Paralanguage

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Abstract

Paralanguage is a very important aspect in human language communication. In the communication of people it is not only the important method to express the significance, the essential middle link of words, but also is the same with the language communication and other non-language communications, can transmit the different semantic information, express varies words significance, has the special communicative function and value. Paralanguage makes the language communication to be more accurate, vividly and full of expressive force. It plays the role of make the words significance determined, beautification, substitution and deepened.

Paralanguage is the important component of our natural communication; it is essential supplement to the spoken language communication. The same with language, paralanguage is also a part of culture. Paralanguage and language form an omni-directional communication system together. The lack of any side will cause incomplete of communication and efficiency reduction. We have to use paralanguage appropriately in communication.

In addition, paralanguage has its arbitrariness and will cause the multi-dimensional pattern of culture.

Key words: Paralanguage; Feature; Word significance

INTRODUCTION

In social activity, people use each kind of code to carry on the exchange of information. The term paralanguage was originally used by Trager. In course of study of culture and society, Trager collects and cleans up a passel of research source material of linguistics and psychology, after synthesize and sum up the material he put forward some voice modifications which can be applicable to different scenes of language. After Trager, the term paralanguage has different meanings because of the different users. What is paralanguage? *Linguistics Encyclopedic Dictionary* explained as:

> Paralanguage refers to some pronunciation characteristic and pronunciation phenomenon which produced follow the language when people speak, including pitch range, speech speed and rhythm and so on. It is well known that the main function of language is communication, but there are few people who can realize the role that the paralanguage play. (Wu, 2003)

Paralanguage is a very important aspect in human language communication. In the communication of people it is not only the important method to express the significance, the essential middle link of words, but also is the same with the language communication and other non-language communications. It can transmit different semantic information, express varies words significance, and has the special communicative function and value. We have to use paralanguage appropriately in communication.

1. PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES AND CLASSIFICATION OF PARALANGUAGE

1.1 Paralanguage Features

About paralanguage features, linguist Abercrombie has ever said "we speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies… the conversational use

of spoken language cannot be properly understood unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account" (Key, 1975).

Paralinguistic features also called paralanguage, paralinguistic. The discipline studies paralanguage also called paralinguistic, The features of paralanguage can be concluded as follows:

a. Paralanguage is systemic. "Systemic" is one of the key point of paralanguage. Generally, features of paralanguage in the specific culture has its fixed form and significant. It can only express its meaning when using in the specific scene. For example, people often pronounce "ur" when they hesitate in speech, it will be unimaginable if we change it into other sound. It is part of the system of paralanguage in this culture to pronounce this sound when hesitated. Similarly, it needs to stand near from each other to show the intimate relations in high-contact culture, or the intimate manner cannot be expressed. Because the two sides of the communication have the paralanguage system of the culture in their hearts, it is not the symbol of intimacy to stand far from each other in this system. Just because paralanguage is systemic, people who hold the same culture can carry on the communication; paralanguage can be acquired and used. What need to be explained is that paralanguage is accompaniment; it is also the product of culture. Left the specific language and culture, paralanguage is no longer a system.

b. Paralanguage is vocal or kinetic. Learn this point is also very important. Because this is the way paralanguage be taken into practice. Paralanguage can be divided into three parts, one is gestures, it realized through movement, the other is proxemic, no doubt that it also realized through movement, another is paralanguage feature, it is vocal. It can be seen that paralanguage is vocal or dynamic.

1.2 Classification of Paralanguage

About the classification of paralanguage, there are different views and different definition according to different principles, standers and angles. Generally, there are different between generalized and narrow sense and different between voiced and silent. In some domestic papers, paralanguage and accompanying language seem to become the identical concept and create confusion. Paralanguage and gestures are all accompanying language, but paralanguage and accompanying language cannot be equal. G. L. Trager has ever pointed out the definition of paralanguage. This term originally refers to the part of accompanying language which has sound form. Gesture is not paralanguage, but is non-spoken language code has accompanying language and visual image which is equally important with paralanguage and unite closely with language performance. So, there are obvious difference between paralanguage and gesture. Condon and Yousef has ever divided paralanguage act into twenty-four aspects. Trager thinks paralanguage act includes two parts:

(i) voice qualities, is the individual sound characteristic which has relative stability and decided by physiological condition. It is constituted by the non-segmental ingredient of pronunciation, such as pitch control and tone control. Vocalizations includes vocal characteristics such as crying, groan and weeping etc. (ii) vocal qualities, such as change the pitch, intensity or the length of sound vocal segregates, such as un-hun, un, uh, ah, etc. Crystal statements the classification of paralanguage should be considered from the pronunciation, semantic and the function angle. The author considers that the paralanguage code may be divided into two kinds: prosodic codes which influence the using significance of spoken language; all kinds of paradigmatic codes which transmits the concerned situation of the teller.

