

Original Paper

A Survey on Strategies and Identity Construction of Coaches in the Voice of China

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Abstract

In the past decade, talent shows have gone viral in China. In talent shows, the interaction between the coaches and the contestants is a major attraction for audiences. The coach's speaking style and pragmatic skills reflect their strategies for recruiting contestants and have influences on identity construction. Based on the Politeness Principle (PP), this study analyzes the utterances of coaches in the recruitment part of The Voice of China season 10. With the help of qualitative analysis software NVivo, researchers try to code the utterances to which PP is applied. Based on the results of the research, this study put forward four recruitment strategies, including Complimentary Strategy, Beneficial Strategy, Emotion Strategy and Modesty Strategy. Moreover, four identities can be constructed based on these strategies, including Amiable Identity, Rational Identity, Perceptual Identity and Modest Identity. This study provides insights into the identity construction of members within an organization from a discourse analysis perspective, especially in the context of talent recruitment and trainee management.

Keywords

Politeness Principle, Recruitment Strategies, Identity Construction, Talent Show, The Voice of China

1. Introduction

With the development of social media, variety show has become a crucial way of entertainment for people. *The Voice of China* is a professional music show broadcast by Zhejiang satellite TV in 2012. As a phenomenal talent show in China, it has attracted much attention and has stood firm in the cruel

market competition for ten years. Accordingly, *The Voice of China* is representative, for the mode of interaction between the host, coaches and contestants. Compared with previous music talent shows in China, one of its innovations lies in the interaction between coaches and contestants, especially the recruitment part after several coaches turn around for one contestant (Qin & Tan, 2012, p. 39). Different from other talent shows, the contestants in this show have the right to choose coaches, which is also a major attraction of this program. When multiple coaches turn around, coaches need to strive for recruiting contestants to join their teams. Therefore, in this stage, it is worth studying how coaches use pragmatic skills and strategies to recruit talents. In this study, based on PP, researchers are going to analyze the dialogue in this show by coding the utterances of coaches in the recruitment part, to reveal the rules and strategies of the interaction in TV shows.

As for the significance of this study, it has both theoretical and practical significance. In the recruitment part, coaches' utterances have pragmatic research significance. Coaches strive for the contestant they need, which means they have to compete with each other through their utterances to win the favor of the contestant. Coaches need to consider what strategies to use and organize their words in advance so as to impress the contestants they want. In such a context, the utterances of the coaches are illocutionary and reflect some strategies when recruiting talents. Therefore, through the study of the coach discourse of *The Voice of China*, pragmatic skills and strategies can be analyzed. In addition, the research on *The Voice of China* also has practical significance. Skills and strategies in the recruitment of talents can be explored by discourse analysis. Through the study of this contextual dialogue, we can better understand the discourse implications of others in daily communication and use these skills to achieve better communication effects in practice. In addition, the article is innovative in that the researchers try to construct the coaches' strategies in the program through discourse analysis and make a connection between PP, recruitment strategies and identity to form a theoretical framework for constructing identity through politeness principles.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Politeness Principle

Politeness is essential for interpersonal communication. Based on Cooperative Principle proposed by American linguist H.P. Grice, Leech summarized the points of P. Brown and S. Levinson and put forward the Politeness Principle (PP) to complement their theories. Leech (1983, p. 80) pointed out that "the Cooperative Principle cannot explain (a) why people are so indirect in conveying what they mean; (b) what are the relations between sense and force when non-declarative types of sentences are being considered", and he tried to provide solutions by socially and psychologically oriented application of pragmatics principles, where politeness becomes significant. The PP consists of the following six maxims:

Tact Maxim:

(a) Minimize cost to others; (b) Maximize benefit to other

Generosity Maxim:

- (a) Minimize benefit to self; (b) Maximize cost to self

Approbation Maxim:

- (a) Minimize dispraise of others; (b) Maximize praise of other

Modesty Maxim:

- (a) Minimize praise of self; (b) Modesty Maxim

Agreement Maxim:

- (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other; (b) Maximize agreement between self and other

Sympathy Maxim:

- (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other; (b) Maximize sympathy between self and other (Leech, 1983, p. 132)

