

Violation of Cooperative Principle: Comparative Analysis of *Jing Xing Show* and *A Date with Lu Yu*

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Abstract: TV talk show is a program in which a host communicates with a guest about a certain topic or person. Usually, the host and guest follow the cooperative principle during their communication, but both sides violate the cooperative principle in the program, realizing the conversational implicature of avoiding answering questions directly, implicit expression and additional information and so on. This article, based on Grice's Cooperative Principle, attempts to analyze the similarities and differences between *Jin Xing Show* and *A Date with Lu Yu* in terms of programming orientation as well as host style from the perspective of violation of cooperative principle. And the examples in this article are chosen from two Chinese shows, in which Hu Ge, a popular actor in China as the guest. It is hoped that this study can provide some reference for other talk shows, and can improve people's ability of daily conversation and enhance people's language charming and communicative competence.

Keywords: Violation of cooperative principle; TV talk show; *A Date with Lu Yu*; *Jin Xing Show*.

INTRODUCTION

With the development of media technology, the TV talk show has become more and more popular among the public. As a matter of fact, the development of talk show has gone through a long time. It is said that *The Tonight Show* broadcast by NBC in 1954 is the forefather of the talk show [1].

Thanks to the great changes in mass media and development of economy, the talk show was introduced into China in 1980s, and nowadays it is growing more and more rapidly among Chinese audience.

Scholars at home and abroad have done lots of TV talk show researches from different perspectives. In linguistics academia, linguists have been mainly devoted to doing researches from the perspectives of conversational analysis and sociolinguistics. Ilie[2] argues that the talk show, as a setting for conversational interaction, bears traits of previous public forms of interaction and TV talk show is institutionally defined, host controlled, participant shaped, and audience evaluated. Koishigulova, D.M. Karagoishiyeva, D.A. Dosanova, A.M. and Abdirkenova, A.K. [3] deal with the peculiarities of behavior of TV talk shows' participants and presenters, themes of discussions, and verbal and non-verbal communication characteristics of television-institutional interaction by conversational analysis of the Kazakh and German TV talk shows. Wang and Chen [4] compare hosts' language strategies in "turn-claiming", "turn-holding", "turn-yielding" and explore methods to improve conversational literacy of

hosts by the analysis of the differences in style between *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *A Date With Lu Yu*.

In sociolinguistics, researchers concentrate on how social factors such as sex, social status and age influence the behaviors of hosts and guests in TV talk shows. Tracy [5] argues that the sociolinguists generally believe that conversation in TV talk shows is one of the most purposeful forms of social actions. And he discusses discourse-goal linkages in specific face-to-face encounters such as courtroom exchanges, marital counseling, and intellectual discussions, as well as in more general theoretical dilemmas. Zhou and Wu [6] Focus on the authenticity realized by the cooperative nature between the hosts and the guests in *Behind the Headlines with Wen Tao*, and explore the content and form to demonstrate how the talk show successfully entertains the audience and provides new information through cooperation strategies.

TV talk shows have been mostly discussed from the angle of structural analysis based on the static corpus of single TV show. However, the comparative researches of different TV talk shows have merely been

studied. And past researches cannot explain why the hosts in different TV talk shows adopt different host style and ask different questions when the guest is the same. Hence, the author aims at identifying these questions by analyzing several cases selected from *A Date with Lu Yu* and *Jing Xing Show*.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

American philosopher Herker Paul Grice [7] firstly put forth the Cooperative Principle in his academic lecture "Logic and Conversation" at Harvard in 1967. He thought all the verbal social communications are geared to some specific purpose. He defined the Cooperative Principle as "some generally accepted principle which the speakers and hearers are restricted to". Grice [8] noticed that there are some regularity in conversation ---

"Our talk exchange does not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction"

That is to say, we must comply with some principles when communicating, namely, the Cooperative Principles or CP. And there are four maxims in the CP.

The Maxim of Quantity

- Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The maxim of Quality

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

The maxim of Relation

Be relevant.

The maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous.

- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief (avoid prolixity).
- Be orderly.

With all these principles and maxims, the language users are hoped to observe the principles in order to communicate efficiently. But in TV talk shows, both the hosts and guests usually tend to violate the principles for particular purposes such as question-eschewing, euphemism, and politeness, face-saving and

so on. Thus, the conversational implications are generated.

VIOLATION OF CP IN JIN XING SHOW (JX)

On January 28th, 2015, Jin Xing, who is a dancer and famous for her "poison tongue", hosted a new talk show named *Jin Xing Show* in the East TV broadcast. In the show, Jin Xing often expresses sharp, funny, humorous, professional as well as entertaining views. Her views and values of the performance are very straightforward, which is seldom seen in Chinese programs. In the program of January 17th, Jin Xing interviewed Hu Ge, a very well-known young actor in China, who is popular with the young in China. This section examines how the host and guest violate the CP.