1.2.1 Prosodic Code

Paradigmatic code includes pitch and stress etc. in specific communication and cultural environment, one sentence will transmits different semantic information and produces different results of communication (Knapp, 1978). Prosodic code's analysis unit obtained the description in the structuralism linguistics and the phonemics. As paralanguage code, its difference is expresses the following information transmitted in language use, show emotion significance by its image and symbolic function. For example: A traffic accident occurred during the rush hours yesterday evening. The pitch of this sentence is different, in certain linguistic environment, may express the statement, surprised and question, and Causes the speech act which the sentence shows to be completely different.

1.2.2 Paradigmatic Code

Paradigmatic codes include accent, volume, voice, and mistake of language, tempo and all kinds of paralanguage codes. They are used to expresses the speech mood, the disposition, the social stratum, the social position of the teller and the manner of the opposite party and so on. For example, intentionally use hoarse voice, labiovelar or nasal, accompanied by each kind of laughter, the stop and the silence when speaking, both of them can express the information of the manner, the position of the teller etc. and not only has beautification function to the language significance, but also is important constitution attribute of language environment.

2. FUNCTION OF PARALANGUAGE: METHOD OF EXPRESSING MEANINGS AND WORDS SIGNIFICANCE OF PARALANGUAGE

About method of expressing meanings of paralanguage was always paid attention to. Samovar, Porter and Jain (1981) think paralanguage "involves the spoken language ingredient, refers to the actual information the different

expression supplies, but about how does this information is express"; they believe paralanguage "is the behavior with sound which is follows, interruption or replaces temporarily. It plays the role of follow of spoken language through tonality, volume, voice quality, the clarity and the intonation". Use the kind of sound such as "uh, umm" may break others' conversation, and may replace the meaning of a sentence with some kind of sound, such as use "brr" to replace "I am very cold" Knapp thought what the paralanguage refers to is the way of expression of spoken language, but is not the content spoken language express. What it processes is the non-language vocal cue revolves the general speech act (Loveday, 1982). In language communication, people of the two sides often use paralanguage to express thoughts, transmit sentiment and achieve the goal of communication when they express different thoughts and feelings, transmit the different information and demonstrated different intention of language using.

Paralanguage is a very important aspect in human language communication. In the communication of people it is not only the important method to express the significance, the essential middle link of words, but also is the same with the language communication and other non-language communications. It can transmit the different semantic information, express varies words significance, and has the special communicative function and value. Paralanguage makes the language communication to be more accurate, vividly and full of expressive force. It plays the role of make the words significance determined, beautification, substitution and deepened. Some talks about the method of express meanings and words significance as follow:

2.1 Volume Control of Conversation

From yells loudly to a low and thin voice, namely intends to control the volume, will have the different request in the different environment of language use. It is a complex pronunciation method to express significance, and changes along with speaker's theme and the semantics. As intonation language, the function of intonation of English appears especially important. When refer to the function of intonation, the French scholars Pierre Delatre thought "intonation and words, like salt and food, although the statement lacks of the intonation change, often can be understood, its content actually appears pale and weak, it will arid tasteless" (Wcitz, 1974). The height of volume has the function of decision significance of words, and may display the speaker's manner and the emotion.

2.2 Strengthens the Stress

In the communication of spoken language, the words significance is different if the stress is different. With the shifting of the sentence's stress, it can also say with the change of the pitch of different words in language, the words significance changes along with it. In specific

communication environment, speaker may change the semantics and transmit different information of communication when they use paralanguage stress method. The listener also judges the thought and the intention of the speaker according to the paralanguage method in order to complete the task of transmission. For example:

(i) a. Jàck didn't dance with Mary last night.
  b. J ack didn't dànce with Mary last night.
  c. J ack didn't dance with Màry last night.
  d. J ack didn't dance with Mary làst night.

In the concrete linguistic environment, when the position of the stress of the four sentences above changes, their significance of language use and words significance also changes along with it. Sentence a stress "Jack", suggested others that danced with Mary last night; sentence b stress "dance", suggested "John and Mary" has done other thing last night; sentence c stress "Mary", explained that John only danced with others last night; sentences d stress "last night", shows that John and Mary dance together every night. It can be seen, utilizes the method of strengthen the stress of paralanguage, may have the different significance of language using. Speakers also establish its words significance, and choose the way of expression according to own intention. At the same time judge the thoughts and intention of the speaker based on the paralanguage method, make the choice in semantic.