As a well-developed pragmatic principle, PP has always been an important method and hot topic in the study of discourse. About 18600 papers on PP in recent five years can be found in Google Scholar. Scholars have published plenty of papers focusing on various subjects, such as linguistics, intercultural communication, social media and education. Pakzadian (2012, p. 351) pointed out politeness maxims help diplomatic language to be more effective and successful by examining three presidential debates in 2008 between Senator Mc Cain and Obama. PP is applied to a wide range of social practices, for instance, in classrooms, literature, TV show, TV series, movie, etc. Felemban (2012, p. 76) conveyed that learners of English should be able to apply PP, together with its maxims and sub-maxims by analyzing a dramatic text, *the Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde. PP is applied to the studies of EFL classrooms as well. Research shows that PP creates togetherness between a teacher and students, builds respect behavior in students, and helps students to have a positive attitude toward the lesson (Haryanto et al., 2017). In China, PP also plays an important role in the study of discourse analysis. TV, literature, film and other aspects have also attracted the attention of Chinese scholars on PP. What distinguishes it from foreign studies is that Chinese studies on PP pay more attention to the comparison of Chinese and foreign cultures and intercultural research. Gu (1992) traced the Chinese notion of “limao” “礼貌” (meaning politeness) and put forward five politeness maxims. Based on the five maxims, he made a comparative analysis of politeness between Westerners and Chinese and pointed out their cultural differences. Besides, Chinese scholars have also studied the relationship between hedges and politeness principles. Ying and Zhou (2009, p. 43) expressed that hedge reflects the Sympathy Maxim, the Generosity Maxim and the Approbation Maxim, which proves that hedges are one of the indispensable strategies of PP. In this study, the researcher uses PP to analyze the discourse in TV programs and tries to explore the relationship between discourse and identity.

2.2 Identity Construction

With the development of sociolinguistics, conversational analysis and pragmatics, the study of identity construction has become a hot topic in social science. The research related to identity construction in daily conversation literature is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, the research on the Membership

Categorization Device; Second, the research on narrative text (Yuan, 2013, p. 39). Identity construction research has been applied to various aspects of society, including daily conversation, institutional discourse, and business discourse. Among them, social media is one of the hotspots in the research of daily conversation identity construction. Gündüz (2017) developed a framework for understanding and analyzing social media as an autonomous social structure in which to construct an identity. Zhao et.al (2008) investigated the identity construction on Facebook. Analyzing 63 Facebook accounts, they found that the identities produced in this anonymous environment differ from those constructed in the anonymous online environments previously reported. Besides, teachers' identity construction has also attracted the attention of scholars. Stenberg and Maaranen (2021) considered teacher identity from the Dialogical Self Theory (DST) point of view and found that struggles at the beginning of the career are rooted in fundamental questions relating to personal matters. Ortaçtepe (2015) explored how 2 EFL teachers' language socialization in the United States resulted in an identity (re)construction as teachers of intercultural competence and found that teacher identities are not unitary, fixed, or stable but dynamic, situated, multiple, and even sometimes blurred.

2.3 *The Voice of China*

This show originated from a Dutch reality show: *The Voice of Holland*, which was first broadcast in 2010. Later, it was introduced to many countries and its copyright was purchased by TV program producers from different countries. Like *The Voice (U.S.)*, *The Voice (U.K)* and *The Voice of Ireland*, the program concept and rules of *The Voice of China* are the same as those of *The Voice of Holland*. That is, contestants perform a song that would then be evaluated by 4 coaches, and if a coach turns around for the contestant (which means that the Chinese coach invites the contestant to join his or her team), the contestant can choose a coach who turns around for him or her and join the coach's team. Contestants will compete with other coaches' teams, and finally, only one team can win the championship according to the votes of the audience and judges.

Due to the popularity of *The Voice of China*, scholars have carried out multi-faceted research on it. The studies on it mainly focus on its communication and media value. Li (2012) analyzed the reasons why *The Voice of China* can stand out from many talent shows. The program is novel and unique, the program contestants have interpersonal attraction, and the program style is stable and atmospheric, but they do not lose the pleasure of entertainment. In addition, there is a small amount of study on the pragmatic analysis of *The Voice of China*. Yan (2015) analyzed the words of four coaches based on turn-taking analysis. Yu and Jiang (2015, p. 44) put forward that by using hedges, the coaches established a relaxed atmosphere and promoted the interactive relationship between the coaches and contestants. Xia (2016, p. 98) constructed four identity types by using different speech acts and pragmatic strategies. However, the previous studies have not constructed the strategy of coach recruitment according to the use of pragmatic principles. Therefore, this study tries to construct recruitment strategies to complement the previous research.

