

Intermediary Context¹

(中介语境)

This paper has done some deeper probe into the error analysis caused in the course of second language learning by means of intermediary context, the new notion about context in seconding language learning first put forward in this thesis.

I. Learner's Context

1. Definition of Context

According to the linguists who have been working on context, context study represents a variety of attentions and aspects studied by different linguists. It is followed that there are many definitions of context from different angles.

Longman Dictionary in linguistics gives definition of context as message existing before and after the word, phrase, utterance, and text under discussion; it is helpful to the understanding of the specific meaning of the word, phrase, speech, and text; and it also indicates the broader social environment of a linguistic item.

Context is the frame created by language as discourse and as a form of social practice.

Context is referred to the text surrounding a speech, and it has sometimes been called the co-text, and the environment where the communication occurs.

While Halliday has argued that the notion of text and context is inseparable and text is language operative in a context of situation, and in addition context is ultimately explained by the texts produced within a group of people. One common conception is that our ideas, our knowledge, our thoughts, our culture are almost independent of language and just waiting to be expressed by it.²

According to the theory of relevance, the concept of "context of an utterance" is "a psychological construct," a subset of the hearer's ideas about the world, and context is a very wide concept that can include in fact any phenomenon by the human mind.

According to Sperber and Wilson, A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterance: expectation about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation.

But it should be pointed out that according to this concept of context, context should be regarded not as a natural given, but as a social construct, the product of linguistic choices made by two or more individuals interacting through language. It is shaped by people in dialogue with one another in a variety of roles and status. Language is at the intersection of the individual and the social, of text and discourse, so it both reflects and construes the social reality called 'context'.

¹Intermediary Context is a new concept first put forward in this paper. I first got the rough and fuzzy idea at my class in China, which became clearer when I was constructing the writing of this thesis, and then I decided to put forward this new notion about second language learning and context in my thesis as a very important key part to describe a new perspective of analysis of errors caused by intermediary context in second language learning and teaching. I hope I will be able to probe the issue deeper in my future study.

²See Halliday, M.A.K. 2002, *Computer Meanings: Some Reflections on Past Experience and Present Prospects*[A], Discourse and Language Function. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

Broadly speaking, the term 'context' refers to all the different situations involved in language communication.

To summarize, the context is a relational concept. Although no identical definition is completely approved and accepted, a clear agreement can be achieved on general understanding. Context does not simply refer to the preceding linguistic text or the environment in which the utterance takes place, but the set of assumptions brought to bear at the intended interpretation. These may be drawn from the preceding text, or what is going on in the immediate environment, but they may also be drawn from cultural or scientific knowledge, common-sense assumptions, and, more generally, any shared item or specific information that the people who communicate utilize.

2. Researches on Context

Researchers give more attention to the theory of context once it is created.

People may communicate with each other under given surroundings in society, for specific purposes, and with specially designated people. And similarly, to determine the meaning of any text, one must inevitably look to the fact that context is a vital factor in human communication so much so that it is widely studied by many scholars since it was created in many places in the world. From the history and present situation of context study, people find that there appear different concepts of context by different subjects and different schools.

In the field of linguistics of western countries, the schools of social linguistics make great efforts in context study. It can be traced back to their founder Bronislaw Malinowski, a famous and renowned Polish linguist. He put forward the concept of context first in the world. But he only mentioned the terminology of "context of situation", declared by Halliday.³ He thought that language is the way of act, but not the sign of thought; Speech and surroundings are closely bound to each other and the surroundings in which speech takes place are indispensable to language understanding. He once argued that linguistic analysis should be carried out along with the analysis of situations in which speech occurs. In addition, language should be viewed as a mode of practical action instead of an instrument of reflection:

It is found out that the study of any form of speech used in connection with important job would reveal the dependence of the meaning of each word upon practical experience, and of the structure of each utterance upon the momentary situation in which it is spoken. Thus the consideration of linguistic uses associated with any practical pursuit, leading to the conclusion that language ought to be regarded and studied against the background of human activities and as a mode of human behavior in practical matters. It is a mode of action and not an instrument of reflection. Meaning does not come from contemplation of things, or analysis of occurrences, but in practical and active acquaintance with relevant situations. The real knowledge of a word comes through the practice of appropriately using it within a certain situation.

The view of context created first by Malinowski, Polish linguist, is accepted and developed by Firth, a famous English linguist. In 1950, Firth made a detailed and complete exposition of context in his book *Personality and Language in Society*. In the book he put forward the theory and method of speech study in speech environment. And he aimed his study at "describing and classifying typical contexts of situation within the context of culture, and clarifying the types of linguistic function in such contexts of situation", according to Leech. He extended the meaning of

³See Halliday, M.A.K. 2002, *Computer Meanings: Some Reflections on Past Experience and Present Prospects*[A], Discourse and Language Function. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

"context" and thought that context refers not only to the text within sentences or paragraphs, but also to the relationship between the speech and social circumstances. While according to Firth, The former is called the context composed of by linguistic factors and the latter is called "situational context" which includes:

- 1) participants of speech communication, i.e. persons, characters and the relevant features of participants;
- 2) relevant objects; third, the effect of speech act. Later, Firth pointed out that "situational context", in fact, should consist of the elements like economic, religious and other social structures, speech categories and speech functions, etc.

It must be mentioned here that Halliday is another person who makes great contributions to context study in functional approach. In 1964, he put forward the concept of "register", and those that "register" reflects is context. He classified register into three aspects: field, mode and tenor.

He held the idea that "field" is the scope, within which the speech activities happen. It includes politics, science, art and daily life, etc. "Mode" is the function of utterance in the event. So it includes the ways of using language, speaking or writing. On the base of this he then put forward "situation", "manner" and "communicator" as three components of speech environment.

Jshua A. Fishman, an American social linguistics founder, then put forward his own concept of "domain" about context. He declared that domain is the social environment which is restricted by the common rules of behavior, which includes place, time, status and subject. He believes in the great influence of language environment on the language which is used.

3. Classifications of Context

As for features and functions of context, researchers classify context in different ways. However, a fact is that the definition and classification of context are partly overlapped with each other. As early as the 1920s, Malinowski, Polish linguist, first divided context into two types: context of situation and context of culture.

And then Firth, basing on the concept of context by Malinowski, divided context into linguistic context and situational context. Different from Malinowski who put much emphasis on macro-context, Firth gave much attention not only to extra-linguistic but linguistic context. Absorbing the ideas of both Malinowski and Firth, another important figure, Halliday proposed his opinion of register on context.

Then, Halliday holds the idea that the category of register is postulated to account for what people do with their language. Three basic aspects of register can be distinguished: field of discourse, mode of discourse and tenor of discourse. And the three aspects are mutually dependent.

Here the term "field" used means what is happening or the nature of the social action that is taking place; the term "tenor" consists of who is taking part, the nature of the participants, and their status and roles. Tenor relays the relationship between the addresser and addressee. This may be analyzed in terms of basic distinctions such as politic-colloquial, intimate, and on a scale of categories, which ranges from formal to informal. "Mode" refers to the medium of the language activity and what symbolic or rhetorical devices are employed, and in what language form the utterance is conveyed- -spoken or written, monologue or dialogue.

In fact, context can also be divided into two categories- situational context and co-text. The former refers to the person, occasion, time, and social background, etc. related to the communication under discussion; besides, it also includes meaningful glance, facial expression,

gesture, etc. The latter, then, refers to the words or sentences before and after the word or sentence in question.

But it must also be mentioned that no theory is perfect. Reviewing the ideas formulated by Malinowski and Halliday, people seem to believe context is to set up in advance of comprehension when analyzing a text or a discourse. In much of the literature, it is explicitly or implicitly assumed that the context of a given text is not a matter of choice; the context is seen as determined, as given.

Furthermore, it has become a general idea that the context is determined and fixed in advance of the comprehension process. The context is assumed static, and what the communicator or the second language learner can do is just to put the sentence or the words in the so-called static context and to try to find its deep meaning. The simplest version of this view is the hypothesis that the context for the comprehension of a text is the set of factors such as field, mode and tenor explicitly expressed by preceding words. The linguists focusing on systemic and functional grammar do much in the studies of coherence of text from the point of view of language form.

On one hand, it is insightful to think context as static for pursuing equivalence in second language learning because the second language learner could formulate the equivalent field, mode and tenor in second language, but on the other hand it fails to explain the inference process, that is, fails to present the context mother tongue embedded in.

On the basis of the above mentioned definitions, features, functions and classifications the speaker applies Sperber and Wilson's idea on cognitive environment in this thesis, holds that context in second language learning means cognitive context including all the background information, both linguistically and extra-linguistically. And it is helpful for the second language learner first to get correct interpretation of the original text and then to render the mother tongue into the second language dynamically.

In one word, linguistic context refers to lexical information, including co-text accompanying the linguistic sign in question.

For the Extra-linguistic context, the speaker divides context into two categories: situational context and cultural context. The former can be further divided into:

- 1) time of utterance (both specific and historical time of utterance);
- 2) place of utterance (where the utterance takes place);
- 3) Theme or topic (theme, refer to the aim of the original writer; topic, refers to the content of communication);
- 4) Style(refer to the writing style of the original and corresponding style in target language text);
- 5) Originator and Receiver (the writer or speaker and the speaker or listener of the original, specifically, refer to their profession, gender, age, social status, educational background, life experience, and the state of mind, etc.)

As to cultural context, it includes historical, political, social, economic, natural and geographical features, religious beliefs, thinking patterns, tradition and customs, etc.

II. Schema Theory in Second Language Learning

1. Development of Schema Theory

The term Schema, also named frame, script, model, background knowledge or prior knowledge, has a long history and is often applied to philosophy, psychology, cognitive

information process and computer science. Initially it was a term that was applied to explain the psychological process.

The definition of schema was first put forward in 1932 by F. C. Bartlett, British psychologist, which was generally associated with his early work on story recall. He defined it as "an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response".

Bartlett attempted to show that remembering is not rote or reproductive process but rather a process in which we retain the overall gist of an event and then reconstruct the details from this overall impression.

While performing experiments with his subjects to repeatedly recall stories over long time intervals so that he could examine the guiding function of schemata in the reconstruction process, Bartlett also found in his study that when his subjects were given stories that were not consistent with their schemata, recall was usually distorted in the direction of the schemata. According to him, when we encounter an event that differs from our usual understanding, it is difficult to fit it into the existing schemata and therefore tend either not to remember it or to "normalize" it, modifying its details until it is congruent with existing schemata.

Thirty years ago, many scholars began to make study on schema theory. It has been realized that it is a theory basically about how knowledge is represented and about how that representation facilitates the use of knowledge in particular ways. According to schema theory, all knowledge is put into units, called schemata. Embedded in these packets of knowledge is, in addition to the knowledge itself, information about how this knowledge is to be used.

In the 1980s, schema theory was first introduced to the interpretation of reading comprehension process and then developed into one of the important reading theories, which clearly point out that people come to understand new information by activating their relevant schemata in their mind. Furthermore, based on the reading theories, psycholinguists have applied schema theory into the research on foreign language teaching and explained the psycholinguistic process in foreign language study and reading, and believed that schema is of importance in reading comprehension, both in the first language and second language context.

2. An Analysis of the Modern Cognitive Schema Theory

Schema theory origins first in the Gestalt psychology of the 1920s and 1930s, and its basic idea is that a new experience is understood by comparison with a stereotypical version of a similar experience held in one's memory. The new experience is then processed in terms of its deviation from the stereotypical version. The theory of schema is applied both to the processing of sensory data and to the processing of language.

The schema theory in modern cognitive psychology maintains the idea that one's knowledge is kept in his or her long-term memory in the form of "schema" and the schemata of different sizes and on different layers interconnect and crisscross with each other, thus forming a huge stereoscopic network system "schemata" in its long course of memory, which entails various kinds of knowledge. It may be said that the sum total of all the schemata is equal to all one's knowledge. Therefore, schemata become basis for one's cognition.

Studies show that when people try to perceive any new information from the outside world, they are bound to combine the new information with the known information, which is also called background knowledge. Besides, as is known, both the coding and decoding of the new information will depend on the pre-existed schemata. Only when the input information matches

with the established schemata could the schemata play the needed role in information processing. Therefore, the established knowledge in one's mind play a key role in his or her understanding of the new information.

