

An Analysis of the Film Dialogue in the View of the Pragmatic Principles

A Case Study of *Love in the 1980s*

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Abstract—The film *Love in the 1980s* shows the changing process of love between the protagonists, Guan Yubo and Cheng Liwen, through dialogue and narrator. The dialogue in different situations conforms to not only the identity of characters, but also the language rule. From the angle of the cooperative principle and politeness principle, the dialogue reflects the different pragmatic effect, expressed implied emotional expression way on that era.

Keywords—the 1980s; dialogue; cooperative principle; politeness principle

I. INTRODUCTION

The film *Love in the 1980s*, adapted from the novel of the same name by the author Ye Fu, has slightly changed the plot of the original work and compressed the dialogue of the characters. Compared with the original work, the plot is compacter and the dialogue is more refined. In the film, the emotional development of hero Guan Yubo and the heroine Cheng Liwen is mainly shown through dialogue and narrative, and the whole plot is also closely related to the dialogue. The dialogue between different roles reflects the characteristics of personality of the role and the need for verbal communication. This paper attempts to analyze the typical dialogue in the film from the perspective of cooperative principle and politeness principle to explore the pragmatic effects it presents.

According to Grice's theory of conversational implicature, the two parties of dialogue should follow the cooperative principle, which means they need to satisfy four criteria: quantitative maxim (full information), quality maxim (true discourse), and relation maxim (be relevant) and manner maxim (be clear). [1] p60 Most of the roles in the film follow the cooperative principle when they talk to each other, but there are exceptions that are mainly reflected in the dialogue between Cheng Liwen and Guan Yubo. Out of the need to hide the true feelings of the heart, Cheng Liwen repeatedly evades the problem of Guan Yubo. This violation of cooperative principle makes audience very confused.

II. MULTIPLE DISSOLUTION OF COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

In the dialogue between Guan Yubo and Cheng Liwen in the film, Cheng Liwen does not follow cooperative principle for most time. Especially at the beginning of the reunion, she always evades and dodges Guan Yubo's repeatedly question, exploration, and hint, so that he could not understand the true thoughts of her heart. When Guan Yubo graduated from university and was sent back to his hometown, he is surprised to find that the classmate of high school whom he has always loved unrequited works at the supply and marketing cooperative here. He is overjoyed and keeps asking her why she is also here, but she never give a straight answer.

Guan: How could you be here, Liwen!

Cheng: How could you be here?

Guna: After graduating from college, I was sent back to the county party committee and then to the countryside for six months. I came here just a month ago. How about you? Why could you be here, too?

Cheng: Where are you living?

Cheng: In village office. Have you never taken the exam again?

Cheng: It's cool in the mountains. You just got here, so pay more attention to the cold and warm.

In the face of Guan's delight and repeated inquiries, Cheng Liwen has never responded positively. Her response has neither followed relation maxim nor provided enough information. The questions asked by Guan Yubo are all blocked back by Cheng Liwen. On the contrary, she asked a few questions about Yubo. After the conversation, Yubo still knew nothing about Liwen. In addition, Liwen also did not show the enthusiasm that should be shown for meeting old classmates. Facing this kind of performance, not only Guan Yubo, the audience also feels that Liwen's reply is too cold and unnatural. However, through the details that Cheng Liwen suggests Guan Yubo buying bulk wine that is not

strong and reminds him to pay attention to the warm and cold, it still can be seen that Liwen is concerned about Yubo in her heart, but she covers up the surging waves in her heart by constantly changing turns of communication. However, the hidden role of language is after all limited, and the action of accidentally breaking the wine bottle lets the audience see her inner waves.

With the increase of contact between two people, Guan Yubo hinted his love to Cheng Liwen in different ways, but Liwen never expressed any opinion and talked about others, so that Yubo was puzzled, feeling that there is no place to place his true love.

Guan: Liwen, when we graduated, I put a letter in your bag. Have you read it?

Cheng: No ... I can't remember!

Guan: Now, would you like to know what I wrote?

Cheng: It's been so long. Let's forget it.

Guan: I want to tell you.

