

The Face Preservation Function of Moderator Speech Behavior

Chen Jingwei

School of Materials and Metallurgy, Inner Mongolia University of Science & Technology, Baotou, China
m13754039259@163.com

Abstract: *In TV programs, hosts often follow the principles of cooperation and politeness, using two major direct face strategies of address and feedback speech and three major indirect face strategies of verbal interruption, verbal humor, and verbal exaggeration to "save the day" and maintain the face of the guests, viewers and themselves, so that the speaker and the addressee can talk to each other in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. The moderator relies on his own empathy, active listening, timely feedback, affirmation and enhancement of the speaker's status, to achieve efficient communication, with superb emergency response ability, timely interruptions, mastery of the discourse initiative, to create a friendly scene. The paper briefly analyzes the direct and indirect face strategies of the moderator's speech acts, the conditions for the formation of the face strategies of the moderator's speech acts, summarizes the whole paper and gives an outlook on the future research on the face-maintaining function of the moderator's speech acts.*

Keywords: *Moderator; Speech behavior; Face-saving strategies*

1. Introduction

The host is crucial to a TV talk show, playing the role of balancing the relationship between words, regulating the atmosphere and promoting the program process. Moderated speech acts are the speech activities of a moderator in a particular medium of communication.

2. The Direct Face Strategy Of the Moderator's Speech Act

Language is the first and most basic means of information transfer in human society, with information transfer function, thinking function and interpersonal interaction function. The interpersonal interaction function of language refers to the use of language for contact and interaction, and interaction includes two aspects. One is that the speaker expresses his or her feelings, attitudes, and intentions in the discourse, and on the other hand, these in turn exert an influence on the addressee, receiving the corresponding verbal or operational feedback, thus achieving a certain practical effect. ^[1]Speech communication is an activity carried out between people to achieve their respective purposes, and it will form different communication effects depending on the subject's ability, character, time, place, environment and other differences. Interview programs are special types of verbal communication, rich in relaxation, improvisation and interactivity. The hosting speech act of interview program hosts is social, purposeful, and authentic, and such characteristics also reflect the three main elements of verbal communication - communicative subject, communicative intent, communicative context, and discourse. "Face" occupies an important position in the development of our culture, influencing the behavior of the speaker and the psychology of the listener in daily communication. According to our Hong Kong psychologist, Ho Yau Fai, face is "the respect and obedience that an individual receives from others as a result of his or her status and contribution", emphasizing that the individual is respected by others and is subordinate to society. Face refers to an individual's desire to gain positive power from others and from social interactions, such as compliments, favoritism, and encouragement, and our view of face comes from the psychological desire to be respected and to maintain dignity. In TV programs as well, how to make guests and viewers communicate in a friendly context and maintain the face of guests, viewers and oneself puts high demands on the host's face strategy.

2.1. Direct Face Strategies for Moderator Speech Behavior

In the scene of program hosting, especially interview programs, live guests, live audience, live staff often many uncertainties in each other's conversations and interactions, there will be frequent need to maintain the face of the phenomenon. ^[2]The process of maintaining face requires the use of face maintenance strategies. Face-saving strategies include direct face-saving strategies and indirect face-saving strategies. And face-saving strategies follow two main principles: the principle of cooperation and the principle of politeness. The principle of cooperation refers to the principle that both communicating parties follow together in order to achieve the purpose of communication, relying on tacit understanding to realize in the process of conversation, including four small principles: the amount of information is limited, the information is true and verifiable, the information is internally relevant, and the content is clear and understandable. The Principle of Civility complements the Principle of Cooperation by explaining aspects that the Principle of Cooperation cannot cover effectively. It is highly persuasive and consists of six subprinciples: complimenting others more, benefiting others more, demeaning oneself more, putting oneself in the shoes of others, avoiding undermining others' interests, and minimizing disagreements with others. In all kinds of programs or activities, hosts often take a combination of direct face strategy and indirect face strategy to maintain the face of the speaker and the addressee, and the direct face strategy mainly includes two aspects of address and feedback speech.^[3]

