

A Pragmatic Approach to Questioning in Chinese TV Interview Programs - from the Perspective of Linguistic Adaptation

Weihong Chen

College of Foreign Languages, Quanzhou Normal University, Quanzhou 362000, Fujian,
P.R. China.

chwh518518@163.com

Abstract

Questioning is a special kind of language use and speech act. Based on collected data and according to Linguistic Adaptation Theory, the study implements a comprehensive discussion and analysis on questioning's dynamic adaptation process in Chinese TV interview programs. The study proves that questioning in TV interview programs is a continuously conscious/unconscious choice-making, which is always characteristic of constantly realizing dynamic adaptation to three contexts: interview environment, social conventions and motivations. In the course of adaptation, questioning in TV interview programs well performs relevant pragmatic functions and guarantees the smoothness of TV interviewing, which thus perfectly fulfills hosts' expected communicative objectives and needs.

Keywords

Linguistic Adaptation Theory, Questioning's Adaptation Process, Pragmatic Functions.

1. Introduction

With the advent of technological innovation and the tremendous growth of mass media, the broadcasting and TV has witnessed a rapid development in China. The number of channels and news outlets has therefore greatly increased, through which people begin to show great interest in various kinds of social, cultural and psychological phenomenon in society. In TV interview programs, questioning is often regarded as a significant component of communication. Therefore, to secure the smoothness of an interview and the amount of information the audience are supposed to obtain, the host's expertise in uttering questioning exerts highly critical importance in the course of producing a successful TV interview program. After reviewing relevant literature, the author finds that researchers have begun to focus on the linguistic phenomenon of questioning in TV interview programs in recent years, which has led to different conclusions on the classification and concepts of questioning from different perspectives.

Likewise, questioning has aroused many pragmatic scholars' immense research interest. With the rapid development of pragmatics, study on questioning has come to a more profound level. Pragmatics aims at exploring meaning, language use and their relationship with users. From this perspective, questioning can be regarded as a special kind of language use and speech act. According to Verschueren's opinion on language use, questioning can be seen as a dynamic and active process, which is characteristic of users' much conscious/unconscious linguistic choice-making and which can act as a method and strategy pushing the interview to move on smoothly, friendly and harmoniously. Therefore, many pragmatic scholars consider this speech act can well reflect communicators' linguistic competence, especially their pragmatic competence.

Besides, context is a critical topic in pragmatic research. When it comes to illustrating language use and meaning, context is one of the hot concerns that pragmatic researchers seldom neglect.

In this respect, it is reasonable to believe that as a language use, questioning's dynamic and active generating process is closely connected with contexts. That is, the former may tend to vary with constant changes of the latter. And then, to investigate questioning's generating process and its relationship with context, we need to explore and illustrate it in a more comprehensive and detailed way; thus, we can well deepen our study and understanding concerning questioning as well as broaden our research scope. With this goal, the present study will take the general functional perspective view of pragmatics proposed by Verschueren (1999) as its point of departure, and then attempts to probe into pragmatic characteristics and properties of questioning in Chinese TV interview programs.

To sum up, based on the framework of Linguistic Adaptation Theory proposed by Verschueren (1999), the focus of this paper is to investigate questioning's linguistic properties, namely its variability, negotiability and adaptability, especially its adaptability. And the second focus of this paper is to explicate questioning's dynamic adaptation process and pragmatic functions in TV interview programs. Specifically, the present study will provide an in-depth analysis of questioning's adaptation to three contextual essentials: interview environment, social norms and utterers' motivations.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the framework of Linguistic Adaptation Theory and teases out previous studies on questions and questioning and the distinction between questions and questioning. Based on the framework of Linguistic Adaptation proposed by Verschueren (1999) and data collected from several episodes of three TV interview programs in China (Dialogue, Yang Lan One on One and Lu Yu You Yue), Section 3 conducts a specific discussion, which includes the detailed illustration of the dynamic adaptation process of questioning in TV interview programs and pragmatic functions questioning realizes in the course of communication. The findings and conclusion are then presented in the final part.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Linguistic Adaptation Theory

