

# Analysis of Verbal Humor in *Friends* from a Perspective of Pragmatic Presupposition

Yang Yang

English Department

School of Foreign Languages and Literature

Wuhan University

Wuhan, China

**Abstract**—As an important theory in pragmatics, presupposition is characterized by mutual knowledge, defeasibility, and appropriateness, etc. Based on these properties, this article conducts a deep analysis of humorous dialogues in the sitcom *Friends*, with the aim to provide a deeper understanding of the nature and properties of presupposition as well as a fresh perspective for explaining the generative mechanism of verbal humor. The results indicate that presupposition is a powerful and common pragmatic strategy used in sitcoms to create humorous effect. Besides, it is found that pragmatic presupposition mainly generates verbal humor in the sitcom in two forms. First, humor appears when the audience perceives the contradiction between the presupposition uttered by a character and the fact or the speaker's true feelings; second, humor appears when a character utters something that cancels the presupposition formed by the audience based on previous plots. It is hoped the attempt to combine pragmatics and humor psychology here can provide some insights into future research on this interdisciplinary field.

**Keywords**—pragmatic presupposition; verbal humor; *Friends*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Humor is an indispensable spice of our life in that it can bring happiness to stressed real world, enliven atmosphere, ease conflicts and enhance interpersonal relationship. Therefore the ability to create, understand and appreciate humor plays a significant role in promoting social and cultural development. Since the ancient times, humor has been explored by researchers from various fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, aesthetics, and linguistics, thus gradually becoming an interdisciplinary subject. In the field of linguistics, researchers have mainly tried to explain the mechanism triggering humor from such perspectives as conversational implicature, speech acts, cooperation principles, and relevance theory. Although pragmatic presupposition has been used in previous studies of verbal humor, it is only treated as a partial contribution without detailed and comprehensive analysis. Therefore, this article is devoted to conducting a deep analysis of how verbal humor is created by use of pragmatic presupposition in the sitcom *Friends*.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Relevant Concepts and Theories

#### 1) Humor

This section reviews previous research on the concepts and theories of humor and pragmatic presupposition which are related to the current research.

Since humor has been studied in many domains, there is neither satisfying definition nor unified classification of it. However, it is well acknowledged that humor is funny, laughable and amusing. The paper adopts the definition and classification of humor proposed by Pocheplsov [1]. He divided humor into situational humor and verbal humor, the latter of which is also called linguistic humor. According to Pocheplsov, verbal humor is the one realized mainly through language, both spoken and written. Therefore, verbal humor analyzed in the following refers to the utterances produced by a character.

There have been many theories of humor aiming to explain what humor is, what social function it serves, and what is considered as humorous. Attardo provided a commonly accepted classification of conventional theories of humor: relief theory, superiority theory, and incongruity theory. The relief theory maintains that laughter is a homeostatic mechanism that can reduce psychological tension, which is thus welcomed by those who believe that laughter is beneficial to one's health. The superiority theory of humor dates back to Plato and Aristotle, whose general idea is that a person laughs at others' misfortunes because their misfortunes stimulate his superiority. Berger [2] holds that our laughter expresses a sudden glory arising from a sudden perception of eminency in ourselves compared with others' infirmity. Therefore, this theory believes that people respond to humor by having a sense of superiority, by laughing at others who might be regarded as incompetent, stupid, or ignorant. The incongruity theory is conventionally recognized as the most influential one in humor research. The foundation of this theory can date back to the German philosopher Kant who said in his book *Critiques of Judgment* that "laughter is an affection arising from sudden transformation of trained expectation into nothing". Another German philosopher Schopenhauer proposed a more explicit

incongruity-based theory of humor which states that "the cause of laugh in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and the laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity" [3]. Morreall provided a simple and direct interpretation of this theory: "what we are enjoying is experiencing something that doesn't fit our mental patterns; and incongruity is a fancy name for a mismatch between what we expected and what we experience" [4]. To sum up, it can be seen that humor involves creative or artistically polished language and the successful transmission of humor requires the participation of both the speaker to utter and the listener to perceive.