Briefly, the modern schema theory focus its attention on the significant role that the background knowledge plays in the process of understanding new information and also how a speaker's background knowledge interacts with certain discourse content and produce the understanding process. According to the schema theory, everyone has his or her own specific schema (background information), which usually varies from culture to culture.

The schema theory now places great emphasis on two basic types of information-processing manner, one of which is "the top-down driven", also called "concept-driven", and the other being "the bottom-up driven", also called "data-driven".

According to the "concept-driven" manner, a schema can activate its sub-schema, that is, the schema on the subordinate level. It is just like the situation in which a computer program activates its sub-program, namely, the program on the subordinate level.

The "concept-driven" manner is also named as "expectation-driven" manner since the activity of the sub-schema seemly comes from a kind of expectation when a schema becomes active and activates a sub-schema. By contrast, the "data-driven" manner refers to the situation in which the activities of a subordinate schema activate that of its superior schema, that is, the schema at a higher level.

In fact, "psychological schema" refers to our psychological model about the program of a certain thing that is constructed in the process of our daily interpersonal contact. As long as one participates in the same kind of activities, the regular program will naturally be activated in his or her mind.

Now take the activity of "going to the restaurant" for instance. At the very beginning, one should find a seat. Then she or he reads the menu, orders the dishes. After that, she or he will have some drinks and eats the main course and at last pays the bills. Similarly, other activities such as making a call, borrowing a book, asking for direction and so on all follow certain models as they have been set examples and have left a deep impression on human mind.

Hence, whenever a certain activity is mentioned, it is usually the case that a series of relevant schemata in one's mind will be activated, which reflects the role of concept-driven. When understanding and processing new information, one, without exception, continuously combines the new information with one's pre-existed schemata and makes it as relevant and consistent with the established schemata as possible. To be more specific, one has to eliminate redundant, irrelevant, unnecessary elements and preserve the content of the most typical significance. And only by discarding the dross and retaining the essence could the generalized and concentrated memory that coincides with one's established schemata be long kept.

From what is discussed above, it will be able to come to the conclusion that the cognitive schema theory has been extensively applied to second language acquisition in recent years. For instance, it is used to explain and guide the various kinds of activities in second language acquisition such as improving the learners' listening, reading abilities as well as providing enlightenment for facilitating target language vocabulary teaching, oral language teaching as well as improving traditional model of writing education. What is more, cognitive schema theory also has guidance effects on the second language learning practice, as will be discussed in the following sections.

3. Schema Activation

The most important function of schema theory is the role of prior knowledge in processing. In order for learners to be able to effectively process information, their existing schemata related to the new content need to be activated, constructed and applied in the process of reading. Schema activation is generally recognized as the process in which some textual stimuli signal the direction or area for the speaker to look for and make the relevant schema from memory active so as to be used in the present reading task.

Schema activation includes three types of information processing: bottom-up processing, top-down processing and interactive processing.

First, the bottom-up processing is the recognition processing initiated by the parts of the pattern, which work as the basis for the recognition of the whole. A word, a group of word, a title or a heading can be highly suggestive and they can activate a certain schema. If the stimulus is highly suggestive of a certain schema, the schema as a whole may be activated. Thus, it is also called data-driven processing. For example, the stimulus of "server" or "order" may activate a "restaurant" schema.

Second, the processing can modify preexisting background knowledge and current predictions on the basis of information encountered in the text. Because more often than not, only one such stimulus is insufficient for schema activation, it can just fill in one certain slot which may exist in many schemata. When more and more stimuli are provided, the possibilities become fewer and fewer, and ideally the speaker may focus on the one schema intended by the speaker. For example, when the stimulus of "coffee" occurs, we may predict it as dinner schema, drink schema, party schema, and so forth. When other stimuli such as "coffee", "supermarket" are also present, and then the potentialities become fewer and fewer until a fixed schema such as shopping schema will be activated. The previous prediction is modified.

Top-down processing appears when the system is primarily initiated by a hypothesis about the whole, which leads to its identification and subsequent recognition of the parts. Therefore, it is also called concept-driven processing. Once a certain schema as a hypothesis is activated, other components and its sub-schemata, whether present in the text or not, which should also be contained in the schema will also be recalled to confirm the hypothesis. That is, the speaker reads a text and uses the text data to confirm or deny his expectations about the meaning before reading. For example, when the supermarket schema is activated, correspondingly its components such as "coffee", and "vegetable", and its sub-schema such as "supermarket" schema would be recalled.

Shortly, the top-down processing bases its meaning on the hypothesis that reading activity proceeds from whole to part, that speaker identifies letters and words only to confirm their hypothesis about the whole meaning of the text, and that the meaning is not derived from print but brought to print.

However, the top-down processing also has limitations. The top-down processing can be an appropriate one for the skillful, fluent speakers, for whom the perception, decoding or recognition of graphic cues has become automatic. But for those less proficient speakers, it is not the same case in foreign or second language reading.

The recognition and analysis of the limitation of the top-down processing lead to a more comprehensive view of reading as an interactive process. This more balanced view of reading suggests a constant interaction between bottom-up and top-down processes. According to the interactive model, the bottom-up process and top-down process occur simultaneously on any

levels or stages. Reading comprehension is regarded as a type of dialogue between the speaker and the text. The speaker constructs meaning by the selective use of information from all sources of meaning. And he simultaneously uses all levels of processing even though one source of meaning can be primary at a given time.

4. Classification of Schemata

Schemata can be classified into some different types, and the classification of schemata will be helpful in getting to a further understanding about the way how schemata operate in the process of reading comprehension, so it is necessary to distinguish different types of schemata.

According to Rumelhart, all kinds of knowledge can be organized into schemata and stored in memory, no matter it is concerning about the linguistic knowledge or word knowledge, for example, cultural differences, as it is often being mentioned in the application of schemata in reading comprehension.

And also according to Rumelhart, different types of schemata have been suggested: formal schemata, relating to the rhetorical structure of the text; content schemata, relating to the content of a text; and cultural schemata, more general aspects of cultural knowledge shared by larger sections of a cultural population. It is generally accepted that the schemata can be roughly divided into the content schemata and the linguistic schemata.

4.1 Content Schemata

Content schemata draw more attention because content schemata refers to the background knowledge of objects and events, and include general or specific information on a given topic. Therefore, they are also named topic schemata. The content schemata cover a wide range of knowledge including three aspects: topic familiarity, cultural knowledge and previous experience.

It has been found out that speaker's familiarity with a topic affects his understanding directly and greatly either in the first language or second language reading comprehension. When a speaker familiarizes himself with the topic the text talked about, he can effectively activate the schemata stored in his memory to assist him to predict and infer easily the input information. Experiences show that if a speaker is familiar with the topic, even when he meets with language obstacles, his schemata can guide him make wise assumptions and judgments. On the contrary, unfamiliar with the topic, a speaker cannot make sense of what he is reading or distorts the text.

Since the content schemata are highly culture-specific, cultural knowledge is often categorized as sub-schema of content schemata. People from different cultures have different values, different moralities and different ideas, and undoubtedly they look at things in maybe quite different ways, which is reflected in their comprehension processing.

Studies have shown that the cultural knowledge implied by a text will confront the speaker's own cultural background knowledge of content to make texts whose content is based on one's own culture easier to read and understand than syntactically and rhetorically equivalent text based on a less familiar, more distant culture. That is to say, when the speaker's culture schemata are well-overlapped with the speaker's, the text will be more readable or accessible. Otherwise, the text will be less readable or even inaccessible. Therefore, the speaker's cultural knowledge is required when the text is culture-specific. This situation is quite common, especially in second language reading comprehension.

4.2 Linguistic Schemata

Linguistic schemata also draw more attention to be discussed further because linguistic schemata refer to the lexical, syntactic and textual knowledge which play a basic role in the

process of comprehension. Initially, the study of linguistic schemata just focused on vocabulary and grammar. With the development of the research in discourse analysis, more and more attention has been paid to coherence and cohesion in the text which are also regarded as part of the linguistic schemata too. Besides, different styles and genres of the texts are also taken into account in the study of a text, thus they also become part of schemata. For the sake of argument, linguistic schemata are divided into three sub-schemata: the lexical schemata, the syntactic schemata and the textual schemata.

Lexical and Syntactic Schemata in Second Language Learning

As has been discussed so far, the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar is a fundamental requirement in the process of reading comprehension, especially in the second language reading.

Eskey claims that "good speakers are both good decoders and good interpreters of texts, their decoding skills becoming more automatic but no less important as their reading skill develops". This is because that "language is a major problem in second language reading, and that even educated guessing at meaning is no substitute for accurate decoding".

Of course this is true. The more automatically a speaker can use skills, the better he can use other high-level skills. In other words decoding successful comprehension of a text is impossible without effective decoding skills.

The words reveal that the lexical and syntactic schemata refer to the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. For example, English language differs from Chinese language lexically and syntactically. Therefore, these differences are also reflected in both English speakers' and Chinese counterpart's lexical and syntactic schemata.

In respect of simple sentence and phrase, the topic-comment structure is perceived more frequently in Chinese language than in English language. In defining topic, the topic of a sentence is what the sentence is about. And, four-word phrases appear with high frequency in Chinese language; while on the contrary, English sentences and phrases appear more in modifier-modified structure.

Textual Schemata in Second Language Learning

With the introduction of discourse analysis into the linguistic study, many researchers began to pay more attention to discussion on textual level which mainly consists of two sections, one of which is about cohesion and coherence considering the organization within the sentence and the relationship between sentences, the other one being concerned with the text type or pattern which is called genre.

According to Halliday and Hasan, cohesion is a notion from the works on textual structure, given to the logical linkage between textual units, as indicated by overt formal markers of the relations between texts. In English, cohesion is mostly marked by such connectives as and, although, however, therefore and so on. For instance, therefore indicates cause-effect logic relationship. And however indicates contrast relationship. Such cohesive markers are often not required if the text is straightforward; the speaker can be trusted to identify the value of sentences without their help. However, where the text is logically complicated or deals with an unfamiliar field, the markers are likely to be frequent.

Also coherence can be regarded as a way of talking about the relations between texts, which may or may not be indicated by formal markers of cohesion. Obviously it is greatly related to speakers' schemata.

And there is one more level that should be paid attention to, apart from the cohesion and

coherence. It is the organizational forms and rhetorical patterns of text. On the level, linguistic schemata are also known as textual schemata which are the knowledge regarding different text types or genres. Texts can be classified according to different criteria.

On the one hand, texts classification more depends on the external communication situations, such as, novels, lectures, letters, poems, jokes, speeches, sermons, telegraphs and so on. Actually they are different genres.

But on the other hand, it concerns more about text internal patterning and an interpretation of text structure. For example, expository text, descriptive text, narrative text, argumentative text, evaluative text, persuasive text, instructive text, etc. In respect of text patterns, we can divide them into problem-solution pattern, claim-counterclaim pattern, narrative pattern, question-answer pattern, general-specific pattern, etc. These genres or patterns are important because they provide us with general expectations regarding the way information in a text will be arranged or organized. Let us consider some examples.

It is an interesting fact that the organization of a news articles can be thought of as an inverted pyramid. The most important points are introduced in the headline and at the beginning of the article. As the article progresses, less important details are brought in. This structure is directly related to the way news stories are edited. If the space is not available for the entire article as written, the editor typically deletes paragraphs near the end of the story. Consequently, journalists arrange their stories so that the more important pieces of information are higher in the story.

The format of an academic thesis adopts another structure. It usually begins with an abstract, followed by an introduction, the method, and the discussion and the results. Students encountering an academic thesis for the first time frequently report that it can be very difficult to understand. Gradually, as students become aware of where to find various pieces of information in the thesis, comprehension improves.

Besides, narrative discourse has also been studied a great deal in text research. Typically, stories begin with the introduction of characters and setting. The main character sets out with a certain goal, encounters some obstacles, and ultimately resolves the problems. In general, in the perspective story, narrative discourse consists of a setting, one or more episodes, and then an ending.

Contrasted with narrative discourse, expository discourse is not intended to tell a story but rather to offer information about the subject matter. We often encounter this form of discourse when reading a textbook or listening to a lecture. The emphasis is on presenting the information in an organized and logical way.

