

The Analysis of Apology Speech in Big Bang Theory from the Perspective of Politeness Principle

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Abstract: The principle of politeness plays an indispensable role in interpersonal communication, enabling people to communicate normally through dialogue. However, in some film and television works, in order to achieve a particular artistic effect, the principle of politeness is often ruthlessly "trampling". Sitcoms were popular in China in the 90s. They attracted many linguists' interest and attention. They tried to analyze the causes of humor from a linguistic perspective. This paper analyzes the speech of apology in the Big Bang Theory from two aspects: the cooperative principle and the violation of politeness principle. Although in daily conversation, we all follow the cooperative principle and politeness principle to ensure the smooth dialogue. But sometimes people have to violate these principles and express the implied meaning to achieve the purpose of communication. The Big Bang is a good example. The analysis of the apologetic speech can not only help audiences better understand the cooperative principle and politeness principle, but also promote the cultural communication between China and the West. To achieve the development of cultural globalization, this paper analyzes the apology language in the American sitcom "The Big Bang" from the perspective of politeness principle.

1. Introduction

Politeness is born in interpersonal communication and has always been objective in all aspects of human life and has changed with the development of human civilization. The most important way of communication is dialogue, and the politeness of discourse is the important basis for smooth communication. However, there are no lines and scripts in life, and everyone's words are the language of temporary organization, except for specific occasions, such as performance, conference speeches, speeches, and hosting. However, it is necessary to follow certain principles for the normal dialogue and communication between people. The Big Bang is a series of interesting stories that occur between four scientific cafes and three very different girls. Those wonderful dialogue, the unique dizzying scientific theory and each character's language features every hour and moment can let the audience uproarious. They also attracted the attention of linguists and let them begin to analyze the causes of verbal humor. In previous studies. The researchers pay more attention to how conversational success is carried out on the premise of complying with the principle of cooperation and the principle of politeness. However, the conversational person may violate some of the principles to produce some special conversational effects to convey some implied meaning. Therefore, this article will analyze the speech of the apology in "the big bang" from the politeness principle.

2. The principle of politeness and the language of apology

The famous language philosopher grice first proposed the principle of cooperation in his 1967 speech at Harvard University. He believes that in the process of communication, the two sides seem to consciously or unconsciously follow a certain principle in order to effectively cooperate and complete communication tasks. This is the principle of cooperation.

Then, Lake off put forward two principles of pragmatic competence in 1977--clarity and politeness. In 1978, Brown and Levinson put forward the Face management View based on the concept of Face, and they believed that the purpose of politeness was to save the Face of both

parties. In 1983, Leech proposed the Principle of Politeness, which mainly consists of the following criteria: (1) the propriety criterion, which is to make others suffer at least, and try to benefit others as much as possible; (2) generous guidelines, namely, to reduce the opinions that are favorable to them, and to pay the price as much as possible; (3) the principle of recognition, namely, to reduce the derogation of others and to praise others as much as possible; (4) the principle of humility, that is, to reduce the praise of oneself, and to minimize oneself; (5) the consensus rule is to reduce the inconsistency with others and maximize the consistency with others; (6) the principle of compassion, that is, to reduce the content of expressing oneself and other people's feelings, and to maximize the compassion for others. However, some scholars in China believe that the politeness principle of Leech is too extreme and always emphasize the maximization and minimization. In many cases, politeness is not applicable. Most of the time, the dialogue between people has to take into account the influence of situations, status, relationships and other factors other than the principle of politeness.

Generally speaking, an apology is a remedial speech act, and also itself is a politeness behavior, which is used when social norms have been violated by a real or potential offence. It frequently occurs in people's daily life, and has become a popular research subject for linguists all over the world. It could help people maintain good interpersonal relationship, and show the speaker's concern about the hearer. Apology's fundamental function is that it can repair people's impaired interpersonal relationship as well as restore social balance and harmony. An Apology aims at support the hearer who is suffering bad influence because of a real or potential offence. To make apologies effective, the speakers usually tend to keep a low profile and admit their mistakes as well as responsibilities.

In recent years, with the Chinese opening degree deepening, English TV drama has gradually come into people's lives and become an important medium for cultural communication; at the same time, It has also become the main way of daily communication habits that the English learners understand English speaking people. "The big bang" is one of the most popular American sitcoms in China. The play revolves around the interesting interactions between four otaku scientists and beautiful neighbour in their daily life. The Sheldon is a superior intelligence genius,³ but they can not correctly understand the emotions of others, Jiepi with obsessive-compulsive disorder is more serious, not good at socializing, Leonard is an experimental physicist with the same high IQ. Penny is a hotel attendant who dreams of becoming an actor. She is young and beautiful. She is a neighbor of Sheldon and Leonard, and later became a girlfriend of Leonard. In this sitcom, due to the different characteristics between characters and caused many ironic conflict incidents, the various types of apology speech acts resulted. Some of these apology speech acts follow the "Politeness Principle", some are contrary to it, and thus produce different apology effects. From the perspective of politeness principle, this paper studies the speech act of apology in drama, which helps to reveal the mechanism of different apology effects, and helps English learners further understand American language use habits.

