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Exploring Conversational Implicature in Reality Show Dialogues: A Case Study of Violating Cooperative Principles in *Divas Hit the Road* (Season 5)

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Abstract: The cooperative principle, a cornerstone in pragmatics, serves as a framework for understanding how speakers strive for efficiency and clarity in communication. This study delves into the conversational dialogues from the tenth episode of the reality show *Divas Hit the Road* (Season 5) to analyze instances where the four maxims of the cooperative principle are violated. By examining these violations, the paper uncovers the diverse manifestations of conversational implicature and their pragmatic implications within the authentic communicative context of the show. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how speakers navigate complex social interactions through strategic language use.

Keywords: Cooperative principle; *Divas Hit the Road*(Season 5); Conversational implicature; Pragmatic effect

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Language originates from the need of expression and communication. In daily communication, people's characters can often be reflected from their words in various contexts. People sometimes do not express their thoughts or feelings directly and clearly, and in order to analyze and understand the implicit meaning of their expressions, it is necessary to find suitable theories. Pragmatics is a powerful tool of discourse analysis. As the focus of pragmatic research, Cooperative Principle can effectively explain most conversation situations in daily communication.

With the increasing pressure on people's lives, as one of the ways to release pressure, film, television works and reality shows are increasingly receiving people's attention. The subject of this paper is the tenth episode of the reality show *Divas Hit the Road* (Season 5). This reality show is a non-specific context work, and the dialogues in *Divas Hit the Road* (Season 5) are condensed from daily conversations, which can reflect communication in real situations.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Study of Reality Shows

Divas Hit the Road (season 5) is a visiting program for young siblings launched by Hunan Satellite TV and Mango TV, with Qin Hailu, Qin Lan, Xin Zhilei, Dilraba, Zhao Zhaoyi, Wang Anyu and Hu Xianxu as permanent guests. The program is broadcasting from October 25th, 2023 to January 17th, 2024. The whole season's journey of the program spans the Eurasian continent, passing through Saudi Arabia, Croatia and Iceland, enjoying the beautiful scenery and different cultures of different countries, visiting and understanding the cooperation project of "the belt and road initiative" on the spot, going into China to build along the way, learning the Chinese plan and understanding the wisdom of China. Through the travel experience of the stars, the program shows the audience the scenery, culture and history of the countries and cities along the Silk Road, and also presents the growth and challenges of the stars in foreign countries.

The year 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the initiative to jointly build a "the belt and road initiative". On December 3, 2023, Wang Wenbin, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and deputy director of the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also recommended *Divas Hit the Road* (season 5) to the world on overseas social media, saying that "Dilraba, dressed in China Xinjiang costumes and dancing in Xinjiang, is shining". Overseas netizen were attracted by the elegance of China's national dance, marveled at the exquisiteness of China's traditional costumes, and felt the charm of Chinese national culture. After the broadcast of the program, on the one hand, it brought local attention. On the other hand, it also promoted the "Silk Road" cultural tourism fever of China netizen. Previously, after the content of the study tour in Saudi Arabia Station was broadcast, the search volume of "Saudi Arabia" on the domestic tourism platform

increased by 772% from the previous month.

However, the author found that at present, the fifth season of *Divas Hit the Road* has not been studied by CP at home and abroad, because the fifth season is currently being broadcast, so it is relatively novel. However, from the perspective of domestic scholars, Wang Xiaolin analyzed the dialogue in the second season of *Divas Hit the Road* from the perspective of CP and PP (Wang Xiaolin, 2022). In addition, Bian Mingjia discusses the conversational implicature of violating CP and PP in the third season of *Divas Hit the Road* (Bian Mingjia, 2018).

