foundation of this approach, CDA itself has received a lot of criticisms during these years. For instance, Widdowson (1998) has claimed that CDA should include discussions with the *producers* and *consumers* of texts, and not just rest upon the analyst's view of what a text might mean alone.

4. BASIS OF THE PRAGMATIC MODEL

As reviewed in the third section, the existing studies still have a lot of limitations. To solve these problems, we need a new model, which should entail an overall consideration of all the social, cultural and cognitive factors involved in the functioning of interdiscursivity. Such a model will be naturally based on Verschueren's (1999) Linguistic Adaptation Theory (LAT). This powerful theory provides a new and comprehensive perspective for the present study. Accordingly, the model generated from it is considered to be more systematic and more explanatory.

4.1 Overview of pragmatics

During the last three decades or so, pragmatics has achieved great progress and has already formed an independent research field concerning the study of language use. With the prosperity of this field, there have emerged many different pragmatic 'schools', among which the popular ones are Anglo-American pragmatics and Continental pragmatics.

So far as the underlying conceptual framework is concerned, Anglo-American pragmatics occupies a dominant position in the study of language use. Pragmatics in this tradition is taken as one of the component disciplines of linguistics, paralleling other ingredients such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, each of which has its own unit(s) of analysis. The basic research units or topics that are associated with pragmatics include deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, conversation, and the like. Among these units, 'speech act theory has exerted an influence which has persisted until today, and it was the driving force behind the Anglo-American prominence in pragmatics' (Verschueren 1999: 256). This Anglo-American tradition, however, restricts the theoretical or empirical scope of research, and fails to account for the social, cognitive and cultural factors systematically.

In contrast, Continental pragmatics understands language use in a rather broad and overarching way, emphasizing the pragmatic aspects of all parts of linguistics and taking all the functioning

factors into an overall consideration. Pragmatics in this school can, in some sense, even encompass what is inquired by discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics, etc. Thus, Continental pragmatics can serve as an 'umbrella' for various areas of linguistics. The major research results of this school are mainly published in *Pragmatics* (quarterly of International Pragmatics Association), *Journal of Pragmatics* (monthly published in Holland), and the book series *Pragmatics and Beyond*.

In addition to these two generally acknowledged pragmatic camps, there still exist some other quite different ways of understanding pragmatics. For instance, Habermas (1998) founds the so called 'universal pragmatics' or 'formal pragmatics' based on the relationship between human communication and social evolution. He places language use in the scope of the universal human experience on communication, and thus pragmatic research becomes one kind of reason reconstruction.

Facing these diverse traditions or schools of understanding pragmatics, we should, according to Mey (2001: 9), 'have these different views existing side by side, so as to expand, rather than narrow, our epistemological horizon'.

4.2 Pragmatics as a functional perspective on language

As illustrated in the above section, there are diverse ways of understanding pragmatics and hence many different definitions have been proposed to delimitate the meaning and scope of this discipline. Among them, the most comprehensive one that deserves our attention is the 'perspective view' proposed by Jef Verschueren (1999), Secretary General of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA). For Verschueren, pragmatics can be defined as '*a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior*' (Verschueren 1999: 7). Verschueren does not confine pragmatics within the contrast set to which phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics belong; nor does he place it in the set of interdisciplinary fields such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and anthropological linguistics. He specifies it as a general functional perspective concerning the full complexity of linguistic behavior, and all sorts of cognitive, social, and cultural variables will be accounted for whenever a linguistic phenomenon is approached from this perspective. Thus pragmatics is concerned with each and every level and aspect of language use, and everything within the scope of linguistics is within the research focus of pragmatics.

The functioning of interdiscursivity as a special kind of linguistic phenomenon is closely related to the cognitive, social, and cultural factors of language use. The interdiscursive texts are aspects of culture, interconnected elements and systems of meaning located in the social world. An interdiscursive text, with its elements rooted in particular institutions, is not individual and idiosyncratic but part of a shared cultural world. However, as mentioned above, previous studies of interdiscursivity are rather incomplete, leaving the cognitive facet intact. In view of this limitation, we choose the pragmatic perspective in order to provide a systematic and coherent analysis for this linguistic phenomenon.