3. Methods

The utterances of Wang Feng, Na Ying, Li Keqin and Li Ronghao in the recruitment part from the first six episodes of *The Voice of China* season 10 were selected as the materials, and the pragmatic strategies of coaches were extracted with the help of the Politeness Principle. These efforts were aimed to answer the following three questions:

- (1) To what extent did coaches use these six maxims?
- (2) What recruitment strategies did coaches use based on the use of PP?
- (3) What identities coaches tried to construct based on the use of those strategies?

In this study, the sentences that applied the PP were tagged with the help of NVivo11. NVivo is a qualitative analysis software, which can effectively analyze a variety of different types of data, such as text, pictures, audio and video. In this software, researchers are able to code and build a theoretical model.

In the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher coded the conversations in the program. Firstly, the researcher transcribed the first six episodes of *The Voice of China* with the help of transcribing software and imported the texts into NVivo. Then, constructing the model and coding the sentences that PP was applied to, the researcher set the four coaches as primary clusters and set the six maxims in PP as secondary clusters. In the process of discourse analysis, based on PP, the researcher analyzed the discourses of different coaches. Firstly, the discourse that applied PP was identified, followed by determining which coach the discourse belonged to, and finally determining which maxim was applied to the discourse. Following the above sequence, the whole text was analyzed and counted how many times each coach used the six maxims. After the above coding and analysis, researchers tried to explore to what extent coaches used these six maxims and the strategies of using the PP. Based on the PP, the strategies were expected to be constructed and identity construction was extracted.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overall Maxims Use

According to the results of NVivo, the use of PP is shown in Table 1. In the recruitment part, the four coaches used PP 89 times in total. Among them, Na Ying used it 29 times, Wang Feng used it 22 times, Li Ronghao used it 23 times and Li Keqin used it 18 times. Besides, among the six maxims, Generosity Maxim and Approbation Maxim appeared the most, and the other four maxims appeared less. The coach who used Generosity Maxim most is Wang Feng, while the coach who used Approbation Maxim most is Na Ying. The coach who used Sympathy Maxim and Tact Maxim most is Li Keqin.

Generally speaking, PP appears frequently in coaches' recruitment strategies. Every coach substantially used PP in their recruitment utterances, which means PP is a significant pragmatic strategy when recruiting talents in the talent show to some extent. Na Ying used the recruitment strategy the most based on PP, and her recruitment strategy is more resorts to the Approbation Maxim. Wang Feng's recruitment strategy is more resorts to the Generosity Maxim, Li Keqin and Li Ronghao's recruitment

strategy resorts to more comprehensive PP maxims. This might be due to different coaches' recruitment strategies and identity construction, and it will be discussed in the following sections.

Table 1. Number of Times Coaches Used the Six Maxims

	Wang Feng	Na Ying	Li Keqin	Li Ronghao
Tact Maxim	3	2	5	2
Generosity Maxim	11	6	4	9
Approbation Maxim	7	18	4	7
Modesty Maxim	1	1	2	3
Sympathy Maxim	0	1	2	1
Agreement Maxim	0	1	1	1

4.2 Strategies of Each Coach

This section will discuss the strategies of coaches by analyzing coaches' use of PP through examples. In this study of *The Voice of China*, the researcher found, based on PP, the recruitment strategies used by coaches were constructed as follows: Complimentary Strategy, Beneficial Strategy, Emotion Strategy and Modesty Strategy.

4.2.1 Complimentary Strategy

Complimentary Strategy is based on Approbation Maxim. The Approbation Maxim is to praise others and make the hearer feel good by exaggerating the praise of them. This strategy emphasizes maximizing the praise of others and minimizing dispraise of others. Coaches usually use this strategy after contestants finish their performances. To impress the contestant for whom they turn around, coaches need to exaggerate their praise for their advantages. And, for the shortcomings of the contestants they turn around for, the coaches generally put forward their suggestions tactfully and reduce their criticism of the contestants. According to Leech (1983, p. 80), a lack of praise implies criticism and impoliteness, especially in the evaluation of performance. Therefore, the use of a Complimentary Strategy is important. It can help coaches get the attention of contestants and narrow the distance between coaches and students. The following examples show the Approbation Maxim applied by Na Ying:

Example 1:

Na Ying: I have a feeling that you are a very professional "rock hostess". Your enthusiasm infects everyone.

Example 2:

Na Ying: This voice really moved me. It was very warm from beginning to end. We like you very much.