1.2.2 Limitations

Although the study of CP has made outstanding achievements in many fields, such as translation, literary works, teaching and advertising, the corpus materials studied are mostly the contents of established texts, such as scripts, lines or teaching terms, and there is little research on natural speech acts in real communication context. The reasons are as follows. First, the real communication context is influenced by many uncontrollable factors and has multiple triggers. Second, it is difficult to collect speech acts in real communication context, and it is also difficult to capture dynamic speech acts without the assistance of images or recorded materials. Based on the above two points, there is little research on real communication corpus in real life.

1.3 Research Purpose and Significance

This paper selects the corpus of the tenth episode of *Divas Hit the Road (Season 5)* as the research object, aiming at analyzing the expression of people's conversational implicature and the pragmatic effect of implication in real communication environment. The purpose of this paper is to enrich the corpus range of conversational implicature research, which is no longer limited to the study of established texts. On the basis of previous scholars' analysis of conversational implicature of scripts or books, this paper studies the conversational implicature and pragmatic effect of daily colloquial corpus resources.

2. Theoretical Foundation

Grice (1975) argues that when we communicate, we unconsciously follow a set of rules or conventions of communication. These rules guide us in terms of how to say things and how to interpret others' messages. Communication is characterized by cooperative efforts among participants who follow underlying rules. Participants adhere to the following CP: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."

There are four basic maxims in this principle, which go toward making a speaker's contribution to the conversation 'cooperative'.

The maxim of quantity means to be informative and give the right amount of information. i.e. 1) Make your contribution sufficiently informative for the current purposes of the conversation. 2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is necessary.

The maxim of quality means to be truthful. i.e. 1) Do not say what you believe to be false. 2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The maxim of relation means to be relevant. i.e. Make sure that whatever you say is relevant to the conversation at hand.

The maxim of manner means to be perspicuous. i.e. 1) Avoid obscurity of expression. 2) Avoid ambiguity. 3) Be brief. 4) Be orderly.

Cooperative Principle requires that what each participant says during the whole conversation conforms to the goal or direction of the conversation (He Zhaoxiong, 2000). It is precisely the violation of Cooperative Principle that produces conversational implicature.

In verbal communication, speakers should observe the maxims of Cooperative Principle depending on the situation and topic. The quantity maxim requires speaking comprehensively, the quality maxim requires speaking truthfully, the relation maxim requires content relevance, and the manner maxim requires clarity of organization. By adhering to the above maxims, people will be able to interact with the highest efficiency. However, sometimes our attention should not just be on whether the conversation can go smoothly, but also on the appropriateness of language, that is, politeness.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Questions

The research aims to answer three questions:

- (1) How is the violation of the cooperative principle embodied in the reality show *Divas Hit the Road (Season 5 Episode 10)* ?
- (2) Which principle is violated the most in the selected text dialogues?
- (3) What effects does the violation of the cooperative principle produce in the selected dialogues?

3.2 Data Collection

This paper selects the tenth episode of the reality show *Divas Hit the Road (Season 5)*, including both positive content and plus content. The author collected the corpus through the APP Mango TV and transcribed all the dialogues that violates CP and its four maxims in the 10th episode of *Divas Hit the Road (Season 5)*. There are 29 examples of dialogues and 3,464 words (in Chinese characters) in total.

3.3 Reasons for choosing reality show *Divas Hit the Road (Season 5, Episode 10)*

Numerous studies have analyzed Cooperative Principle (CP) pragmatically in contexts like foreign literature, films, TV shows, and comedies, but they often rely on scripted or designed materials, lacking real-life authenticity. This paper focuses on natural, unscripted communication, particularly among young adults, using a coherent corpus from intensive, real-time interactions. *Divas Hit the Road*, a travel reality show without scripts or director intervention, offers an ideal platform for collecting immediate, spontaneous responses that violate CP while adhering to real-life speaking habits.

The tenth episode of *Divas Hit the Road*'s Iceland trip (episode 10) was popular, with 72% of viewers praising its scenic beauty and humor, high viewership, and favorable ratings. After ten episodes of bonding, the cast's familiarity and camaraderie make their interactions more realistic, natural, and valuable for analysis. Hence, this paper analyzes the conversation from the episode 10, leveraging its tourism-based authenticity and ease of corpus collection and analysis.