2.2. Term of Address

Facilitators often use flexible use of epithets, feedback language, etc., in order to achieve face maintenance with their speech acts. Calling language refers to the two sides of verbal communication used to address each other and greetings, suitable and appropriate calling language can not only quickly narrow the distance between the two sides of the communication in a short period of time, but also make the recipient of the appropriate calling language and feel concerned about, respected, in order to eliminate the tension, the feeling of constraints, to produce a good effect of communication. Most of the program hosts on the site of the guest's title is usually the last name plus title or near name, which, on the one hand, through the address to convey the status of the guest in the limited contact time, the presence of the domain, suggesting their social status, from another side reflects the host of the guest of honor to open the lecture and politeness. But there will be guests to address the phenomenon of dissatisfaction or aversion, at this time the host is required to quickly receive the signals sent by the guests, timely and active use of the two principles of face strategy to change the address to meet the guests' psychological demands.

2.3. Feedback Speech

Feedback speech refers to the immediate response of the addressee to what the speaker has said, which usually occurs when the speaker makes a longer speech or a more complex explanation, and the addressee uses feedback speech to indicate that he or she is "thinking with you", "listening", "I agree with you", and so on. This behavior may be an unconscious speech habit, it may be a deliberate feedback given to the speaker, and it is a way for the speaker to get feedback from the addressee while not stopping talking. For example, when the teacher is teaching a lesson, the students will unconsciously nod their heads and say "right", "oh", "uh-huh". Feedback speech does not have any practical significance, the amount of information is not large, and rich in immediacy, but for the smooth progress of a conversation plays a role that can not be ignored, especially in the TV talk show, the guest is mostly in the answer to the question, which requires the host to quickly capture the feedback information, timely verbal feedback, to promote the process of the program.

3. Indirect Face Strategies for Moderator Speech Behavior

Indirect face strategy mainly includes three aspects of verbal interruption, verbal humor, and verbal exaggeration, and the host should be good at using indirect face strategy to maintain the face of the speaker, the addressee, and himself, to control the situation in time, and to save the face of the individuals involved in the conversation.

3.1. *Speech Interruption*

Speech interruption is a common phenomenon in conversation, where the listener interrupts before the end of the speaker's turn in order to express his or her own point of view, opinion, or to maintain the smoothness of the context, and it generally occurs when over-association is purposeful. Verbal interruptions are very common in daily chats, mostly occurring on occasions when the two sides of a conversation collide due to emotional excitement, and in the classroom and interviews, teachers and interviewers will often take verbal interruptions to advance the progress of teaching and interviews. In TV talk shows, each program has a fixed length and theme, which requires the host to interrupt the program at the right time to ensure the effect of the program when the conversation appears to be off-topic and off-topic, the content orientation is biased, or the expected duration is too long.

3.2. *Verbal Humor*

In daily life, humor plays a crucial role in conversation and communication. It is an essential communication skill that can attract laughter, liven up the atmosphere, and smoothly transition between topics. Humor makes language more versatile, witty, and infectious. People generally enjoy interacting with individuals who have a strong sense of humor. Verbal humor, including self-depreciation, antithesis, sarcasm, jokes, etc., can maintain the face of both or more parties in a conversation, relieve stress, relax, solve problems, and promote interpersonal communication. Verbal humor is a form of linguistic expression chosen by the speaker according to the context, which can express the speaker's psychology and reach a certain efficacy, and has five functions: defusing function, releasing function, goodwill function, education function, and attack function. When the speaker is self-deprecating or self-effacing, the moderator should uphold the principle of politeness as the criterion of praise and the criterion of generosity, to realize the defusing function and goodwill function of verbal humor, and to improve the speaker's status and maintain his social image in the alternation of the round of words.