2.1.1. The Theoretic Foundation of Adaptation Theory: a New Perspective

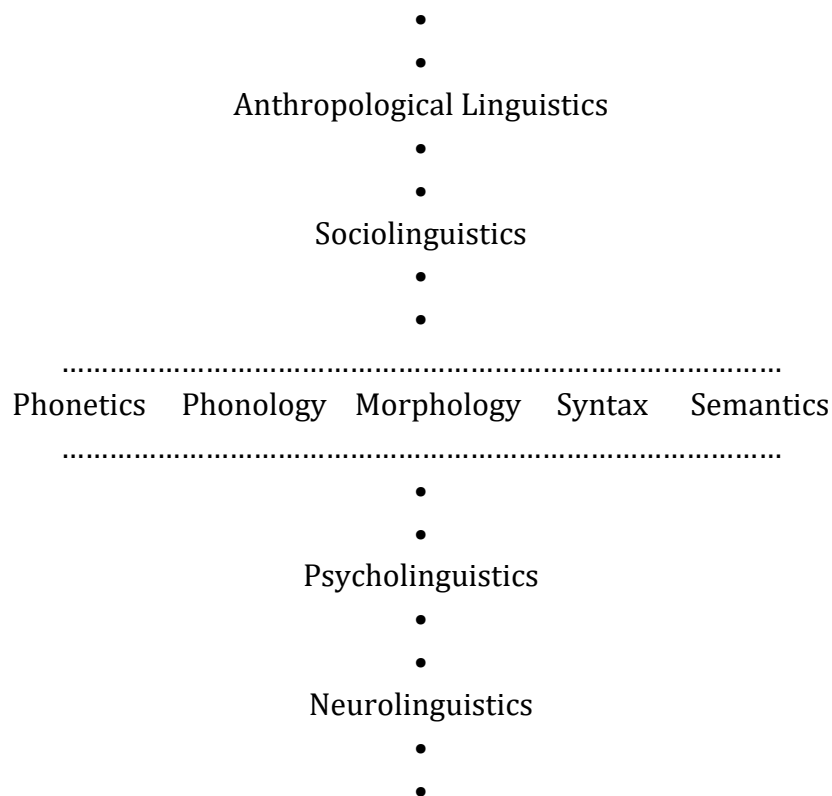
Generally and traditionally, there are two main kinds of views about pragmatics: the component view and the perspective view. The former view considers pragmatics one of the components and disciplines of grammar, together with phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics (Kecskes, 2014). This viewpoint is shared by many British and American linguists. They tend to believe that the pragmatic component is an essential and indispensable part of a good theory of language capability.

For example, Leech (1983) believes that syntax (an abstract system dealing with sentence-formation system) and pragmatics (principles of language use) both belong to complementary field of linguistics. As for him, semantics is a component of syntax, while pragmatics is complementary to it or to syntax.

The perspective view was described by Verschueren (1999). Contrary to the above division, Verschueren (1999) showed his doubt and argument on the traditional component view of pragmatics in his writings on pragmatics. As for him, each of the traditional component disciplines, such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, is related to a specific unit of analysis, while pragmatics has none. Therefore, due to lack of any concrete unit of analysis, pragmatics cannot participate in the traditional division of linguistic theories. He thought that the traditional division neglected many pragmatic problems and phenomenon. For example, Levinson has made many efforts to discuss presupposition in his books, however, he did not pay any attention to various ways in which presupposition is used in real interaction.

As for Verschueren, it is all kinds of adaptation reflected in using presupposition that is the core issue that pragmatics should concern.

Therefore, in his book *Understanding Pragmatics*, Verschueren proposes a new division of linguistic disciplines, which is based on language use. He tends to treat pragmatics as a general functional perspective on language, which is concerned about linguistic phenomenon or research objects of such component disciplines as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. In other words, he tries to regard pragmatics as a different perspective of linguistics to give insight to language use in general human life. Therefore, as long as a linguist studying one of these component disciplines of linguistics adopts this functional perspective (here "function" means cultural, social and cognitive analysis), he is engaged in study on pragmatics, which is shown in the following graph (Verschueren 1987:37).



From the graph, we can clearly grasp his idea on pragmatics and make a conclusion on his belief on pragmatics as follows:

First, pragmatics is different from phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics because it does not have its own unit(s) of analysis. It is obvious that all of the traditional component disciplines of linguistics share a focus and emphasis on language resources. But when it comes to pragmatics, which linguistic unit does pragmatics penetrate in? Is it possible to put pragmatics in the same contrast set with a comparable work?

At the most elementary level, pragmatics can be defined as the study of language use, or, to employ a somewhat more complicated phrasing, the studying of linguistic phenomena from the point of view of their usage properties and processes. This base-level definition does not introduce a strict boundary between pragmatics and some other areas in the field of linguistics, such as discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, or conversation analysis. In fact, according to Verschueren (1999), pragmatics can be situated in the science of language in general. That is, pragmatic analysis can be studied at any level of language. In other words, any level of language may cause processes of linguistic adaptation and display characteristics of adaptation. Therefore, linguistic phenomenon involving any structural level of language should be put in the perspective of pragmatics.

Secondly, different from sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and other interdisciplinary fields, pragmatics does not have its own object (s) of study related to language. Pragmatics does not study the language itself but language use and various links between language form and language use (Verschueren 1995:1). Language use involves the cognitive process and happens in a social world full of a variety of cultural restrictions. This well illustrates that pragmatics is interdisciplinary.

All in all, according to the theory of adaptation, pragmatics is not a separate component discipline of linguistics, which can be shown from the fact that there is a basic difference between it and traditional components of a linguistic theory, such as semantics. That is, it possesses not a basic analysis unit. And what's more, the difference between it and interdisciplinary fields of investigation such as neurolinguistics is that it does not have any specific or concrete extra-linguistic reality as its correlational objects. As for Verschueren, pragmatics is a general functional perspective and anything related to language can be its study objects. To sum up, pragmatics can further be specified as a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior.

