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A Study of the Cooperative Principle in Crisis

Negotiation

论合作原则在危机谈判中的作用

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Abstract

In recent years, crisis negotiation, as a developing field of discourse study, has increasingly attracted attention of domestic and international scholars. They explore crisis negotiation from various perspectives, ranging from communication to psychology. Compared with other researches, our understanding of crisis negotiation is rather limited due to the fact that it is under-explored. Since there isn't sufficient research on the crisis negotiation from pragmatic aspect, this paper intends to contribute to fill this gap, mainly focusing on how the Cooperative Principle functions in the crisis negotiation. The main analysis is carried out in the following two parts.

The first two chapters intend to construct a theoretical framework for analyzing crisis negotiation. After introducing briefly the definition, Chapter One introduces some basic concepts concerned with crisis negotiation, and presents a review of previous studies on crisis negotiation both at home and abroad. Chapter Two lays down the theoretical framework of the study, on the basis of conversational implicature theory. The Cooperative Principle, which is the key principle of conversational implicature theory, is especially emphasized.

The second part consists of Chapter Three, Chapter Four, which devoted to analysis of crisis negotiation. Chapter Three introduces the research methodology and data collection. American TV series *Standoff*, which is chosen to build up a corpus with 159 negotiation conversations. Chapter Four carries out the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The frequency of observation and violation of the four maxims under the Cooperative Principle by the crisis negotiator and the hostage taker are computed in this chapter.

According to our research, our major findings are as follows: Firstly, the research proves that both crisis negotiator and hostage taker observe the Cooperative Principle during negotiation process. Furthermore, both of them value the maxim of quality much more highly than the other maxims. Secondly, research proves that violation of the Cooperative Principle will not always cause bad consequence. Sometimes, such violation will bring unexpected effect on the outcome of negotiations. Furthermore, the thesis discusses the reasons why crisis negotiator fouls the four maxims of the

Cooperative Principle. The reasons for the hostage taker are also mentioned in the thesis. Thirdly, research shows that the Cooperative Principle is turned out to be effective in solving critical incidents. It plays an active role in reaching the goals of negotiation. Beside this, the Cooperative Principle is proved to be a great help to the final result of crisis negotiation.

Being the first pragmatic approach to crisis negotiation, there are certain limitations of the present study and some areas still call for further study.

Key words: the Cooperative Principle; crisis negotiation; pragmatic aspect.

摘要

近年来，随着国际反恐局势日益严峻，作为解决恐怖事件方法之一的危机谈判引起越来越广泛的关注。国内外的许多学者从各种不同的角度来研究危机谈判。然而，相较于其他角度，从语用学角度来研究危机谈判的研究却很少，理解也有限。针对于这种情况，本文主要探讨了合作原则在危机谈判中的运用。

本文共分为六个部分，第一部分为引言部分，介绍本文的写作背景、目的和方法论。第一章首先介绍危机谈判的定义以及相关理论，进而回顾并评论了这一领域以往的研究成果。第二章阐述了全文的理论基础，包括会话含义，特别是格莱斯的合作原则。并在此基础上搭建了本研究的理论框架。第三章主要描述了本研究的研究方法以及语料的收集。本文选择美国电视连续剧《僵局》作为语料的来源，从中收集了包括危机谈判员和人质劫持者在内的共 159 个谈判对话作为语料库。第四章通过具体的例子，展示了合作原则的四准则是如何被危机谈判员和人质劫持者分别遵循和违背。在对所收集的语料进行定量和定性分析的基础上，计算出合作原则的四准则被遵循和违背的频率。文章的最后一个部分为结论部分，根据收集的数据进行分析，总结了本项研究的发现并探讨原因，并介绍进行继续研究的设想和打算，以及指出本研究的不足。