Example 3:

Na Ying: Your voice is strong, especially the explosive power of your voice. Every word is very special and different, so we didn't discuss it. The moment we were turning, we were actually excited. In this case, according to Table 1, Na Ying used Approbation Maxim the most. After turning around, she generally is the first to praise the contestants and express her expectation to win the contestants. In example 2 and example 3, she directly expressed her feelings about the song and her love for the contestants, such as "excited" "moved" and "warm". These emotional expressions made her praise to the contestants more sincere so that the contestants felt the authenticity of her praise. By using this strategy, the contestants' "face" has been paid full attention and the contestants' affection for the coach might be promoted.

4.2.2 Beneficial Strategy

Beneficial Strategy is based on Tact Maxim and Generosity Maxim. Tact Maxim demonstrates the need to focus on the hearer's intention, desire and needs and it can be found in invitations and requests (Liu, 1987, p. 44). The Beneficial Strategy emphasizes maximizing the benefits to others and maximizing the cost to self. Coaches often use this strategy after using Complimentary Strategy. When using this strategy, coaches usually make promises to contestants, show what they can do for the contestants and exaggerate their benefits to the contestants. They will show contestants that joining his team will bring some benefits and help to their careers.

Example 4:

Wang Feng: If you come to my team, I want to create at least one great song for you and present you as a whole. If you want to be very successful, I hope to make an album for you.

Example 5:

Wang Feng: I can find your best friends and let them help you make every song behind you most comfortable for you.

Wang Feng used the Generosity Maxim the most. He often makes some promises to the contestants at the end of the recruitment stage to show that he is willing to make sacrifices for the contestants to maximize the benefits of the contestants joining his team. In examples 4 and 5, he promised to make songs and albums for the contestants and find their friends to help the contestants, which is very attractive for the contestants and makes them feel that their "face" has been paid attention to.

Besides, coaches also applied the Tact Maxim from time to time. They respect the contestants' choices and often euphemistically imply their desire for contestants, so as to make their words more appropriate and polite. In this way, coaches maximize their own costs and contestants' benefits are maximized.

Example 6:

Li Keqin: So, if possible, if you join our team, you can also write one for me.

Example 7:

Na Ying: Whichever coach you choose is the right choice.

These examples show that coaches made requests tactfully. Although they want to win this contestant, they did not force contestants to join their team and respect their choice by giving them the right to

choose. In example 6, the utterances of Li Keqin have illocutionary meaning that he hopes to win over this contestant and invited him to join his team. However, he said: “if possible, if you join our team”, which represented a high level of politeness. Na Ying also applied this strategy to maximize the benefits for the contestant by encouraging him to choose the team following his heart. This strategy makes the contestants feel that the coach is making sacrifices, which may increase her favor for the coach.

4.2.3 Emotion Strategy

Emotion Strategy is based on Sympathy Maxim. The application of the Sympathy Maxim shows that the speakers should focus on the desire, interests and intentions of the hearer, and try to be empathetic to the hearer. The emotional strategy emphasizes empathy. Through sympathy for the contestants, coaches achieve emotional interaction with the contestants, to narrow the emotional distance between them. Emotional interaction is an important part of *The Voice of China*. Zhang (2013, p. 17) pointed out that *The Voice of China* internalizes the social emotional and cultural system, such as emotional values and emotional morality, into the personality system by creating a new interactive ritual atmosphere of sincerity, equality, and respect culture. Therefore, the application of the Emotion Strategy is crucial for impressing contestants and helping coaches construct their identities.

Example 8:

Na Ying: We are all sad for this. We absolutely don't allow you to walk away with tears. It's not easy for each student who comes to this stage. They all have their own dreams. You have to be brave.

In this example, a contestant was eliminated, and Na Ying encouraged her and showed her sympathy for the contestant. Na Ying tries to maximize her empathy for the contestant and express her sadness. These utterances take into account the feelings of the contestants and let the coach and the contestant achieve an emotional interaction.

Example 9:

Li Keqin: I used to participate in the singing competition like you. I should have participated in a competition in 1985. At that time, I entered the last 30, and then I couldn't enter the final competition. I was very upset at that time, because I seemed to think that I was not good enough.....So I think it doesn't matter how many times. It's rare to succeed the first time, so I think we should continue our efforts.

In this example, Li Keqin applied Sympathy Maxim to encourage a contestant who mentioned that he had failed many times in talent shows. Li Keqin talked about his similar experience of participating in a singing competition when he was young, to express his understanding and sympathy for the contestant. Such utterances enhance the emotional interaction between the coach and the contestant and make the contestant a sense of identity. Based on such Emotion Strategy, the contestant's identification and favor with Li Keqin may be improved.

