

Analysing the wonders of pragmatics

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Abstract: Pragmatics exists in people's daily life all the time, and its importance can be seen in the fact that people use pragmatics to transmit information and convey emotions. Among them, two important components of pragmatics are conversation analysis and the principle of cooperation. Conversational structure analysis mainly includes turn-taking, neighbouring pairs, correction mechanism, etc.; the principle of cooperation mainly includes quantitative criterion, qualitative criterion, relevant criterion and modality criterion. The principles of conversational analysis and co-operation appear all the time in our daily lives and play a very important role in influencing our speech and communication with them. This paper takes the British long novel *Pride and Prejudice* and the TV series *Family Guy* as examples to show the wonderful use of pragmatics by analysing the characters' character in *Pride and Prejudice* and the creation of humorous effects in *Family Guy*.

Keywords: pragmatics; conversation structure; co-operation principle; *Pride and Prejudice*; *Family Guy* and *Girl*

Pragmatics is an emerging subject area in the various branches of linguistics that takes language meaning as its object of study. Pragmatics is the specialised study of the understanding and use of language, the study of particular discourses in particular situations, and the study of how language is understood and used through context. Two of the important components of pragmatics are conversation analysis and the principle of cooperation.

1. Analysis of Conversational Structure in *Pride and Prejudice*

Conversation Analysis (CA) does not refer to any study of conversation, but rather to a specialised school of thought (often replaced by the capital CA in the English literature). Conversationists use their linguistic knowledge as well as non-linguistic socio-cultural contexts just to express themselves and understand each other. Conversation not only shows the communicative competence of the interlocutors, but also reflects the general principles of social interaction, whereby the parties harmonise their purposes, images and interpersonal relationships.

1.1. One of the turn-taking transitions

Researchers have pointed out that conversation is characterised by turn-taking: a conversation must consist of at least two turns of speech, where A speaks first, and after a pause, B then follows, and the distribution of the dialogue between the two individuals is A-B-A-B-A-B-A-B. E.g.,

Lady Catherine: "And that I suppose is one of your sisters."

In this clip, it is Lady Catherine, Mrs Bennet and Elizabeth who are talking. In this question, Lady Catherine mentions "your sister", which shows that she has already designated the speaker under this turn-taking.

The second rule for talk round transitions is that if C chooses N in one of the talk rounds at the time, then C must stop talking and N must go on to talk, with the transition occurring at the first TRP after the choice of N. For example:

Mrs Bennett: "Oh! a bachelor, my dear, a bachelor indeed! A rich bachelor: £4,000 or £5,000 a year. What a blessing for the daughters!"

Mr Bennett: "How is that? What business is it of the daughters?"

Mrs Bennett: "My good lord," replied the wife, "how you call it a nuisance! To tell you the truth, I was thinking how nice it would be if he picked one of our daughters for a wife!"

Mr Bennett: "Is that his intention in living here?"

Mrs Bennett: "Intention! Nonsense, what a thing to say! But he's got his eye on one of our daughters. You'll have to pay him a visit as soon as he moves in."

1.2. Talking Wheel Switching III

The third rule of talk-round switching is that if C does not choose N, and no other participant presses for self-selection, then C may (not must) continue to speak (i.e., claim the right to continue to speak for the next round). E.g.:

“Miss Bennet, wouldn’t you like very much to take the opportunity of a Scotch dance?” Darcy asked, and Elizabeth did not answer him.

..... (Darcy) then asked again. “Miss Bennet, are you not very anxious to take this opportunity to have a Scotch dance?”

2. Violation of the Principle of Co-operation in Family Guy

2.1. Violation of quantitative norms

The Maxim of Quantity

(1)

One day, Liu Xing’s grandma came to see Liu Xing to go to Liu Xing’s parent-teacher conference for Liu Mei.

Grandma: Tell me did you get into some trouble again?

Liu Xing: Aiya, something small!

(2)

One day, Liu Mei was educating Liu Xing and asked him what he should and should not learn.

Liu Mei: Liu Xing, what do you think should be learnt and what should not be learnt?

Liu Xing: Their sexiness, their revealing clothes.

Liu Mei: My son is great!

Liu Xing: Mum, what I said is what should be learnt!

(3)

One day, Liu Xing sneaks off to play at an Internet cafe, and when he comes back, Liu Mei keeps asking after Liu Xing to find out where the hell he’s been.

Liu Mei: Liu Xing, where the hell have you been?

Liu Xing: In the future, you don’t care about my business.

