Dialogues

A Comparative Approach to Chinese and English Public Dialogues

汉英会话语篇对比研究

王望妮 著

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·北京·

内容简介

本书是一部对汉英会话语篇进行系统对比研究的学术专著。书中将会话研究与语篇分析结合起来，把会话看作特殊的语篇类型并基于汉英语料，从会话分析学、语用学、批评语篇分析、功能语言学和社会语言学等角度对汉英会话语篇进行了多角度的对比分析，探讨了汉英会话语篇在文化、语用、社会意识形态、人际介入等方面的异同，是会话语篇研究的最新成果。

本书可供语言学专业、英语专业的本科生、研究生和相关教学科研人员阅读参考。

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PREFACE

This book explores the ways top leaders practice communication at public dialogues. The theoretical foundations are made up of three different yet complementary orientations to language and discourse: Conversation Analysis (CA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). For better insights into public dialogues, a combination method of both qualitative and quantitative is adopted for this project.

The multidimensionality of political media discourse has aroused the interest of many discourse analysts. Public dialogue, however, has rarely been the specific subject of study. Although there have been some studies reported in the field of news interviews in general, there has been very little, even no work on the comparison of public dialogues by top leaders from massively different ideological backgrounds.

The analysis was firstly based on a corpus of 20 public dialogues by top leaders dating from 1996 to 2008 and later particularly focused on 4 of them for a better control of the variables involved and as a result of the rotten time limit. The data left serve as reference for this study. In addition, to validate the analysis, a corpus of secondary data consisting of statements, commentaries, news and views expressed in the media by spokespersons, associates, news reporters,

political analysts, and academics, from a variety of media sources with such modalities as text, audio, and video, has been considered.

The focus of this study is on the way speakers or respondents position themselves, journalists and the public through public dialogues with a comparative approach.

The study contributes a theoretically motivated, multi-dimensional and pragmatic explanation of political discourse in the media.

In brief, the book consists of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the research background and motives, the theoretical foundations and the significance of the study. Chapter two is focused on the histories and functions of public dialogues. Chapter three reviews theoretical foundations of the present study with political discourse in the media. The following three chapters correspondingly analyze the selected corpus from the three theoretical perspectives. Chiefly based on the findings and conclusions from the previous three chapters, chapter seven makes a summary of the findings for insights, conclusions and suggestions, paving the way for the would-be creation of a model for political media discourse.

Wang, Wangni
Shanghai International Studies University
May, 2012

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Wang, Wangni

April, 2012

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Motives 1
1.2 Theoretical Framework 3
1.3 Data Collection 5
1.4 Research Questions 6
1.5 Significance of the Study 7
1.6 Organization of the Study 8

2 PUBLIC DIALOGUES

2.1 Press Conference & Press Release 10
2.2 Press Conference & News Interview 13
2.3 Public Dialogues 21
2.4 Public Dialogues in U. S. 22
2.5 Public Dialogues in China 28
2.6 The Roles and Functions of Public Dialogues by Top Leaders 37
2.7 Summary 43

3 THEORECTICAL FOUNDATIONS

3.1 Introduction 44
3.2 The Public, the Media and Politics 48
3.3 Political Discourse 51
3.3.1 Introduction 51
3.3.2 CA to Political Discourse 57
3.3.3 CDA to Political Discourse 59
3.3.4 Cognitive Approach to Political Discourse 60
3.3.5 Functional Approach to Political Discourse 63
3.3.6 Political Discourse in the Media 64
3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis 70
3.5 Systemic Functional Grammar 73
3.6 Summary 73

4 CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERNECES IN PUBLIC DIALOGUES

4.1 Introduction 75
4.2 Question-response Sequences 77
4.2.1 The practice of questioning 78
4.2.2 The practice of responding 80
4.2.3 Present study 82
4.3 Methods for Corpus Analysis 83
4.3.1 Units of analysis 83
4.3.2 Questions as requests 87
4.3.3 Refusals in responses 88

4.3.4 Coding of the corpus 90
4.4 Findings and Discussion 91
4.4.1 Request functions 92
4.4.2 Refusal strategies 93
4.5 Conclusion 97

5 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL GAPS IN PUBLIC DIALOGUES

5.1 Introduction 99
5.2 Socio-political Ideologies in Public Dialogues 101
5.3 Theoretical Framework: CDA 104
5.4 The Generic Structure of Public Dialogues 105
5.5 Thematic Analysis of Public Dialogues 106
5.5.1 Content analysis 106
5.5.2 Distribution of themes and journalists in Chinese public dialogues 107
5.5.3 Distribution of themes in English public dialogues 110
5.5 Discoursal Analysis 113
5.6 Social-cultural Analysis 115
5.6.1 Thematic interpretation of Chinese public dialogues 115
5.6.2 Thematic interpretation of English public dialogues 118
5.7 Findings and Discussions: A Comparison 119
5.8 Conclusion 120

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6 INTERPERSONAL ENGAGEMENT INTO PUBLIC DIALOGUES THROUGH MODALITY

6.1 Introduction 122
6.2 Going Interpersonal: SFL 123
6.3 Analysis 125
6.3.1 Evasive and non-committal leaders: functions of *I think* 125
6.3.2 The confident speaker 131
6.4 Discussion 136
6.5 Reconciling Two Pictures: the Evasive and Confident Speakers 137
6.6 Summary of the Findings and Concluding Remarks 138

7 CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTOINS

7.1 Introduction 142
7.2 Findings 143
7.2.1 Research findings: similarities and differences 143
7.2.2 Discussion 147
7.3 General Contributions of the Study 151
7.3.1 Contributions to the field of research into the language in public dialogues 151
7.3.2 Contributions to CDA and SFL 151

7.3.3 Contributions of the thesis to linguistic theory 152
7.3.4 Contribution to the study of political discourse in the media 152
7.4 Suggestions for Future Research 153
7.5 Implications of the Research 154
7.6 Limitations of the Research 155

BIBLIOGRAPHY 156

1 INTRODUCTION

Based on Aristotle's premise that human beings are all political and able to use language to pursue their own ends, the study uses the theoretical framework of linguistics to explore how politically speakers communicate in public, putting domestic and global issues in general under the linguistic microscope. What do speakers really do in public dialogues? What verbal games do they play? How do they express their values through language? The study draws on some public dialogues for a comparative exploration.