2.1.2. Linguistic Adaptation Theory Framework

In his book *Understanding Pragmatics*, Verschueren provides a sound analysis pattern for our linguistic study. According to him, language use is a continuous choice-making process on linguistic forms and strategies. The reason why humankind can make choices on language is that it has three core interrelated properties: variability, negotiability and adaptability. Variability means all possibilities that language can provide for users to choose from. Negotiability means that this process of choice-making is not mechanical or dull, but is based on highly elastic principles and strategies. These two properties indicate the uncertainty of language choice-making. Since language choice-making abounds in uncertainty, why can we guarantee our success in communication? It is because of the third property——adaptability, which is the most important one of language use. Adaptability is the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs (Verschueren 1999:61). The term “communicative needs” is used to cover all kinds of needs that may affect the process of communication. In a word, adaptability can help language users to choose appropriate language forms and strategies from many possibilities after careful negotiability, so as to satisfy their communicative goals. These three core properties are inseparable and form the basic essence of language.

As a special linguistic phenomenon, questioning also possesses these three core qualities. As for linguistic variability, the process of questioning generation and illustration means that speakers tend to choose question forms and questioning strategies from many possible linguistic choices. As for linguistic negotiability, although questioning features many forms and strategies, language users can choose right ones to form a smooth piece of communication, which means they conform to highly flexible principles and strategies. As for linguistic adaptability, it means that questioning generating is a dynamic process adapting to several contextual components based on its variability and negotiability. And the notion of adaptability does not appear in vacuum (Verschueren 1999). When analyzing the adaptability of the host's questioning in interview programs, it should be set in specific contexts. Therefore, in line with variability and negotiability, adaptability becomes a critical key to our understanding of questioning in TV interview programs. To analyze its adaptability, the present study will start from three specific aspects: questioning's adaptation to physical world, social norms and psychological world. These serve as the basic theoretical framework of the present study.

Meanwhile, to start our research on questioning's dynamic adaptation, it's necessary to tease out related literature on question forms and pragmatic questioning, which is shown in the following part.

2.2. Pervious Study Approaches to Questions and Their Classifications

The study of questions has aroused lots of logicians, linguists and philosophers' interest, especially in the late 1950s. It originates from the grammatical field, develops in the logical-semantic sphere, and continues to improve in the pragmatic domain. In English grammar, the term "interrogative" is often used. For a long time, linguists have been studying English interrogatives from different points of view and in various ways and methods. The approaches to the analysis of interrogatives can be concluded and divided into three aspects, which are as follows:

2.2.1. The Grammatical Approach and Classification

The classification of the general question and the specific question are first proposed by Naiman et al and Bialystok et al (1978). By Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985)'s account, interrogatives are seen as one of the four major syntactic types that are coupled with different discourse functions, which mainly aim at seeking information about a specific issue. In line with the types of reply and response expected, questions can fall into three categories: the yes/no questions, the response to which can be either positive or negative; the wh-questions, the reply to which is various and open; the alternative questions, whose reply is to choose one from the two or more options offered in such a question.

Moreover, Quirk et al. (1985) admitted that in some situations, questions can perform other discourse functions as well. For example, they can play the role of directives, expressing requests, suggestions, invitations or advice. Interrogatives with the non-eliciting functions are exemplified by exclamatory and rhetorical questions. Both in the syntactic form of interrogatives, the former "has the illocutionary force of an exclamatory assertion" while the latter "has the force of a strong assertion".

In addition to the types of questions identified by Quirk et al. (1985), Bull (1994) introduced two additional categories when discussing news interviews: indirect questions "in which the force of the question is expressed in a subordinate clause", and what Jucker called "moodless" questions, which refer to questions without a finite verb (Jucker, 1986). Syntactically, among the typology of six major questions, yes-no questions, wh-questions and alternative questions are interrogative, while declarative, indirect and moodless questions are non-interrogatives.

With the above-mentioned grammarians' research on interrogatives and based on classic grammar, a general classification of English interrogatives is widely accepted, which contains general questions (yes/no questions), tag questions, special questions (wh-questions) and alternative questions.

(1) General Questions

General questions are normally answered by "yes" or "no". So they can also be called yes-no questions. This kind of interrogatives is mainly constructed by putting whole or parts of predicates before subjects. For example,

Do you have any brothers?

(2) Tag-Questions

Tag-questions are constructed as: assertive sentence + simplified question. A tag-question with negative assertive part and positive simplified question may be as follows:

You haven't finished your work yet, have you?

(3) Special Questions

Special questions always begin with interrogative pronouns or interrogative adverbs. Interrogative pronouns are who, whom, whose, what, which, and interrogative adverbs include when, where, how and so on. For example,

Which novel is more interesting?

How do you know that?

