

Analysis of Conversation Meaning from the Perspective of Cooperation Principle: An Example of Interviewing Athletes in Previous Olympic Games

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Abstract: Interviews with athletes of various events show the most real emotions and states of athletes after the games. In recent years, the questions asked by domestic media reporters interviewing athletes have caused a lot of controversies and dissatisfaction. Taking the principle of pragmatics cooperation as the entry point, this paper takes the text of live interviews with athletes by Olympic media reporters as the corpus, analyzes the questioning style, discourse generation and discourse effect of live media interviews, and then gives insights into the questioning skills that need to be mastered in live interviews of sports events.

Keywords: Pragmatics; the Cooperative Principle; Athlete Interviews.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the core topics of pragmatics research, the cooperation principle was first proposed by Grice in 1967. According to Grice, in the process of verbal communication, in order to achieve a specific communicative purpose, there is a tacit agreement between the speaker and the listener that enables the communication to proceed smoothly, and both parties should follow certain rules, which he called the cooperation principle. Grice (1975) divided the CP into four guidelines: quality, quantity, manner, and relevance (Grice, 1975).

- 1. The Maxim of Quality:** The speaker should be sincere and should say what is true; the speaker should not say anything that lacks evidence; the speaker should not say anything that he or she knows to be false.
- 2. The Maxim of Quantity:** In conversation, the speaker should provide enough information as required, and the information provided should match the amount of information required, not too much, not too little.
- 3. The Maxim of Manner:** The speaker's speech should be short and orderly, to avoid obscurity, ambiguity and vagueness.
- 4. The Maxim of Relation:** The speaker should say something relevant to the content of the previous conversation, not to say something irrelevant to the content of the conversation.

Grice points out that in order to make communication and exchange go smoothly, both sides of the verbal communication will observe the principle of cooperation in the process of communication. In fact, however, people do not always strictly adhere to the principles of cooperation, and they occasionally violate some of these four guidelines. Although, in general, conversational participants may adhere to the cooperative principles, the guidelines may be violated for a variety of reasons. When either of the two communicators deliberately violates the cooperative guidelines, the corresponding conversational implications arise. In Grice's theory of cooperative principles, he tries to apply scientific theoretical grounds to rationalize the implicit meaning of the discourse expressed by the speaker to the listener. Undoubtedly, dialogue becomes the main object of his study. Through an in-depth analysis of dialogue, we can better interpret the deeper meaning of the speaker beyond the literal meaning, understand the speaker's truest intention and purpose of speech, and maintain harmonious and good interpersonal relationships.

In large sporting events like the Olympic Games, live interviews are conducted immediately after the athletes have competed, and they are the interviews that record their most realistic state after the games, the most exciting moments, with joy, tears, and life lessons. After each competition interview, there are many

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netizens trolling journalists' interview questions, and there are even sarcastic articles about sports journalists. Through the analysis of journalists' live interviews in major sports events, we can find out the crux of the problems and provide insights for media questions.

This article takes the texts of journalists' on-site interviews of Olympic Games as the research object, and takes the principle of pragmatics cooperation as the entry point to explore the on-site interviews of journalists in sports events. It analyzes whether the questions asked by the journalists and the answers given by the interviewed athletes are in line with the pragmatic principle, and summarizes the questioning techniques and methods that need to be paid attention to in live interviews in sports events.

Analysis of athlete interview profiles

This paper randomly selects the textual materials of on-site interviews conducted by journalists with athletes at the Olympic Games, with a total of 40 times and 18,923 words. Among them, 25 on-site interviews by Chinese journalists, totaling 11,647 words, and 15 on-site interviews by foreign journalists, totaling 7,276 words. Among the 25 randomly selected on-site interviews with Chinese journalists, from the viewpoint of single interview length, 1 minute 01 seconds-1 minute 30 seconds accounted for the largest proportion, 10 times, accounting for 40%; among the 15 randomly selected on-site interviews with foreign journalists, from the viewpoint of single interview length, 1 minute 31 seconds-2 minutes and 2 minutes 31 seconds -3 minutes accounted for the largest proportion, a total of 8 times, accounting for 53% of the proportion.