The schemata about the textual patterns can also improve speakers' reading ability to some extent. If the speakers are conscious of these patterns, they will quickly form a frame about the text even without reading through it, and then the rest of work is to find evidence and details to support the frame.

However, it must be pointed out that not all paragraphs display a clear pattern of structure, and with in some texts, it is possible to identify more than one genres or textual patterns. Lack of such linguistic schemata also contributes considerably to the problems in reading comprehension.

Take English language and Chinese language for instance. The Chinese way of thinking is a spiral pattern, while the English way is a straight one. Influenced by the two ways of thinking, the English text and Chinese text proceed in different ways. The English text proceeds straight, thus it presents a typical straight organization. In contrast, the Chinese text proceeds spirally, therefore it

appears a typical spiral organization.

Undoubtedly, these two ways of thinking result in two basic types of reasoning in text organization: inductive which proceeds from examples to conclusion and deductive which proceeds from the truth or conclusion to the examples. Both of these forms of reasoning are linear. The basic structural form of inductive reasoning is separate arguments leading to a conclusion. The basic structural form of deductive reasoning, however, is conclusion and then the separate arguments. The Chinese text prefers to use inductive reasoning rather than deductive, although deductive reasoning is quite possible. In contrast, the English text favors deductive one or topic-first one.

There is evidence to show that influenced by the way of thinking, the English text organization differs from that of Chinese text. If a Chinese speaker wants to get spirally into an English text which is organized in a straight way, they will definitely encounter some difficulties. Here a schema should be set up to make the speakers more conscious of this kind of difference. And it is the second language learner who is supposed to rearrange the second language's structure according to his assumption of the target speaker's textual schemata. Only when the second language's organization fit to the target speaker's textual schemata, is the second language acceptable.

III. Cognitive Context and Relevance Theory

1. Notion of Relevance

Relevance theory has drawn more attention from linguistic researchers nowadays. The notion of relevance from cognitive view is first put forward by Sperber and Wilson.

According to Sperber and Wilson, "An assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effects in that context". Contextual effect is a relationship between the information provided by an utterance and its context. Since people have a natural interest in improving their understanding of the world around them, this understanding consisting of the assumptions about the world which they have stored in memory. Therefore they expect the effort spent in comprehension will in some way modify the contextual assumptions they brought to the communication act. The modification of the contextual assumptions is the referred "contextual effects".

The followings are three potential relations, which will produce contextual effects:

1. New information strengthens the existing contextual assumptions;
2. New information unites with old information and gives rise to new contextual implication;
3. New information contradicts the existing contextual assumptions and rejects the old assumptions.

These three prerequisites determine whether an utterance or a piece of new information will have relevance to the cognitive environment of the audience. Contextual effects of an utterance are the necessary and sufficient condition for relevance.

2. Principle of Relevance

Every act of communication will have its own optimal relevance. Thus whenever someone shows his wishes to communicate, he implicitly and automatically conveys the assumption that the hearer can expect to derive adequate contextual effects without spending unnecessary effort. According to Sperber and Wilson, this assumption has an important consequence for the theory of

utterance interpretation: the hearer has the right to assume that the first interpretation he arrives at so that a rational speaker might have expected:

- (a) to yield adequate contextual effects
- (b) to put the hearer to no unjustifiable processing effort in obtaining those effects is the interpretation intended by the communicator.

Also according to Sperber and Wilson, such an interpretation is agreeable with the principle of relevance. And this is the answer of relevance theory as to how hearers can infer what the intended interpretation or meaning of an utterance is: it is the interpretation that is consistent with the principle of relevance, and there is never more than one interpretation that fulfills this condition.

If the information does offer contextual effects adequate to the occasion in a way the speaker could have foresaw, then it may be said that it has used the right contextual information, and that is just that speaker-intended contextual information. The expression "adequate to the occasion" is important because there is no absolute level of relevance that is adequate to every occasion, thus when engaging in a friendly chat with a stranger at the bus stop one would not normally be expecting a high degree of relevance, so would not be looking for a wide range of contextual effects.

By contrast, when listening to a paper given by a leading scholar in one's field of study, one would expect a much greater number of contextual effects, and would also be prepared to invest more processing effort to recover them, perhaps even read a book written by that scholar in order to understand better what he said.

After having looked at the principle of relevance mainly from the hearer's point of view, it is clear that it is equally important from the communicator's end. Since it is the communicator's desire to have his informative intention recognized, it is also his responsibility to express himself in such a way that the first interpretation, which will come to the hearer's mind and which he will find optimally relevant, will indeed be the intended one.

In actual fact, this means that "communication is an asymmetrical process", where more responsibility lies with the communicator than with the audience: It is left to the communicator to make correct assumptions about the codes and contextual information that the audience will have accessible and be likely to use in the comprehension process. The responsibility for avoiding misunderstanding also lies with the speaker, so that all that the hearer has to do is to go ahead and use whatever code and contextual information come most easily to hand.

3. Optimal Relevance

It is worth noticing that a key factor in relevance theory is principle of relevance which can interpret and govern human activities of communication. It is assumed that every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance.

According to Sperber and Wilson, optimal relevance should be defined as follows:

Optimal relevance, an utterance, on a given interpretation, is optimally relevant if:

- (a) it is relevant enough to be worth the hearer's attention;
- (b) it is the most relevant one the speaker is able and willing to produce.

And this definition of optimal relevance is based on the revised presumption of relevance given in the second edition of relevance:

Presumption of optimal relevance:

- (a) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to

process it.

- (b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

This definition by Sperber and Wilson declares that the audience should be able to look for at least adequate cognitive effects. In other words, an utterance is optimally relevant when it enables the audience to find without unnecessary effort the meaning intended by the communicator and when that intended meaning is worth the audience's effort, for example, when it provides adequate benefits to the audience.

In a word, seeking optimal relevance is a basic principle that people obey in the activity of utterance communication. The speaker always expresses his meaning in ostensive way in order that the audience can understand his intention. While the audience must put the information into ostensive-inferential communication mode and deduce and infer it in order to understand the intention of the speaker. A crucial foundation of deduction and inference is to get the optimal relevance of information and context.

An important fact is that the best contextual effect produces the optimal relevance. More successful the deduction and inference are, the more relevance of the utterances can be achieved and clearer the relevance is, the less efforts will be made by the audience in the process of inference but better contextual effect is got, which leads to the correct understanding of the utterances and the success of the communication.

4. Cognitive Context in Relevance Theory

According to Sperber and Wilson, a context is a psychological construct, a "subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world". Also according to them, the context is these assumptions, of course, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance.

But there is an important issue to be discussed for successful communication. The issue is, how do listeners manage to select the actual, speaker-intended assumption from among all the assumptions they could use from their cognitive environment? However, not all the assumptions available from the potential context are equally accessible at any given point in time.

As is known, different degrees of accessibility of contextual assumptions make themselves felt by the different amount of effort that their retrieval requires in a particular act of communication. This sensitivity to processing effort is one of the crucial factors which make inferential communication possible.

Communication is determined by the desire for optimization of resources, just like other human activities. One aspect of the optimization is to keep the effort spent to a minimum. Applied to the selection of potential context, it means that listeners naturally select those contextual assumptions which are most easily accessible to them.

By its effect on the accessibility of assumptions, the organization of memory offers the basis for a very effective constraint on the selection of context, given the general principle that people will try to spend as little processing effort in supplying contextual information as possible.

The other aspect of optimization is that of obtaining benefits. In the perspective of the relevance theory, people have a natural interest in improving their understanding of the world around them. This understanding consists of the assumptions about the world which they have stored in memory. Thus listeners expect that the effort spent in comprehension will in some assumptions they brought to the communication act way modify the contextual.

Context modifications are referred to as contextual effects and there are three kinds: the

derivation of contextual implications, the strengthening, or confirmation of assumptions already held, or in the elimination of assumptions due to a contradiction.

Having had briefly introduced the effort and the benefits involved in interpreting utterance, people will find that they can now introduce the notion that shows how the two relate to each other, and that is the notion of relevance in terms of the following conditions:

- 1) Extent condition 1: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large;
- 2) Extent condition 2: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small.

Thus a conclusion can be drawn that firstly relevance is dependent on the interplay of two factors: contextual effects and processing effort, secondly the notion of relevance is context-dependent, and thirdly utterances can vary according to the degree of relevance they achieve in some context. Human communication creates an expectation of optimal relevance, that is, an expectation on the part of the hearer that his attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost.

This fact is believed to be part of the human psychology, and is expressed in relevance theory as the principle of relevance: Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its optimal relevance. With the principle, the hearer has the right to assume that the first interpretation he arrives at that a rational speaker might have expected:

- (a) to yield adequate contextual effects;
- (b) to put the hearer to no unjustifiable processing effort in obtaining those effects is the interpretation intended by the communicator.

From the communicator's point of view, it is the communicator's desire to have his informative intention recognized, it is also his responsibility to express himself in such a way that the first interpretation that will come to the hearer's mind and that he will find optimally relevant will indeed be the intended one. Only the communicator can increase the relevance and the audience has no other means to do it.

Cognitive context in the relevance theory is a "psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world", according to Sperber and Wilson. It refers to part of hearer's assumptions about the world or cognitive environment which comprises a potentially huge amount of very varied information. People's cognitive environment consists of the following three parts:

- (1) information which can be perceived in the physical environment;
- (2) information that can be retrieved from memory including information derived from preceding utterances and any cultural or other knowledge stored in mind;
- (3) the information that can be inferred from above-mentioned two sources.

5. Ostensive-inferential Communication Mode

In communication, the audience is interested in the communicator's meaning bearing explicature and implicature. The audience needs not only to know the communicator's explicature but also to understand his implicature.

In fact, explicature and implicature refer to the communicator's meaning and intention respectively which are involved in ostensive-inferential communication mode.

Ostension and inference are two sides in the process of communication. From the communicator's point of view, it is ostension, when the communicator's task is to produce a

stimulus, either verbal or non-verbal, which makes his informative intention clear to both sides of the communication.

However, informative intention is not the intention to be communicated at all and the true communicative intention is to make one's informative intention recognized. Once Sperber and Wilson pointed out that to succeed, an act of ostensive communication must attract the audience's attention. In that sense, an act of ostension is a request for attention.

From the audience's point of view, it is inference: the audience's task is to infer the communicator's intentions from the evidence presented. The following example best illustrates ostensive-inferential communication mode:

A: Is there any shopping to do?

B: We'll be away for most of the weekend.

In this conversation, B offers the information of "be away for the weekend" and probably he wants to pass on his intention clearly and correctly to A that A needn't do any shopping. This is communicator's ostension in communication. In turn, on hearing this, A can infer B's implicated intention from B's information provided that he doesn't need to do any shopping.

While how does A infer the intention of B? Although A takes "be away for the weekend" as contextual assumptions and the premise of inference, he or she cannot tell whether B wants to buy something in shop. The ostension of B provides the cognitive environment for inference and A gets his or her own contextual assumptions from such cognitive environment, then makes out various contextual implicatures from B:

- (1) If we are away for the weekend, then we won't need food.
- (2) If we are away for the weekend, then we won't be able to go shopping.
- (3) If we don't go shopping, then we won't have any food on our return.

By inferring from these contextual implicatures we can get contextual effects:

- a. According to (1), A knows that B doesn't want to buy food in the shop.
- b. According to (2) and (3), A may think that B want to go shopping.

From the above example it can be seen that the process of ostension of communicator actually provides a cognitive environment under which audience can make his inference.

6. Relevance-Theoretic Inference Procedure within Cognitive Context

In inferring and interpreting a speech, the hearer starts with a small initial context left over. From his processing of the previous utterance, he estimates the contextual effects of the utterance in that initial context. If there are not enough contextual effects to make the utterance worth his attention, he will expand the context, obtaining further effects, and repeats the process until he has enough effects to make the utterance optimally relevant in a way the speaker could manifestly have foreseen.⁴

Here, the inference involves two major factors, the cognitive context and the inferential processing mechanism. The latter is to explain how the intended meaning is achieved.

Sperber and Wilson argue that the conversational meaning of an utterance is determined by the interaction of its linguistic meaning with specific contextual assumptions; the inferential process by nature is to bridge the gap between the semantic representation of sentences and the thoughts actually conveyed by utterances, and this is achieved under the guidance of the relevance principle.