(4) Alternative Questions

Alternative questions are composed of two or more than two general questions with conjunction “or” joining them, for example,

Is it still raining or has it stopped?

Sometimes alternative questions consist of a special question followed by provided options. For example,

Which is more powerful determinant, heredity or environment?

The classification shown above is the major classification from grammatical point of view. And this kind of classification still plays an important role when people get to know interrogatives in English nowadays.

Chinese grammarians also showed great interest in Chinese interrogative sentences, forms of which are different from those in English. Researchers basically classified Chinese interrogative sentences into four categories: “Shifei Type”, “Tezhi Type”, “Xuanze Type” and “Zhengfan Type”, which are shown in the following table (LuoAn’yuan, 1996):

Chinese Forms	Features	Examples	English Counterpart
Shifei Type	Declarative sentence plus “ne” “ma” “ba” “ya”, etc.	ta zai chifan ba? (Is he eating?)	Yes/no questions
Tezhi Type	Using interrogative pronoun in declarative sentences	shui lai le? (Who comes?)	Wh- questions
Xuanze Type	The appearance of “shi...haishi”	shi ni shuo haishi wo shuo? (Is it you or I who will say that?)	Alternative questions
Zhengfan Type	The appearance of “shibushi”	ta shibushi xue yixue de? (He majors in medicine, doesn't he?)	Tag questions

According to the above account and analysis, it is obvious to find that grammatical classification of questions is based on types of reply and response. Besides, this kind of categorization basically focuses on syntactical forms of questions instead of their pragmatic functions, which can only be explained in contexts, although some of the grammarians did mention some discourse functions fulfilled by questions.

2.2.2. The Rhetoric Approach and Classification

According to A Dictionary of Linguistic and Phonetics (2000), ‘rhetoric’ means the art of using language impressively or persuasively, especially in public speaking. Rhetoric questions are a kind of indirect illocutionary act. The typical function of questions is to ask for unknown information. So when a question is not uttered to request information but generate other functions, it is then regarded as an indirect speech act. English rhetoric questions are a special interrogative form aiming at emphasizing something. The speaker expresses his emphasized affirmation or negation through the use of questions. Since they are designed to emphasis, the hearer need not answer.

Iles (1994) pointed out that by means of a rhetorical question, the speaker expects the hearer to apprehend his implied message, for he believed that typical rhetorical questions convey “a request for information or advice”, which are the embodiment of prototypical non-information eliciting questions. The essential task of rhetoric approach is to explore the art of language use to satisfy different communicative purposes.

2.2.3. The Functional Approach and Classification

The previous two classifications emphasize forms of questions, while the following focuses on their functions. Based on their functions, McHoul (1987) divided questions into Q-type (questionnaire-type) and the N-type (negative-type) in accordance with their functions. In most cases, a Q-type question is often followed by a standard answer whereas a N-type is probably replied with defense, admission, excuse, justification or others. McHoul has drawn a distinguishing line between the information seeking function of questions, which is considered as the prime function, and those non-information seeking ones.

According to Ilie (1994), he brought forth a new category based on the types of response obtained, which is supported by the principle of pragmatic adequacy. Accordingly, this category leads to four major types of question which can be identified as information-, answer-, action- and mental-response-eliciting questions.

Analogous to Ilie's viewpoint, Freed (1994) developed a taxonomy of question functions which is represented by a continuum. The continuum theory is firstly established by Ilie. Freed sets forth that any question can be located somewhere along the continuum, one polar of which is information sought and the other information conveyed. Since the purpose or functions of a question is a significant factor in its classification, Freed, to a great extent, has equalized the classification of questions with that of their functions. Freed's four categories of questions, ranging from those at the end of seeking information to that of conveying information, are "the external questions", "the questions about talk", "the relational questions", "the expressive style questions".

Freed's four general categories basically parallel Kearsley (1976, cited in Freed, 1994)'s classification. Kearsley divided questions into epistemic, echoic, social control and expressive types. Yet Kearsley takes the speaker's attitude into consideration in the expressive group and holds that the expressive questions and the social control questions do not involve the information content of the questions while Freed excludes the speaker's intent or attitude, considering only the literal meaning of the questions in her study.

Therefore, here, interrogatives can be divided into four kinds according to the addressor's purpose and the pragmatic functions of the sentences.

(1) Information Questions

The most basic pragmatic function of English interrogatives is acquiring information. This kind of interrogatives is a requirement for the unknown message from the listener. For example,

-Is the library open on Sunday?

-No, I am afraid not.

If the counter-partners are equivalent or with close relationship, for the most part, messages can be acquired easily and there is no power concealed in the information question. On the contrary, if the involvers are not equal by status or to be stranger one another, the information would merely be gained by indirect questioning and request. For example,

-Tourist: Excuse me. I wonder if you could tell me the way to the railway station?

-Policeman: Take bus No.1 near the central bank and get off at the last stop.

(2) Rhetorical Questions

Questions used for rhetoric purpose are rhetorical questions from pragmatic point of view. There are approximately four kinds of rhetorical questions due to their different performance.