1. Tokyo Olympics: diving men's three-meter board champion Xie Siyi interview after receiving the prize

Reporter: "I see when you award, not yet reported your name, you have one foot on the podium, the kind of stand on top of the world of this urgent mood is not particularly strong."

Xie Siyi: "Uh, I thought he would say this name continuously, I did not expect to interrupt the time of reporting, the feeling is... not feel robbed, that is, the time of reporting some slow bar may."

Reporter: "I know you are particularly excited, just want to hurry to taste this men's springboard championship."

Xie Siyi: "Yes, on also also worked hard for a long time, and then every time a little short, today finally returned me a big bar."

Reporter: "Before the game because only one Chinese player left to participate in the final, they have no pressure? Nervous about it?"

Xie Siyi: "Well, there is, suddenly feel a little like a double feeling, is the feeling suddenly no longer, but also have to adjust it, even if you double jump or single jump, but also to put their own jump good. I just want to try to put down the baggage, according to the team leader said it."

2. Beijing 2022: Interview with Eileen Gu after game

Q: One thing we've been trying to clarify -- are you still a US citizen or how's that work?

A: I've always been super outspoken in my gratitude to the US and to the US team as well. They have been nothing but supportive to me, and so for that I'm forever grateful. And same to the Chinese team. They have been, you know, so, so supportive of me. And so in that sense, I feel like sport is really a way that we can unite people. It's something that doesn't have to be related to nationality. It's not something that can be used to divide people. We're all out here together, pushing the human limit. When the other two athletes were going through their own emotions at the end, I really went over to them and I made it clear that I won because of them, that because they had inspired me so much, they had made me the skier that I was. So I kind of wanted to express my gratitude to them as well. We're all out here doing this together. We're pushing the sport together, especially women's skiing.

Q: We understand that you're trying to unite people through sports, which is a great thing. But you were not clear about if you still have your American citizenship and if you live in the US or in China from now on.

A: So I grew up spending 25% to 30% of every year in China. I mean, as you guys all know now from me answering questions, I'm fluent in Mandarin and English. I'm fluent culturally in both. I have family coming from Beijing. My mom grew up in Beijing. Actually I was just saying, you can see that, there's like a tower here that you can see from the top, of course, and I can also see it from my house in Beijing, so I really felt like there was a sense of coming home, eating food that my grandma makes for me at home here in the Olympic Village. So I definitely feel as though, I am just as American as I am Chinese, I'm American when I'm in the US and I'm Chinese when I'm in China. And I've been very outspoken about my gratitude to both the US and China for making me the person who I am. I don't feel as though I'm, you know, taking advantage of one or the other because both have actually been incredibly supportive of me and continue to be supportive of me because they understand that my mission is to use sport as a force for unity, to use it as a form to foster interconnection between countries, and not use it as a divisive force. So that benefits everyone, and if you disagree with that, then I feel like that's someone else problem.

Q: You've spoken very eloquently about trying to keep everyone from China and the US happy. I was wondering how hard is it for you to balance those two things, particularly when you get criticism on social media, particularly in America, for your performance?

A : Absolutely. Thank you for that question. I think that -- here's the thing. I'm not trying to keep anyone happy. I'm an 18-year-old girl out here living my best life. Like,

I'm having a great time, you know. It doesn't really matter if other people are happy or not because I feel as though I am doing my best, I'm enjoying the entire process, and I'm using my voice to create as much positive change as I can for the voices who will listen to me in an area that is personal and relevant to myself. So I know that I have a good heart. And I know that my reasons for making the decisions I do are -- are based on a greater common interest and something that I feel like is for the greater good. And so if other people don't really believe that that's where I'm coming from, then that just reflects that they do not have the empathy to empathize with a good heart, perhaps because they don't share the same kind of morals that I do. And in that sense, I'm not going to waste my time trying to placate people who are, one, uneducated, and two, probably are never going to experience the kind of joy and gratitude and just love that I have the great fortune to experience on a daily basis. So yeah, if people don't believe me and if people don't like me, then that's their loss. They're never going to win the Olympics, so...

The interview length of Chinese journalists is 2 minutes and 57 seconds, and that of foreign journalists is 3 minutes and 53 seconds. In terms of interview length, foreign journalists generally had longer single interviews than Chinese journalists by 30 seconds to 1 minute, and there were even interviews that lasted nearly 4 minutes, which did not occur in Chinese journalists. Foreign athletes are more active and willing to express themselves in interviews, which is because foreign journalists ask more questions and have more detailed content than Chinese journalists, so the interviews have better communication effects.