⁴See Zhao Yanchun (赵彦春), 关联理论对翻译的解释力, 《现代外语(Modern Foreign Language)》, 1999 .

As is mentioned before, the cognitive context, being a subset of cognitive environment, is a general term of context, which can be divided into linguistic context, situational context and cultural context.

From activating the initial context, it is, linguistic context, the linguistic meaning of the utterance can be acquired by decoding; if the linguistic meaning succeeds in yielding adequate contextual effects, the communication is done; if it fails, i.e. any difference occurs between the linguistic meaning and the conversational meaning, the communicator will expand to the situational context, in which, the linguistic meaning becomes a piece of evidence helping the recipient infer the conversational meaning.

Since people have the tendency to achieve the greatest possible contextual effects with the smallest possible processing effort in their inferential process, the communicator will automatically get the most relevant contextual assumptions by activating the situational context with the help of linguistic meaning. From most relevant assumptions selected by the communicator, if the conversational meaning is achieved, the communication is done; if it fails, then, the recipient will go back to cultural context, until he gets the intended contextual effects, which will, in turn, renew the recipient's cognitive context. The process can be illustrated through the following figure.

For example:

Smith: shall we go shopping?

Betty: I have to meet a friend of mine at the airport.

Here the utterance is that Smith invited Betty to go shopping but Betty has to meet his friend at the airport.

And there comes the inference, that is, to decode the linguistic meaning of " I have to meet a friend of mine at the airport ", the recipient activates the linguistic context, getting the semantic intention: the fact "I have to meet a friend of mine at the airport ", but this reply seems irrelevant to the question because Jack's question is a suggestion in fact, his expectation of Betty's answer is to accept or to refuse. Thus for Smith, as the recipient of the sentence, he would expand to logic-situated context. In this context, he could have the following assumptions:

- a) Young people like to go shopping.
- b) Going shopping takes much time.
- c) Meeting friend at the airport takes much time.
- d) Generally one cannot go shopping and meet a friend of mine at the airport at the same time.

These assumptions are related to the utterance with different degree of relevance. In terms of contextual effect and processing effort, assumption:

- a) is the least relevant
- b) is the most relevant one

"Generally one cannot go shopping and meet a friend at the airport at the same time. And I (Betty) have to meet a friend of mine at the airport."

From the most relevant assumption got from the situational context, Smith, the recipient got the intended intention: "I (Betty) cannot go shopping." Which changed Smith's cognitive context and the derivation of this intention takes less psychological costing than the other assumptions such as "The shop is far from here".

In this case, the recipient gets the optimal-relevant answer, or the intended conversational

meaning, he does not have to consult cultural context. But in some other cases, the step is needed.

From the above discussion, it is clear that predictably, people are paying attention to the most accessible information that seems most relevant to them and are having thoughts inferentially derived from combining this information with the most relevant contextual information available. The process of the relevance-theoretic inference is a process to seek optimal relevance in ostensive-inferential communication.

7. Second language learning: Special Communication of Two Ostensive-Inferential Processes

Second language learning is a special form of communication which involves three participants, that is, the mother tongue speaker, second language learner and the target speaker, and two ostensive-inferential processes.

In the first ostensive-inferential process, the mother tongue speaker conveys his or her communicative intention to the second language learner who processes the mother tongue speaker's stimulus or utterance with principle of relevance. The second language learner infers the communicative intention kept in the ostensive information of mother tongue by making full use of kinds of informative knowledge from his own cognitive context, and then finds the optimal relevance of source information and contextual assumptions to get the contextual effect correspondingly. In this process, the second language learner plays the role of a receptor.

Then the second language learner enters into the second ostensive-inferential communicative process, in which the second language learner takes the cognitive ability and expectation as norm and makes the choice of optimal relevance of second language learning to provide optimal contextual effects for the target language speakers and transmit the intention and relevant information of the mother tongue. At this time the second language learner becomes the addresser or communicator. He displays information to the second language speaker according to the mother tongue, his understanding and mastering of the source language writer's communicative intention, the target language environment and his estimate of the target language speaker's cognitive context; And the second language speaker processes the information the second language learner conveys and derives the intended interpretation.

It can also be found out that a second language learner has double identity, that is, the communicator or writer and the receptor or speaker. In the first ostensive-inferential communication, the second language learner's main task is to draw inferences from the original speaker's communicative intentions. He is a receptor as an ordinary speaker of the original text. During the second process, however, he acts as a communicator. He conveys what he infers from the original text to the target language speaker.

So it can be seen that the mother tongue speaker's communicative purpose is achieved indirectly by a series of turns: the speaker creates a body of contextual factors (the mother tongue) by means of his or her own cognitive context and cognitive sense; the second language learner decodes the mother tongue by using his or her cognitive context and cognitive sense and forms a context in his mind, and then reproduces the formed context in corresponding linguistic signs of a different language to transmit the speaker's communicative purpose; in the end, target language speaker sees the speaker's purpose by decoding the second language through his or her own cognitive context and cognitive sense. On this ground, the realization of communication purpose by means of second language learning is at the same time conditioned by the speaker's cognitive context and then contextual factors, the second language learner's and the target language

speaker's cognitive contexts, and the contextual factors.

Obviously the second language learner acts as a communicator in the second stage of second language learning. The expressions are the presupposition or rearrangement of the contextual factors in people's cognitive context in accordance with their communicative purpose.

The second language learner is an ostensive communicator, so the responsibility for avoiding misunderstanding and other communication breakdowns in second language learning lies with him.

The second language learner does decide what to preserve and what to discard in the second language learning. He may put his intentions explicitly or implicitly, which is determined by his view of the target speaker's cognitive context. It is the communicator's responsibility to ensure that the audience can recognize his informative intention.

Moreover, the second language learner may consider suitable strategies for providing necessary contextual clues to help the target speaker interpret the learner's speech. In the relevance-theoretic framework, second language learning is a dynamic process, the strategies the second language learner shall employ varies with particular purpose. What is important for second language learner is to let target speaker achieve adequate contextual effects without unnecessary efforts.

It is the communicator's desire to have his informative intention recognized, so that it is also his responsibility to express himself in such a way that the first interpretation, which will come to the hearer's mind and which he will find optimally relevant, will indeed be the intended one. This means, in effect, that "communication is an asymmetrical process", here more responsibility lies with the communicator than with the audience: It is left to the communicator to make correct assumptions about the codes and contextual information that the audience will have accessible and be likely to use in the comprehension process.

The second language learner should make ostensive to his expected speaker what he believes to be the intentions of the original text. The semantic representation the second language learner uses automatically claims its optimal relevance.

The optimal interpretive expression of a thought should give the listener information about that thought which is relevant enough to be worth processing, and should require as little processing effort as possible. Being a kind of communicative activity in nature, successful second language learning must make the communicator's intentions and speaker's expectations meet. In other words, the second language learner must seek the optimal relevance from what is made ostensive by the original writer and convey it to the target speakers.

IV. Intermediary Context and its Construction in the Light of Relevance Theory

1. Intermediary Context —a Bridge Connecting ST Context and TT Context

The schema theory fully shows the active effect of one's established knowledge on processing new information. The second language learning practice is actually the communicative and interactive process among the three sides, namely, the expressor of the source language text, the second language learner and the speaker of the target language text. The second language learner's understanding of the mother tongue is realized by virtue of the shared cultural schemata between the source language speaker and the second language learner, in addition to the relevance inference principle. Therefore, the shared cognitive schemata are the prerequisite for a successful communication between the speaker and the second language learner.

However, there is a pity about the relationship of the cognitive schemata between the writers or speakers of the source language text and the second language learners.

The pity lies on the intermediary context –a bridge connecting the ST context and the TT context, that is to say, intermediary context is the context formed by second language learners in their minds.

It must be made clear that intermediary context, which is the new notion about context in seconding language learning first put forward in this thesis, is not iner-context, which is the ST context and TT context shared by the two sides of source language speaker and target language learner, often viewed as across-cultural context. However, intermediary context is the context between the ST context and TT context, formed only by second language learners themselves in their minds according to their own understanding of the ST context, as a medium during the process of transfer between the ST context and TT context.

1.1 Differences between Schemata of ST speaker Second Language Learner

The modern schema theory explains how significant a role the background knowledge plays in the process of understanding new information and also how a speaker's background knowledge interacts with certain discourse content and gives birth to the understanding process. According to the schema theory, everyone has his or her own specific schema (background information), which usually varies from culture to culture. As to second language learning, there is also some differences between the schemata of the ST speaker and the second language learner.

As is known, schemata can be roughly split into content schemata and linguistic schemata. And cultural schemata as sub-schemata of content schemata play an important role in second language learning because second language learning is a cross-cultural communication whose one of the missions is to promote the cultural exchange and amalgamation. The thesis dwells on the analysis of the differences between cultural schemata and linguistic schemata of the second language learner and the speaker.

Differences between Culture Schemata of ST Speaker and Second Language Learner

The content schemata, as is known to all, are highly culture-specific, so cultural knowledge is often categorized as sub-schema of content schemata. Influenced by different social backgrounds, different cultural traditions, different religious beliefs, different customs and habits, etc, people from different cultures have different values, moralities and perceptions, and undoubtedly they look at things in different ways, which is reflected in their comprehension processing.

As for second language learning, if the second language learner is from a foreign country, the cultural schemata of ST speaker and the second language learner will be evidently different each other in many aspects. Cultural differences and different cultural mentalities between the speaker and the second language learner are likely to turn into second language learning barriers. Before his reading of the mother tongue, the second language learner has been shaped by his culture, and thus there is always cultural presupposition in his mind. This shaping determines how he will understand the mother tongue.

There was a translated book 《假设的无辜者》 in Chinese, translated from a novel named *Presumed Innocent* written by Scott Turow. The name of the book *Presumed Innocent*, which derives from a legal term "presumption of innocence" equivalent to the term ‘无罪推定’ in Chinese turned out to be a mis-second language learning. Because it was not until very recently

that the principle of the presumption of innocence was introduced into criminal law in China, the second language learner had no idea about the legal principle, and a mis-second language learning was the result.

There is another kind of situation which is resulted from the differences between the culture schemata of the ST speaker and the second language learner. Between the writer and the speaker of the source language text, it is through the very shared schemata and the mutually-acknowledged pragmatic proposition that the two-way information exchange and smooth communication are successfully realized.

Out of the pragmatic economical purpose, the writer of the source language text tends to omit the cultural information that he or she believes it is unnecessary and even redundant to make clear because his or her intentional speakers would be able to subconsciously supplement the vacant gap of the omitted cultural knowledge according to some hints of the text in their communication (that is, the reading process in this context) and in addition, activate the relevant schemata in their memory.

But the intentional speakers of the source language text do not include foreign second language learners, let alone the second language learners with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the cultural background knowledge shared by the writer and the speakers of the source language text that is considered to be self-evident is comparatively strange and unintelligible to second language learners with different cultural backgrounds.

Although second language learners try their best to study the target culture, they cannot master the target culture as well as the native speakers do. In cross-cultural communication, it is often the case that the input information can not activate the cognitive vacant gaps and therefore, can not activate relatively complete schemata. What is more, in certain cases, there is simply no relevant schema in the foreign second language learners' mind at all, which leads to the difficulty in understanding the source language text.

Differences between Linguistic Schemata of ST Speaker and Second Language Learner

Viewing from one language to another, it is immediately obvious that people in different speech-communities always have different modes of expression. The distinction between Chinese language and English language should be helpful and should be a good instance for better recognition of differences between the linguistic schemata of the ST speaker and the second language learner.

The modes of expression in Chinese differ in thousands of ways from those in English. Both in morphology and in syntax, Chinese has little in common with English:

(1) Differences on the level of word

Chinese and English are quite distinct from each other in the use of words, such as plural nouns, numeral-classifier compounds, articles, the idiomatic "it", and the expletive "there".

(2) Differences on the level of syntax

Syntax is that part of grammar which deals with the rules according to which words are connected in sentence, and also the various kinds of sentences, their structure and meaning. In syntax the Chinese language also differs greatly from English and other European languages, English, French, German, Russian, Polish etc. included.

All the syntactical rules and principles in English grammar are not fit for use in

Chinese sentence construction.

