

The Analysis of Pragmatic Strategies of Turn Claiming in Two Conversational Styles

Wanting Chen

Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics , Nanchang 330013 , Jiangxi China

Abstract: George Yule, a linguist, classified conversational styles as high involvement style and high considerateness style. Pragmatic strategies mean there are the various ways in which language users achieve their communicative goals. The turn-claiming is one of pragmatic strategies, which refers to the opportunities to be the speaker or the lines the speaker says. In this paper, we will explore turn-claiming pragmatic strategies of in two conversational styles.

Keywords: Conversational styles; High involvement style; High considerateness style; Pragmatic strategies; Turn-claiming

1. Introduction

Here we firstly distinguish two terms “discourse” and “conversation”. The concept of discourse was introduced and popularized by Wooffitt. In a way, the discourse can be understood as a text or a tool that people use to carry various meanings, data, information and knowledge. It can refer to both written and oral expressions (Wooffitt, 2006).^[2] A conversation is an informal exchange between two or more participants to achieve a communicative purpose including both daily and agenda-based communication. The conversational style is a particular way of engaging in a conversation (Yule, 2020:76).^[1] George Yule noted that people usually have two conversational styles - high involvement style and high considerateness style.

The phenomenon of participants get the floor to speak during a conversation is called “turn-claiming” (Edmondson, 1981).^[3] In this paper, the author will select various texts in different conversational styles separately to analyze what pragmatic strategies people use to get the floor from the speaker.

2. The Meaning of Two Conversational Styles

The high involvement style mean that people participate in a conversation will be very active, that speaking rate will be relatively fast, with almost no pausing between turns, and with some overlap or even completion of the other’s turn (Yule, 2000:76).^[1] It is a high volume and frequency of verbal information exchange, active verbal participation by both or several parties and a high rate of overlap.

It differs substantially from another style in which speakers use a slower rate, expect longer pauses between turns, do not overlap, and avoid interruption or completion of the other’s turn. This non-interrupting, non-imposing style has been called a high considerateness style (Yule, 2000:76). The conversation is characterized by a high volume of non-verbal information, a slow frequency, a tendency for both or several parties to express or participate in expressing their views in a non-verbal way, and a relatively low rate of overlap in the discourse.

The comparison revealed that the British, Americans, Germans and Swiss, for example, tend to use a high involvement style, while the Chinese, Japanese and Koreans tend to use a high considerateness style. There are reasons for this finding in terms of power distance, values and language thinking.

3. The Origin of Two Conversation Styles

3.1 Power Distance

Power distance refers to the extent to which publicly acceptable power is unevenly distributed among relationships, institutions and organizations (Hofstede, 1980).^[5] In terms of power distance, ancient China was a feudal society with a strict hierarchy which constructed social stratification through power relations between specific classes. The distinction between inferiority and superiority

was evident in China, for instance, in the ethical culture of the Chinese Confucian, which referred to.

“the Three Rules (ruler guides subject, father guides son and husband guides wife) and Five Constant Virtues of Confucianism (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity)”. The young cannot be disobedient in front of the elders. Americans feel that power can be challenged. On talk shows where they can make the president or other politicians as a punchline, and rappers like Eminem and Fat Joe blame Donald Trump in their lyrics with fury.

3.2 Values

People in the culture of high considerateness style promote the value of collectivist, while people in the culture of high involvement style promote individualist values. Japan is a collectivist country. Due to geographical factors of natural disasters, the Japanese are in awe of nature and are aware of their limitations and vulnerability as individuals, and thus a strong sense of belonging to the group and the nation has naturally developed in their minds as they survive and thrive in this environment. For a long period, they have lived within groups and pursue collectivism. One of the characteristics of European and American culture is that they does not sympathize with the weak and emphasizes individualism. “A country does not have permanent friends, only permanent interests.” This is a quote from British Prime Minister Palmerston in the nineteenth century, which became the foundation of British diplomacy. It is also the one of reasons for Brexit.