Questions providing information instead of asking for answers

Do you know it is already 8 o'clock in the evening?

Questions used to express the addressor's feeling

Who else burns a bank check if not an idiot?

Questions emphasizing the truth

What could be larger than the universe?

Questions expressing surprised feeling by using an exclamatory form

Isn't it beautiful weather today?

Examination Questions

Addressors bringing on this kind of questions do not expect unknown information, but to exam whether the receiver knows the answer or not. In fact, the speaker knows exactly what the answer is. For example,

Do you know what my name is?

Examination questions can be subdivided into two kinds considering the contexts.

For educational purpose, teachers or parents may ask students or children for test to know the knowledge they have mastered.

Another typical kind of examination question is the interrogation question. This kind of questions aims to make someone to confess by stating a fact, such as,

Where were you when the bomb exploded in the car?

Indirect Request Questions

To be polite, the address or asks the listener to do something by using indirect request questions. The purposes of this kind of questions are normally polite request, suggestion or invitation. For instance,

Could you open the door for me?

Would you mind turning down your TV volume a bit?

Will you come to dinner with us tonight?

Questioning, as a kind of speech act, is used to achieve pragmatic function such as acquiring information, expressing feelings, examining and polite requirement. Meanwhile, the relationship of the participants is shown by the dialogue they made.

According to different classifications of "question" above, the present study believes that scholars in different research fields classify "question" in agreement with its forms or functions in order to meet their research needs. By analyzing and comparing these classifications, in this study, the types of question will be categorized as six types according to their forms and functions: yes/no question, wh-questions and alternative questions, declarative, indirect and moodless questions.

2.3. The Pragmatic Approach to Questioning

"Questioning" is an activity aiming at requesting information. In so thinking, questioning differs fundamentally from "questions" in both forms and functions. The former is characteristic of dynamics and uncertainty, which is to fulfill communicative functions and the functions of which can only be explained and illustrated in specific contexts. In brief, "questioning" is not mere one in the form of interrogative sentence and not just to approach the goal of getting information.

The most recent research on questioning is based on the pragmatic approach. It represents a transition from an overemphasis on form and the static aspect of questioning to an emphasis on their functional and dynamic aspects. Research on functions of interrogative sentences has laid a solid foundation for the pragmatic research of "questioning". That is, the pragmatic research of "questioning" can find its way into the research on functions of interrogative sentences. All of those characteristics of questions can therefore form a foundation for questioning. Lots of linguists, such as Quirk (1972, 1985), Georgia M. Green (1989) and Amy Tsui (1992), probed deep into the analysis of this research.

Graesser (1992:169) pointed out that "questioning" can be divided into two types: the real questioning aiming at requiring information and the strategic questioning containing other

pragmatic functions. As for him, “questioning” is not just to ask for information. That is, not all questioning is motivated by information.

Chinese pragmatic researchers also showed great interest in questioning. He Gang (1995) treats questioning as a speech act and process, which is driven and motivated by pragmatic needs and designed to realize certain communicative goals. The questioning the speaker utters can perform different communicative tasks in specific contexts. Therefore, “questioning” can be defined as a kind of speakers’ pragmatic need and verbal process. In 1997, He Gang made further study and improved his observation on “questioning” by viewing it as an act full of various complicated features and boasting interpersonal-situational interactive values. He argues that “questioning” is an act with functional selectivity of contexts. Through this special language use, many interactive purposes can be well served.

Another Chinese scholar Xu Shenghuan also provides a pragmatic method to explore questioning. In studying English interrogatives and questioning functions, Xu (1998) proposed a new theory named Transmutation of Interrogatives. He supposes that transmutation of questions demonstrates itself in two ways: the transmutation in grammatical representation and that in pragmatic functions. The former concerns structural changes which will finally turn interrogatives into non-interrogatives, while the latter bears characteristics of gradual decrease, or even transference of pragmatic functions. Later, Xu Xiaochun and Xu Shenghuan (1999) proposed The Theoretical Model of Pragmatic Transmutation of Interrogatives to illustrate strong interrogation and weak interrogation.

As for interview questioning, the pragmatic approach to interview questioning is mostly concerned with cooperative principles and pragmatic functions. Based on framework of Face Model proposed by Bull et al. (1996), Elliott and Bull (1996) examine face threats in questions uttered in political interviews. Ilie (1999) investigates discursive and argumentative functions of question-response argumentation in talk shows.

Related pragmatic research demonstrates questioning’s pragmatic features. Researchers’ pragmatic questioning study has provided us with substantial progress for further investigation on questioning. It can be concluded that from the pragmatic point of view, questioning is an important and universal behavioral mode to effectuate linguistic interpersonal functions in speech activities. However, too comprehensively survey questioning’s pragmatic features, there is still a long way to go.