3.3. *Overstate One's Case*

Hyperbole is a rhetorical device, and hyperbole or hyperbolic rhetoric in literature is intended to enhance the effect of a particular point of view by exaggerating it. The verbal exaggeration mentioned in the face-saving strategy shares similarities with rhetorical exaggeration. The both involve exaggerating the actual situation or using exaggerated language to preserve the face of the speaker and the addressee. This is typically achieved by magnifying the image characteristics of things or people. Through a witty and humorous way to introduce the characteristics of the characters or describe the characteristics of things in order to achieve another impressive effect on the audience, the host in the use of verbal exaggeration strategy is often coupled with body movements, facial expressions, demeanor and other sub-language to achieve a better effect. This kind of strategy is inseparable from the host's personal and professional image, including the positioning and characteristics of the TV program, in the actual TV program production process, whether live or taped, the verbal exaggeration is usually a "flash in the pan", and even the host himself can't perfectly reproduce the effect at that time. Therefore, the host's verbal behavior when implementing the face strategy is usually distinctive and cannot be easily replicated.

4. Conditions for the Formation of Face-Saving Strategies for Hosting Speech Acts

In program hosting, the host's identity construction and discourse construction are key elements, and the program is dependent on the content and form of the host's hosting discourse. The opening segment of a program serves as a crucial foundation, setting the direction and conveying valuable information and guidance for the current period. It aims to create an inviting atmosphere that helps guests and the audience feel engaged and connected. Employing simple, refined, and humorous language can foster a relaxed interview atmosphere during the recording process. It is important to maintain a balanced overall rhythm, regulate interpersonal relationships, and pay attention to portraying meaningful details. By delving deeper into these details, the program can gain more depth. Lastly, after the program, it is essential to elevate the theme, connect with the reality of society, and highlight the prevailing themes of the contemporary era.

4.1. Principles of Emergency Response

The emergency handling ability of the host is the embodiment of his business ability and stage experience, and it is one of the host's frequently examined abilities as well as an important and indispensable aspect in the teaching of broadcasting and hosting art majors. After the emergencies, the scene situation is complex and changeable, the moderator must have a strong ability to adapt in order to achieve good results. In the process of promoting the program, there are many uncertainties and unexpected situations, such as the guest's non-cooperation, the sharpness of the questioner's words leading to an awkward atmosphere, changes in the flow, etc.^[4] Therefore, the host needs to have excellent emergency response skills, be able to adapt flexibly and be able to quickly use appropriate language strategies to solve the problem. Combined with the actual work, it is vital to analyze how to improve the emergency handling ability of TV program hosts. In responding to emergencies as television program hosts, two fundamental principles are followed: firstly, taking ownership of the discourse, and secondly, maintaining appropriate tension. Taking ownership of the discourse involves actively leading the conversation and steering it as needed while maintaining appropriate tension, which helps to keep the audience engaged and interested. Additionally, creating a friendly and cordial atmosphere on-site is important to ensure a positive and comfortable experience for everyone involved. In verbal communication, when people are in a discourse-initiated position, they usually try their best to express their views or questions, but if they fail to grasp the degree appropriately, they may fail to get the answers they expect, or they may be too urgent in expressing their views, leading to verbal disagreement, or even violating the communication norms, which may threaten the face of the addressee. Therefore, the speaker himself or others present need to adopt face-saving strategies in a timely manner in order to save his face and preserve the social image of others. In a dialogical process, the speaker takes the initiative and thus fully utilizes the individual's subjectivity, which leads to the basis of face threat and maintenance. A lack of effective face-saving strategies on the part of the speaker in a television program can easily trigger a face-threatening incident. In the process of preserving the face of the speaker, the moderator needs to follow the principles of courtesy and protection in order to avoid face-threatening behaviors and to take timely and targeted remedial measures in accordance with the speaker's identity and social status in order to safeguard his or her rights and dignity. In TV talk shows, the host can control the speaker's discourse through the skillful use of language skills. In TV programs, due to the uncertainty of the content of the program, there are often situations where the scene gets out of control, such as awkwardness of the scene, dissatisfaction of the guests, and sharp questions from the audience representatives. However, the host needs to set up and take steps ahead of time to ensure that caring for the emotions of the people in the room won't affect the progress of the program, as well as demonstrating his or her confidence in controlling the room, so that the guests and the audience will have confidence in him or her. In addition, the tight time constraints and compact program arrangement often require speakers to change topics to effectively communicate with the audience constantly. This constant topic shifting can lead to the host experiencing nervousness and anxiety during the program, which may hinder the normal flow of the program. When the host is guiding the speaker, he or she needs to consciously maintain the dignity of the speaker and act as an "intermediary" between the speaker and the addressee, so as to avoid differences between the two sides in speech, thus preventing the atmosphere of the program from falling into embarrassment.