Bond and Smith (1996)^[6] report that conformity is higher in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures. Members of individualistic cultures, for example, are more affect-oriented based their behavior on their feelings (Frymier, Klopf, & Ishii, 1990)^[7] and more inclined to talk (Gaetz, Klopf, & Ishii, 1990)^[8] than are members of collectivistic cultures. Members of individualistic cultures are more motivated to communicate interpersonally to achieve the phenomenon of harmony, pleasure, and inclusion than members of collectivistic cultures (Fernandez-Collado, Rubin, & Hernandez Sampieri, 1991)^[9]. Members of collectivistic cultures pay more attention to others' behavior and more attention to others' status characteristics than members of individualistic cultures (Gudykunst, Gao, Nishida, Nadamitsu, & Sakai, 1992).^[10]

3.3 The Mode of Language Thinking

The thinking mode of China is mainly “inductive”, whereas the thinking mode of the western is mainly “deductive” (Lian Shuneng, 2014).^[11] Chinese people tend to summarize from the experiences of others, while westerners focus on the reasoning process at each step. This shows that the thinking mode of China determines that Chinese people adopt a high considerateness style to communicate, and they listen carefully to what others are saying and do not interrupt them. The thinking mode of westerners dictates that they adopt a high involvement style of conversation. They will constantly test their suspicions and assumptions on the other person. Therefore, the speaker will give his or her floor to the other person, seeking to confirm that the other person's thinking follows their own.

4. The Pragmatic Strategies of Turn-claiming in Two Conversational Styles

The high considerateness style conveys information through the non-verbal behavior. The high involvement style, on the contrary, refers to a culture that relies on the act of language and focuses on the usage of language as a vehicle for explicit expression during the exchange of information. We will analyze the pragmatic strategies of turn-claiming in two conversational styles.

4.1 The Pragmatic Strategies of Turn-claiming in High Considerateness Style

Generally speaking, due to the dominance of collectivist values, there is a tendency to behave in a non-verbal way to imply his or her intention to take the turn in the culture of a high considerateness style. It will remind the speaker that the listener want to get the floor.

4.1.1 Facial Expression

The listener is blinking, frowning, chinning up, keeping lips tight and keeping silent with corner of the mouth down or the listener is rolling his or her eyes and looking away indicates that the listener is not paying attention to what the speaker is saying and is bored by the content.

4.1.2 Kinesics

People in high considerateness style can raise his or her hand to express your opinion in formal situations such as classes and meetings. People can shrug his or her shoulders, stretch out and fidget with your clothes if he or she disagrees with the other person's point of view and want them to stop talking.

4.2 The Pragmatic Strategies of Turn-claiming in High Involvement Style

Individualistic values are dominant in the culture of a high involvement style, there is a tendency to behave in a verbal way to get the floor. It is often the case that he or she does not expect the speaker to give the floor and usually interrupt others with obvious and

direct verbal behaviour.

4.2.1 Additional Information

The listener can add information at the end of a sentence that the speaker has not finished but is about to finish, which may be relevant to what the speaker is going to say next.

Karen: Where is the cat? In the bedroom or the drawing room?

Mike: Or in the kitchen?

4.2.2 Adjacency pairs

These automatic sequences are called adjacency pairs. They always consist of a first part and a second part, produced by different speakers (Yule, 2000).

Cindy: How are you?

Rose: I'm fine, thank you.

4.2.3 Preference Structure

If the first part of what the speaker says is a request or an offer, it usually means that the second part is expected to be an acceptance. Preference structure divides second parts into preferred and dispreferred social acts. The preferred is the structurally expected next act and the dispreferred is the structurally unexpected next act (Yule, 2000).

Waiter: Would you like some coffee?

Customer: Yes, please. (Preferred) / No, thanks. (Dispreferred)

5. Conclusion

The paper mainly explored two conversational styles, pragmatic strategies and turn-claiming. Power distance, values and the mode of language thinking cause people in different countries using different conversation styles. People in the culture of different conversational styles will make different pragmatic strategies of the turn-taking. In a high consideration style, people prefer to adopt kinesics and facial expression. However, in a high involvement style, people will be more willing to use additional information, adjacency pairs and preference structure directly. Hope this article will be useful for linguistic research and intercultural communication!

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