In case of questioning in TV interview programs, obviously, questioning is a key role in the success of communication between hosts and guests in TV interviews. Many TV interview programs rely on typical “question-answer” pattern to move on. Therefore, the hosts’ manipulation of questioning skills makes great contributions to a successful interview, which has become their top priority in preparation for interviews. Thus, it’s worth investigating questioning in TV interview programs, which can act as guidelines to help improve hosts’ questioning technique so as to guarantee the smoothness of interviews.

Due to these two reasons, the present study desires to adopt the comprehensive functional perspective view of pragmatics proposed by Verschueren (1999) to analyze questioning in TV interview programs. In accordance with pragmatics, especially the framework of Linguistic Adaptation Theory, the present research regards questioning as a kind of linguistic phenomenon and a speech act, which contains three essential properties of language: variability, negotiability and adaptability. Besides, in the communication in TV interview programs, it is a dynamic process concerning physical, social and mental contextual elements, which always varies with the changing contexts. As for “question”, it is then only a kind of linguistic product generated in such communicative environment.

To testify the above thesis and to further dig deep into questioning’s pragmatic quality in TV interview programs, the present study aims at answering the following questions:

(1) How does questioning in TV interview programs serve as realization of adaptation based on its variability and negotiability?

(2) In what aspects does questioning in TV interview programs display its dynamic adaptation process?

To settle these two problems, with the data collected from several episodes of three famous TV interview programs in China (Dialogue, Yang Lan One on One and Lu Yu You Yue), the examination of questioning in TV interview programs is carried out in great details in the following part, which aims to test whether the host's questioning in TV interview programs serves as realization of his/her conscious or unconscious adaptation to the three specific contexts initiated by Verschueren: physical environment, social conventions and principles and psychological motivations and intentions.

3. Questioning in Interview Programs as Realization of Adaptation

3.1. Questioning in Interview Programs as Adaptation to the Interview Environment

All objective existing material elements that exert influences on linguistic choices of communication can be included in the interview environment, which is also defined as the physical world. In the physical context, time and space are the most common components, for these two are the most obvious concepts in our real life.

Meanwhile, elements such as bodily postures, gesture, gaze, physical appearance are all components of the physical world of communication, which will, to some extent, influence language users' linguistic choices as well as affect the effectiveness and the smoothness of a communication. Therefore, communicators will adapt to them consciously or unconsciously in the course of communicating. Such is the same with the host's questioning in interview programs.

In the present study, linguistic choices' adaptation to the physical world will be divided into adaptation to time, space, participants in interviews and material conditions.

3.1.1. Adaptation to the Temporal

Example 1

Host: qishi zai qiguo he luguo zhijian, zuizhong qi jue dingxing yinsu keneng jiushi liangshi, nin xieguo yibenshu jiao liangshizhazheng. women shixiang yixia, ruguo luguo he qiguo zhizheng, zhege banben fangdao jintian lai de hua, ta huishi shenmeyang de yanyi?

'In fact, perhaps the final decisive factor of the war between the Qi Kingdom and the Lu Kingdom is rice. And we know you have written a book named Seeds of Destruction: The Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation. And I wonder if the story occurred today, what would it be like?'

Dialogue: Dialogue with War Minds

The questioning was uttered after a short story about the conflict between the Qi Kingdom and the Lu Kingdom in Ancient China had been played on the big screen in the studio. Here, the word "jintian(today)" was used in the host' questioning. However, it does not mean that the assumption would occur on the day the interview was recorded. As is mentioned previously, in the process of generating meaning, time is a relative concept and characteristic of uncertainty. It does not always mean the exact time as its literal meaning denotes. However, communicators will not misunderstand each other during the communication. When choosing the word "jintian(today)", the host was very sure that all participants on the spot knew exactly what the word "jintian(today)" means in that specific context. Obviously, in this interview, the host adapts to the time the interview was recorded to utter his questioning.

Moreover, since the topic of the interview is discussing the famous leading researcher, economist and analyst of the New World Order William Engdahl's vision and idea of genetic food production and food crisis, the function of the question is to obtain more information from the interviewee, so that the audience can learn more and come to understand the interviewee's thought on the world. Thus, the questioning serves as pushing the communication to develop into deep topics.

3.1.2. Adaptation to the Spatial

Space is another key and critical issue in the physical world. And in interview programs, it can not be neglected, either. For example, in interview programs, participants will be arranged to sit in different places, and it is common that the host and the guest will be usually in the center of the studio. And the distance between them is proper to make it convenient to communicate face to face as well as keep a certain distance. Besides, some interview programs also pay much attention to their setting design. For example, in *Lu Yu You Yue*, snug couch in warm bright color is always put in the middle of the setting for the host and the guest. In such relaxing environment, the talk will go on easily and harmoniously. In *Yang Lan One on One*, the recording is often set in the guest's office, which also makes it easier to create a harmonious atmosphere for the interviewee. Moreover, in the host's questioning, it is common to find that the concept of space can also be used as a kind of pragmatic strategy of the host. For example,

Example 2

Lu Yu: neng huicheng le, gaoxing ma?

'Then You could come back to Beijing, are you happy?'