2.3 Intonation

Intonation is a kind of complex pronunciation method of significance expression. Communicators can transmit different information and significance using special intonation in words. In spoken language communication, the falling tone generally has severely and the firm tone; the rising tone often expresses the anticipation or the suspicion meaning; falling then rising tone often to have the retention or the satire and so on lodges righteousness. For example:

(ii) a. I should | gó |.
  b. I should | gó.|
  c. I ′should go.|
  d. I | shòuld go.|
  e. I | shǒuld go.|

In linguistic environment, sentence a expresses the normal intonation in communication, expresses the normal words significance; sentence b contains the rising tone, express the implication that solicits opposite party whether he is willing to call me to go; sentence c has rapid decline in I, then stressed that this I go, but is not the semantic information which you go; sentence d lowering on should, suggested that you do not let me to go but I bend on going; in sentence e, should including falling and rising tone, the meaning is I am willing to go. In the words, the change of intonation may have the different semantics, has influence to the words significance.

2.4 Pause

Pause is vocal segregates in paralanguage. Without pause words news' transmission will carry on with difficulty. The pause here refers to filled pauses. When filled pause, there are still paralanguage acts. For example, utilizes "or" "em" "wh" and some glossary loses the dictionary significance, such as "well", "you know" and so on substantial words. Utilizes the method of pause in communication may cause the change the significance of words, brings to listener's attention and strengthening the expression effect of the words used after pause. It is often to use filled pause act of paralanguage to achieve the goal of prominent semantics, emphasizes the focal point information and causes the attention when announces the position in athletic contest and gives out prize in lecture and recites (Wardhaugh, 1977). For example:

(iii) The prize has been won by- John.

(iv) And the final count shows -that by a margin of 3000 -the successful candidate is Charles Brown.

Generally, the division of pronunciation may play the role of punctuation mark in the written language. But it can reflect the psychology and the words' in-depth meaning of the speaker more accurately, especially when speaking fast. We can only understand sentence have different meanings with the aid of pause:

(v) Mary said / her mother is done for. (玛丽的母亲已经不行了)

Mary / said her mother / is done for.（玛丽的母亲说玛丽已经不行了）

The pronunciation pause is the physiological needs that the speaker needs the cushion in the process of the sending out and acceptance of the information between the speaker and the listener. Generally it is also accompanied by facial expressions, hand signals, postures and so on non-speech act during stop, even silencesis also a method to transmit the information and the emotion.

2.5 Length

In communication, the two parts of the conversation may express different intention of language use and words significance of the speaker using extension word or some pronunciation length of syllable of the word. The length of the pronunciation time of a phoneme in a word or phrase named the length of the sound. In the normal condition, the length of sound has a fixed value (Wcitz, 1974). For example, in English /a: / pronounce a little longer than /ʌ/. In the process of actual communication, we can elongate the tune to too long or use the too short pronunciation to expresses the special significance according to the original meaning of glossary, the linguistic environment and the situation of communication. This kind of vocal qualifiers produced from the control of articulationary organs may express discontented, angry, joyful, surprised and so on complex emotion and the different intention of language using. G. L. Trager once lifted the following example when discussing paralanguage:

(vi) Get out.

Extension pronunciation length according to the different intention of communication may change the words significance and transmits different information. However, it will receive the restriction and the limit of the linguistic environment, if you want to determine its accurate words significance. The judgment of its specific words significance needs to be decided according to the social gathering. If the words above said with both resounding and short expression, that is only angry at heart; if this sentence said with low, slow and long expression, then specially rich of minacity.

(vii) You are so clever.

After stress and lengthen clever, its meaning will turn into the opposite side. The meaning that the speaker wants to express is that the listener thinking himself is clever.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, paralanguage is an important component of our natural communication. It is the essential supplement to spoken language communication. The paralanguage which has sound plays the role of strengthening, auxiliary and transformation semantics, the silent paralanguage plays the role of exchanging the thought, convey emotions, makes psychological clear and indication interpersonal relationship. The same with language, paralanguage is also a part of culture. Paralanguage together with language has formed an omni-directional communication system. The lacks of any side will cause the incomplete and reduction of efficiency of communication. In communication, we can only utilize the goal language accurately and appropriately to carry on the harmonious communication by using the paralanguage appropriately.

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