Interviewing is a communication process in which information flows from the reporter to the interviewee and from the interviewee back to the reporter, forming a cycle. The smoother the communication of information, the more successful the interview will be. According to the theory of turn of phrase proposed by American sociologist Harvey Sacks and others, the turn of phrase is the basic structural unit of daily conversation, which exists in many social communication activities. In a certain conversation structure, the speaker's words are regarded as a turn of phrase from the beginning to the end, and the turn of phrase ends as soon as the speaker changes. Thus, a live interview consists of a series of turn-taking between the reporter's questions and the interviewee's answers.

The former is the outer shell of the structure, which is an external bond, also called surface bond; the latter is the substance of the structure, which can be regarded as the deep bond in the structure of the conversation. Both are relatively independent and intrinsically related in the conversation structure, and they also have relationships with other components. Turn-taking and topic-taking act on the conversational

structure and are the dynamics of change and development of the conversation.

Among the 25 groups of Chinese journalists randomly selected for on-site interviews, there were 106 topics and 255 turns for Chinese journalists. The largest proportion of Chinese journalists occupying the turns of a single topic is that each topic is completed by 2 turns, 71.4%; in the 15 groups of randomly selected foreign journalists on-site interviews, a total of 81 topics, 183 turns, a single topic occupying the largest proportion of rounds is also completed by 2 turns of each topic, 77.3%. The total number of topics occupied by Chinese journalists in a single interview is 5, accounting for 23.3%; the total number of topics occupied by foreign journalists in a single interview is also 5, accounting for 47.1%. This indicates that within the limited on-site interview time, both Chinese and foreign journalists were restricted to ask questions on 5 topics per interview, with the most topics for a single interview being 6 for Chinese journalists and 8 for foreign journalists. This means that under the same conditions, foreign journalists are more comprehensive in their questions.

In the randomly selected interviews, there were 255 turns of Chinese journalists' on-site interviews, of which 141 were initiated by journalists, accounting for 55.3% of the total turns; 114 were initiated by athletes, accounting for 44.7% of the total turns; 183 were initiated by foreign journalists, of which 94 were initiated by journalists, accounting for 51.4% of the total turns; 89 were initiated by athletes, accounting for 48.6% of the total turns. The highest number of single interview turns in China was 6-10, accounting for 36.7% of the total turns: the highest number of foreign interviews was 11-15, accounting for 35.3% of the total turns.

From the perspective of the individual turn-taking time, the Chinese live interviews accounted for the largest proportion of the 0-5 second turn-taking time, with 117 times, accounting for 39.7%; foreign live interviews also accounted for the largest proportion of the 0-5 second turn-taking time, with 69 times, accounting for 29.9%. Longitudinally, 11 seconds-15 seconds to 31 seconds-35 seconds in this interval, foreign countries accounted for a higher proportion than China's.

Although both Chinese and foreign journalists took up more words in the interview, in terms of the length of the interview and the length of the single turn, foreign athletes' answers took up most of the time in the interview and the single turn was longer than that of Chinese athletes.

Analysis of interview questioning techniques under the Cooperative Principle

In the randomly selected interviews, of the 255 rounds interviewed by Chinese journalists on site, 243 turns met the Cooperative Principle, accounting for 95.3% of the total number of turns; 12 turns did not meet

the Cooperative Principle, accounting for 4.7%. Among the 141 turns of interviews with journalists, 69 were in line with the Cooperative Principle, of which only one case was in line with both the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner, accounting for 0.7%. Among the 141 turns of questions asked by journalists, 3 did not comply with the Cooperative Principle, accounting for 2.1%; among them, 2 did not comply with the Maxim of Relation, i.e., the questions were not relevant to the subject of the interview, accounting for 1.4%; 1 did not comply with the Maxim of Manner, i.e., the questions were ambiguous, accounting for 0.7%. Of the 114 turns answered by the athletes, 6 cases (5.3%) did not meet the Maxim of Relation of the Cooperative Principle, i.e., the answer was not what was asked.