4.3 Verschueren's Linguistic Adaptation Theory

Linguistic Adaptation Theory (LAT)[8] is conceived, updated, and finally put forward by Verschueren. The proposal of this theory is not completed in one breath but after several endeavors of development, enrichment, and modification. The basic form of this theory was first sketched out in *Pragmatics as a Theory of Linguistic Adaptation* (Verschueren 1987), the first working document of International Pragmatics Association (IPrA), when IPrA was founded. After that, continuous attempts have been made at its improvement and embellishment till the publication of the book *Understanding Pragmatics* (Verschueren 1999), in which the comparatively mature version of this theory was elaborated. The power of LAT lies in that it offers an explanatory and coherent theoretical framework for the research of language use. The essence of this theory may be summarized as follows:

Applying evolutionary epistemology to language, Verschueren proposes that '*using language must consist of the continuous making of linguistic choices, consciously or unconsciously, for language-internal (i.e. structural) and/or language-external reasons*' (Verschueren 1999: 55-56). It is further explained that choices are made in the aspects of communicative strategies as well as linguistic forms. In fact, the language user is under an obligation to make choices whenever he/she enters the dynamic process of communication. Furthermore, choices are made not only by language producers but also by interpreters, and both types of choice making are of equal importance for the success of communication. It deserves our attention, however, that all choices are made with varying degrees of consciousness.

The view that language use is a process of choice making is based upon the three properties of language, namely, variability, negotiability and adaptability. Variability is the property of language which defines the range of possibilities from which choices can be made; negotiability is the property of language responsible for the fact that choices are not made mechanically or according to strict rules or fixed form-function relationships, but rather on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies; adaptability is the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs (Verschueren 1999: 59-61). It should be emphasized that the three notions are not separate topics of investigation but interrelated properties of the overall research object for the pragmatic perspective. The former two are necessary to the adequate understanding of the third property, which is a higher-order notion in the hierarchical ranking.

Using the higher-order notion of adaptability as the starting point of language study, we should take the four focal points into consideration, including contextual correlates of adaptability,

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[8] Verschueren's Linguistic Adaptation Theory (LAT) does not appear in a vacuum, but has its solid theoretical basis. While formulating this theory, he was inspired by a whole body of theoretical precursors such as evolutionary epistemology in Darwinism, Piaget's psychological theories, and Giles' speech accommodation theory, etc. Among them, Darwinism merits our primary attention since LAT is almost directly originated from this doctrine, and *evolutionary epistemology* in particular.

structural objects of adaptability, the dynamics of adaptability, and the salience of adaptation process. The contextual correlates of adaptability can be depicted as Figure 1 (Verschueren 1999: 76):
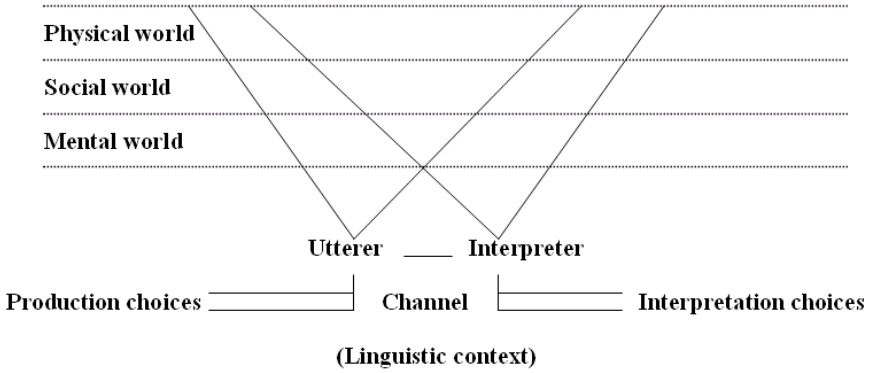

Figure 1 Contextual Correlates of Adaptability

Figure 1 indicates that all the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors related to a language phenomenon are within the visual field of 'context'. Specifically, we should take all components of the communicative context into account in order to examine their interadaptive relations with linguistic structures. Ingredients of communicative contexts include language users (utterer and interpreter), mental world, social world, and physical world. Besides the communicative contexts, linguistic channel and linguistic context also belong to the contextual correlates of adaptability. The structural objects of adaptability include the structures at various layers of linguistic organization and the principles of 'structuring'. The dynamics of adaptability involves the dynamic generation of meaning in communication, or the ways in which communication principles and strategies are used in the making and negotiating of choices of production and interpretation. The salience of the adaptation process accounts for the fact that not all linguistic choices are made with equal degree of consciousness; instead, some are highly motivated while others are virtually automatic with the functioning of medium of adaptability, 'mind in society'. The above four angles of investigation are not separate research topics but focal points in one coherent pragmatic approach to language use. None of them can either be ignored or underestimated because they are necessary and inter-related ingredients of an adequate pragmatic perspective. Their relations can be illustrated in Figure 2 (Verschueren 1999: 67):
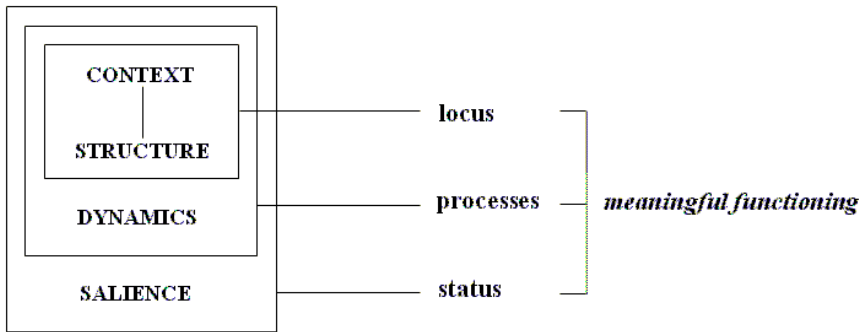
Figure 2 The Structure of a Pragmatic Theory