## 2) Pragmatic presupposition

Presupposition is something that one believes to be true and uses as the beginning of an argument even though it has not been proved, or a "foreground assertion" [5]. It might be "taken as the background information shared by the participants in the verbal exchange" [6]. The concept of presupposition was first proposed by Frege, the architect of modern mathematic logic and analytical philosophy. In the 1960s, presupposition was introduced into linguistics. Since then it has gradually become an important subject of linguistics, especially in semantics and pragmatics. Unlike semantic presupposition which is defined in terms of truth-conditions, pragmatic presupposition is defined in terms of the relation between utterances and their contexts. The reason why pragmatic presupposition can be applied in analyzing verbal humor in the sitcom is because they both always lie in the context involving various factors such as background knowledge or shared knowledge, and the physical setting.

Domestically, He [7] defines pragmatic presupposition as the premise that is sensitive to the context and has relation to the beliefs, attitudes, and intentions of the speaker (sometimes including the listener). Based on its actual functioning in a certain discourse, pragmatic presupposition can be further classified. For instance, in the study of the application of pragmatic supposition in advertisements, Chen [8] divided pragmatic presupposition into fact presupposition, belief presupposition, state presupposition, and behavior presupposition. Meanwhile, previous theoretical research on pragmatic presupposition has revealed that it mainly has such properties as defeasibility, mutual knowledge, and appropriateness. First, defeasibility refers to the case in which the presupposition may disappear when the context or speech content changes. Second, mutual knowledge was first introduced by Levinson [5] who states that "An utterance A pragmatically presupposes a proposition B if A is appropriate and only if B is mutually known by the participants." It can be seen that mutual knowledge refers to the shared information between parties of communication. Third, Austin was the first to propose a theory of presupposition from the perspective of appropriate conditions of speech acts. He believes that appropriateness has to be met in order to produce meaningful utterances and to perform an effective illocutionary act during communication. Finally is about presupposition triggers, which refers to the linguistics items that lead to

presupposition. He [9] divided the 13 pragmatic presupposition triggers listed by Levinson into three major types. First are verbs, including implicative verbs, factive verbs, predictive adjectives, change-of-state verbs and verbs of judging; second are iteratives and adjuncts, such as again, another, even, etc.; third are phrases and clauses such as temporal clauses, cleft sentences, questions, comparisons, etc.

## B. Previous Research on Humor from the Perspective of Pragmatic Presupposition

Most of the studies of verbal humor from a pragmatic approach are done by domestic scholars. Although pragmatic presupposition has also been explored by researchers to explain humor, it is usually combined with other pragmatic theories in analysis. One of the earliest analyses was done by Lu Guandan [10], who attempted to explore the relation between pragmatic theories and humor under the guidance of conversational maxims, conversational implicature, deixis, presupposition and speech acts.

More recently, some scholars have recognized the strong exploratory power of presupposition for creating humorous effect. For instance, Jiang [11] explored how pragmatic presupposition generates verbal humor from the classification, property, strategy and triggers of presupposition, thus providing a fresh perspective for humor research. Through a deep analysis of humor in the famous comic sketch of Help or Not, Cong and Qiu [12] finds that semantic and pragmatic presuppositions complement each other in producing humor effect, which is different from the normal view that the two presuppositions belong to different linguistic study. The results show that the actor's speech act humor can be achieved by such presupposition strategies as "leading to the plot and theme", "secretly replacing the focus to meet the need", "shifting the empathy for harmony", "treating people in their ways", and "being diametrically opposite". It should be noted that the operating mechanism of these presupposition strategies is based on the prototype of common ground, which is mutually manifest, deficient, or deliberately broken to create humor. Later, Cong [13] explored the role these two kinds of presupposition play in Chinese comic sketches. The findings reveal that in the case of modern Chinese comic sketches, yushe functions as the situation setting and theme deepening while the defeasibility of qianshe leads to the humor. It can be seen that she believes the humor is generated through the departure of stereotypical relations which is out of expectation in individuals' mind. This view conforms to the conventional incongruity theory of humor mentioned above.