Guest: na dangran gaoxing.

'Of course I was happy.'

Lu Yu You Yue: Father and Son's World

The spatial reference is usually connected with some perspective. According to Verschueren (1999), the spatial reference can either utter space or reference space. The former shows that the deictic center of the discourse is closely related to the speaker's perspective, while the latter indicates a deictic center distinct from the utterer's. And spatial reference is usually linked up with conceptions of motion space.

In the above example, the host used "huicheng(come back to the city)" in her questioning to ask whether the guest was happy or not at that time. Here, obviously, the host quitted her own spatial perspective and adopted the guest's spatial perspective, for "huicheng(come back to the city)" clearly presented the spatial position of the guest instead of her own. Therefore, the host's questioning here can be regarded as her conscious adaptation to the spatial reference. This questioning aimed to ask the guest's emotion when he was allowed to return to Beijing. So it does not only serve as checking information but also building the common psychological ground that can make the guest feel comfortable and relaxed.

3.1.3. Adaptation to the Interviewee's Physical Appearances

As is pointed out previously, bodily postures, gesture, facial expression (such as gaze, smiles and so on), physical appearance (including clothes) are all components of the physical world of communication, which will, to some extent, influence language users' linguistic choices so as to affect the effectiveness and the smoothness of a communication. Usually, the host will also use questioning to accomplish similar communication purposes. For example,

Example 3

Yang Lan: ni zheshen yifu ting ku de, shi cong nage haijun luzhandui nonglai de ba?

'Your suit looks cool, is it got from some Marine Corps?'

Wang Shi: zhe yifu shi women gongsi de gongzuofu, jiushi wanke wuyeguanli de gongzuofu. nin kan zhege—"PM property management (wuyeguanli)", zhe shi women wanke de biaozi.

'It is our company's uniform. That is, The Wanke Property Management Company's uniform. Look, here, the phrase—PM, this is Wanke's logo.'

Yang Lan One on One: Wang Shi

In the above example, the host's questioning is definitely an adaptation to the guest's physical appearance. What the guest wore decided the linguistic choice the host made while she uttered the questioning and greatly affected the effectiveness of the questioning. Meanwhile, as the first question of the interview, its function is to help start the dialogue between the host and the guest as well as make the audience aware of the uniform of the guest's company. Such amicable questioning quickly relaxes the guest, which is conducive to the following questioning.

Therefore, in TV interview programs, it is common that the host will mention what he/she has found on the interviewees and express his/her comment as a way to initiate, maintain or shift the topic by questioning. Apparently, questioning can be used as a means of managing topics in interview programs.

3.2. Questioning in Interview Programs as Adaptation to Social Conventions

The social world includes norms of a society that have come into being gradually in daily life and can be reflected in clothing, food, shelter and transportation, etc. It is changeable, regional, in which culture is embedded. Language use does serve as a reflection to society and culture. As a specific linguistic phenomenon, questioning can also act as carrier of some social norms and cultural elements. Meanwhile, social norms and cultural elements will also play a role in the shaping and molding of questioning in TV interview programs. The following analysis is to discuss the adaptation of the host's questioning to the social world in several aspects: adaptation to the care for guest's health, adaptation to the respect for guest's privacy, adaptation to the respect for the guest's social status and adaptation to the respect for the guest's standpoint.

3.2.1. Adaptation to the Respect for the Guests' Social Status

In China's social life, Chinese value their face very much and requires others' respect and appreciation all the time. While western people regard freedom of conduct and speech, Chinese people would like others to show their respect more directly in using language during communication. Gu (1990) puts that "denigrating self and respecting other remain at the core of the modern conception of limao". The social hierarchy gives rise to politeness and consequently the latter expresses and helps maintain the former. As a host of a successful interview program, the host will definitely take politeness into serious account, which is especially shown in his/her questioning utterances.

To show concern about others' face and dignity, one has to implement many principles of politeness. As is said above, Western social world and China embody different politeness maxims and principles. For example, person deixis can be used as a method to show politeness in our everyday lives. In TV interview programs, person deixis can help fulfill various pragmatic functions in different specific contexts and plays an important part in the shaping of the host's questioning in TV interview programs.

Example 4

Lu Yu: tian a, nin xiaoshihou yangguo maogou ma?

'Oh dear, did you raise pets in your childhood?'

Lu Di: yangguo, wo muqin shi fojiaotu a, nashi cibeiveihuai de.

'Yes, for my mother was a Buddhist and she was very kind to animals.'

Lu Yu You Yue: Lu Di-In the Shadow of Leaders

Example 5

Lu Yu: pingchang ni bijiao xihuan bieren zenme chenghu ni, shi jiao liangnvshi, liangxiaojie, haishi jiao shenme?

'Usually, what would you like people to call you? Is it Madam Liang, Miss Liang, or something else?'

Guest: jiao wo fengyi.

'Call me Fengyi.'