The general rule for sentence building in Chinese is well illustrated as “积字成句，积句成章”，that means a sentence is made by accumulating the words and a passage is made by accumulating the sentence. The Chinese language and the English language differ mainly in the following ways: in constituent elements; in classification of sentences and in word order in the sentence.

(3) Differences on Modes of Thinking

People with different culture background have different mode of thinking. The difference of thinking reflects on the particular tendency of the linguistic psychology of people that formed tens of millions years ago. So each language gives expression to the characteristics of thinking of people who speak this language.

Through the above analysis, it can be said that Chinese language and English language are poles apart. It is essential to recognize that each language has its own genius. That is to say, each language possesses certain distinctive characteristics which give it a special character, e.g., word-building capacities, unique patterns of phrase order, techniques for linking clauses into sentences, markers of discourse, and so on.

When discussing the differences between the linguistic schemata of the ST speaker and the second language learner, interlanguage has to be accounted as an important factor leading to the differences.

Inter-language, a kind of phenomenon in the process of second language learning, is unavoidable and has own unique features as a continuum between the learners' mother tongue and the target language. This special language system, belongs to the language schema which is acquired through a long-time process of schemata accommodation and adaptation.

Furthermore, language transfer and inter-language are independent with each other. Second language learning is continuously accompanied by the mother tongue's transfer, which constantly affects learner's master towards the target language. it brings two sides' effects on cross-language transformation: when the mother tongue has some similar grammar points with the target language in inter-language, learner can quickly acquire these structures; while if some language rules from two languages are totally different, inter-language will bring some negative transfers on his learning which result in misunderstandings.

Although interlanguage is often used to solve problems in language acquisition and language teaching, it can also be employed into second language learning which deals with the transformation between languages. A second language learner is also a second language speaker. For him, inter-language is an inevitable process and affects his thinking and organization in the later second language learning practice. The speaker, therefore, thinks that second language learning has a closely relationship with interlanguage.

Interlanguage is distinct from both his mother tongue and the target language. Few learners progress all the way to native-like proficiency in all areas of the target language, although many learners do become fully functional in all relevant domains of target-language use.

Apparently, even the special inter-language of the second language learners does not include some basic mistakes, such as pronunciation errors and wrong words; negative transfer concerning ways of thinking from mother tongue will still occur from time to time in their practice. In other words, their inter-language largely brings some negative transfers related to cultures and habits. Therefore, second language learner's inter-language is, on many occasions, a result of cultural

disagreements or even cultural conflicts.

Negative transfer in their second language learning usually takes place in the following situations: when the second language learner of a second language mistakenly believes that there are some cultural features shared by both his mother tongue and the target language; when he inappropriately links his knowledge gained from his native language to the target language while encoding it; or when he wrongly uses some cultural values from his mother tongue environments to that of the target language. In these situations, cultural negative transfers in second language learner's second language learning will apparently lead to some problems in second language learning.

1.2 Differences between Context Formed in Second Language Learner's Mind and Mother Tongue Context

In the framework of relevance theory, second language learning is regarded as a communicative process of cognitive inference in which second language learner should make full use of kinds of informative knowledge from his own cognitive context and infer the communicative intention implied in the ostensive information of mother tongue, then find the optimal relevance of source information and contextual assumptions to get the contextual effect correspondingly.

The ST⁵ speaker's communicative purpose is achieved indirectly by a series of turns: the speaker creates a body of contextual factors of the mother tongue by means of his or her own cognitive context and cognitive sense, and then the second language learner decodes the mother tongue by using his or her cognitive context and cognitive sense and forms a new possible context in his mind, and then rearranges the information into target language text and then reproduces the context formed in his mind in corresponding linguistic signs of a different language to transmit the source informant's communicative purpose; in the end, the target language speaker sees source informant's purpose by decoding the target language context through his or her own cognitive context and cognitive sense. According to this, the realization of communication purpose by means of second language learning is at the same time conditioned by the informant's cognitive context and then contextual factors, the second language learner's and the target language speaker's cognitive contexts, and the contextual factors.

Once a certain mother tongue is finished, the certain context reflected in the text is fixed, as far as second language learning is concerned. If the second language learner wants to understand what a text was originally intended to convey, the second language learner has to try to take into account its original setting and reconstruct the historical, cultural and sociological background in which the ST was written. then a second language learner always tries to find out the situation where the language act takes place and materials relevant to the original — the writer's biographic stories, comments on him and his writing, the socio-cultural background or setting of the creation of the original, the writer's psychology and so on. In this way the second language learner is taking pains to penetrate the writer's cognition world in the creation context. Only after accomplishing these matters has the second language learner managed to comprehend the creation context and the meanings in the original.

Thus it can be concluded that experience and cognition precedes second language learning activity, and the translated work is the product of the experience and cognition. Second language learning is based on the second language learner's comprehension of the various meanings in the

⁵Referring to Source Text, while TT, the short form for Target Text

original work, and his comprehension is unavoidably based on his experience and cognition of the original work.

Viewed as communication from the perspective of relevance theory, second language learning is context-dependent. In the cognitive sense, context is a set of psychological constructs, such as schema, a subset of the speaker's assumptions about the world. Context is not given but chosen. In the process of the speaker's inference, the speaker chooses those more manifest or accessible contexts.

The schema theory in modern cognitive psychology maintains the idea that one's knowledge is kept in his or her long-term memory in the form of "schema" and the schemata of different sizes and on different layers interconnect and crisscross with each other, thus forming a huge stereoscopic network system "schemata" in its long course of memory, which requires various kinds of knowledge. The sum total of all the schemata is equivalent to all one's knowledge. Therefore, schemata are bases for one's cognition.

Since there are some differences between the schemata of the ST speaker and the second language learner, there must be some differences between the cognition of the ST speaker and the second language learner. So the context formed in the second language learner's mind can't be equal to the mother tongue context. It can only be infinitely close to the mother tongue context.

1.3 Differences between Context Formed in Second Language Learner's Mind and Target Language Context

Obviously, even the literary masters may encounter the situation when they can't express what they think fully and exactly. As to second language learning, due to the linguistic competence of the second language learner, there must be some distance between the context formed in the second language learner's mind and the second language context.

Cultural presupposition is also an important reason leading to the differences between the second language learner's mind and the second language context. Sometimes in extreme cases, deep-rooted cultural presuppositions and dogmatically held cultural values may even prompt the second language learner to misrepresent the source message purposefully. This may be observed in some Chinese second language learners of Buddhist scriptures.

Chinese Buddhism is in many ways quite different from Hindu Buddhism, although Chinese Buddhists, especially priests, all claim some Scripture to be the foundation of the doctrine of the sect they each belong to. Buddhist creed was in a large measure signalized owing to the second language learning of Scripture. Such basic concepts of Buddhism as "impermanence" or "anatman" meaning no independent individual existence have never entered into Chinese philosophy as they originally were; they were received in line with Chinese ideology.

Important sources of interference in the second language learning of Scripture were 13 typical Chinese values, especially those values deeply rooted in Confucianism, which the second language learners of Scripture made an effort to accommodate.

For instance, in Chinese consciousness the exceptional respect for one's teachers and superiors led the second language learner of Fa Hua Qing (Fa Hua Scripture) to rewrite arbitrarily the following sentence:

An enlightened Self (Pratyekabuddha) opened his eyes to the truth without looking to his master for help (anacarya).

Into a new one:

"He listened to the Buddha's law and accepted it as being true."

Unfortunately, that is just the opposite of its original meaning.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the context formed in the second language learner's mind after his reading of mother tongue can't be equal to the mother tongue context and the second language context.

Here, the speaker calls the formed context as intermediary context. It is formed by the relevant contextual assumptions the second language learner gets by activating his own cognitive context in accordance with relevance principle, from which the writer's linguistic intention and intended communicative intention can be achieved as much as possible. It is a bridge connecting the mother tongue context and the second language context. It plays the role of both the second language learner's reception context and the expression context.

In second language learning, the second language learner, as a speaker, knows the mother tongue's linguistic meaning and communicative meaning by constructing the intermediary context on the basis of relevance principle. While as a reproducer, the second language learner transfers the mother tongue's linguistic meaning and communicative meaning by encoding the intermediary context into the second language after evaluating target speaker's cognitive context.

2. Model of Intermediary Context Reconstruction

In nature, second language learning is a communicative activity that naturally depends on the intention of the communicator and the expectation of the audience.

According to relevance theory, second language learning is basically an act of communication, whose success depends on whether the communicator's intentions and the recipient's expectations are met or not. So what the second language learner needs to do is to coordinate his intentions with the speaker's expectations.

However, the intentions and expectations belong to the cognitive context of second language learner and speaker respectively. Then, here comes the question: how can the second language learner coordinate the two? And in what way, the second language learner should reconstruct the writer-intended context? According to relevance theory, it is governed by the principle of relevance, which, indeed, is the ultimate principle that governs second language learning.

The purpose of second language learning is mainly for interpretive use of language. In terms of inter-lingual interpretive use, the second language learning is intended to re-state in one language what someone else said or wrote in another language. Since the second language learner is in the "secondary communicative environment", and due to differences resulted in language and culture, no second language learning can completely resemble the original text. Any learner's speech will be unavoidably affected by the second language learner's own interpretation of the original. Therefore, successful second language learning can only be a receptor language text close to the original in relevant aspects.

Obviously, it is the optimal relevance that determines the degree of resemblance a second language learner could aim for. In order for his second language learning to be of optimal relevance, the second language learner will need to look at the likely benefits, that is, the contextual effects and also at the processing effort involved for the target speakers. Particularly, the second language learner needs to have a right evaluation of the target speakers' cognitive context to ensure that his second language learning is optimally relevant to them.

It is generally accepted that second language learning is a communication of two ostensive-inferential processes. And the first ostensive-inferential process is actually the process of comprehension, while the second one is the process of expressing.

At the stage of comprehension, the second language learner gets the information from language decoding, and his mental process shows his multiple understanding to the text, that is, making multiple contextual assumptions. Then the second language learner must infer the most possible assumptions, that is, the intermediary context with the guidance of relevance principle.

As have been discussed above, “ The central claim of relevance theory is that human communication crucially creates an expectation of optimal relevance, that is, an expectation on the part of the hearer that his attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost”, according to Sperber and Wilson. When put it into second language learning study, it is both the goal of the second language learner and the principle of evaluation. The task of the second language learner is to try to create adequate contextual effect through finding the optimal relevance.

In order to determine what is optimally relevant between mother tongue context and the intermediary context, the second language learner needs to look at both the contextual effect and the processing effort involved for him.

Actually, when the second language learner wants to achieve adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost, he must search for the optimal relevance in contexts. The more relevant in contexts, the less processing effort it may require, and the better contextual effect it will achieve. Once the optimal relevance is found in second language learning, the intermediary context can be decided.

Actually, it is in the inference process that the second language learner constructs the intermediary context in mind. And the inferred contextual assumptions constitute the intermediary context. Therefore, to be a successful mediator, the second language learner needs to have a good mastery of both the source and the target language otherwise he could not have adequate contextual assumptions let alone infer the relevant ones to interpret the mother tongue.

While at the stage of expressing, the second language learner needs to make assumptions about the second language speaker's cognitive context, find out the relations between the second language speaker's cognitive context and intermediary context, and then adopt corresponding second language learning strategies to establish the optimal relevance between the intermediary context and the second language.

When the second language learner and the target language speaker share the intermediary context, the second language learner may directly translate the intermediary context into the target language one, conforming to the rules and principles of the target language. If the text speaker's cognitive context is quite different from intermediary context, or the two form a gap, the second language learner should make some appropriate adaptations in his second language learners to yield the context effects that the target language speaker needs, and achieve the mutual manifestness of cognition with the speaker.

Whatever strategies he may use the second language learner must keep one point in his mind: he has to make his intentions meet the target speaker's expectations. According to the relevance theory, human communication crucially creates an expectation of optimal relevance, that is, an expectation on the part of message receiver that his attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost.

As to second language learning, the target speaker has the right to assume that the first interpretation he arrives at that a rational communicator might have expected to yield adequate contextual effects, and to put the receiver to unjustifiable processing effort in obtaining those

effects is the second language learner's intended interpretation. Since it is the second language learner's desire to have his intention recognized, it is also his responsibility to express himself in such a way that the first interpretation that will arrive at the receiver's mind and that he will find optimally relevant will indeed be the intended interpretation.