4.2.4 Modesty Strategy

Modesty Strategy is based on Modesty Maxim. Modesty Maxim shows that we should maximize dispraise to ourselves. The modesty Strategy focuses on the speaker's humility. By using this strategy, the coaches keep a low profile towards contestants and show them the greatest respect. The success of *The Voice of China* is because it greatly meets the needs of "grass-roots singers" for self-esteem and their desire for self-realization. It has built an exciting and warm emotional dance platform for young people who are unknown and eager to be recognized (Zhang, 2013, p. 18). Modesty Strategy makes the coaches who are masters of music closer to the contestants, and makes them more approachable.

Example 10:

Li Keqin: Let Mo Chou talk about it because I don't know Zhou Sheng very well.

In this example, Li Keqin is actually very familiar with Zhou Shen, but in the face of praise from others, he did not admit his relationship with Zhou Shen. Through the use of the Modesty Strategy, Li Keqin did not boast about himself but asked his assistant to explain, which is more objective and persuasive.

Example 11:

Li Ronghao: I liked R&B very much when I was young, but my first album (with a lot of R & B songs in it) was terrible.

In this example, Li Ronghao turned around into an R&B singer, and he mentioned his first album. Although he is a popular singer and his first album has made great achievements, he deliberately dispraised his album to keep a low profile. Through this strategy, contestants may consider the coach is easy to contact.

4.3 Strategies and Identities Construction of Each Coach

Since the four strategies were constructed, this section will discuss what identities coaches tried to construct based on the use of those maxims and strategies.

In order to achieve better communication effects, people make pragmatic efforts and use various pragmatic resources. Among them, the identity constructed by communicators through discourse can be regarded as a kind of pragmatic resource to help communicators achieve specific communication goals (Chen, 2014). In *The Voice of China*, to win excellent students into their team, the four coaches also have to show their charm. Therefore, how the coach constructs or highlights different levels of personal identity through discourse interaction with students in the program has become one of the biggest highlights of *The Voice of China* (Xia, 2016, p. 99). Therefore, the identity construction of the four coaches is worth discussing.

4.3.1 Amiable Identity Construction

The use of a Complimentary Strategy may help coaches construct an amicable identity. In the program, Na Ying tried to construct an enthusiastic and amiable identity. According to table 1, Na Ying used the Approbation Maxim 18 times, while other maxims are relatively few. It can be seen that the Complimentary Strategy is her main recruitment strategy. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies. Yan (2015, p. 152) conveyed that Na Ying showed more sensibility and mostly

expressed her praise for the contestants in the recruitment part. According to the study of Xia (2016), building a friendly coach image is conducive to contestants' emotional acceptance.

4.3.2 Rational Identity Construction

The use of a Beneficial Strategy may help coaches construct a rational identity. In the program, Wang Feng and Li Ronghao tried to construct a professional and rational identity. According to table 1, Wang Feng used Generosity Maxim and Tact Maxim the most, indicating that his main recruitment strategy is Beneficial Strategy. As shown in Example 4 and Example 5, Wang Feng was used to attracting contestants to join his team by making promises and bringing benefits to them, which makes him a clear-minded and rational coach. Yan (2015, p. 152) considered Wang Feng to be the most rational of the four coaches. Although he was also very excited, he thinks clearly and speaks logically during the whole process. Similar to Wang Feng's strategy, Li Ronghao also made a promise to the contestants from time to time, which makes him a clear-minded and rational coach as well.

4.3.3 Perceptual Identity Construction

The use of Emotional Strategy may help coaches construct a perceptual identity. In the program, Li Keqin constructed a gentle and perceptual identity. According to table 1, he used Sympathy Maxim the most, but the least Approbation Maxim, indicating that his main recruitment strategy is the Emotional Strategy. Li Keqin often paid attention to the contestants' emotions and tries to empathize with the contestants, such as Example 9, which demonstrates that he tends to focus on the feelings and emotions of contestants, to increase contestants' favor to a certain extent. Besides, Na Ying also constructed a perceptual identity. Na Ying often expressed her feelings, such as in example 1 and example 3. By praising and expressing her emotion, Na Ying constructed an emotional and perceptual identity as well.