It is considered that context and structure are the locus or 'place' where the dynamic processes of adaptation take place with different degrees (or status) of salience. In other words, the use of language is a dynamic process of mutual adaptation between linguistic structure and context at different levels of salience. The idea conveyed by Figure 2 not only sketches out the general picture of the LAT but also lays a sound theoretical foundation for the present study.

So far as the research of interdiscursivity is concerned, the present study suggests that the functioning of interdiscursivity concerns the continuous making of linguistic choices from the repertoire of forms and strategies to approach different pragmatic functions, which has taken shape within the scope of Verschueren's LAT. Moreover, since variability, negotiability, and adaptability are universal properties of language, interdiscursivity makes no exception. The producing and consuming of interdiscursivity are no doubt results of the dynamic adaptation between contextual and structural correlates of adaptability. All the above considerations can be accounted for from the four focal points proposed by the LAT. Therefore, we will choose it as our theoretical foundation.

5. ESSENTIALS OF THE PRAGMATIC MODEL

After a brief sketch of the theoretical basis, we will try to characterize a unified and coherent model for interdiscursivity understanding in the coming subsections so as to make an explanatory account of the mechanisms, motivations as well as functions related to the employment of this linguistic phenomenon. We propose that interdiscursivity can be conceived as a result of choice making, a product of dynamic negotiation, a means of linguistic adaptation, and a way to satisfy communicative needs.

5.1 Interdiscursivity as the result of choice making

As expounded above, the functioning of interdiscursivity involves the continuous making of linguistic choices in both formal and strategic aspects. In the process of producing interdiscursivity, the producer has to choose certain interdiscursive elements, such as genres,

discourses or styles, and then further chooses specific linguistic forms related to these chosen elements, including choices of specific lexical items and sentence structures, etc. The whole choice-making process operating on different levels of linguistic structures demonstrates the variability of interdiscursive texts. Apart from the structural forms, the producer also chooses strategies in this process to achieve the desired effects as well as the intended communicative goals. For instance, in an advertisement, the producer may choose a picture, a poem, a proverb or a slogan, etc. for the purposes of 'information-and-persuasion' or 'telling-and-selling'. It deserves our attention that choices are also made in the interpreting process, which is equally important for the success of communication. While interpreting interdiscursivity, the interpreter usually chooses certain kinds or parts of interdiscursive texts according to his/her interests or purposes of consumption. Having chosen specific interdiscursive text(s), he/she further chooses specific interdiscursive elements, linguistic structures as well as interpreting tactics from the repertoire of forms and strategies so as to successfully understand what the producer means. In this sense, the producer and the interpreter adapt to each other directly or indirectly in the whole process of communication.

Moreover, the choices in the functioning process of interdiscursivity are made with different degrees of consciousness or awareness. Some choices are highly motivated by the communicative goals (in recruitment brochures, for instance), while others are made automatically with a lower degree of consciousness (in the programs of talk show, for instance). Sometimes communicators are racking their brains to design/identify the patterns of interdiscursivity in certain texts so as to achieve certain communicative goals, while in other cases even communicators themselves can not realize that they are employing interdiscursive texts strategically even though they are understood as using them strategically.

5.2   Interdiscursivity as the product of dynamic negotiation

While making linguistic choices, language users continuously weigh up the different principles and strategies to make sure the chosen ones can help to achieve the communicative goals. It is a natural characteristic of language use that there is no one-to-one correspondence between linguistic form and function. Therefore, communication is full of indeterminacies, which is not only a consequence but also a prerequisite of the dynamics of language use.