In summary, previous studies have shown that verbal humor can be generated through violation of some properties of pragmatic presupposition, particularly mutual knowledge or common ground, appropriateness and defeasibility. Among the three properties, defeasibility is in line with the incongruity theory of humor, both of which holds that humor is created by the disparity between what we expect and the real condition. Despite the strong exploratory power of pragmatic presupposition for verbal humor, deep research on humor adopting this perspective is rather limited. Besides, previous studies mainly choose Chinese comic sketch and

cross talk for analysis. However, western sitcoms are also very successful carrier of verbal humor and may be conducive to English learning.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Research Question

Based on the review of relevant concepts and previous pragmatic research on verbal humor, the present study attempts to analyze the verbal humor in the sitcom Friends from the three major properties of mutual knowledge, appropriateness and defeasibility of pragmatic presupposition. This paper is devoted to addressing the following question: How these properties of presupposition are used to generate humorous effect?

#### B. Data Collection and Analysis

The present study selects humorous dialogues from the corpus of the script of the sitcom Friends (Season 1) which follows the personal and professional lives of six twenty to thirty-something-year-old friends living in Manhattan. The characters in the play demonstrate distinctive personality and dialogues are vivid and humorous. Besides being popular around the world for its hilarious plots, Friends is always being good material for English learners to improve L2 proficiency for its real-life settings. Therefore, the analysis of verbal humor in such a sitcom from the perspective pragmatic presupposition is of significance, which not only help us better understand the nature of pragmatic presupposition, but also provide a fresh perspective to learn from this excellent comedy.

The study adopts a qualitative method to explore the generative mechanism of humor in Friends from the perspective of pragmatics presupposition, specifically from the major properties.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a deep analysis of how verbal humor in the sitcom is generated by violating appropriateness and mutual knowledge and employing defeasibility. The generative mechanism of humor through each presupposition property is analyzed with five examples.

#### A. Verbal Humor Realized by Violating Appropriateness

The appropriateness of pragmatic presupposition is an important property ensuring successful communication. However, the speaker or hear sometimes may violate the appropriateness by intentionally or unintentionally uttering something contradictory to a presupposition, thus triggering humorous effect. Generally, the appropriateness can be violated by misunderstanding presupposition, using false presupposition and misusing presupposition (Jiang, 2009). Five examples involving such violation are analyzed in in this part.

Example 1:

Rachel: Oh, he is precious! Where did you get him?

Ross: My friend Bethel rescued him from some lab.

Phoebe: That is so cruel! Why? Why would a parent name their child Bethel? (The others are surprised.)

In this example, the audience and other characters presuppose that Phoebe feels pity for the monkey by saying "cruel", since it was used for experiment in lab before (as shown in "rescued him from some lab"). However, Phoebe's next utterance is contradictory to this presupposition. In fact, she is just too surprised that someone is named as Bethel (a house of worship). It is worth noting that here the facial expression of the other characters showing unbelievable feelings complements the humor created by the contradiction. The facial expression and other body language are usually employed to produce situational humor which belongs to nonverbal humor mentioned in the literature review part. Therefore, it can be seen that sitcoms and other TV programs usually combines verbal and nonverbal humor to enhance the hilarious effect. However, the present study focuses on verbal humor only and the following analysis omits situational humor. Moreover, the presupposition used here help further impress the audience that Phoebe is really weird, thus also serving to enhance characters' personality.

Example 2:

Shelley: Question. You're not dating anybody, are you? Because I met somebody who would be perfect for you.

Chandler: Ah, y'see, perfect might be a problem. Had you said "co-dependent", or ...

Shelley: Do you want a date Saturday?

Chandler: Yes please.

Shelley: Okay. He's cute, he's funny, he's-

Chandler: He's a he?

Shelley: Well yeah! ...Oh God. I just... I thought... Good, Shelley. Okay.

In this example, we can see Chandler presupposes his colleague will set him a date and he is willing to accept this kindness by the answer "yes, please". However, it can be seen that this colleague presupposes Chandler as a gay by the use of "he's", which is contradictory to the fact that Chandler is straight (which is known by the audience), thus generating humor.

Example 3:

Phoebe: God, what a great day. ...What? Weather-wise!

In this example, "what a great day" let the audience presupposes that Phoebe is in a good mood. However, the background is the funeral of Ross and Monica's grandma, where people are normally let down. Therefore, such a presupposition is inappropriate here due to its contraction to the reality.

Example 4:

Monica: Okay. Well, I'm going out with a guy my friends all really like.

Paula: Wait wait. We talking about the coyotes here? All right, a cow got through!

Monica: Can you believe it? ...Y'know what? I just don't feel the thing. I mean, they feel the thing, I don't feel the thing.