Cheng: Since long time has passed, some words are like a dream, which will become pieces if they are spoken. It is not fun.

When Guan Yubo tried to take courage to express his love to Cheng Liwen in the darkness brought by the power outage, Liwen stopped him again through the unequal response. From Cheng Liwen's reply, it seems that she doesn't want to know how Guan Yubo feels about her at all, and prevents him from expressing his feelings for several times. Cheng Liwen's repeated violations of cooperative principle are not the sign of tactfully refusing to love Guan Yubo. On the contrary, it is because she loves so much that she restrains and forbears to bury her feelings deep in the bottom of her heart, because in the eyes of Cheng Liwen, to love a person is to help a person. It is the greatest desire of Cheng Liwen to let her loved ones go out of the mountains to the wider world. She would never allow herself to be the bond that prevents Guan going out of the mountains.

After Guan Yubo completed his workout, before returning to the city, he once again confessed to Cheng Liwen that he was willing to stay with her, but Cheng firmly refused. In this conversation, Cheng Liwen follows cooperative principle, and does not completely cover up her true feelings.

Guan: It's really beautiful here! I want to stay, too.

Cheng: This is not where you should stay.

Guan: But you can ...

Cheng: You are a man as well as a passer-by.

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Cheng: Even if you understand my father's sacrifice, do you understand my mother's guilt? I don't want to be a second mother.

This time, the dialogue that basically follows cooperative principle lets Guan Yubo understand the real reason why

Cheng Liwen always refuses him. The reason why Cheng Liwen pushes away Guan Yubo so firmly is that her parents' life has engraved a deep brand in her heart. Her father, a bridge design engineer can only stay in the peak of the Gongmu village to weave bamboo basket and his talent and learning can't be used. In any case, Liwen does not want her beloved to spend his life in the mountains like her father. Guan Yubo was the only one admitted to the university, and entering the university meant that their identities are different from then on. The gap between classes and the difficulties in mountains make it impossible for the precocious girl who is always considerate of others to keep Yubo here. As she said to Xiaoya, who came from the city to see Guan, "One thing we all agree about is that we all want him to go out of here." Through these refined dialogues, the film explains the martyrdom love of Liwen. She is "subdued and soft, self-respected and reserved", and is sacrificed for others until the end of life.

III. CONSTANT PRESENTATION OF POLITENESS PRINCIPLE

Leech thinks that cooperative principle is not enough to explain the relationship between the explicit meaning and the implied meaning. On the basis of the cooperative principle, he puts forward the politeness principle, which includes the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim and sympathy maxim. [3] 384-385 In the process of conversation, cooperative principle is sometimes violated in order to follow the politeness principle.

In the film, in the conversation between Guan Yubo and the village head in the toilet after encounter, questions and answers of each other are unfolded in politeness principle.

Township head: small Guan, have you eaten?

Guan: Huh? There's been stomach trouble these last two days, not yet.

Township head: I heard that you and Xiao Cheng in supply and marketing cooperatives are very close ... Personal matter still should rely on organization.

In this country where "food is the first necessity of man", asking if someone has eaten is a classic way to greet people, but the township head doesn't consider the fact that the occasion is a toilet, and he still asks small Guan whether he has eaten or not in accordance with the usual practice. The township head asks such questions in the toilet, making Guan Yubo very surprised and suddenly frozen, and then he understands that the township head greets him only out of courtesy. In order to avoid the township head becoming embarrassed, Yubo truthfully makes an answer. In order to break the embarrassing atmosphere, the township head changes the topic and asks about the emotional life of Yubo. The inquiry way of the township head is very experienced. First, he affirms Xiao Cheng is a good girl to praise Guan Yubo's vision, and then euphemistically reminds small Guan to pay attention to his future. He not only resolves the embarrassment of squatting in the toilet together, but also expresses the concern for Guan Yubo, and reflects the characteristics of mate selection in that era.

Not only the dialogue between the township head and Guan Yubo, but the dialogue between the other main characters in the film also abides by politeness principle. This is also reflected in the daily conversation between old Tian who cooks in the dining hall and Guan Yubo.

