

A Study on the Identity Construction of the Host in American Talk Show from the Perspective of Adaptation Theory—The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon as an Example

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Abstract: There is a close relationship between language and identity construction. This paper selects the February 17 phrase in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* as the corpus based on Verschueren's language adaptation theory, based on speech act theory and conversation analysis theory, and the author use quantitative and qualitative analysis methods discusses the different types of pragmatic identity constructed by the host and the strategies of identity construction. The major finding is the identity construction of the host Jimmy Fallon includes Commercial advertising promoter, Program guest introducer, Program flow controller and construct pragmatic identity adapts to the context, including physical context, social context and psychological context. The host has different pragmatic identity construction, which is the result of the game between various powers.

Keywords: Identity; Identity Construction; Adaptation Theory; Talk Show; Jimmy Fallon

1. Introduction

In daily communication, speakers construct different identities consciously and unconsciously. Different identities have different effects on the listener. Burke and Stets (2009) recognized the combination of this stable identity with the concept of negotiation and construction. In other words, identity is not completely dynamic. Therefore, identity has the duality of static component and dynamic structure. Talk show is a TV program with one or more guests as the object and the host has an interview dialogue with the guests. In American TV programs in previous years, talk shows were deeply loved by people because of their humor and lightness. In the talk show, there are two main roles: host and guest. The witty humor of the host and the witty response of the respondents deeply attracted the audience. This paper mainly analyzes Jimmy Fallon's dynamic identity construction through Jimmy Fallon's discourse analysis. At present, the domestic research on American talk shows mostly focuses on the research fields of foreign linguistics and applied linguistics taking American talk shows as cases. However, the research on the historical development, program evolution and program cultural function of American talk show is relatively limited. In particular, the research on programs has stagnated in the analysis of program characteristics and success reasons. These previous studies further proved the feasibility of this study. Based on the adaptation theory and these studies, this paper combines the construction of pragmatic identity with *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* to analyze the construction of the host's pragmatic identity.

2. Data Description

This paper selects the video of February 17, 2014 in the American talk show *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* as the data. Firstly, select the appropriate materials according to the research content. Specifically, because we study pragmatic identity construction, the data we choose include pragmatic identity types and language strategies for construction. Secondly, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* had two years of updated videos on iQiyi website, and each speech video was about 40 minutes. However, considering the authenticity of the data, due to the limitations of research time and space

and the ability of researchers, the author chose one of the programs to establish a small corpus. Third, the American talk show Jimmy tonight has bilingual subtitles. This paper carefully collects and forms a small data.

3. Results and Discussion

According to Verschueren (1999), any language choice is an adaptation to different contexts in communication. Starting from the adaptation to the material world, social world and spiritual world, this paper analyzes the pragmatic identity construction of host Jimmy Fallon. In table 4.2 below, the author summarizes the frequency of pragmatic identity structure adaptation to three worlds in the table 1:

Table 1 the occurring frequency of the adaptation of contextual correlates

Contextual Correlates	Number	Number Total	Frequency
Physical World	15	104	14%
Social World	48	104	46%
Mental World	51	104	40%

In the above table1, the adaptability to the physical world is 14%, which is the smallest. Because the communication process is closely related to the social identity of the speaker and the psychological process of the communicator, the adaptation rate to the social world is 46%, and the adaptation rate to the psychological world is 40%. The next part will explain in detail how the speaker adapts to the three worlds to construct pragmatic identity.

3.1 Adaptation to physical world

From the perspective of adaptation to the physical context, Miguel felon's different identity construction runs through different stages of the interaction process. Among them, the construction of host identity is mainly obvious at the beginning and end of the program. At the beginning of the program, Jimmy Fallon first introduces the guests of this program. The identity of the host runs through the interaction process with the audience, which is closely linked. The questions of the host gradually guide the thoughts of the audience. The audience is obviously through the whole interactive process. It can be clearly seen from the video that in the process of communication between the host and the guests, the supporters focus on listening to the audience's response most of the time, mostly focusing on eye communication and facial expression to respond to the guests. Commentators are mostly in communication.

3.2 Adaptation to social world

The social factors that require language adaptation are complex, and the adaptation process is more dynamic and subtle [14]. Social factors restrict people's language behavior, mainly including social norms and cultural norms.

(6) J: but I love what you do. You make the best ice cream out there, but you also do so much for charities. Uh and, you do stuff for fair trade. And our ice cream is made with all fair-trade ingredients, can you explain what fair trade is? Yeah. This is very cool.

JB: It's a program that guarantees a fair price for small farmers in developing countries for commodities, like vanilla, cocoa, coffee, Ben and jerry is now 100 % fair trade and 100 % non-gmo.

In example 6, identity is actually a process of mutual transformation, in this video, the guest's purpose is to promote their ice cream, but the host does not directly publicize, but self publicizes by asking questions about social knowledge, not as a salesman to achieve the publicity effect, and let the audience know more about "fair trade".

3.3 Adaptation to mental world

In talk shows, generally at the beginning, the psychological distance between the two sides of communication is relatively far The Tonight show starring Jimmy Fallon was more like a news program before it started, but in the guest interview part, there were more interactive exchanges between the two sides to understand the personal hot spots, creative stories or interesting things of the guests.

(7) J: It's in E. We'll do it in E, here we go, 1, 2, 3, boom, bang, bang, and then that. And we're like not planned out, no one planned any of this.

T: What was going on?

J: We didn't know what was going on. And we sang I saw her standing there. And I was screaming it. Yeah, Oooh, I was going for it. And then you're like, we finished that. Then you go, I'll do one of my songs and you started shake it off. I I don't know Tom Carney knows shake it off. And There is he knew shake it off, and he was like, shake it off, shake it off, shake it off. and then he was like, Oooh, hoo.

T: And I was going because the player's gonna play, and you go play, play, play, play.

It can be clearly seen that in the last part of the communication process, the psychological distance between Jimmy Fallon and the guests is narrowed. In communication, Jimmy Fallon dynamically adapted to the close and distant relationship and constructed a closer interpersonal relationship.

3.4 The motivation of pragmatic identity construction of Jimmy Fallon

In the concept of adaptation theory, generally, the final result of communicators' dynamic adaptation to various contextual relations is language use, and there are generally power relations in various contextual relations, such as psychosocial and so on. Therefore, the host of talk show constructs different pragmatic identities by changing discourse. From a certain point of view, this is also the inevitable result of the multiple power confrontation between the program operator and the sponsor. In addition, for the host, his dual identity of controlling the program process and introducing guests represents the achievement of high-power control of the organization. Because the operator of the program has set the specific process, direction and time arrangement in each node of the program in advance, the host has become a low-power person in such a contest between institutional powers. From this perspective, the program host is the agent of institutional power, and its different identities are constructed accordingly. the host has the high power of institutions and individuals, while the guests participating in the program have the low power of individuals, the host has a high voice in the program, thus guiding the change of program topics. Whether it's talking about a conversation, building a topic or adding a new conversation, the host has the control over the program that relatively suppresses others. The above can be proved in the corpus of this paper that the host holds the high power of the organization and uses language to grasp the trend of the whole topic.

4. Conclusion

Taking the talk show as the corpus source, this paper studies the types and functions of identity construction between host and guests in communication, and finally puts forward that individual identity construction in different contexts has dynamic adaptability. However, this research is still not deep and comprehensive enough, and the author will make a further study on it in the future.

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