

# Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Huang, Mimi (2012) Exploring Meaning Construction in Narrative Discourse. In: 4th UK Cognitive Linguistics Conference, 10th - 12th July 2012, London, UK.

URL:

This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/28268/>

Northumbria University has developed Northumbria Research Link (NRL) to enable users to access the University's research output. Copyright © and moral rights for items on NRL are retained by the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. Single copies of full items can be reproduced, displayed or performed, and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided the authors, title and full bibliographic details are given, as well as a hyperlink and/or URL to the original metadata page. The content must not be changed in any way. Full items must not be sold commercially in any format or medium without formal permission of the copyright holder. The full policy is available online: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/policies.html>

This document may differ from the final, published version of the research and has been made available online in accordance with publisher policies. To read and/or cite from the published version of the research, please visit the publisher's website (a subscription may be required.)



**Northumbria**  
**University**  
NEWCASTLE



**UniversityLibrary**

## **Exploring Meaning Construction in Narrative Discourse**

This paper proposes an analytical framework for meaning construction that is based upon two separate but compatible models in cognitive science. The first model explores a mechanism of information retrieval (Hintzman, 1984, 2010), and the second model investigates the interaction between language and cognition (Perlovsky, 2009). I shall argue that these two models, one operating on a horizontal axis, and the other operating on a vertical axis, can work effectively to explore how we understand new information on the basis of existing experience, such as when reading a fictional narrative.

According to Hintzman (1984), the process of memory retrieval operates upon interaction between secondary memory (SM) and primary memory (PM) in that PM sends out retrieval cues to SM, and receives a series of parallel and simultaneous 'echoes' that are drawn upon a pool of episodic memory traces in SM. The most activated information in this retrieval process is the one that receives the strongest echo.

Perlovsky (2009), with the focus on neural networks, proposes a dual model based on dynamic logic, which implements both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms to evolve vague and uncertain models into crisp and specific models in both language and cognition (see also Barsalou, 1999, 2008). Both models are hierarchical, and employ a similarity measure to restrict or allow information process.

I shall argue in this paper that a combined framework based upon these two models can account for crucial aspects involved in meaning construction when processing a narrative discourse. This combined framework will be illustrated through the analysis of Terry Pratchett's text *Witches Abroad* (1991), which calls upon the reader's existing knowledge of classic fairy tales for the construal of a magical story in Discworld.

Abstract ID: 1332