

Review Article

## The Study on Linguistic Humor of Hosts of *Happy Camp* in the Perspective of Cooperative Principle

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**Abstract:** *Happy Camp* has become one of the most popular entertainment programs in China now, which owes to the linguistic humor of the hosts to a large extent. Cooperative Principle is a set of maxims for conversation. If people obey these maxims when they have a talk, the conversation will be successful. However, if they violate these maxims on some occasions, it would result in linguistic humor. This paper is going to analyze the linguistic humor of the hosts of *Happy Camp* in the perspective of Cooperative Principle in the hope of having implication for hosts of other entertainment programs.

**Keywords:** Cooperative Principle; *Happy Camp*; Hosts; Linguistic Humor.

### INTRODUCTION

*Happy Camp*, started in 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1997 by Hunan TV station, has become one of the most popular entertainment programs in China now. During 21 years, it has experienced adjustments to the form and has injected fresh blood into its host team which refers to that in 2006, its host team was renewed and was composed of five people who are JiongHe, NaXie, WeijiaLi, XinWu and HaitaoDu, which is the foundation of its popularity. It emphasizes the entertainment and tries to exhibit the linguistic characteristics of relaxing and humorous, which is the prime factor of its popularity [1]. Five hosts have themselves linguistic characteristics, but one of the common linguistic characteristics is humor.

Cooperative Principle is a set of maxims for conversation. If talks are in line with these maxims, the conversation will be successful. However, in real context of communication, some people deliberately violate these maxims in order to create the humor instead of disturbing the conversation [2]. This paper does analysis of the hosts' linguistic humor of *Happy Camp* in the perspective of violating the Cooperative Principle in order to have implication for hosts of other entertainment programs.

### Cooperative Principle

Cooperative principle is proposed by Grice, a famous American philosopher, in his famous work "*Logic and Conversation*" in 1975, which has received extensive attention and has been widely acknowledged since its publication. Grice suggested that there is a set of over-arching assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. These arise, it seems, from basic rational considerations and may be formulated as guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to further cooperative ends [3]. Grice thought that the conversation usually has an explicit purpose or continues in an acceptable direction by the people involved. He proposed that the speaker should obey some rules and make cooperation if they want to have a talk successfully. If not, the conversation will be failed and they can't convey themselves ideas successfully which will result in misunderstanding or confusion of the others [4]. These rules are called Cooperative Principle. Cooperative Principle can be comprehended as the following: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." [5]. It includes four maxims: the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relevance and the maxim of manner [4].

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The Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically: a) Do not say what you believe to be false. b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The Maxim of Quantity: a) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange. b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The Maxim of Relation: Make your contributions relevant. It means that in a dialogue, the information would be given to make contribution relevant to the exchange.

The Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous: a) Avoid obscurity of expression. b) Avoid ambiguity. c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). d) Be orderly.

If daily conversations are in line with these four maxims, they would be effective and successful.

### **The Violation of Cooperative Principle of Hosts' Utterances of *Happy Camp***

The use of terms such as "principle" and "maxim" does not mean that the Cooperative Principle and its maxims will be followed by everybody all the time. In some contexts, participants violate these maxims deliberately. However, this does not influence the normal process of the conversation. Instead, it leads to the humor linguistic result. As an entertaining TV program, the hosts play an irreplaceable role on maintaining the relaxing and pleasant environment on the spot. How do they attain this goal? The prime factor is their linguistic humor [6, 7]. Therefore, they are used to violating the maxims of the Cooperative Principle to attain this goal. This part does analysis of the linguistic humor of hosts of *Happy Camp* from the perspective of violation of Cooperative Principle.

### **The Violation of the Maxim of Quality**

(1) NaXie: The number of audience who watch our program has exceeded 2 billion. JiongHe: One day Na Xie will invite the aliens to watch our program.

These two sentences all violate the maxim of quality. *Happy Camp* is an entertainment program in China which means that the majority of its audiences are Chinese. The populations in China are about 1.39 billion, how can audiences of the program reach 2.2 billion? So it is wrong. However, Jiong He pretended not to notice the false and answered that "One day Na Xie will invite the aliens to watch our program". Why does Jiong He say this sentence knowing that this can't come true? The purpose is to tell the audiences indirectly that the words said by Na Xie are wrong and creates a pleasant environment.

(2) Questioner: Mr. He, if you can grow 20 centimeters at the cost of half your intelligence, will you agree?

Na Xie: That's to say, you will become Haitao if you grow 20 centimeters.

Jiong He: I will agree because I think Haitao is good.

Na Xie: You are not meant to grow tall because your intelligence quotient is too high.

Jiong He: In my view, growing tall is very important to me because I haven't other disadvantages. This conversation is extracted from the program broadcasted on 30<sup>th</sup>, April, 2016. One person asked Jiong He if he would like to be taller at the expense of his intelligence. Jiong He's answer violates the maxim of quality apparently, because nobody is perfect. However, his answer indicates his confidence and makes humor effect.

### **The Violation of the Maxim of Quantity**

(1) (Before debate competition)

Weijia Li: Mr. He has ever been the best debater, so this time you might.....

Jiong He: No, no, just the best undergraduate debater in Beijing.