Violation of the maxim of quantity in JX

Example 1:

金星：小朋友，选哪一个座位呢？

胡歌：坐近一点。

金星：你看这个聪明吧！人家把这个避开了，说坐近一点！一般坐这个会结婚，那个会生孩子的，人都不提这个事。坐近一点！坐近一点，和姐坐近一点吧！

This conversation happens at the beginning of the show, and Jin Xing asks Hu Ge which seat he would like to have. As is known to the guest of the show, the seat on the left symbolizes the birth of children while the seat on the right means that the guest will have a marriage in the near future. Hu Ge does not give the exact information---the left seat or the right seat, that Jin Xing requires, which violates the maxim of quantity. That is because both the marriage and giving birth to a child are relatively private for a popular star. Whatever Hu answers, Jin Xing will ask more about the topic. Rather, by saying "坐近一点"(sit nearer), his expression is certainly not referring to the exact information Jin needs. In this way Hu Ge cleverly escapes the sensitive topic.

Violation of the maxim of quality in JX

Example 2:

小南：你那小猫崽子都生了一窝一窝的了。

胡歌：是的，是的。

小南：你咋不生啊？

金星：跟谁生呢？

胡歌：指标都让它们占了！

观众和场上的主持人、嘉宾哈哈大笑.....

In this excerpt, Jin Xing and Xiao Nan, her vice-host, ask the very private affair ---Hu's affection and giving birth to a child by saying "Your cats have given babies again and again, why haven't you?" and Hu responds with "They took up all the quotas". Obviously, whether Hu has a child or not has nothing to do with the cats, so this is the violation of maxim of

quality. By saying what is certainly false, Hu provides the audience with amusement and the conversation can go on more successfully.

Violation of the maxim of relation in JX

Example 3:

金星：你在出那个人生最大车祸，那个之前和现在，你觉得差别大吗？

胡歌：其实啊！我自己看不那么清楚。可能是周围的人，别人从一个客观的角度来看我，在这件事儿前后会有一些不同。其实我以前演戏啊，会有一个问题，就是用力过度，那我现在就知道学会去做减法，就是一种状态叫存在即表现。就是其实你很多时候，你是不是要刻意地去表现的，观众就能感受到。

In this excerpt, Jin asks Hu whether the car accident makes a big difference to him. If he observes the CP, he will offer the exact answer---the influence is great or not. However, Hu shares his change in performance by saying “其实我以前演戏啊，会有一个问题，就是用力过度，那我现在就知道学会去做减法” (In fact, when I used to be in a play, there was a problem, that is, I overplay, right now I learn to do subtraction, that is, there is a state, in which existence is a kind of expression). It seems that his experience in performance has no relation with the question Jin asks and what Hu says is irrelevant to the topic being discussed, which is the violation of maxim of relation.

Violation of the maxim of manner in JX

Example 4:

金星：但是无意也好，有意也好，感情有时候不是一个人的事情，感情是两个人的事情，你被人伤害过吗？你啊！

胡歌：没有。

金星：但你把人弄得乱七八糟的挺多的。

胡歌：有。

金星：是吧？

胡歌：对。

Hu Ge's love affair with Xue Jianing has been heatedly discussed for a period of time. In this part, JinXing attempts to ask Hu Ge about his affection to verify whether the gossip on the Internet is true. However, it is not polite to talk about a famous actor's affection, especially the ex-girlfriend's name in public. Thus, Jin says “但你把人弄得乱七八糟的挺多的” (someone has been seriously hurt by you), in which she uses “someone” to avoid saying the exact name that both sides know. By saying the obscure information, Jin fulfills her goal of the interview and the violation of maxim of manner makes the conversation more harmonious.

VIOLATION OF CP IN A DATE WITH LU YU (LY)

A Date with Lu Yu is a TV talk show designed for the host Chen Luyu in 2001, which has a comparatively long history. The show is supposed to be a popular program, with the host interviewing the popular entertainment star, social celebrities, social hot spots and ordinary people, etc. to give them a platform to talk about their stories in their way to success. The show probes deeply into interviewees' inner stories and feelings with "witnessing history with you, thinking about life, speaking out spiritual secrets and exploring the life experience" as its motto. The following examples are selected from the show in January 7th, 2016, Hu Ge as the guest.

Violation of the maxim of quantity in LY

Example 5:

鲁豫：我几次见你的感觉还真是和以前很不一样，我不知道是长大的原因，还是.....

胡歌：是，是因为喝了酒。

鲁豫：不是！这才喝了多少。

胡歌：已经起到作用了，开始慢慢放松了。

The conversation appears at the beginning of the show and Chen Luyu talks about her different impression on Hu Ge compared with previous time. In this case, Chen Luyu's violation of the Maxim of quantity is achieved by saying the incomplete sentence--还是(or something else), and Lu Yu actually tries to ask the reason why Hu Ge seems a little different from what he was. Thus, through the incomplete sentence, the host gives less information to let the interviewee talk about what he has actually experienced recently.