Since the dynamic negotiation is based upon certain principles, it should be pointed out that the notion of 'principles' is usually put forward as opposed to another concept of 'rules' in the sense that 'principles' are much more flexible than 'rules'. Specifically, rules of language cannot be violated in order to keep the generated sentences well-formed and acceptable, while principles may be either followed or flouted, which would result in different communicative effects or realize distinct communicative goals. The overarching principles that function in the dynamic process of negotiation include Cooperative Principle, Politeness Principle, Economy Principle, and Principle of Relevance, etc. It is the functioning of these principles that makes negotiation possible.

So far as interdiscursivity is concerned, we cannot find such fixed rules that can tell a communicator when and why to mix interdiscursive elements. Instead, the communicator produces or interprets the interdiscursive texts on the basis of flexible principles with the efforts paid to meet the communicative needs. There is no interdiscursive form-function association and all choices can be permanently negotiated; therefore, the functioning of interdiscursivity in communication is a highly dynamic process of constant negotiation.

5.3   Interdiscursivity as a means of linguistic adaptation

According to Verschueren (1987, 1999), language is adaptable, and the process of language use is that of adaptation. Moreover, adaptation operates at all levels of linguistic structuring and in all forms of language use. Thus we propose that interdiscursivity functions as a means of linguistic adaptation. In the process of adaptation, the functioning of interdiscursivity realizes various pragmatic effects and contributes to human being's survival in the long term.

In the present study, we divide the elements or objects to which the functioning of interdiscursivity gets adapted into three categories: variables of the physical world, variables of the social world, and variables of the mental world. Among them, the functioning of interdiscursivity as adaptation to variables of the physical and social world can be seen as passive since within both categories the choice of interdiscursivity is on the whole driven by the force of language user-external factors, either complexities of the physical reality or expectations and conventions of the social world. While the functioning of interdiscursivity as adaptation to variables of the mental world can be taken as active in the sense that within this category of adaptation the choice of interdiscursivity originates from the communicator-internal motives, either psychological motivations or emotions, etc. As a natural consequence of these three different courses of adaptation making, various communicative functions of interdiscursivity are realized.

We know that Verschueren's LAT has its tendency to focus on production; however, the interpretation of interdiscursivity can also be considered as a process of adaptation. In the present study, we think that this two-way-adaptation contributes to the success of communication.

5.4   Interdiscursivity interpretation: tracing meaning generation

In some sense, the process of interpretation can be seen as the course of tracing the ways of meaning generation from the four focal points, namely, context, structure, dynamics, and salience. And whether the interpretation is successfully accomplished or not can be judged according to the degree to which the interpreter's tracing of the meaning generation is to the point.

As far as the interpretation of interdiscursivity is concerned, the interpreter takes into account not only the explicit meaning (or textual meaning) of the linguistic phenomenon but also the implied meaning (or discursive meaning) and the pragmatic functions (or social meaning) as

well. Consequently, the match and mismatch between the producer's communicative intention and the interpreter's tracing of meaning would lead to totally different results, namely, success or failure in communication respectively. In fact, this is a matter of degree, or to be more specific, the satisfaction of the producer's communicative needs cannot be guaranteed but only be approached to various degrees (Verschueren 1999: 62). Therefore, communication through the functioning of interdiscursivity is a dynamic process of mutual recognition/tracing of each other's motivation.