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 Violation of the maxim of quantity

Example 1:

Qin Hailu: I think I haven't eaten meat for days. I think I'm a little grumpy. Now, the only thing that can relieve me and stabilize my mood is a bone stick.

Zhao Zhaoyi: Must it be a big bone stick?

Qin Hailu: Yes. **It's white. It is cooked in white soup. Put some pepper, aniseed, onion, ginger, and garlic. And then boil them again in white soup. Finally I can take it out and bite it down.**

Qin Hailu violated the maxim of quantity. Qin Hailu provided more information than is required. She could have stopped after she answered Zhao Zhaoyi's question. However, she continued to describe the procedure of making stone sticks. In this way, the audience can feel her strong wish to eat stone sticks. The pragmatic effect achieved here is to make the audience feel more clear about the bone stick, and to understand Qin Hailu's strong wish for a bone stick.

Example 2:

Wang Anyu: This golden circle line is that they have a special scenic spot where people can go. A car costs more than 6,000 RMB.

Dilraba: The worker says that diesel oil here is also very expensive, **which is more expensive than balloons.**

Hu Xianxu: Balloons?

Qin Hailu: **That's really more expensive than balloons.**

Dilraba violated the maxim of quantity. Dilraba did not provide enough information. Everyone knows diesel oil is definitely more expensive than balloons. Dilraba said this sentence in order to make the atmosphere more relaxing and comfortable. Although this sentence did not produce any factual and necessary information, it expresses the effect of some kind of humor, making them feel more harmonious and happy.

3.4.2 Violation of the maxim of quality

Example 1:

Hu Xianxu: The food are much more in it. **You look for it and you will find that the car key when we are in Hrvatska is also in it.**

Hu Xianxu intentionally violated the maxim of quality. What he said is not truthful. The car key can not be in the curry soup. Actually, everyone present knew Hu Xianxu has said the false sentences. However, it did not cause any trouble for them to understand his implicature. Instead it produced a funny effect. The use of humorous language to express their views is also a major attraction of this travel reality show.

Example 2:

Hu Xianxu: **I'm so happy.**

Qin Hailu: You can stay here.

Hu Xianxu intentionally violated the maxim of quality. The background is that everyone is climbing a snow mountain and they all feel tired. All of them have claimed to slow down or give up because it was too hard to climb the snow mountain successively for nearly one hour on such a cold day. And when everyone except for Hu Xianxu began to complain, Hu Xianxu said that he was very happy. Of course he was not truthful. In this way, it brought two effects. First, it produced a happy and funny atmosphere and put away the bad mood. Second, it lightened the guilty of Xin Zhilei who was the proposer and designer of this activity. From this dialogue, we can also find that Hu Xianxu is a very considerate, optimistic and energetic person.

3.4.3 Violation of the maxim of relation

Example 1:

Xin Zhilei: Look at that building.

Hu Xianxu: Crab pliers.

Xin Zhilei: **How is this done?**

Hu Xianxu: **It must have been made by someone.**

Hu Xianxu violated the maxim of relation. What he answered was not related to Xin Zhilei's question. What Xin Zhilei wanted to know was that how or in what way the building has been built. In fact, she was surprised by this wonderful building. However, Hu Xianxu changed the question to another topic. In fact, both of them knew the building must be built by someone. In addition, the answer is not necessary and useless so Hu Xianxu also violated the maxim of quantity. The use of humorous language to express their views is also a major attraction of this travel reality show.

Example 2:

Zhao Zhaoyi: **These lambs are so cute.** They walks slowly.