Therefore the second language learner should keep his expression of the constructed intermediary context consistent with the principle of optimal relevance, enabling the target speaker to achieve adequate contextual effects without unnecessary efforts.

In the comprehension stage, the second language learner decodes the linguistic form of the mother tongue into lexical meaning. The lexical meaning will automatically activate the second language learner's cognitive context.

Linguistic expressions, in the cognitive framework assumed by relevance theory, are dealt with first of all by a component of the mind that specializes in processing language data. This component is essentially a coding device which takes as input linguistic formulae and on the basis of their linguistic properties assigns to them mental formulae that mean or represent something, that is, semantic representations. The term "semantic representation" here is used to refer to mental representations that are the output of the language module of the mind.

However, due to the fact that the language module of the mind handles only linguistic data, the semantic representations which it produces as output are not normally complete and fully truth-conditional propositions or assumptions, but rather assumption schema or blueprints for propositions, which need to be developed and enriched in a number of different ways. Once a mental representation has been processed and completed in this way to become fully truth-conditional it is said to have a propositional form.

Thus in relevance theory, the fact that on the one hand linguistic expressions do have some meaning, and yet that this meaning is not necessarily identical to the meaning actually conveyed by that expression on any given occasion, but is accounted for by the claim that verbal communication involves two distinct kinds of mental representations: semantic representations that are the output of the language module of the mind, and thoughts with propositional forms that are derived from semantic representations by further processing. The way in which the second language learner gets from semantic representations to propositional forms crucially involves the use of context.

The second language learner starts with activating the initial context, that is, linguistic context, and then arrives at the linguistic meaning including the source language's phonology, lexicology and structure. If the linguistic meaning can succeed in yielding adequate contextual effects, that is, it can help the second language learner construct the intermediary context, the comprehension process of the intermediary context construction is done; if it fails, the linguistic meaning is not relevant enough for the second language learner to construct the intermediary context, the second language learner will expand to the situational context, at this step, the linguistic meaning becomes a piece of evidence to help the second language learner infer the mother-tongue-speaker-intended meaning conversational meaning.

Since people have the tendency to achieve the greatest possible contextual effects with the smallest possible processing effort in their inferential process, the second language learner will automatically select the most accessible and relevant contextual assumptions by activating the situational context.

From the selected most relevant assumptions, if the mother-tongue-speaker-intended meaning

is achieved, then these contextual assumptions are the intermediary context the second language learner aims to construct, thus the construction is done; if it fails, then the second language learner will move on to cultural context, until the second language learner gets the contextual assumptions from which the mother-tongue-speaker-intended meaning is achieved until he gets the intended contextual effects.

Obviously, the relevant contextual assumptions the second language learner gets by activating his own cognitive context in accordance with relevance principle, from which the writer's linguistic intention and intended communicative intention can be achieved, form the intermediary context the second language learner aims to construct in second language learning, and it is in the inferring process that the second language learner constructs the intermediary context.

After constructing the intermediary context in mind, the second language learner comes to the expression stage. He will first make an evaluation of the target speaker's cognitive context, in the opposite order of activating, namely, firstly, cultural context, and then situational and linguistic context.

According to the relevance principle, people have the tendency of achieving the greatest possible contextual effects with the smallest possible processing effort in their inferential process, so after constructing the intermediary context in mind, what is accessible to the second language learner is the newly gotten information from the cultural context, if it is activated before, and then the information from situational and linguistic context. After evaluation, the intermediary context may fall into the following three categories:

- (1) The intermediary context is overlapped with target speaker's cognitive context.

Although each individual is characterized by one's own cognition, there exist biological, psychological and anthropological universals underlying human faculties. Aggregates of people everywhere possess the same capacity to comprehend the observed and imagined universe properties through their own language. Some mental qualities are universal of the human psyche. Thus, context overlap lies mainly in the largely common factors that can be cognized by all human beings with the same cognitive sense.

- (2) There exists a gap between the intermediary context and the target speaker's context. The context gap rises from those nation-specific contextual factors.

The culture schemata default is an important factor contributing to the differences between the intermediary context and the second language speaker's cognitive context. Culture schemata default means that a schema in one culture does not possess its equivalent in another culture or just has its incomplete equivalent which partially corresponds to it.

To remove the obstacles caused by culture schemata differences, some second language learning strategies are probed. The mother tongue speaker's schemata and the second language speaker's are required to be fully evaluated by second language learner. If a culture schema default occurs, the strategy of filling the gap between the two culture schemata is needed.

- (3) The intermediary context is against the target speaker's context.

Different nations may have cultivated their own cognitive rules and principles in the course of contextualization of the outside world. These rules and principles are internalized into the nation's unique cognitive context. The factor causing the mismatch

is the conflicting schemata which share the same signified in two cultures but have considerably different or even conflicting connotation and denotation. Let us take the schema of bat for example. In Western countries, the bat is usually an image of an ugly, sinister, blood-sucking creature.

There are many typical expressions of the negative associations such as "as blind as a bat", "crazy as bat", "he's a bit batty" and so on. To Chinese, however, the bat is a symbol of good fortune, well-being, and happiness. In short, the bat is associated with positive qualities in Chinese culture. It is probably because the name of the creature is pronounced as the same as the Chinese character “福” (fu) which indicates well-being, happiness and good fortune.

When the different or even conflicting schemata occur, the second language learners is supposed to undertake the responsibility to adjust or modify the second language speaker's existing schemata which is different or even conflicting with the mother tongue speaker's schemata.

Then the second language learner will use some strategies to encode the reconstructed context by means of the linguistic units: words, phrases, sentences and text of the target language.

What is more, after encoding, the representation of intermediary context which is constructed by the second language learner will produce on the target speaker's part similar contextual effects, and it will cost target language speaker similar amount of cognitive effort for it because the target speaker will reconstruct the second language learner expressed context in the same order as the second language learner does, as a result, the target speaker's cognitive context will be modified and renewed; and the renewed cognitive context will be of some help for the target speaker in the future cognitive process.

In order to illustrate the model, here take the second language learning of the underlined sentences as examples here. The English original is from *Memoirs of My Life and Writings* by Edward Gibbon, the great British historian who wrote *The Decline and Fall Of The Roman Empire*.

The Original Essay is as following:

No sooner was I settled in my house and library, than I undertook the composition of the first volume of my History. At the outset all was dark and doubtful ;even the title of the work, the true era of the Decline and Fall of the Empire ,the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labor of seven years. The style of an speaker should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effects. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace; but the fifteen and sixteen chapters have been reduced by three successive revisals from a large volume to their present size; and they might still be compressed, without any factors or sentiments. An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London. Such an oracle might have been consulted and obeyed with rational devotion; but I was soon disgusted with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends some will praise from politeness, and some will criticize from vanity. The speaker himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject; no one is so sincerely interested in the event... I

have presumed to mark the moment of conception; I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day ,or rather night ,of the 27th of June,1787,between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote that last lines of the last pages, In a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts, which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos.(1) My fist rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press.(2)Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those o the speaker and the printer: the faults and merits are exclusively my own. (Edward Gibbon, Memoirs of My Life and Writings)

The speaker Edward Gibbon, an English historian and scholar, is the supreme historian of the Enlightenment. He is known as the speaker of the monumental *The Decline and Fall Of the Roman Empire*, is often considered the greatest historian in the British history. After *Decline and Fall*, Gibbon also wrote a memoir. It went through many drafts and was not published during his lifetime. Lord Sheffield later prepared Gibbon's *Memoirs of My Life and Writings* for publication and *Miscellaneous Works*. The extract chosen to be a case study here is from his *Memoirs of My Life and Writings*. As to this extract, it tells about the speaker's industry and pain in writing of his work *The Decline and Fall Of the Roman Empire*, and the joy and relief of his finishing of this long, long task.

Example: An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London.

Analysis and assessment is like this:

First, after decoding the linguistic form of the sentence, the second language learner gets the lexical meaning, and the lexical meaning activating the linguistic context, the second language learner knows the fact that "An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I (the speaker) have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London." But this fact cannot help the second language learner construct the intermediary context, i.e., activating the linguistic context does not yield enough relevance, so the second language learner should expand to the situational context. In this context, he could have some assumptions according to relevance principle like these:

- a) The history of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander should not be recorded concisely and superficially.
- b) It is a fault that the speaker recorded the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander concisely and superficially.
- c) The speaker didn't know the fault until Mr. Hume pointed it out in his last journey to London.

These contextual assumptions are relevant with different degree of relevance, from which,

the second language learner constructs a context like:

- d) It's a fault that the speaker recorded the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander concisely and superficially, and the speaker didn't know the fault until Mr. Hume pointed it out in his last journey to London.

However, the reason for the fault is not included in this context, that is, the relevance between the second language learner constructed context and that of the mother tongue is not adequate, so the second language learner has to go ahead to activate the cultural context, for the sentence is closely related to the history of Roman Empire. It is necessary for the second language learner to know who Commodus and Alexander are and what their positions and roles are in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

In fact it is necessary for the second language learner to be aware of the history of Roman Empire. During the reign of the philosopher and emperor Marcus Aurelius, the borderline of Roman Empire was frequently invaded by its eastern and northern enemies. The Empire began to downgrade.

According to historic record, in 180 A.D., Marcus Aurelius was assassinated and his son Commodus came into rule. Commodus was ruthless and abnormal. He believed that he was the reincarnation of Hercules, and often went to the arena to fight as a gladiator. In 192 A.D., Commodus was strangled to death by a wrestler in the arena. It is from that time on that the Roman Empire began to fall and decline.

During the years between 193 A.D. and 284 A.D., many military riots broke out. As the military generals strengthened their power gradually, at last they threatened the reign of the emperors. In the following 50 years, there were 26 generals who overthrew the emperor's reign. So the third century is also called "third century crisis". Alexander's rule was in this century, to be more exact, during the years between 222 A.D. and 235 A.D.

The second language learner should distinguish between this Alexander and Alexander III The Great, whose reign was during 356 B.C.

Through the above analysis, it will not be difficult to understand the intention of Gibbon. Because he is writing the fall and decline of the Roman Empire, and in his opinion, the beginning of the fall was from the reign of Commodus, it is proper to regard the reigns of Commodus and Alexander as the early age of the fall and decline of the Empire. In this context, the second language learner gets the assumptions:

- e) The reigns of Commodus and Alexander are closely related to the fall and decline of the Empire. It is one of the main reasons which lead to the fall and decline of the Empire. So it's a fault that the speaker recorded the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander concisely and superficially, and the speaker didn't know the fault until Mr. Hume pointed it out in his last journey to London.

According to relevance principle, the second language learner tends to achieve the greatest possible contextual effects with the smallest possible processing effort, so e) is the most relevant contextual assumption, while d) is not, because without information on the close relationship between the reigns of Commodus and Alexander and the fall and decline of the Empire mentioned before, making such assumption in the reconstruction would cost second language learner more effort. Combining the contextual assumptions gotten from activating linguistic, situational and cultural context, the second language learner constructs the intermediary context:

The reigns of Commodus and Alexander are closely related to *The Fall and Decline of the*

Empire. It is one of the main reasons which lead to the fall and decline of the Empire. So it's a fault that the speaker recorded the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander concisely and superficially, and the speaker didn't know the fault until Mr. Hume pointed it out in his last journey to London.

The second language learner constructs the intermediary context in mind, and then before expresses it in second language, he should evaluate speaker's cognitive context. As discussed before, the second language learner would evaluate the speaker's cultural context first, because it is the most accessible with new information from the second language learner's cultural context.

Here, in this example, after evaluating speaker's cultural context the second language learner finds that the common Chinese speakers could not get the contextual assumption. The reigns of Commodus and Alexander are closely related to the fall and decline of the Empire. It is one of the main reasons which lead to the fall and decline of the Empire. By activating their cultural context, he should add this information into speaker's cognitive context, and then, the second language learner forms the intermediary context in his mind, taking speaker's situational and linguistic context into account in a way that the speaker could reconstruct the context.