3. Rio Olympics: Chinese women's volleyball team won the championship Yan Ni's post-match interview

Reporter: "I always say that you are a late bloomer."

Yan Ni: "Yes the outside world is commenting on me like that."

This is against the way guidelines in the Cooperative Principle, the reporter used the idiom easy to produce ambiguity.

The reporter's question used the word "late", refers to the person who can take on important responsibilities after a long period of exercise, so the achievement is late. Also used as a comforting word for people who have been unmotivated for a long time. Putting this idiom into the context of the interview with volleyball player Yan Ni, it has two meanings: one is praise, after a long period of refinement, finally become a great weapon, praise Yan Ni to play the ball well; the second layer is comforting and derogatory.

4. Rio Olympics: Diving men's double 10m platform finalist Chen Aisen's post-competition interview

Reporter: "One last question, is it cool on the 10m platform today? And do you feel good on it?"

Chen Aisen: "It feels very cool, the feeling of the wind blowing around, but the game is actually okay when the mind is quiet."

The reporter's question violates the Cooperative Principle in the Maxim of Relation, the question and the subject of the interview is not relevant. How much does standing on the ten-meter platform cool or not cool have to do with the athlete winning the championship? Here I think the question can be designed as follows: Today the wind is very strong, does this make it more difficult for you to do the movement? What is the impact on your state of mind when preparing for the jump?

5. Rio Olympics: Chinese women's volleyball team won the championship Zhu Ting's post-match interview

Reporter: "Of course! In fact, you see, I haven't interviewed you since the Olympics because I know you are the main scoring point of the Chinese women's volleyball team, and I know you are under a lot of pressure."

Zhu Ting: "Of course you know that I don't like interviews very much, so you may not call me much either. Because I think I may have a little pressure to interview during the game, so I will choose to interview after the game."

What the reporter actually wanted to ask was how Zhu Ting played so well after being under a lot of pressure? How to relieve the pressure? Is the spirit of women's volleyball supporting her? However, Zhu Ting misunderstood the reporter's expression and focused her answer on whether she liked the interview or not. The reporter's question violated the Maxim of Manner in the Cooperation Principle, and the expression was not clear, which led to ambiguity and made Zhu Ting misunderstand and answer biased. In addition, Zhu Ting's answer violated the Maxim of Relation in the Cooperative Principle.

6. Rio Olympics Chinese women's volleyball team won the championship Lang Ping post-game interview

Reporter: "OK, last question, in 1981, you and the Chinese women's volleyball team started in Japan, with the spirit of women's volleyball. I wonder if you will give yourself a successful conclusion to the Tokyo Olympics in 2020?"

Lang Ping: "I think whether I am here or not, the spirit of Chinese women's volleyball needs to be passed on from generation to generation."

Here Lang Ping's answer obviously violates the Maxim of Relation in the Cooperative Principle, and the answer is not what is asked. The reporter wanted to know from this question whether Lang Ping would still coach Chinese women's volleyball in 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but Lang Ping heard the reporter's intention and chose not to answer for "no comment" or for reasons that are not yet determined.

CONCLUSION

On-site reporters of large sports events are all on-camera reporters, and the improvised oral organization and language expression ability of on-camera reporters directly affect the quality of on-site interviews and communication effects. Through the linguistic expressions of journalists' on-site interviews, athletes and spectators can clearly feel the business quality and cultural cultivation of journalists. Through the preliminary analysis of Chinese and foreign journalists sports major events live interview word round conversion situation, pragmatics principle situation, the

causes of sports journalists interview problems are roughly the following points.

First, the influence of psychological state. The organization of improvised speech is transient, and the reporter's mental state, language expression ability and familiarity with the interviewee are the main factors affecting the organization of improvised speech. As large events are often broadcasted live, journalists will inevitably have a nervous state of mind, which will affect the language expression and lead to incoherence, stuttering and verbosity. The psychological state is related to the reporter's own experience and familiarity with the interview environment. Journalists can effectively improve the level of questioning and communication effect through the experience accumulated by participating in the competition coverage several times. In addition, journalists should be familiar with and confirm the range of discourse for interviews and questions in advance. The range of discourse is also called the field of speech, where the field of speech refers to the topic and environment of the interview. Journalists often give interviews to athletes in the stadium, and sometimes they can only meet them in the mixed interview area.