Amanda: **Pull up the wool.**

Qin Lan: **Knitting sweaters, shaving wool and rubbing sheep ropes.**

Qin Hailu and Qin Lan violated the maxim of relation. Zhao Zhaoyi expressed her love for these lambs. Qin Hailu and Qin Lan could have said something related to the praise of these lambs. However, both of them just did not care about the cute lambs. Instead what they said was about how to kill these lambs and utilize them. Although their conversation is irrelevant, it will not threaten their relationship, but will enhance their relationship. It is this irrelevant reply that creates a contrast effect and brings a harmonious and comfortable atmosphere.

3.4.4 Violation of the maxim of manner

Example 1:

Dilraba: **Who's that? And you are? Didn't you say you were going? Because I didn't come. Later. Who are you? Who are you?**

Wang Anyu: **Who am I? Why am I here?**

Dilraba and Wang Anyu violated the maxim of manner. This maxim requires people to be perspicuous, brief and orderly. But at first what Dilraba said was rather out of order. The audience could not understand her words. And then Wang Anyu said something similar to Dilraba. Both of their words were unordered. The background is that they just got up so early in the morning that their mind was not clear at that time. In this way, a funny scene came out. The similar unordered words generate a funny atmosphere.

Example 2:

Wang Anyu: Then. **This roundabout. This roundabout.**

Dilraba: **This roundabout? Which roundabout?**

Wang Anyu: **This roundabout.**

Dilraba: **Which one is this?**

Wang Anyu: This exit.

Wang Anyu violated the maxim of manner. This maxim requires people to be perspicuous and avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity. Dilraba did not know where to go and asked Wang Anyu for help. She expected to know the specific direction while Wang Anyu always told her that she should go towards this roundabout. Wang Anyu did not explain the specific meaning of 'this' which causes some ambiguity. So not only Dilraba but also the audience did not know the direction. This kind of ambiguity in our daily life will also cause unnecessary trouble if not paying attention to. Actually, in this reality show, they are all considerate and understandable to each other, therefore it will not bring any unpleasant mood among them. Instead, it will alleviate the pressure of Dilraba as a driver.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Table 1. Distribution of Dialogues Produced by Violating the four maxims of CP in the Study

	number	percent
The maxim of quantity	3	8.82%
The maxim of quality	20	58.82%
The maxim of relation	3	8.82%
The maxim of manner	8	23.53%
Total	34	100%

Note: If there is a conversation that violates two kinds of maxims at the same time, then both maxims will be counted.

4.2 Discussion

First of all, as for the first research question, through the detailed analysis of the selected 14 representative dialogues, we can clearly know how four maxims are violated respectively in daily communication dialogues. Secondly, as for the second research question, As seen in Table 1, we can find that in these 29 dialogues, the examples of violating the maxim of quality are the most, far exceeding the sum of the other three items, which shows that in the real communication situation, people tend to say something that is untruthful, thus violating CP. Under such circumstance, people often deliberately say these words on the premise of knowing that what they say is false, so as to bring some effects. Finally, as for the third research question, in fact, violating CP will not cause obstacles to communication between them, nor will it increase some unpleasant difficulties. On the contrary, more pragmatic effects brought about by violating CP are humor, relaxation of tension, mutual consideration, and closer relationship.

5. Conclusion

With the Cooperative Principle as the theoretical framework, *Divas Hit the Road (season 5 episode 10)* as the subject of the study, this thesis analyzes how the cooperative principle and its four maxims are violated, which maxim is violated most and what effects does it produce.

Grice's Cooperative Principle are important theories. Cooperative Principle is about a set of maxims that people should observe in ordinary conversations. But in actual life the speaker usually violates certain maxims and deliberately lets the hearer know that. The speaker aims to let the hearer infer the implication from the speaker's utterance.

The analysis of the conversations in *Divas Hit the Road (season 5 episode 10)* by violating the maxims under the CP may help audience learn about the subtle relationships among these seven people, which helps pave the way to a more comprehensive and profound understanding of interpersonal relationships in our real daily life. In a word, this paper provides a new perspective to appreciate reality show, thus inspiring people to master something skills to bring the relationship closer, ease the tense atmosphere and bring humor.

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