Tian: In this mountain, I can't accompany you, and no one can. Every man has his own life, so it is impossible to refuse to obey it.

Guan: Old Tian, you can actually find a wife to help you sew and wash, and you can also have a companion.

Tian: Oh, meaningless, meaningless. The husband and wife are originally birds in the same forest, but they will fly away separately facing the big disaster.

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Guan: Why do you come here, Liwen?

Cheng: Didn't you ask Aunt Qin, who was on the street, to call me?

Tian: Come on in, Comrade Cheng. I asked Aunt Qin to call you.

Tian: I made a little game for a farewell dinner to Xiao Guan. I don't think I can talk with him, so I just think of you. Only you can accompany him on the street and I asked Aunt Qin Yi to invite you. That was presumptuous.

Cheng: He, never remembers me if there is delicious things. Teacher Tian is a good person. Thanks a lot, teacher Tian.

Before Guan Yubo returned to the city, old Tian specially bought game for him, and invited Cheng Liwen to accompany him. The appellation between people during the dinner was quite intriguing. Old Tian and Cheng Liwen are more polite, using honorific title; and Cheng Liwen and Guan Yubo are old schoolmates who have mutual affection, so they call each other by name; Guan Yubo and old Tian spent half a year together, and they can be regarded as old friends, so the address is more random. Whether it is politely or casually, each other's appellations follow the politeness principle.

It was the most common form of address among state functionaries at that time to add "old" or "Xiao" to the first names of other persons, which is called official appellation. From the township head to old Tian in village office, they all call Guan Yubo "Xiao Guan," while the local villagers call him "Comrade Guan." The township head calls former primary school teacher who cooks in the township government canteen after rehabilitation "old Tian," so Guan Yubo also calls him "old Tian". However, Cheng Liwen, who knows his life, calls him "Teacher Tian," as a sign of respect. Although Cheng Liwen works for the supply and marketing cooperative as a worker, she belongs to the public. Thus, she is naturally called "comrade" by the villagers, and old Tian politely calls her "comrade Xiao Cheng." "Comrade" was the usual appellation used by the villagers for state officials at that time. "Comrade" was not only a title, but also a symbol to distinguish the two classes. The polite

appellation represents the distance between each other. Villagers, on the other hand, call each other with the names of relatives according to rural customs, such as "Aunt Qin", which is mentioned several times in the film. The difference of appellation is also the embodiment of local customs.

Years later, when Guan Yubo returned from his downfall, the monitor of high school arranged a class meeting for him, and they still called the nickname or childhood name they used at school, making audience feel more intimate. The relaxed teasing and sincere wishes during the dinner show the pure friendship between classmates. The nickname and childhood name are the most appropriate names at this time. If the official name is used, it will alienate the emotion.

IV. IMPLICIT EXPRESSION OF IMPLICATION

The original work is written in a poetic language. "The language of novels of Ye Fu pushes the use of Chinese to the extreme." It not only has the philosophy and simplification of the poetic language, but also has the exquisite, agility and clean of prose language. At the same time, it also has the broadness and cordial of language of minority nationalities in ethnic areas. "[4] The dialogue in the film is also as simple and flexible as poetry. Many words contain other meanings, which are implicative and euphemistic, providing much food for thought. It is also very consistent with that time. At that time, the way of expressing love at that time cannot be too straight forward; many dialogues convey the true intentions of the speaker in the form of metaphor, which needs listener to digest carefully to understand.

Guan: This (wild flower) is for you!

Cheng: Why do you pick wild flowers along the road?

Guan: Beauty is like a flower across the clouds, which cannot be picked.

Guan Yubo returns from the countryside with a bunch of wild chrysanthemums for Cheng Liwen. In the face of Liwen's teasing, Guan Yubo seize the opportunity to hint his own mind, and euphemistically express the pity that Liwen always keeps distance with him.

Cheng: This one is too small. Throw it back into the river. It hasn't tasted the life yet!

Guan: You are too big. How can I net you?