4.3.4 Modest Identity Construction

The use of Modesty Maxim may help coaches construct a modest identity. In the program, Li Ronghao constructed a modest identity. According to table 1, he used the Modesty Maxim. Li Ronghao often uses humble and humorous language. According to Meyer (2000, p. 318), one valuable function humor serves is to build support by identifying communicators with their audiences, enhancing speaker credibility, and building group cohesiveness. In addition, Modesty has always been a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation and one of the excellent personality qualities. In the process of discourse interaction with the students, the tutor should not only show his affinity in front of the students and the audience but also build an image of a modest tutor. (Xia, 2016, p. 101). Therefore, the use of humor and modesty helps coaches build an approachable identity and might enhance the emotion between the coach and the students. Besides, Li Keqin constructed a modest identity as well, and he also tends to be humble in the program. He often fell behind in recruiting contestants, for he always made comments after other coaches, which makes him a moderate and reliable coach.

4.4 Model Construction

To sum up what we have discussed, this section summarizes the model (see Figure 1.) among PP, recruitment strategies, and identity constructed in this study. This research aims to establish a link

between pragmatics, strategy, and identity, explore the influence of discourse on recruiting and identity, and provide a complete model for similar situations. Therefore, to provide evidence for future research, a model about this is necessary. According to the model, the recruitment strategies are constructed on the maxims of the PP, and the identities are constructed on the recruitment strategy. With the help of recruitment strategy, PP and identity are logically and reasonably linked. In other words, the importance of discourse function is more intuitively displayed. Besides, in such a specific situation, coaches can also resort to this framework to choose the identity they want to construct and to decide which recruitment strategy and pragmatic strategy they are recommended to use. For instance, to construct an amiable identity, Na Ying applied a Complimentary Strategy to a warm and intimate image.



Figure 1. Model Construction of PP, Strategies and Identity

Xia (2016) used the speech acts of different coaches in *The Voice of China* to construct four identities. However, her research did not establish a complete model of pragmatics, strategy, and identity, and the impact of its identity construction was lack of discussion to a certain extent. Based on her research on the construction of coach identity, this study adds the link between recruitment strategy and identity construction, which better explains the significance and influence of the identity. The authors think of the coaches' purpose in constructing an identity is to be more impressive in recruiting talents. Accordingly, Identity construction and recruitment strategy are closely related and contribute to the implementation of the strategy.

5. Conclusion

According to the results and discussion, this chapter summarizes coaches' strategies and their constructed identities.

Based on PP, this study put forward four recruitment strategies, including Complimentary Strategy, Beneficial Strategy, Emotion Strategy, and Modesty Strategy. Complimentary Strategy is based on Approbation Maxim; Beneficial Strategy is based on Tact Maxim and Generosity Maxim; Emotion Strategy is based on Sympathy Maxim and Modesty Strategy is based on Modesty Maxim.

Besides, the identities constructed by the coaches have been discussed. By using the strategies discussed above, four different identities can be constructed, including amiable identity, rational

identity, perceptual identity and modest identity. Na Ying constructed an amiable and perceptual identity by using Complimentary Strategy. Wang Feng constructed a rational identity by using Beneficial Strategy. Li Keqin constructed a modest and perceptual identity by using Emotional Strategy and Modesty Strategy. Li Ronghao constructed a modest and rational identity by using the Modesty Maxim and Generosity Maxim. Therefore, in the recruitment part of the talent show, coaches' recruitment strategies are reflected in pragmatic principles, and their utterances contribute to the construction of identity. This study provides coaches with four recruitment strategies, which enable them to decide their speaking style according to the pre-determined recruitment strategy and the identity they intend to construct.

The existing findings of the current study have some practical implications. Except for the talent show, people can apply these strategies to construct identities that meet their intentions and needs as well. In some cases where there is a superior-subordinate relationship, the superior can apply these strategies to the subordinate, for example, in *The Voice of China*, coaches are more like superiors and contestants are more like subordinates, and these strategies seem to be appropriate in such an occasion. Besides, in the classroom, teachers can use the above strategies to choose their pragmatic principles in advance to construct the identity they want, for example, teachers can praise students more to build an amiable identity, or express more sympathy to construct a perceptual identity. Moreover, in the company, a boss may apply the Beneficial Strategy to show his/her professionalism and rationality. On contrary, a boss may apply the Modesty Strategy to express his/her willingness to keep a low profile and get closer to employees. In general, to improve interpersonal communication, people should pay attention to the impact of discourse on identity construction and use strategies reasonably to construct the identity they need.

Similar to many studies, our study is not exempt from limitations. One limitation is that the model needs to be tested in more cases. Maybe in other situations, the identity will change slightly, or some new identities can be constructed. In addition, the encoded sample size needs to be expanded. In this study, just one season of the show was studied, and in the future, researchers could do research with a larger sample. Although the main purpose of this qualitative study has been achieved, a larger sample size can enhance the persuasiveness of this study.

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