Violation of the maxim of manner in LY

Example 6:

鲁豫：哎，你能允许我说一句话吗？我觉得你当初的那个女朋友真的很了不起，真的很牛！从一个女性角度，她真的很棒，我指她后来的做法。

胡歌：是的。

鲁豫：尤其最近她的一些说法，我觉得她真的很不错。我觉得你碰到的人都是很靠谱的人，你让一个靠谱的人错过了，我说一句会让你睡不着的话。

胡歌：她是，她真的很好。

In this example, Lu talks about Hu's personal affection with Hu--his ex-girlfriend. As a popular actor, his affection has attracted much attention from the audience, which is also the issue he does not want to mention, but it is what the public are most concerned about. In the dialogue, the host violates the maxim of manner by design and adopts a vague way to refer to the name---Xue Jianing, the ex-girlfriend of He Ge. Lu uses the word---“she” to replace her name to achieve a double effect, that is, Hu knows what Lu is referring to; at the same time, they do not explicitly mention the exact name. The host follows the guidelines of

politeness principles and properly protected the privacy of the guest. However, before Lu asks, she says “你能允许我说一句话吗” (Would you allow me to say something), which shows her respect to the guest.

Violation of the maxim of relation in *LY*

Example 7:

胡歌：习惯了就不累了，因为你不会看觉得有些事情是好像必须要那么做，一定那么做，而是本身就那么做的，所以不会累，如果不那么做了，可能会很累。

鲁豫：我明白，我非常明白。

胡歌：就像我那个时候很早碰到孙莉，就是黄磊的太太，她以前不是学跳舞的嘛！我拍的另一部戏就是跟她合作，那时候她也在唐人，是我大师姐嘛！因为她学跳舞，她坐的时候就特别直，我就是老这么坐没坐样。我说，你这样做不累吗？她说习惯了，我要像你这么坐才累。

In this part, they have a conversation about habit and Hu talks about his previous conversation with Sun Li, in which they are concerned with the sitting posture. The matter of habit has seemingly no relation with Hu's conversation with Sun Li. Therefore, Hu's answer is the violation of maxim of relation. However, he actually complains about his understanding to habit in more detail.

CONTRAST OF *JIN XING SHOW* AND *A DATE WITH LU YU*

By the analysis of *Jin Xing Show* and *A Date with Lu Yu*, it can be seen that both the host and guest often violate the cooperative principle in the shows, realizing the conversational implicature of avoiding answering questions directly, implicit expression and additional information, etc. However, it is clearly acknowledged that there is some difference in the way of violating the cooperative principle between them. From this perspective, the distinctive program setting and different host style can be seen.

Different program setting

In terms of choice of different topics, *A Date with Lu Yu* selects the topics about growth experience, actor career, affection experience and pays more attention to guest's individual feeling. Comparatively, *Jin Xing Show* chooses the topics which are more about the private affairs and heated topics that are talked about by the audience. Concerning with different program orientation, there are more examples of violation of quality maxim in *Jin Xing Show*, achieving the humorous effect, while the examples are relatively rare in *A Date with Lu Yu*. This is because *Jin Xing Show* is famous for its humorous and ironical atmosphere, while *A Date with Lu Yu* puts more emphasis on listening to the stories and feelings of interviewees. Besides, *Jin Xing Show* is in a typical host-oriented style, while *A*

Date with Lu Yu gives interviewees more chances to speak out their mind.

Different host style

In two shows, in which Hu Ge is the guest, Chen LuYu observes the cooperative principle most of time, and listens to his story carefully, while Jin Xing violates the CP more and she usually asks questions by interrogative clauses. In this way, the host has more opportunities to ask the questions she wants to know and the interviewee is more passive in some way. Compared with *Jin Xing Show*, Lu Yu's utterances usually end with the declarative sentences, guiding the interviewee to speak out his opinions and feelings. As for the listening art, Lu Yu usually gives some responses to the guest's utterance, indicating that she is listening carefully to the topic spoken, which reflects the show's value. In comparison, Jin Xing often continues with another subject after the guest's speech, which reflects that Jin Xing has a sharper perception to the topic.

CONCLUSION

Cooperative Principle is one of the core ideas in pragmatics. It plays an important role in guiding people's verbal communication, attempting to keep conversation more harmonious. However, in some cases, the violation of cooperative principle is needed in order to achieve humorous effect or for some specific purposes. This paper has examined how the violations of cooperative principle are used in two popular Chinese TV talk shows. It shows that the violation of CP is not only an inevitable parts of the Chinese TV talk shows but that both the hosts and guests consciously or unconsciously use the violation of CP as communicative strategies. In the two Chinese TV talk shows, the violations of CP are important features in TV talk shows involving implicit expression, face-saving, etc. It has been found that the different program setting and different host style of the two Chinese TV talk shows determine how the violation of CP is used in the two shows. The violation of the maxims sometimes is of great importance to successful conversation and does good to the humorous effect. Therefore, it is hoped that a detailed analysis of the violations of CP in two Chinese TV talk shows may provide a deep insight into conversational implications embedd in utterances in our daily conversation.

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