Paula: Honey. Listen, if that's how you feel about the guy, dump him!

Monica: I know. Its gonna be really hard.

Paula: Well, he's a big boy, he'll get over it.

Monica: No, he'll be fine. It's the other five I'm worried about.

This clip involves at least two rounds of presuppositions. First, the audience presupposes that Monica is satisfied with her boyfriend by "I'm going out with a guy my friends all really like", whose appropriateness is cancelled by her next utterance "I don't feel the thing" though. Second, Paula presupposes that Monica's boyfriend is the one who will suffer from the break-up by "Its gonna be really hard." In fact, however, she is worried that her five friends will be depressed, as shown in "No, he'll be fine. It's the other five I'm worried about", which cancel the appropriateness of the second presupposition here. It should also be noted here that Paula actually can understand that Monica worries about her friends if she pay attention to Monica's facial expression featuring hesitation and Monica's emphasis on these friends. However, she neglects all this and then misinterprets Monica's utterance. This might be the script writers' intention to create humor through such manipulation of presupposition.

Example 5:

Rachel: Look-look-look-look-look, my first paycheck! Look at the window, there's my name! Hi, me!

Phoebe: I remember the day I got my first paycheck. There was a cave-in in one of the mines, and eight people were killed.

Monica: Wow, you worked in a mine?

Phoebe: I worked in a Dairy Queen, why?

In this example, Monica and the audience presuppose that Phoebe worked in a mine by the description of severe casualties in a mine. However, Phoebe's response to Monica's question is contradictory to the presupposition. By "why", it seems that Phoebe feels it right to mention the casualties which have nothing to do with her work but lead to false presupposition when it comes to the first day of getting paid. Therefore, this use of presupposition strategy in this example also serves to enhance the weird characteristic of Phoebe.

### *B. Verbal Humor Realized by Violating Mutual Knowledge*

Mutual knowledge refers to the shared information by participants of the communication that ensures the conversation to be smooth and effective. However, the fact is that mutual knowledge doesn't always shared by the

communicative parties. This property is often violated by the speaker or the hearer either due to the lack of background information or intentionally. Analysis of five examples from the sitcom involving such violation is as follows.

Example 6:

Rachel: God, isn't this exciting? I earned this. I wiped tables for it, I steamed milk for it, and it was totally — (opens envelope) — not worth it. Who's FICA? Why's he getting all my money? I mean, what- Chandler, look at that.

In this example, Rachel presupposes FICA is a person by saying "who" and "he". In fact, FICA stands for Federal Insurance Contribution Act, which is a law requiring each employee to pay social security tax with 7% of his or her wages. However, Rachel was born into a well-off family and has never taken a job to earn money herself. Therefore, she has no idea of what FICA is, which violates the mutual knowledge of presupposition and produce humorous effect. This clip also involves defeasibility and will be further discussed in the later section (Example 15).

Example 7:

Monica: Uh, Rach, it's the Visa card people.

Rachel: Oh, God, ask them what they want.

Monica: (on phone) Could you please tell me what this is in reference to? (Listens) Yes, hold on. (To Rachel) Um, they say there's been some unusual activity on your account.

Rachel: But I haven't used my card in weeks!

Monica: That is the unusual activity. Look, they just wanna see if you're okay.

The audience and Rachel herself presuppose that her account might be stolen or losing a lot of money based on the "unusual activity" uttered by Monica. Actually this "unusual activity" refers to Rachel's stopping using the card for consumption from the perspective of the bank staff. Therefore it can be seen that background information doesn't share between the bank and the audience as well as the character. On the one hand, while Rachel has started to live on herself and stopped using the card given by her family, the bank fails to get this updated information of its VIP, thus generating humor. On the other hand, as for the audience, "unusual activity" reported by the bank is generally linked to loss of money, so they also don't have the mutual knowledge here.

Example 8:

Rachel: C'mon Daddy, listen to me! It's like, it's like, all of my life, everyone has always told me, "You're a shoe! You're a shoe, you're a shoe, you're a shoe!". And today I just stopped and I said, "What if I don't wanna be a shoe? What if I wanna be a purse, y'know? Or a hat! No, I'm not saying I want you to buy me a hat, I'm saying I am a hat. It's a metaphor, Daddy!