5.5 Interdiscursivity as realization of communicative functions

Various kinds of communicative functions are realized when the interpretation of interdiscursivity is successfully completed. And the treatment of these functions as well as the strategic exploitation of them is, as Verschueren argues, within the scope of discussion concerning the adaptability of language use (Verschueren 1987: 52). Due to the differences of the motivations and mechanisms behind the functioning of interdiscursivity, there are diversified kinds of communicative functions associated with this linguistic phenomenon. All these communicative functions are closely related to the development of postmodern society. From the adaptationist perspective, interdiscursivity is not only one of the mirrors reflecting the tendencies of discursive and social development but also one of the tools endowed by language to enable users to satisfy their communicative needs in the short term and to contribute to their survival in the long term as the outcome of successful adaptation.
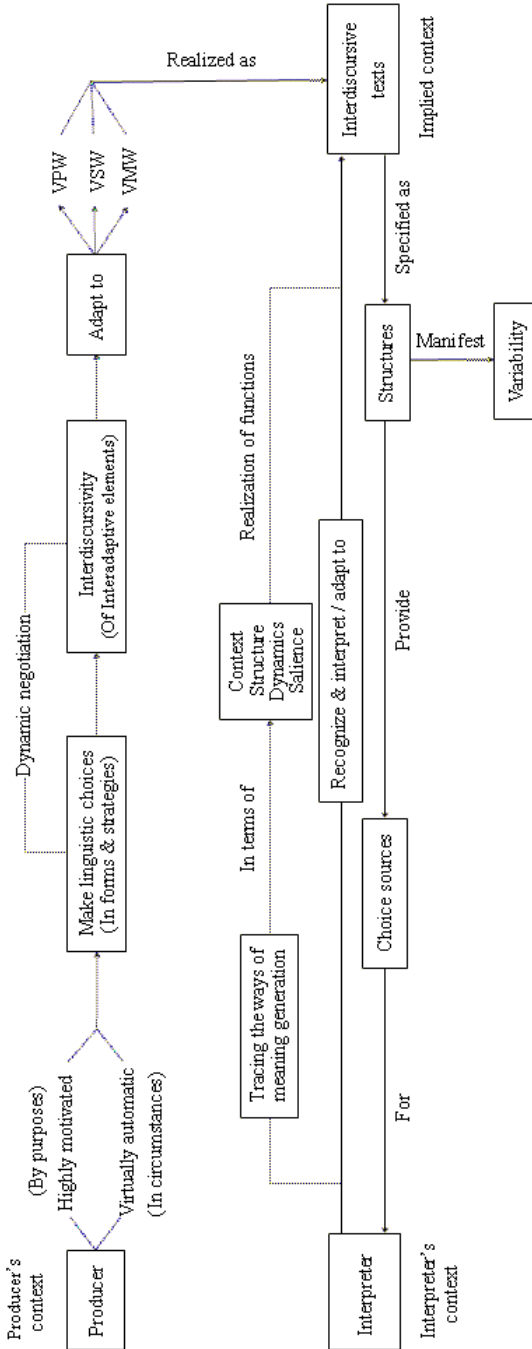
5.6 Variability of interdiscursivity

Variability is meant to cover the entire range of variable options that are assumed to be accessible to language users for them to make choices. This property of language is of crucial importance to the fulfillment of communication.

Interdiscursivity possesses a wide range of variations, which makes interdiscursive texts possible and flexible in communication. In the present study, variability refers to the linguistic diversity manifested in interdiscursive texts in terms of element complexity, interdiscursivity types and application domains. So far as the element complexity is concerned, we have an increasingly broad range of genres, discourses, and styles. These elements are closely related to the extraordinary flux in certain 'orders of discourse' as well as social orders. In terms of interdiscursivity types, interdiscursive elements can be textured or articulated together in different ways; accordingly, we will have different forms of interdiscursivity. Moreover, interdiscursivity does not appear in all application domains with the same frequency. Due to the influence of the communicators' motivations and the social/cultural factors, interdiscursivity may occur more frequently in some application domains such as advertising and medicating discourses, while in other domains it does not appear as frequently.

The existence of interdiscursivity variability, on the one hand, shows the diversity and complexity of interdiscursive texts in linguistic forms; on the other hand, it also accounts for the difficulty in the research of interdiscursivity.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the above discussion, we build up a pragmatic model of interdiscursivity research, which can be represented in the following flow chart (Figure 3).

Figure 3 A Pragmatic Model of Interdiscursivity Research

Note: VPW = Variables of the physical world; VSW = Variables of the social world; VMW = Variables of the mental world.

This model is an attempt to bring together the production and interpretation of interdiscursivity, neither of which is dispensable for a better understanding of this linguistic phenomenon. When a producer of interdiscursivity is involved in communication, he/she is either highly motivated, with specific communicative purposes in mind, or virtually automatic, adjusting himself/herself to certain communicative circumstances. In order to approach particular communicative goal(s), he/she has to make choices at various possible levels, including the choice of linguistic forms and strategies. During this process, the choices are not made mechanically or statically but rather dynamically in a negotiable manner. Based upon this negotiable choice making, the interdiscursivity is produced so as to adapt to variables of the physical world (VPW), variables of the social world (VSW), and variables of the mental world (VMW). Then as a natural consequence of the producer's choice making and adaptation, there come the interdiscursive texts, which manifest great variability in terms of element complexity, interdiscursivity types, and application domains. These interdiscursive texts, in turn, provide choice sources for the process of interpretation. Although Verschueren's LAT has its tendency to focus on the production of language, we think that the interpreter will also make adaptations in the process of interpretation. But the central task of the interpretation is to trace the ways in which meaning is generated in terms of the four factors involved, namely, context, structure, dynamics, and salience. We assume that the interpreter will recognize and adapt to the structural objects of the texts and their implied contextual correlates (or the context of the relevant discursive practices) in order to interpret them. Within this process, the producer and the interpreter will influence and adapt to each other dynamically. If the producer's intention is correctly interpreted or traced by the interpreter, the producer's communicative goal(s) are realized and the communicative event is brought to success. During this dynamic process, various kinds of communicative functions are realized as well.

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