3. Politeness principle and verbal humor

As the main form of humor, verbal humor is widely used in people's daily life and literature of film and television works, it is not only the relationship of people's social intercourse lubricant, but also an important form of literature and art performance. Domestic and foreign scholars from different fields have studied verbal humor from different perspectives. These researches are mainly from the perspective of sociology, anthropology and psychology.

In the past more than 20 years, with the rapid development of pragmatics, the use of pragmatics to study verbal humor has also developed and produced some valuable achievements. The principle of politeness was first proposed by the famous linguist Leech in his *Principles of Pragmatics* ("principles of pragmatics"). The reason why he put forward the politeness principle is that he found that the principle of cooperation has many limitations, for example, it can not explain why people sometimes violate the principles of cooperative principle in conversation. He believes that the principle of politeness is not only the one attached to the principle of cooperation, but also an

important supplement to the principle of cooperation, which can make up for the shortcomings of the principle of cooperation in the interpretation of the discourse. Leech believes that politeness is related to the participants of the conversation, which can be referred to as "self" and "others". The degree of politeness is inversely related to "others" or "self" beneficiaries. In general, the more direct the discourse is, the greater the likelihood of the speaker's damage and the greater the possibility of the speaker's benefit. On the contrary, the more indirect and Euphemism of the discourse, the less possibility of the hearer's loss, the greater possibility of the discourtesy, the more polite the discourse is. According to the benefit loss relationship, Leech proposed six criteria with politeness principle: 1) tact maxim, 2) generosity maxim, 3) approbation maxim, 4) modesty maxim, 5) agreement maxim, 6) sympathy maxim. Leech believes that not all of the six criteria are equally important, and some guidelines, such as strategic guidelines, are more binding than other norms in dialogue. The principle of politeness explains to some extent the reason why people violate the principle of cooperation in conversation, that is, the consideration of politeness. Politeness is a very common phenomenon in many cultures. It is also considered to be a strategy for successful communication and maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationship. However, not all participants will follow the politeness principle. Sometimes, in order to achieve a specific effect, the speaker will intentionally or unintentionally violate the politeness principle, and verbal humor effect is one of the reasons. In the "Big Bang" of the sitcom, the protagonist often violates the politeness principle, the conversation is full of verbal behavior to make their own benefit to others damaged, and however, such words are successful in achieving humorous effect, so that a large number of audience, the drama in recent years become the most successful American sitcom. This paper aims to use the classical theory of pragmatic politeness theories as the theoretical basis, combined with the current popular American sitcom "the big bang" in verbal humor examples, trying to provide another perspective for the generation mechanism of humor, verbal humor also provides a deeper perspective to interpret the play for the play. This study offers a new angle to study the speech act of apology by analyzing characters' dialogues in TV series from the perspective of Politeness Principle. Since Politeness Principle is an important theory of Pragmatics, the study on apologies by employing the six maxims of Politeness Principle can deepen the understanding of apologies from the perspective of Pragmatics and enrich the application range of Politeness Principle. What's more, this research can also deepen people's understanding of American's apologies, avoid cross-cultural communication failure, and make the communication between Chinese and American proceed successfully. Because there is little research on American's apology strategies from the perspective of Politeness Principle, this study can contribute to filling the existing gap in Pragmatics. In addition, this research makes a contribution to the improvement of oral English teaching, students can learn more about native English speaker's apology strategies. Therefore, this thesis is quite meaningful and essential.

4. An apology in the great explosion of life from the perspective of the "Politeness Principle"

In the sitcom "the big bang theory," many of the characters violated the "principle of politeness" in their apologies, which greatly affected the effect of the apology. The "politeness principle" can provide a new perspective for the study of the text of the film and TV series, and this paper confirms the feasibility of analyzing the text of the film and TV series from this perspective. For example, in the big bang theory, characters who violate or follow the "principle of politeness" and "guidelines" will have different apologies and create different characters. By analyzing these people's dialogues that violate the "principle of politeness" and their "principles", it helps us to understand the real thoughts of the characters and the creative intention of the writers.