The background of this clip is that Rachel decided not to marry her fiancé on the wedding day and is trying to explain to her father why she dumped the groom. By saying "shoe",

"purse", and "hat", she is trying to persuade her father to accept her change of mind. Apparently, it can be told that Rach's dad is making fun of Rach's metaphor by saying "buy her a hat", and pretended that he didn't know what Rach was talking about. As a successful and wealthy doctor, he wants his daughter can marry the man who is also a wealthy doctor and continue living without worries. Therefore, he is intentionally violating mutual knowledge here because he doesn't share the common ground with her daughter.

Example 9:

Ross: Well, I don't know, okay, okay, how about the baby's name?

Carol: Marlon-

Ross: Marlon?!

Carol: If it's a boy, Minnie if it's a girl.

Ross: ...As in Mouse?

Carol: As in my grandmother.

Ross: Still, you say Minnie, you hear Mouse. Um, how about, um... how about Julia?

This is also an example involving deliberate violation of mutual knowledge. We can tell that Ross is doing this intentionally by "how about Julia". He knows that Minnie refers to his ex-wife's grandmother rather the Mouse from Carol's perspective, but he has his own choice about the baby's name. Here Ross violates the mutual knowledge because he degrades to name the baby with Minnie.

Example 10:

Monica: C'mon, you can't live off your parents your whole life.

Rachel: I know that. That's why I was getting married.

In this example, Monica presupposes that Rachel knows that a person should be independent someday. However, in Rachel's view, the fact that can't live off her parents the whole life means she should start to live on her husband instead of getting a job to get economically independent. The humor is created by the two characters' different knowledge about life independent of parents.

### *C. Verbal Humor Realized Through Defeasibility*

A certain language structure can generate a presupposition, but the contradiction between background information, specific contexts, but verbal content will cause the presupposition to disappear, which is called the defeasibility of presupposition. In general, a presupposition is cancelled when the semantic or logical expression at the speech time is inconsistent with the context where the communication occurs or the consensus among people about something. This disparity conforms to the traditional incongruity theory of humor. Besides, the cancellation of presupposition provides a way to achieve such incongruity that generates humor. Defeasibility seems to be one of the crucial properties of presupposition and one of the touchstones against which all theories of presupposition have

to be assessed (Levinson, 1983). Indeed, the following analysis of humor caused by cancelling presupposition proves its importance.

Example 11:

Ross: I'll be fine, alright? Really, everyone. I hope she'll be very happy.

Monica: No you don't.

Ross: No I don't, to hell with her, she left me!

When Ross says "I hope she'll be very happy", the audience presupposes he has forgiven his ex-wife for being a lesbian and divorcing him. However, his next utterance "No I don't, to hell with her, she left me!" quickly cancels the previous presupposition formed by the audience, and such a "surprise (or unexpectedness)" is hilarious.

Example 12:

Rachel: Please, no, go, that'd be fine!

Monica: (to Ross) Are, are you okay? I mean, do you want me to stay?

Ross: (choked voice) That'd be good...

Monica: (horrified) Really?

Ross: (normal voice) No, go on! It's Paul the Wine Guy!

The background here is that Rachel has fled from her wedding and Ross has been dumped by his wife, and they are both important friends to Monica and may need her company at the moment. However, Monica is supposed to go out on a date with a potential boyfriend. The audience presupposes that Ross really needs her sister to stay by "That'd be good", which is then cancelled by "No, go on! It's Paul the Wine Guy!" Before the last sentence is uttered, the audience feels Monica's stressful hesitation between staying with friends and meeting new boyfriend. However, the last utterance by Ross suddenly removes this stress and makes the audience surprised, thus creating humorous effect.

Example 13:

Joey: Hey Pheebs, you wanna help?

Phoebe: Oh, I wish I could, but I don't want to.

In this example, the audience and Joey presupposes that Phoebe wants to help but has no time, which is quickly cancelled by her latter half of the utterance "but I don't want to". Here is another similar example featuring this property: I'm not gonna tell you what they spent on that wedding, but forty thousand dollars is a lot of money! (Mr. Geller)

Example 14:

Chandler: "Look, Gippetto, I'm a real live boy." (Mimic)

Joey: I will not take this abuse. (Walks to the door and opens it to leave.)