This conversation is extracted from the program broadcasted on 5<sup>th</sup>, January, 2019. After the beginning of the competition, Weijia Li introduced the honorary title of Jiong He. However, Jiong He clarified that he is just the best debater among undergraduates in Beijing, which violates the maxim of quantity because his answer is not required for the current purposes of the exchange.

(2) Jiong He: This is "Ma Lanshan Media Company". After several years' operation, our company will form a group called "Baiyi Young".

Xiena: Humph, we are the really "Baiyi Young".

Jiong He: The fact is that only you have the right to say that word.

Xiena: Why?

Jiong He: Because you are the most important artist in our company.

Xiena: If you are right, why does YuchangPeng (the guest) look at me with derision?

Jiong He: Who?  
YuchangPeng : I don't.  
Jiong He: Who? YuchangPeng ?

Xiena: When you said that our company pays the most attention to me, he looked at me with derision. He definitely wants to say what company it is.

Jiong He: No, he doesn't think that our company has any problems. He just thinks that the standard to choose people has problems.

This dialogue is selected from the program broadcasted at 22th, December, 2018. In this dialogue, if Jiong He does not say the last sentence, people will think of that he is praising Na Xie. However, after saying the last sentence, people know that he is satirizing Na Xie, which violates the maxim of quantity, but makes a humorous effect.

### **The Violation of the Maxim of Relation**

(1) (When introducing the judges of competition)

Jiong He: Ok, the person in the middle is also a director.

Xiena: Was he the winner of the competition of choosing the ugliest photo which was held during the New

Year?

Weijia Li: Is he also the good-looking person?

Jiong He: Because there are two different... no, don't say that. He is the judge now.

Xiena: Oh, I'm sorry, sorry.

In this dialogue, Jiong He's answer has nothing to do with the questions asked by Na Xie and Weijia Li, which violates the maxim of Relation, but people all know that he is warning Na Xie and Weijia Li of the bad results of their questions which may be hurt the director and result in the low score of their team, the humorous effects are made immediately.

(2) (The dancing competition will begin soon, and Jiong He worries members' dancing ability very much)

Jiong He: Dongjun Han (the guest), You are no problem, right?

Dongjun Han: I just worry that my clothes or trouser might crack.

This dialogue is extracted from the program broadcasted at 5<sup>th</sup>, January, 2019. After the beginning of the dancing competition, Jiong He worried his team members' capability of dancing, so he asked them about that. Dongjun Han's answer had nothing to do with the question asked by Jiong He apparently, which violates the maxim of relevance. However, the audiences who watch previous program, in which Dongjun Han tore his pants when he was dancing, will know that his answer is humor.

### **The Violation of the Maxim of Manner**

(1) Yilun Sheng (the guest): Hello, everybody, my name is Yilun Sheng. I am very happy to come here again.

Xiena: You should come out in the end, because it can't be left one round.

Yilun Sheng: Every time it is left one round when I come.

This dialogue is selected from the program broadcasted at 22<sup>th</sup>, December, 2018. The pronunciation of the guest name Yilun Sheng is as same as that of the phrase "sheng yilun" in Chinese, which is likely to make ambiguity when they exist in the dialogue at the same time. When the guest Yilun Sheng made self-introduction, the host Na Xie took this opportunity to make humor effect through violating the rule of avoiding ambiguity in the maxim of manner.

(2) Jiong He: Haitao, when you see Yuanchang Zheng's (the guest) eyes, would you think them beautiful?

Haitao: Yes, but do you know? I think his eyes beautiful from my heart. But, There are some gossips which I don't want to say, but today you are all here, I must to say but those are not my words.

Xiena: Quickly!

Wuxin: Dear me! How wordy you are!

Jiong He: What do you want to say?

Haitao: You know, I can't believe what they say. It is impossible. So perfect! I really don't believe it. They say you had an operation on your eyes.

In this dialogue, Haitao just want to ask Yuanchang Zheng if his eyes have been fixed, but he says in a rigmarole way. He firstly said that it is not his words but the gossip, then expressed the surprise for several times, and glorified that Yuanchang Zheng's eyes are beautiful, lastly asked the question, which obeys the politeness principle well, but at the same time, violates the rule of being brief and being orderly in the maxim of manner.

(3) Jiong He: Today the topic is called "Love China". ....is very important. Why? Haitao, tell them.

Haitao: Since reform and opening-up, since reform and opening-up, people have been living comfortable life, and are happy everyday. Meanwhile, they can watch our program. That is happiness. That is love to China.

Jiong He: I think this topic is very great, but after Haitao's interpretation, it becomes very plain. In this dialogue, the words said by Haitao are verbose and obscure which violates the rule of avoiding obscurity of expression and being brief in the maxim of manner. But at the same time, the pleasant atmosphere is created.

## CONCLUSION

Through analyzing the examples of hosts' linguistic humor of *Happy Camp* which violates Cooperative Principle, we can conclude that violating Cooperative Principle masterly in some cases can contribute to the linguistic humor. The hosts of *Happy Camp* make use of this method flexibly and make the program become one of the most popular entertainment programs in China which have implication for the host of other entertainment programs. Due to the limitation of time, this paper has many gaps which would be completed in the future studies.

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