根据研究，本文可以得出以下结论：第一，在谈判过程中，危机谈判员与人质劫持者都倾向于遵循合作原则的四准则。并且在四准则中质量原则被谈判双方的遵守频率是最高的。第二，研究表明合作原则的违背并不会总对最终的谈判结果造成不好的影响。有时，刻意的违背合作原则反而会对危机的解决造成意料之外的影响。此外，本文还探讨了谈判双方在谈判过程中违背合作原则四准则的原因是什么。第三，研究结果表明了，合作原则对于谈判的顺利进行有积极作用的，并且对于危机的最终解决有正面影响的。

本文首次从语用学的角度探讨了合作原则在危机谈判中的运用，在一定程度上补充和丰富了现存的危机谈判的研究。当然，危机谈判涉及到各种各样的因素，还需要更多的研究和进一步的探讨。

关键词：危机谈判；合作原则；语用学角度

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Introduction

The present thesis intends to provide a pragmatic analysis of the Cooperative Principle used in crisis negotiation in American television series. This chapter presents the rationale and objectives of the present research, briefly describes the methodology and outlines the overall structure of the thesis.

1. The rationale of the study

It is apparent that one critical competency in this century is the ability to negotiate reasonably under crisis situations. Crisis negotiation, as a developing field of study, has increasingly attracted attention of domestic and international scholars. They have explored crisis negotiation from various perspectives, such as communicative perspective, psychological one, sociological one, and criminological one. In this thesis we try to discuss crisis negotiation from pragmatic aspect.

According to Georgia M. Green, the broadest interpretation of pragmatics is that it is the study of understanding intentional human action (Green Georgia M., 1989: 3). Meanwhile, it involves the interpretation of acts assumed to be undertaken in order to accomplish some purposes. The Cooperative Principle is one of the basic principles in pragmatics. People intend to be cooperated when they talk with others to achieve some goals. For example, they want to express their goodwill to their counterpart; they hope the meaning of their words could be delivered with less misunderstanding; they hope their negotiation process would go on with fewer obstacles. While in crisis negotiation, negotiators try to get a win-win outcome, using the Cooperative Principle in communication is advocated in achieving this goal.

Therefore, the major focus of the present study is to find out how the Cooperative Principle functions in crisis negotiation. By observing the obedient and violation of the Cooperative Principle, we will find what effect it will have for the final result of crisis negotiation.

2. The objectives of the study

Firstly, the present study attempts to enrich the Cooperative Principle. Inspired by the Cooperative Principle, a large number of researchers have conducted researches of concrete examples on how the Cooperative Principle functions. On the basis of Gricean theory, some scholars, who base on their understandings about the Cooperative Principle, bring up the further developments of the Cooperative Principle. Others put forward new theory to explore the implicature of sentences. However, most of their researches are from linguistic perspective, for example, which words will be chosen in order to observe the Cooperative Principle. They pay little attention to pragmatic strategies used specifically in crisis negotiation.

Secondly, current researchers explore crisis negotiation from perspectives of communication, psychology, sociology, and criminology. However, these researches concentrated on the use of strategies and tactics without support of detailed language data. The analysis of negotiating language from pragmatic perspective is remains under-explored. The present study makes up for this deficiency to some extent.

Thirdly, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How does the Cooperative Principle contribute to the success of crisis negotiation? Which maxim functions best during crisis negotiation?
- (2) What will happen if there are violations of the Cooperative Principle in negotiation and what causes the violations?

With these objectives in mind, we will make every effort to offer a more dynamic and functional analysis of the Cooperative Principle, so as to shed light on the further study of the Cooperative Principle.

3. The methodology of the study

The present study, methodologically speaking, essentially relies on the case study of American television series *Standoff*. With regard to data analysis, it combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research methodology and data collection

of present study would be further elaborated in Chapter Three.

4. Outline of the thesis

This thesis is made up of six parts including an introduction, a conclusion and four chapters. The introduction clarifies four sections with a brief introduction to the rationale, the objectives and the methodology of the present study. It also outlines the layout of the thesis.

Chapter One presents a brief review of the literature on the relevant studies of crisis negotiation. In this chapter, definition of crisis negotiation is explored, some relevant theories concerned with crisis negotiation is introduced, the contributions of previous researches following different approaches both at home and abroad are introduced and their drawbacks are also pointed out.