4.2. Positive Empathy Effect Achieved

In addition to having good emergency response skills, interview program hosts should also have strong empathy, be good at looking at issues from the perspective of guests and audiences, and understand the psychology of respondents. The complete empathy effect requires the facilitator to realize effective listening, timely feedback and efficient expression.^[5] The moderator should focus on listening to the speaker and should not ignore the specific content of what the speaker is saying for the purpose of facilitating the flow of the program, but should change the language at the right time according to the specific content of what he is saying. The host of a television talk show often listens carefully to the speaker and reacts affirmatively, which not only gives the speaker an urge to keep talking and expressing his thoughts, but also makes him think along with the speaker, so that he is able to appreciate each other's feelings. Therefore, the moderator of the interview program should affirm or restate the speaker's statement in a timely manner, and interrupt the questioning at the right time when it is not understood, so as to realize effective listening. Television programs often encounter situations where the guest cannot fully understand or answer the question posed by the host. In these cases, the host needs to approach the question from the perspective of the discussed subject and provide timely

feedback to the guest. This feedback can help clarify the question and address existing issues or misunderstandings. When the questioner's emotions run high or the question is so pointed that the guest can't answer it, the moderator is asked to respond to the questioner in his or her own words and will guide the guest to expand on the topic. As far as TV programs are concerned, whether verbal humor or conversational summary, it is necessary for the host to use condensed language to achieve the best results.

5. Conclusions

By analyzing the verbal behavior of the facilitator, practical communication skills, principles and strategies are gained that can be widely applied by touch to all other jobs and situations that require interaction and communication with people. As a public figure, the host has formed a certain professional image both inside and outside the screen, and has received wide attention from the public and has a certain role in leading social customs and values and aesthetic orientation. The words and behavior of the hosts not only show the level of the radio and television program producers, and be known by the audience, but also many peers and students in the learning model. Therefore, research on this issue is of some relevance.

Maintaining the face of the guest, the audience, and oneself through speech acts is an important part of the presenter's business skills, as well as the responsibility of the host of a variety show or event. This paper attempts to analyze the face strategy of the host's hosting speech act from a cross-disciplinary point of view, taking the relevant theoretical studies in linguistics and applied linguistics, broadcasting and hosting arts, and communication studies as the origin, analyzing the host's use of the direct face strategy and the profile face strategy and briefly researching the conditions for the formation of the face strategy of the host's hosting speech act and the role of the host's hosting speech act. Our scholars have made a detailed analysis of speech acts and speech act theories, making this paper able to conduct further analysis based on existing research results, but there is still a lack of research on the role of the host's speech acts, and there is a lack of research to look at the development of the host with a developmental perspective. The analysis of the face strategy in hosting speech acts on TV programs from a cross-disciplinary perspective remains an understudied area that requires further exploration. The previous generation of researchers has yet to delve deeply into this subject. Conducting in-depth investigations into individual cases can provide a multifaceted inquiry and shed valuable insights. This topic is still highly relevant and worthy of comprehensive consideration by practitioners in the media industry.

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