1.1 Research Background and Motives

A dialogue is a conversation where there is a free flow of meaning in a group and diverse views and perspectives are encouraged (Hargrove, 1995: 176), which is a distinct way of communicating since it generates genuine interaction through which people listen to each other intently enough to have their thoughts or opinions changed by what they learn. The purpose of a dialogue is to go be-

yond any one individual's understanding (Senge, 1994) and to build community among participants. Public dialogue is to facilitate people to listen, learn and discuss, fostering an environment of active, inclusive participation. It will empower community members to constructively address issues that affect them in their daily lives. Meanwhile, public dialogue offers an effective means for policy makers to be informed about public concerns, needs and priorities. It serves to find ways in which community demands can be addressed effectively.

Public dialogue/interview is oftentimes chaired by a leader. The interview of such a special kind has a dual status as communicative genre and media event (Fetzer. A. 2006), a hybrid of political discourse and media/news discourse, both of which are intrinsically connected (Fetzer. A et al, 2007). Political discourse is increasingly mediatized, while media discourse is predominantly marketized. This coupling of the field of politics onto the marketized field of media has thus been a focus of critical examination (Fairclough, 1995; Franklin, 1994; Thompson, 1995; Chouliaraki, 2000).

Public dialogues hosted by top leaders from both east and west provide rich data to study how different ideologies are negotiated, how power relations are asserted, and how political discrepancies on difficult issues are communicated in a *positive* way (Bhatia, A. 2006). Over the years, this aspect of public communication has become even more entertaining as these figures have been transformed into media personalities as a result of the mediatization (Fairclough, 2000: 4). The airing of the interview resulted in the laymen's creation of the social-identity. The public began to learn about what kind of people their leaders were and how they dealt with other countries. The complexities and goings-on of the political scene became public knowledge informed by the media. Politics and media, therefore, be-

gan to have a lot more interdependency, sharing a paradoxical relationship whereby one needed the other to survive, or rather thrive, yet each endorsed considerable hostility for the other (Bhatia, 2006)

As well-known leaders, their public activities are of substantial theoretical importance (Brace and Hinckley, 1992; Edwards, 1983, 1989; Eshbaugh-Soha, 2000; 2003; Hager and Sullivan, 1994). Equally, press conferences are one of the most important vehicles by which presidents or premiers or other spokespersons communicate to the media and public (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2003) on behalf of government. Yet few studies have explored this means of communication and even fewer have investigated discourse of this kind with comparative approaches. That's the emergence of the research focus.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The research foregrounds a theoretical model as a point of departure for an exploration of ways leaders practice communication in public dialogues. The goal of this research is to pave the way for a new multi-disciplinary model of analysis of media discourse. The multidimensionality of media discourse has aroused the interest of many discourse analysts (Harris, 1991; Atkinson, 1988; Scannell, 1991; Fairclough, 1998, 2000; Negrine, 1994; Schaffner, 1997; van Dijk, 1998; Hudson, 1978; Biletzki, 1997; Chilton, 1985; Collins, 2002; Geis, 1987; Glover, 2002; Holly, 1989; Lakoff, 1990; McCarthy, 2002; Otero, 1988; Wilson, 1990; Wodak, 1989; Bhatia, A. 2006). Public dialogues, however, though very interesting from the viewpoint of language use to negotiate ideologies and assert power relations, have rarely been the specific subject of study. Although there have been some studies reported in the field of presidential

press conferences (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2003; Sharp, 1968-9; Smith, 1990) focusing on issues of 'show business and politics' and dramatic license in political broadcasts (Jennings, 1968), broadcast political talk (Davis, 1997; Reinsch, 1968), politicians and media hostility in press conferences (Ryfe, 1999), press conferences and public relations (Manheim, 1979), press and political campaigning (Barkin, 1983), national radio conferences (Sarno, 1968-9), there has been very little, even no work on the comparison of public dialogues by top leaders from massively different ideological backgrounds. Taking an integrated approach, this thesis is intended to fill that gap by focusing on public dialogues, specifically from a linguistically comparative perspective in both Chinese and English by using different theoretical frameworks, such as Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985, 1994, Martin, 1992, Halliday and Matthienssen, 1999), reflecting current moves in discourse analysis to cross-disciplinary and methodological boundaries.

SFL makes itself predominant over other theoretical alternatives in the sense that it examines language from social reality and holds that language is social semiotic, a product of social process, a shared meaning potential, at once a part of experience and an intersubjective interpretation of experience (Halliday, 1978:1-2). "One of the purposes of Functional Grammar (hereafter FG) is to understand the quality of texts: why a text means what it does, why it is valued as it is" (Halliday, 1978: xxix). It maintains that linguistic choices perform a function in discourse and are intended to achieve a communicative goal. That is, every single choice a speaker/writer makes from those open to him/her in the system of language performs a specific communicative function. Its semantic functional orientation and em-

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