Guan Yubo and Cheng Liwen went to the river to collect the fish netted by old Tian and Guan Yubo took the opportunity to express his feelings by using the name of netting fishes. There are many similar implications in the film. Guan Yubo seizes every opportunity to express his deep feelings through things in front of them. He even uses the words that boys like to sing when they are at school: "To pay you sky, to pay you land, to pay a son-in-law for your family" to show his heart. However, every time Liwen affects ignorance and never responds. As soon as she thought about her father's situation, she closed her heart and could not respond to Yubo. Through fine tuning of the film, Liwen's father is positioned as an engineer who comes from the provincial city to the mountain to design the Qingjiang

Bridge. Cheng's father, who fell in love with her mother, stayed here for her, and later encountered the Cultural Revolution and other changes. Now he can only spend the rest of his life by weaving the bamboo baskets at the peak of Gong-mu-zhai. Liwen wouldn't let Yubo, her deep love be buried here like her father or old Tian.

Guan Yubo once went to visit Liwen's father, and the dialogue between the two generations of intellectuals meant a lot.

Cheng's father: It's hard to walk in the mountain road. It's hard all the way.

Guan: Uncle, here is quite tall.

Cheng's father: All mountains in a single glance.

Guan: Your birdcage is very exquisite.

Cheng's father: No matter how exquisite it is, it is just a bird cage.

Cheng's father is like a bird trapped in a cage. Although the beauty of the mountains is picturesque and life is quiet and leisurely, what he has learned is of no use. The exquisite birdcage is a metaphor for life in the mountains. It is just because Liwen understand her father's helplessness that she does not want to become a fetter of Yubo, so that Yubo can easily move along the way to a broader world beyond the mountains. Compared with the novel, the big change in the film is the father's life experience. In the film, Cheng's father is the object of persecution, the symbol of many intellectuals of that time, so he carries more of the brand of the times.

There are also many metaphorical objects in the film, such as Guan Yubo's guitar and harmonica, Cheng Liwen's "Harvest" magazine, old Tian's glasses tied with ropes, and the pictorial of Yamaguchi Momoe and Tomokazu miura on the wall. The musical instrument that Guan Yubo carries with him shows his characteristics as artistic youth. The magazine that Cheng Liwen subscribes reflects her own literary accomplishment. Old Tian's glasses are like Kong Yiji's long gown, which is a symbol of knowledge. The pictures of film stars on the walls create a sense of the times.

Cheng: This sweater is made of wool from Inner Mongolia by me. Please take it.

Guan: This (harmonica) is for you, as a souvenir.

Before leaving, Cheng Liwen and Guan Yubo send each other presents, which is also the metaphor love. It seems that they give a part of their life to each other. The sweater is made by Liwen with thousands of needle and ten thousand lines, and thousands of words are in the sweater with thick warmth; The harmonica is carried by Yubo every day, and he has played for Liwen many times. It is dependent on his lip and tooth. This unforgettable love and heart-to-heart feelings cannot be said, which can only be conveyed implicitly through the metaphorical nature of these objects.

Years later, Guan came back from his downfall, and the conversation with Cheng Liwen when he was alone at the reunion continued the metaphorical style of many years ago.

Guan: I am now sober and rational. A man cannot miss his love twice in his life.

Cheng: We have missed since the 1970s ...

Precocious Cheng Liwen soberly realized that fate embedded herself into the mountains, while Guan Yubo is doomed to go outside, so they belong to two different worlds. Cheng Liwen tried her best to help the man, not to keep him, but to let him stand up again. A love that began in the 1970s and blossomed in the 80s is doomed to have no end. "Missed long ago since the 1970s" is the best annotation of this relationship without end.

The film ends with the death of Liwen to paint a beautiful ending to the relationship, and bury the love in the 1980s together. Liwen's death is a sign of the forever end of an era and a relationship. This kind of restrained and forbearing love can only be fixed in its own time, and can only be recalled, but cannot be repeated.

V. CONCLUSION

Throughout the whole film, both the dialect of old Tian and the poetic dialogue between Guan Yubo and Cheng Liwen reproduce the unique way of verbal communication in that era very appropriately, enhance the viewing value of the film, and play the effect of expression of finishing point.

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