Liu Mei: Ah? What did you say? What do you mean, I don’t care about your business? How come you don’t let me control when you drink milk? When you were sick, why didn’t you let me control it? Why didn’t you let me control you when you were learning to walk? Now that you’re letting me take care of you, how come you’re all grown up and have hardened your wings and can fly on your own?

2.2. Violation of qualitative norms

For example:

(1)

Xiaoyu: Mum, my hand was bitten by a bug.

Liu Mei: Yo, what’s going on? Yo, mosquito bites it, mum to scratch.

Xiaoyu: Why do mosquitoes only bite me and not Liu Xing? Is this not my home?

Liu Mei: Don’t be ridiculous, how is this not your home ah, this is your home ah! You see mum and dad are not there, right? Do you know why mosquitoes bite you but not Liu Xing? Because your blood is sweet, Liu Xing’s blood is stinky, mosquitoes smell, here sweet blood, I’ll bite him!

(2)

Liu Mei and Xiao Xue are discussing idols, Liu Mei wants to get closer to Xiao Xue and the two start chatting.

Xiao Xue: Auntie, do you like F4?

Liu Mei: I like it a lot.

Xiao Xue: So do you think F4 is handsome?

Liu Mei: Handsome! I think F4 is more handsome than F1, F2 and F3!

Xiao Xue: So Auntie, what bands are F1, F2 and F3?

(3)

Xia Donghai: Liu Xing, tell us how the little mouse died.

Liu Xing: In a dark and windy daytime, the little mouse was locked up at home alone, thinking, "How nice it would be if I could go out to play, even if I play video games for half an hour". So it secretly matched a key and ran out to play.

Xia Donghai: I think you want to go out to play! Liu Xing, take out the key you secretly matched!

2.3. Violation of relevant norms

(1)

Liu Mei: Xiao Xue, you must be hungry at home, try my cooking.

Xiao Xue: I'm not used to eating with the help of others.

(2)

Xiao Xue brings her "boyfriend", Wild Boy, home to introduce him to Liu Mei and Xia Donghai.

Liu Mei and Xia Donghai: Xiao Xue, who is this?

Xiao Xue: The flower that symbolises love, how fragrant it is!

(3)

Liu Mei: not stimulated, right? Just you this kind of to Xiaoxue kind of good students used to open the parent-teacher conference, you must have a huge gap in the heart, is not a kind of head banging feeling!

Xia Donghai: The meeting was quite successful

Grandma: (coughing) Tickle in the throat.

Liu Mei: What did the teacher complain about again?

Xia Donghai: I'll get some medicine for grandma.

In this clip, Xia Donghai does not answer Liu Mei's question positively in order to hide it from Liu Mei together with Liu Xing's grandma and avoid Liu Mei's question about Liu Xing's performance at school. So Xia Donghai deliberately violates the relevant guidelines and always says something irrelevant, for this reason to divert Liu Mei's attention and avoid answering Liu Mei's questions.

2.4. Violation of modal norms

(1)

Xia Donghai: Xiaoxue, I think we should talk alone!

Xia Xue: I want to talk to my "Wild Boy" alone.

Wild Boy: I'll leave you to it.

Xia Xue: Page 48, lines 3-16!

Wild Boy: I'm here for you, I'm here for you.

(2)

Liu Mei: Why do orangutans refuse to evolve?

Liu Xing: Give me a reason to evolve.

Liu Mei: Why isn't it talking?

Liu Xing: What do you want me to say?

Liu Mei: In the lack of hearing gene differentiation process.

Liu Xing: My ears are fine.

Liu Mei: go go, don't always make trouble here.

Liu Xing: You do not say my?

Liu Mei: Who's talking about you, I'm talking about the gorilla!

(3)

Xiaoyu, Xiaoxue and Liu Xing are introducing themselves.

Xia Xue: My name is Xia Xue.

Xiaoyu: My name is Xiayu.

Liu Xing: My name is Hail.

3. Summary

Pragmatics is the specialised study of the understanding and use of language, the study of particular discourses in particular situations, and the study of how language is understood and used through context. Grice's principles of co-operation mainly include: quantitative guidelines, qualitative guidelines, relevant guidelines and modality guidelines. These four guidelines are closely related to our daily life, and Grice believes that abiding by them is abiding by the principle of cooperation. In this paper, the character traits of Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennett and Mr. Bennett are analysed with the help of the three laws of conversation structure analysis of turn-taking analysis, which creates a rich character image for us; the TV series "Children of the Family" has violated Grice's principle of cooperation many times in its major protagonists, so that "Children of the Family" appears to be particularly humorous and interesting, and the wonderful use of pragmatics is precisely embodied in here.

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