The mixed interview area is the first-time reporters interview athletes after the game, but also the athletes must pass through the area before leaving the field, each interview in the mixed area is limited to one minute, this is often a major media reporters must compete. Here the players just out of the field or podium complex feelings called out, then the reporter a question in line with the taste of the athletes, may attract the attention of the athletes. But there are also cases where athletes do not want to be interviewed. Mixed area is often very crowded, noise, time is short, which determines the language of the reporter's questions must be logical and clear, short and concise, focused, in the shortest possible time to capture the hearts of athletes.

Second, the preparation before the interview. Live interviews belong to the first site of the news broadcast, journalists on the spot often do not have enough preparation time, so you must be familiar with the interviewee in the day before the interview or longer, to prepare for the interview. This is the key to determining the topic and direction of the interview. Preparation for an interview in a sporting event includes: the athlete's performance on the spot, historical results, background, game habits, any injuries or illnesses, physical condition before the game, etc.; the athlete's project, technical moves, tactical preparation, and referee scoring standards; and the specific event of the interview. Adequate preparation can effectively avoid nervousness and make the reporter have something to say, so that he can better control the round of words in the interview; ask more detailed questions to make the athletes change from "must say" to "want to say", so as to enrich the interview content and achieve This will enrich the

content of the interview and achieve a good communication effect. Through the case study, the following are the insights of interviewing techniques in the event from the perspective of pragmatics.

(1) Focus on technical and other professional issues

The key to effective questioning is to set the focus of the discourse. The discourse focus refers to the key information that the speaker emphasizes in his or her utterance, i.e., the athlete being interviewed and the topics surrounding the athlete. The reporter should emphasize the focus part of the question in the field, i.e., he or she wants the athlete's answer to be more focused.

In the context of a live sports interview, the focus of effective questioning is on the athlete, so the questions should first be set in line with the athlete's interests, converting the consideration of question setting from what the reporter wants to ask to what kind of questions the athlete likes? What kind of questions would athletes like to answer? Through the above analysis, I found that athletes generally like the reporter questions are technical, win-lose nodes, feelings three types of questions.

Technical questions are the core of the athletes' game, and the results of years of training will raise the interest of the athletes and make them talk about it, and technical questions are both professional and what the audience, "amateurs", want to know. The turning point in the game that led to victory or defeat and the factors that led to it are also key points that the athlete wants to talk about, which is crucial and impressive for the athlete. Questions about feelings are asked almost every time in sports interviews, and athletes are often emotional after the game and definitely have something they want to express.

(2) Asking questions to avoid ambiguity and effectively confirm the focus of discourse

In the view of the discourse principle, the setting of effective questioning often follows two major discourse principles. The principle of cooperation requires journalists to ask questions objectively and fairly, without personal emotions, and to express language concisely and accurately, avoiding ambiguity. The expression "avoiding ambiguity" discussed here is the reporter's perspective, but the effect of "avoiding ambiguity" is seen from the perspective of the athlete's understanding of the discourse.

Athletes' confirmation of the focus of discourse information determines their understanding of the discourse's pragmatic presuppositions. In the post-match interview with Zhu Ting, the reporter asked, "I haven't interviewed you since the Olympics because I know you are the main scoring point of the Chinese women's volleyball team and I know you are under a lot of pressure". The discursive presupposition of this particular statement changes as Zhu Ting's

understanding of the focus of the message changes. Zhu's response was "Of course you know that I don't like interviews very much, so you may not call me much. Because I think it might be a little bit stressful for me to interview during the game, so I will choose to interview after the game." This is a clear misunderstanding of the focus position. The focus of the reporter's words was "you are under a lot of pressure", while the focus of Zhu Ting's words was "there has been no interview", so Zhu Ting answered around "why don't reporters interview me and when do I like to interview?" Obviously this is not effective questioning. Under the principle of cooperation, questions should be set according to the focus of information identified by the athlete, otherwise, the athlete's answer will violate the principle of cooperation.

By starting with the cooperative principle, event interviews and communication will be smoother and more effective. I believe that athletes will no longer say "no" to journalists, and that journalists will build bridges between sports, athletes and audiences to achieve better communication results.

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