Thus there are some different Chinese versions:

“与此恰好相反，关于康茂德至亚历山大这几代帝国衰落之初的君主统治时期，叙述上却过分简洁而流于粗浅：这个缺陷我以前从未听人提及，直到休谟先生最后一次旅居伦敦，才为他亲口指出。”

“在叙述从科摩多斯到亚历山大的这些早期王朝时，我又犯了一个相反的错误，把他们写的过于简单肤浅了。休谟先生最后一次来伦敦时跟我提到了这个错误，而在此之前从没有人跟我说过。”

“一个相反不足可以归罪于对康茂德到亚历山大大帝最初统治时期简洁、肤浅地叙述；直到休谟先生最近一次来伦敦旅行，我才从他那里听到这个不足。”

“与此相反，对从卡德斯到亚历山大这段统治时期的叙述则过于简洁、肤浅，我从前从没听说过些时写得简洁、深入浅出也是一种错误，只是在休谟先生上次来伦敦时听过。”⁶

In order to make clearer about the theory, the next is another example for the theory.

After laying down my pen, I took several turns in berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent.

Reading this sentence, one may get the lexical meaning of it by activating our linguistic context and one may be impressed by the words, phrases and structure as the long and short sentences interact. Parallel structures are well used:

“The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent.”

The linguistic meaning of these words and phrases helps us construct a distinct picture of the silent night, which is part of the mother tongue context, i.e., the writer's linguistic meaning. Thus it is necessary to move to the situational context to construct the intended conversational meaning.

In the first paragraph, Gibbon has narrated his feelings in writing of the History. In the second paragraph, he will tell us about his complicated feelings at the moment when he finished the writing of the History. Of course, he was exhilarated that at last he finished his History after many years of efforts. But this feeling disappears quickly.

Soon he had feeling like the feelings one had lost his old companion. These complicated feeling were further strengthened and contextualized when the speaker made a walking in the moonlight on one night of June. And the linguistic meaning becomes a piece of evidence to help

⁶See Xu Yuanchong(许渊冲), 1984, 《翻译的艺术》.北京: China Foreign Publishing Press.

us have such relevant assumptions like:

- a) In the sentence, the words “temperate, serene, silent” with soft sounds like “t” and “s”, will make one imagine the whole world in the night is silent.
- b) The air, the sky, the silver orb of the moon and the waters form a world of silence.

The way these assumptions are made is in accordance with relevance principle, which is why we get these assumptions instead of others. From these possible assumptions, we construct a context like: it is a silent night. The four sentences of the mother tongue draw a distinct picture of the silent night.

Combining the contextual assumptions from activating the linguistic and situational context, the second language learner constructs the intermediary context in his mind, and then evaluates speaker's cognitive context before expressing it. In the target speaker's situational context, there is a vivid image of silent night stored, so what we should do is to translate the intermediary context into the second language.

At the same time, the language characteristics of the original underlined sentence can also be analyzed. The style is simple, the images are clear, and the flow of the language is slow. These match well with feelings of the Gibbon. So it is also the second language learner's task to reflect these characteristics in the target language. And considering the language characteristics of the target language, of course, it is proper to use four-character idiomatic expression in the target language of Chinese.

The Chinese version is:

朗朗夜空，气极清爽，月撒银辉，泛光水上，天际间万籁俱静。

From the model, it can be seen that the intermediary context construction includes almost everything, both objective and subjective, because the context itself includes everything. It may confuse some people at the beginning. However, the key point of this model is that all these components will be directed by the principle of relevance. That is to say, the model is set up on the cognition of people. It has been proved that people's cognition should follow the principle of relevance.

In the model, relevance, the fundamental guideline determines the inference of contextual assumptions, which form the intermediary context. In simple words, automatically applying relevance principle, the second language learner gets these assumptions that can yield adequate effects with reasonable effort instead of others. During the process of inference, the second language learner constructs the intermediary context.

In second language learning, the second language learner, as a speaker, knows the mother tongue's linguistic meaning and communicative meaning by constructing the intermediary context on the basis of relevance principle. While as a reproducer, the second language learner encodes the intermediary context into the second language after evaluating target speaker's cognitive context.

3. Application of Intermediary Context Reconstruction in Second Language Learning

As has been talked about above, intermediary context, which is the new notion about context in second language learning first put forward in this thesis, is not inter-context, which is the ST context and TT context shared by the two sides of source language speaker and target language learner, often viewed as across-cultural context. However, intermediary context, not the same as the context of the mother tongue and the context of the target language, is the particular context

between the ST context and TT context, formed only by second language learners themselves in their minds according to their own understanding of the ST context, as a medium during the process of transfer between the ST context and TT context.

The intermediary context construction is a comprehensive process in second language learning, including the construction of the cultural context and the situational context. Since second language learning is a cross-cultural communication, the thesis will put the emphasis on the illustration of how the construction of the cultural context in the intermediary context is applied in practical second language learning.

3.1 Cultural Default

It is a whole set of social tradition, customs, moral rules, law systems, religious beliefs, value and ideas that help people speak the same language formulate a certain community. Language is a mirror that reflects all kinds of colorful cultural images.

In some sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it includes their historical and cultural backgrounds and their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking. Therefore, second language learning means more than merely transferring linguistic elements such as words, phrases, sentences. A second language learner's second language learning process is also a cultural transplanting process. What's more, the mission of second language learning is not merely to convey information but to promote cultural exchange and blending.

Because source language speakers and target language speakers live in two different forms of culture, there exists different cognitive context. People will yield two different cognition attitudes. The task of a second language learner is setting a bridge between the two cognitive patterns.

Clearly, the cultural context can be viewed as the organized cultural background knowledge, which leads the speaker to expect or predict aspects in second language learning. And the cultural background knowledge forms an intrinsic part of an individual's context and exists in the form of cultural context, which can be completed into full-fledged assumptions on the basis of certain contextual information.

Generally speaking, people who live in the same socio-cultural environment usually have shared cultural background knowledge, and this mutual cultural knowledge is presupposed in their communication. Hence in communication, in terms of the principle of relevance, the cultural information shared by them will be left out by the speaker, for the source language speakers can automatically get the implicated information and yield contextual effects.

But the speakers in foreign culture lack the correlative knowledge of cultural background. As a result they seem to be insensitive to some information in the text or they may notice the difference but do not understand it. Certainly they cannot fill up the cultural vacancy and the contextual effects cannot be produced. Hence, in second language learning—an inter-lingual communication, the second language learner undertakes the task of filling up the cultural vacancy and bridging two different cultures to help the target speaker reconstruct the defaulted cultural background information.

Since every culture is the product of ecological, historical and contemporary adaptive needs, there exist great differences between cultures. Cultural differences, in turn, lead to different cognitive context of people.

Generally speaking, every writer intends his text to be read by people within his own culture. Since they are in the same culture, it is not very difficult for the writer to have a correct evaluation of the cognitive context of his intended speaker and make his writing of optimal relevance for his

intended speaker. According to the communicative principle, in normal language communication, people in the same cultural context will not reveal all the information about their intentions but adopt a communicative strategy to cover up the information which are self-evident. Thus the implicature is produced. Speakers in the same cultural context will not have the difference in cognition about the implicated meaning. Consequently, the problems of second language learning will arise.

3.2 Difficulties in Dealing with Cultural Context in Second Language Learning Process

The difficulties in dealing with cultural context in the intermediary context generally include two aspects.

Firstly, the cultural assumptions in the intermediary context may not be achieved by target speaker in activating his cultural context; which may give rise to incoherent understanding of the second language.

Secondly, the cultural assumptions in the intermediary context are different from those gotten by the target speaker; therefore a different cultural context is constructed by the target speaker. Thus the mismatched assumption may result in a misunderstanding of the original text.

Absence of Relevant Cultural Assumption

Now the following Chinese will be discussed to see the case of the absence of relevant cultural assumption.

(1) 茶馆厅内陈设古朴典雅。八仙桌、靠背椅以及屋顶悬挂着一盏盏宫灯，无不渗透出特有的京味气息。

For the English speakers, who have never been to China or who are unfamiliar with Chinese history and culture, cannot imagine what "八仙桌" and "靠背椅" look like. They could not get such cultural assumption by activating their cultural context. Consequently, they can not understand or appreciate "京味气息". They could not find relevance between "八仙桌、靠背椅宫灯" and "京味气息". Definitely they will fail to understand the text without adding the cultural information. For this reason, the second language learner must explicate the implicature and provide target language speakers adequate contextual effects:

The elegantly furnished teahouse features furniture of strong Beijing furniture flavor, such as the "Eight Immortals" table, a square table large enough to seat eight people with 8 wooden high-back chairs, and palace lanterns hanging from the roof.

The second language learner described "八仙桌" and "靠背椅" as "a square table large enough to seat eight people with eight wooden high-back chairs" in second language learning and bridges the cultural default of target language speakers' cognitive context achieving cognitive mutual manifestness, meanwhile, reserves the flavor of Chinese.

It shows that the second language learner can provide enough contextual effects for the target language speaker and achieve the optimal relevance if only he or she fully considers the cognitive environment of target language speakers in their cultural context and adopts appropriate way to explicate the implicatures.

(2) 南方除夕一般是吃元宵和年糕。元宵是用糯米制作，中间包甜馅为多，取全家团圆美满甜蜜之意。年糕也由糯米做成，取谐音“年高”之意。年糕甜咸兼有，制作方法也不同。

Yuanxiao (sweet dumpling made of glutinous rice flour) and Niangao (New Year's cake) are the staple foods of southerners on New Year's Eve. Yuanxiao symbolizes family reunions and

happiness. Niangao, also made of glutinous rice flour, means "to advance year by year". Niangao can be either salty or sweet, and can be made by many different methods.

Yuanxiao (元宵) and Niangao (年糕) carries the cultural information “团圆美满”and“年年高升”. But for English speakers, who have no such cultural assumption in his cultural context, it is hard for them to associate the explicated information of such kinds of food with the implicatures:“团圆美满”and“年年高升”.so the absence of relevant cultural assumption would give rise to incoherent understanding on the part of target speaker without adding the defaulted information in the second language. The second language learner makes the optimal relevance of these implicatures with their explicated information by way of adding supplementary explanation and provides the target language speaker the appropriate contextual effects.

From the examples above, it can be seen clearly that the implicated communicative intention which is provided by the ostension of the mother tongue cannot be recognized by the target language speaker due to the cultural divergence of different languages. The second language learner should make inference of the cognitive context which is provided by the source language and find the optimal relevance between the information of mother tongue and contextual assumptions in order to get the contextual effects.

In the process of second language learning, a second language learner has to infer the implicated meaning from the explicated information of mother tongue and make his or her own contextual assumptions in the cultural context of source language, then in the cultural context of target language he or she should consider the cognitive environment of target language speakers and explicate the implicated meaning of mother tongue in the proper form of target language, in order to provide adequate contextual effects for the target language speaker and express the mother tongue as clear as possible.

Gut advocated that the second language learner should transfer the implicated meaning which cannot be inferred by the target speaker due to the contextual differences to the explicated meaning. “Therefore the second language learner attempts to communicate these assumptions to the receptors as explicatures.”

Mismatching of Relevant Cultural Assumption

A text is the microcosm of a society and historical environment. The meaning of any text refers directly or indirectly to the corresponding culture. Usually, a seemingly simple word is essentially a cultural memory in which the historical experience of the society is embedded. Because of the cultural differences the formally close words from different cultures may carry quite different associations. A word, which is loaded with certain cultural background information in one culture, may activate quite different cultural assumptions in another culture.

- (1) *How could I offend a man who was charitable enough to sit at my bedside a good hour, and talk on some other subject than pills and draughts, blisters and leeches? (Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights)*

For most Chinese people, leech is a harmful aquatic worm that sucks people's blood. While in Europe, leech was formerly much used medically. Chinese speakers who are unfamiliar with English do not have the knowledge in their mind and certainly they cannot have the association of it. In this case, the Chinese speakers are probably to have wrong assumption of "leech", to think that "blisters" in the preceding were caused by leech's sucking. Thus the original meaning is misread.

Thus it is translated like this:

我怎么好拒绝他一片好心呢?他在我床边足足坐了一个小时,除了药片、药水、药膏和药用水蛭之外,还讲了些别的事。

Obviously, the second language learner gives the consideration to the cognitive environment of target language speakers in a different cultural context. Provided the communicative intention of the speaker is transferred and the optimal relevance is achieved, the second language learning will be a successful one.