Chapter Two lays down the theoretical framework for the present study. In this chapter, conversational implicature is introduced. And the Cooperative Principle puts forward by Grice will be especially emphasized. Other opinions concerning with conversational implicature are discussed.

Chapter Three introduces the research methodology and data collecting of the present study. American television series *Standoff*, which is chosen to build up a corpus with 159 negotiation conversations, are also described in this chapter.

Chapter Four uses specific cases chosen from *Standoff* to elaborate how the Cooperative Principle works in crisis negotiation. The research result and discussion of research result are also expounded in this chapter.

The whole thesis ends with the conclusion, in which a summary of the present study is provided. There are certain limitations of the present study and some areas still call for further study.

Chapter One Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

Currently, high-risk situations are so common throughout the world. For example, In June 2007, 32 Korean had been kidnapped by the Taleban. In April 2008, school shooting in Virginia, USA, 32 people were killed. As an effective way to resolve these crises, crisis negotiation attracts attention of more and more scholars. As an attempt, we will explore what role crisis negotiation will play in resolving crises.

This chapter begins with a detailed discussion of some definitions of crisis negotiation. And then, concepts related to crisis negotiation will be introduced. Finally, an overview of existing researches on crisis negotiation both at home and abroad will be presented.

1.2 The definitions of crisis negotiation

The definitions of crisis negotiation have been developed with the passing of time. The initial definitions of crisis negotiations primarily focused on the resolution of terrorist incidents (Ochberg et al, 1982: 128; Frank et al, 1990:39-40). It puts more emphasis on the bargaining role which hostages play in terrorist events.

More recent definitions provide a broader perspective toward crisis negotiation. According to Donahue W.A., Ramesh C. & Borchgrevink C. (1991:73), crisis negotiation is a communicative process that has, as its goal, the movement from crisis bargaining to more normative, problem-solving processes. Holmes and Fletcher-Bergland defines crisis negotiation as “the deliberate interaction of multiple attempting to manage conflict rooted in interdependence arising from a technical or sociopolitical system failure that poses a severe threat to the goals of one or more of the parties” (Holmes et al, 1995:241). They emphasize on the reasons that cause conflict, which makes negotiation necessary.

Hammer M. R. (1997b) and Hammer M. R. and Weaver G. (1998) focus

attention on the cultural differences that are integral to crisis negotiation. From another definitional vantage point Hammer M. R. (2001) defines crisis negotiation within a conflict communication framework in which incompatibilities and interference between the hostage taker and the police negotiator give rise to perceptions of threat and negative emotions. Rogan R. G. and Hammer M. R. (2002, 2006) suggest a definition of crisis negotiation that combines both crisis intervention and bargaining approaches and permits a greater focus beyond terrorist events. Their definition is as follows:

A unique form of conflict interaction in which law enforcement officers attempt to facilitate a (peaceful) resolution to an incident where an individual barricades him/herself, sometimes with a number of hostages, in an effort to elicit some desired want or to communicate anger and frustration about a personal or social concern. (Rogan et al, 2002: 229-230)

Lanceley F. J. (2003:40) suggests that incident negotiations are a combination of crisis intervention (in which the hostage has no substantive value to the subject) and bargaining approaches (in which the hostage is used in order to gain a substantive demand). McMains M. J. & Mullins W. C. define crisis negotiation as “any incident in which people are being held by another person or persons against their will, usually by force or coercion, and demands are being made by the hostage taker” (McMains et al, 2006:39).

Compared with other definitions, Rogan R.G. and Hammer M. R.’s definition (2002, 2006) on crisis negotiation is more reasonable and scientific, which not only combines both crisis intervention and negotiation approach, but also permits a greater focus beyond terrorist events. Therefore, in the present study, this definition is adopted for the pragmatic analysis.

1.3 Some Concepts Related to Crisis Negotiation

In the previous part, we have discussed some definitions about crisis negotiation. In this part, we will introduce some concepts related to crisis negotiation.

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