4.1 Violation of the "rules of praise" and "modesty"

According to the nature of the speech act of apology, it is a face-threatening act to the speaker, but a face-saving act to the hearer. However, if the speaker fails to perform an apology when an infraction has occurred, the hearer's face will be threatened. Therefore, the speech act of apology plays an important role in people's interpersonal relationship. Furthermore, in most speech

communities, having a good knowledge of making apologies is an important part of politeness. As a result, the speech act of apology became an extremely important research direction for linguists, especially for discourse analysis and sociolinguists. What's more, these scholars' research achievements attracted more and more people's attention.

The "rules of praise" and "modesty" are also the two aspects of the same problem, the former stipulates how to look at others, and the latter stipulates how to look at themselves. In the big bang, there are often apology words that violate the rules of praise and modesty.

Amy: What do you want?

Sheldon: Amy, this isn't easy to say. All relationships are difficult, but even more so when you're in one with a person who struggles with everyday social interactions. And frankly, who can strike some people as being kind of weirdo. Amy: Sheldon You're not a weirdo.

Sheldon: I wasn't speaking about me. I mean, honestly, there's no telling what will set you off. You know, introduce myself as your boyfriend, giving you the opportunity to drive me home. Breaking the ice with your colleagues using ethnic humor, the funniest kind of humor.

Amy: What's your point?

Sheldon: My point is, we're a couple. And I like you for who you are, quirks and all.

Amy: I like you, too.

Sheldon: Well, I should hope so; I don't see anyone else banging on this door to put up with your nonsense.

Sheldon said many embarrassing words to Amy in front of her colleagues, which would lead to Amy very angry and decided to have the cold war with Sheldon, aware of Amy's anger, Sheldon said in an apology: "Amy a person who struggles with everyday social interactions" and "who can strike some people as being kind of weirdo."

This meant Amy is not good at social intercourse, it is a clear violation of the recognition criteria. Then Sheldon said:

"Well, I should hope so, I don't see anyone else banging on this door to put up with your nonsense."

Obviously, Sheldon in this way was very arrogant, contrary to the modesty maxim. There is no real awareness of his mistakes. As a result, Sheldon's apology does not play a role in resolving conflicts and improving relations, and Amy is still very annoyed at it.

4.2 Violation of the "appropriate guidelines" and "generosity"

When Penny learned that Sheldon and Leonard broke into her house late at night and cleaned up, she became furious. Sheldon came to apologize to Penny at the request of Leonard, so she had this conversation. After the brief apology, he said to assume all the responsibilities, requirements Penny not to prejudice Leonard.

At the same time, he even said "Leonard" is not only a wonderful guy, but also I hear a gentle. And thorough lover "hints that Penny thinks of being a Leonard woman friend. At this point, Penny was still very annoyed at what the two had done, and Leonard didn't even apologize. Therefore, when Sheldon apologized, he asked Penny to act according to his expectations, which obviously violated the "appropriateness" and "generosity criteria", which resulted in Penny's more angry closing.

4.3 Violation of the "unanimous guidelines" and "sympathy guidelines"

"Consistency rule" and "sympathy rule" are also interrelated. When people want to express their agreement with each other, they should eliminate opposite feelings and increase their understanding of sympathy. However, in the great explosion of life, there is often an apology for breaking the principles of consistency and sympathy.

Sheldon destroyed the blind date of Rajesh but didn't know it. After Leonard reminded him, he reluctantly said "sorry" to Rajesh. Obviously, he still doesn't think Rajesh's date failed because of his reason, then put forward the "she wouldn't have asked me to go with her if you hadn't been drunk and boring." At this point, Sheldon broke the agreement maxim and sympathy maxim, he did not agree that he should be the reason of failure to date and did not show his sympathy on the Rajesh's

failure date. Obviously, the apology does not seem to have any sincerity in Rajesh, and does not allow him to forgive Sheldon's behavior.

5. Conclusion

The "Politeness Principle" can provide a new perspective for the study of the text of the film and TV drama. And this article verifies the feasibility of analyzing and studying the text of film and TV drama from this point of view. For example, in this 8 big bang, people violate or follow the "Politeness Principle" and their "guidelines", which will produce different apology effects and create different characters. By analyzing these dialogues that violate the "Politeness Principle" and its "guidelines", we can help us understand the real thoughts of the characters and the author's intention. The Big Bang is mainly portrayed by some very low social skills "nerd" images, so there are many violating politeness principles in verbal humor. However in the daily communication, we are more of the principle of politeness in order to ensure the smooth progress of communication. It should be particularly prudent in the process of use if it violates the principle in order to achieve a particular effect. Once the hearer fails to understand the speaker's special intention, on the one hand, it will appear rude and rude, and leave a bad impression on the speaker. On the other hand, there may be some unexpected serious consequences such as misunderstanding and conflict.

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