The following is another example for mismatching of relevant cultural assumption.

(2) 华大妈看她排好四碟菜,一碗饭,立着哭了一通北过纸锭,心里暗暗地想“这坟里的也是儿子了。”

As old Hua's wife watched the other woman set out four dishes of food and a bowl of rice, then stand up to wail and burn paper money, she thought: "It must be her son in that grave too".

“纸锭” in Chinese culture is a kind of funeral object made with paper into the shape of money. People believe that the dead also need money in the lower world so the relatives of the dead often burn the nether world paper money in front of the grave as sacrifice offerings. But as for English speakers, they cannot have such association and the contextual effects because they lack the same cognitive environment as Chinese and the new information in present context is helpless for them to understand the sentence.

What the contextual assumption the English version of“纸锭”-paper money leads is "the real money made of paper, like bank notes and claque." Obviously,“纸锭”and "paper money" are actually false friends. Without the default cultural information, the target speaker could wonder why the woman burned money before the grave; in this case the target speaker fails to find relevance between the sacrificial offerings.

In the second language learning, the second language learner considered the cultural context of English speakers. English speakers get the information related to their cognitive contexts and obtain the optimal relevance by little efforts. The second language learner not only transfers his intention to the target language speaker and makes his intention and the speaker's expectation meet, but also transferred Chinese cultural background knowledge.

Second language learning difficulties caused by the default cultural information in the above cases highlight the second language learner's responsibility as a mediator between two cultures. The mother tongue speaker has his intended speaker in his mind which is abstracted and generalized from the real speaker. With the intended speaker, the speaker makes an assumption of the real speaker's cognitive context and select writing strategies. Based on his assumption, the speaker omits something mutually manifest to him and his speaker, and leaves some clues to activate speaker's cognitive context so that his speaker can maximize his contextual effect with minimum processing effort. That is, the match between mother tongue speaker's and mother tongue speaker's cognitive context makes the speaker achieves the speaker's intentions.

However, the case is quite different for the second language speaker. The speaker's intended speaker doesn't include the second language speaker, thus he does not take into account the second language speaker's cognitive context. More or less, a mismatch between the cognitive context intended by the mother tongue speaker and those actually used by second language speaker may occur. Any differences between the two cognitive contexts will spell the failure of comprehension.

Firstly, the second language learner should be competent in two languages, and more importantly in two cultures. Just as Eugene A. Nida proclaimed that "It is always assumed that second language learners are at least bilingual, but this is really not enough. To be a fully

competent second language learner, one also needs to be bicultural in order to 'read between the lines.'"

Secondly, the second language learner is supposed to perceive the match and mismatch. Based on his linguistic and cultural competence, the second language learner should possess the awareness of culture and schemata similarities and differences, and those in thought patterns. Thirdly, the second language learner is demanded to re-establish the optimal relevance between the second language speaker's intentions and the mother tongue speaker's interpretation. To fulfill this, the second language learner ought to assume both the speaker's cognitive context and the speaker's cognitive context. If mismatch occurs, the second language learner is supposed to find out and fill the gaps between the cognitive context in second language.

Because of the asymmetrical distribution of responsibilities in cross-cultural communication, it is usually seen as the second language learner's responsibility to familiarize himself with the historical and cultural background of the original text to ensure a correcting understanding and more importantly, to help the target speakers to overcome the cultural barrier resulting from different cognitive context. The second language learner's task on dealing with cultural context is to reconstruct the defaulted cultural information and then employ suitable second language learning strategies to present the cultural context to target speakers after evaluating their cognitive context.

4. Some Effective Strategies Proposed to Deal with Cultural Context

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the absence of contextual assumptions or mismatched contextual assumptions may lead to second language learning difficulties. However, the speaker's assumptions derive from the process of relevance seeking. As relevance is measured in accordance with processing effort and contextual effect, so what strategies possible to be employ to construct the cultural context in second language is highly connected with the contextual effects produced by the second language and the target speaker's processing efforts.

The contextual effects a learner's speech usually produces can be summed up in the following aspects:

- 1) to enlarge the speaker's cognitive context;
- 2) to convey the original writer's communicative intentions so that the speaker can gain a coherent understanding of the text;
- 3) to promote communications between cultures. However, in actual second language learning practice, it seems that it is not very possible that the learner's speech can produce the above three kinds of contextual effects at the same time.

Moreover, these three aspects of contextual effects are not of equal importance in any given case. Which aspect should be laid more emphasis on depends on the textual typology and second language learning purpose.

Generally speaking, there are three strategies the second language learner usually employs to construct cultural context in second language learning, namely, cultural transplantation, cultural annotation, and cultural integration. It is worth making some general comment on the merits and demerits of each of them and discussing its suitability to different cases.

4.1 Cultural Transplantation

Cultural transplantation refers to transplanting the original defaulted cultural information into the second language learning without giving any explanation. It is generally considered as a good way to promote cultural communication for it enriches the target culture by implanting the foreign

cultural term or spirit.

In addition, the target speaker or can get an esthetic appreciation through the image of the original text it conveys. This strategy is often used when the target speaker has been familiarized with the particular culture or when he has similar cultural background knowledge in their cognitive context, thus he can achieve more contextual effects for the efforts he makes.

For instance, in the original Chinese drama *Romance of the Western Bower*⁷, Master Zhang and Cui Yingying dare not declare their love but reveal it in their verses. And the second language learner directly put their unique ways of expressing love into target language.

And in the second language learning of most verses of the original play, the original is adapted like this:

(张生云)小生礼当侍立，焉敢与夫人对坐！

(夫人云)道不得个“恭敬不如从命”。

Master Zhang says: "I should remain standing before you as prescribed by the rite. How could I presume to sit down in your presence?"

Madame Cui says: "Do you not know the old saying that politeness is not as good as compliance?"

The saying "恭敬不如从命" is widely known to Chinese households. In this second language learning, the original is adapted and become "politeness is not so good as compliance". As a result, the target play is faithful to the original, more vivid and more graceful, and even has created a strong emotional atmosphere in the target language speakers' hearts.

However, the strategy of cultural transplantation is not perfect. If the cultural assumptions do not exist in the target speaker's context or it is easy to arouse misunderstanding on the target speaker's part, achieving a coherent understanding on the target speaker's part will be out of the question.

4.2 Cultural Annotation

Many texts with cultural default are so culture-specific that it is impossible for them to be directly accepted by the target language speakers. Therefore, in more cases, cultural annotation takes precedence.

Cultural annotation here refers to transplant the cultural factors from the original drama language, and add some annotation and explanation in footnotes.

This strategy, to some degree, fulfills the three contextual effects introduced above.

Firstly, it represents the original image, conveying the artistic qualities of the original;

Secondly, it introduces the defaulted foreign cultural information by means of footnotes;

Thirdly, it enlarges the cognitive context of the target speaker and promotes the cultural communication. With the help of footnotes, the speaker can gain a coherent understanding of the text.

Now take the following as another example.

“难道这也是个疯丫头又象颦儿来葬花不成？”因又自笑道：“若真也葬花，可谓‘东施效颦’了，不但不新奇，而且更是讨厌”。

"Can this be another absurd maid come to bury flowers like Ping'er?" He wondered in some amusement. "If so, she's 'Dong Shi imitating Xi Shi,' which isn't original but rather tiresome."

Xi Shi was a famous beauty in ancient kingdom of Yue in ancient China; Dong Shi was an

⁷*Romance of the Western Bower*, Chinese famous ancient love novel, is said to be *Romeo and Juliet* in China, which has the similar moving love story.

ugly girl who tried to imitate her way.

People in Chinese cultural context know well about "比干" and "西子", and the idiom "东施效颦", which are unique images in China. But for English speakers, this idiom cannot produce adequate context effects, even there is no accessible context in which it can be processed in their cultural context. The second language learner tries to make his intention (actually the speaker's intention) and the English speaker's expectation of relevance meet and uses this foot notes to add to the versions some additional information. He complements the cultural background that is necessary for the interpretation of the text by annotation. This helps the TL speakers find out the optimal relevance and arrive at a certain contextual effect.

By means of cultural annotation, the cultural information is provided in much detail. It also enlarges the cognitive environment of the target speaker or audience and promotes the cultural communication. What's more, the footnotes can help the speaker or audience to fill his vacuum of sense resulted from cultural default and to gain a coherent understanding of the text.

However, too much annotation would disrupt the continuum of target language reading process and overstrain the target language speakers, and thereby reduce the pleasure they derive from reading. The speaker would lose interest in the learner's speech under the pressure of too much annotation, not to say to obtain cultural knowledge from them. Therefore, too many lengthy and detailed notes should not be encouraged.

It is advisable that the notes should be as concise and brief as possible so long as they can provide the relevant information the target speakers must have in understanding the learner's speech. Otherwise the target speaker may pay too much processing effort, which may outweigh the contextual effects he can get in return.

4.3 Cultural Integration

Cultural integration means representing the original defaulted information with additional explanatory words within the text. It has two merits: on one hand, it enables the target speaker to form a coherent understanding of the text with little processing effort; on the other, it conveys the defaulted cultural information and enlarges the target speaker's cognitive context.

For instance, "玉人" in *Romance of the Western Bower* refers to Cuiyngying and is translated as "fair lady". In fact, the word "玉人", appears frequently in Ancient Chinese poetry. It refers to the female meaning the lady is as beautiful as a piece of jade. The example directly fused the Chinese folk custom culture into the target language. It enables the target speakers to form a coherent understanding of the drama with little processing effort. And they also convey the original cultural schema, enlarging the target speakers' cognitive environment. The changes of surface forms of the original play caused by integration are necessary and they also produce a certain kind of rivalry with the original play in a graceful way.

However, this strategy also has demerit. Due to the limited space for explanation, the relevant cultural background information it conveys will be rather insufficient.

So far three strategies have been discussed to reconstruct the cultural context, but each of them has both merits and demerits. Though there is no omnipotent or perfect second language learning strategy for constructing the cultural context, we can employ one of them or combine them all into second language learning as long as the target speaker can achieve adequate contextual effects without unnecessary efforts.

The purpose of second language learning is to enhance mutual understanding between nations. So in this case, the speaker prefers alienation in second language learning for a total

realization of the original context to let the speakers absorb in the completely new source language culture and set up the source language culture's presupposition.

V. Conclusion

Theoretically, second language learning is a special case of ostensive-inferential communication with two ostensive-inferential processes, involving two communicators and two recipients, of whom second language learner has a double identity, that is, the communicator and the receptor. In order for his second language learning to be of optimal relevance, the second language learner will need to look at the likely benefits, that is, the contextual effects and also at the processing effort involved for the target speakers.

Particularly, the second language learner needs to have a right evaluation of the target speakers' cognitive context to ensure that his second language learning is optimally relevant to them. The relevance principle shed light on second language learning and the intermediary context construction as well.

The relevant contextual assumptions the second language learner gets by activating his own cognitive context in accordance with relevance principle, is the intermediary context second language learner aims to construct in second language learning, and it is in the inferring process that the second language learner construct the intermediary context; The constructed intermediary context may fall into the following three categories: the intermediary context is overlapped, gapped, and clashed with target speaker's context.

Based on these categories, the second language learner could employ different strategies of encoding. After encoding, the representation of intermediary context; which is constructed by the second language learner will produce on the target speaker's part similar contextual effects, and it will cost target language speaker similar amount of cognitive effort for it because the target speaker will reconstruct the second language learner expressed intermediary context in the same order as the second language learner does.

The cultural context can be seen as the organized cultural background knowledge, which leads the speaker to expect or predict aspects in the interpretation of communication and can be completed into full-fledged assumptions on the basis of certain contextual information. Therefore, the cultural background information is defaulted during the process of communication. In second language learning, an inter-lingual communication, to let the target speaker reconstruct the writer-intended cultural context, is to reconstruct the defaulted cultural background information.

There are three strategies the second language learner usually employs to deal with the cultural context in second language learning, namely, cultural transplantation, annotation, and cultural integration. But each of them has merits and demerits. Although there is no omnipotent or perfect second language learning strategy for reconstructing the cultural context, we could employ one of them or combine them all into second language learning as long as the target speaker can achieve adequate contextual effects without unnecessary efforts, in other words, to let the speakers absorb in the completely new source language culture and set up the source language culture's presupposition.

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