Chandler: You're right, I'm sorry. (Burst into song and dances out of the door.) "Once I was a wooden boy, a little wooden boy..."

The background for this clip is that Joey is being teased about his unsuccessful acting career. Both Joey and the audience presuppose that Chandler is truly sorry for mimicking his roommate's ridiculous playing part. However, Chandler's singing and dancing afterwards indirectly cancels this presupposition, thus creating humor by this incongruity between his words and his action.

Example 15:

Rachel: God, isn't this exciting? I earned this. I wiped tables for it, I steamed milk for it, and it was totally — (opens envelope) — not worth it. Who's FICA? Why's he getting all my money? I mean, what- Chandler, look at that.

Chandler: (looking) Oh, this is not that bad.

Joey: Oh, you're fine, yeah, for a first job.

Ross: You can totally, totally live on this.

Ross: Oh, by the way, great service tonight.

All: Oh! Yeah! (They all get their wallets out and give generous tips.)

The first part of this example has been analyzed from the property of mutual knowledge, which only serves as background information here. The audience presupposes that the wages Rachel has gotten is enough through her friends' verbal response. However, such a presupposition is cancelled by their behavior of giving generous tips. Here presupposition is cancelled by nonverbal act.

## V. CONCLUSION

From a pragmatic approach, this study explores how humor is generated in the sitcom *Friends* by use of presupposition. The findings reveal that, based on the property of presupposition, humor is created by violating the appropriateness and mutual knowledge and by manipulating defeasibility. Specifically, the violation of appropriateness appears when the participants of the communication utter something contradictory to a previous presupposition; the violation of mutual knowledge can be done by the speaker or hearer either intentionally (for not sharing common ground) or due to the lack of enough background information; and the use of defeasibility generates humor in that it creates disparity between what is believed and the real situation. Among the three properties, the defeasibility of presupposition conforms to the conventional incongruity theory of humor and is the most used property to generate humor. Meanwhile, it is found that pragmatic presupposition mainly generates verbal humor when the audience perceives the contradiction between the presuppositions uttered by a character and the fact or the speaker's true feelings, or when a character utters something that cancels the presupposition formed by the audience based on previous plots. Moreover, the analysis reveals that presupposition also serves to enhance character's personality besides creating humorous effect in the sitcom. The present study is of practical significance to the learning and research of English. On the one hand, it can help EF learners better understand the humorous language in American sitcom and then learn to use

it in their communication with others. On the other hand, it provides a detailed exploration of pragmatic presupposition by use of real-life like examples.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Pocheptsov, G. G. *Language and Humor*. Kiev :Vysca Publishers, Head Publishing House, 1998.
- [2] Berger, A. A. *An Anatomy of Humor*. New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.): Transaction Publishers, 1993.
- [3] Raskin, Victor. *Semantic Mechanism of Humor*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1984.
- [4] Morreall, John. *Humor Works*. Massachusetts: HRD Press, Inc, 1997.
- [5] Levison, S. C. *Pragmatics*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- [6] Simpson, J. M. Y. *A First Course in Linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press, 1979.
- [7] HeZiran. *Pragmatics and English Learning*. Shanghai: .Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1997.
- [8] Chen Xinren. *Pragmatic Presupposition in Advertising Language*. *Journal of Foreign Languages*, (5).
- [9] He Ziran. *Pragmatics*. Nanjing: Nanjing Normal University Press, 2003.
- [10] Lv Guangdan, *Pragmatic Analysis of English Humor*, *Journal of Foreign Language* vol.15, pp. 55-58, 1988.
- [11] Jiang Bingqing, *An Elaboration on the Theory of Presupposition and the Generative Mechanism of Verbal Humour*, *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*, vol.3, pp. 14-18, 2009.
- [12] Cong Rizhen and Qiu Wei, *An Elaboration on Presupposition Strategies of Actors' Speech Act Humor and Operating Mechanism in Chinese Comedy Sketches — A Case Study of Help or Not*, *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, vol.1, pp. 29-32, 2015.
- [13] Cong Rizhen, *On the performances of pragmatic roles and cognitive motivations of presupposition functioning as a background introduction and as ending up with defeasibility: A case study in modern Chinese comic sketches*, *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, vol.3, pp. 35-40, 2018.