Lu Yu You Yue: Liang Fengyi: Perfect Life

In China, "nin" and "ni" (you) are the two pronouns used to indicate the counterpart in a conversation. The former one is often uttered by speaker to show his/her respect for the listener, especially those who are older than he/her, or those who are not his/her acquaintances, which can be seen in Example 4. Here, the host chose "nin" as a deixis in order to show her great respect to the guest, who is over 60. In this example, a yes/no question was uttered, to begin to discuss the guest's deep love and care for animals. And in Example 5, the host used the counterpart "ni" to utter the questioning. Here, the deixis "ni" indicates two things: firstly, the host is close to the guest, so uttering "ni" well displays their psychological and pragmatic distance; secondly, the guest is almost as young as her. Besides, in this example, a specific alternative question was used at the very beginning of the whole interview, which was designed to elicit information. In a word, generally speaking, to adapt to the social conventions of respecting people's social status, the host tend to use different deictic terms to represent different guests.

3.2.2. Adaptation to the Guests' Privacy

Embraced by Confucianism thought and culture, Chinese tend to take being polite to others as one of their important social norms. They will talk with people with frankness and answer each question with sincerity, for this is seen as good virtue. As for personal privacy, Jia (2004) believes that it is a part of social concern and is considered as a way to show others' friendliness. So, usually, they will answer to each question the host asks. However, this does not mean that they do not pay attention to their personal privacy. For example, generally speaking, Chinese do not like others to ask questions about their fortunes. In a word, in interview programs, the host will take the interviewees' feeling into consideration when he/she begins to make a questioning utterance concerning their privacy.

Example 6

Yang Lan: wo zhidao ni zuijin tebie mang, haoxiang yijing mang le haojige tongxiao le, zai mang shenme neng toulou yidian ma?

'I know you have been very busy recently. And you seemed to stay up for many nights. Could you tell me what you are busy with?'

Chen Tianqiao: women zai zuo yige zizhu zhishichanquan chanpin de yanfa, zuijin jiuyao nachulai gei shiren kan le. cengjing zai 2 yuefen de yici xinwenfabuhui shang, wo gei zhege chanpin qile yige timu, jiao "xinchuanqi, xinqidian". keneng zuijin jiuba zhekuan youxi tui chulai.

'We have been working at launching products of independent intellectual property, which will be made public recently. In the press conference held in February, I named the product "New Legendry, New Start". Maybe this new game will be initiated recently.'

Yang Lan One on One: Chen Tianqiao

Business confidentiality is a sensitive issue in people's conversation, which belongs to people's business privacy. Therefore, before uttering her questioning on what business activities the guest has been recently joining, she used the modal verb "could" to initiate her questioning, so as to ask for the guest's permission. This is an obvious form of questioning showing respect for others as well as seeking information.

3.3. Questioning in Interview Programs as Adaptation to the Interviewer's Motivations

The following analysis will divide the host's linguistic adaptation to his/her psychological world into five parts: questioning as knowledge-acquiring strategy, questioning as mitigation strategy, questioning as appreciation and approval elicitation strategy, questioning as compliment strategy and questioning as humor cultivation strategy.

3.3.1. Questioning as Knowledge-acquiring Strategy

Most TV interview programs are mainly designed for conveying information and message to the audience, to inform the audience of something they do not know or something they do not know well. As the most common form of the interviewer's discourse in TV interviews, questions are set to ask for information, just as Churchill (1978)'s belief that all questions are technically requests for information in interview. Therefore, the central function of questioning is performing the communicative needs for information. This property is closely connected with the features of TV interviews. That is most interviews are task-oriented, in which participants have to accomplish the task of inquiring and supplying information. And seeking information includes acquiring knowledge that appears in the guest's statement and that the host doesn't understand or have no idea of during the interview.

As for knowledge-acquiring, it means asking for some information by questioning in the communicative process. It is a natural thing that a host does not know anything, although he/she may make a full preparation for an interview. In the recording course of a program, it is common that the host may encounter some difficulties in understanding some new terms, information or phenomenon just mentioned by the interviewee. Then, how to react to this seeming embarrassment in time? Resorting to the guest directly for the answer seems much wiser and more feasible in the communicative process. Similar sort of questioning can therefore be seen as the host's knowledge-acquiring strategy. For example,

Example 7

Host: shenme jiao guan zhu min ban?

'What is private investment and governmental support?'

Dialogue: The World is Flat:China Sample

Amid the communication with an official, the host uttered the above questioning so as to remedy his knowledge of this term. "guan zhu min ban (private investment and governmental support)" is a new official catchphrase springing up recently in the government's documents and many officials' account, which means that the government will provide support for the individual's private business activities. To relieve his embarrassment and his confusion on this phrase, the host chooses to ask the guest for the answer directly and immediately. It should be pointed out that perhaps sometimes the host does know related knowledge, while the audience may not know. Therefore, he/she just utters his/her questioning to let the guest explain to the audience. In such kind of case, the host's questioning acts as acquiring the audience's knowledge in certain fields. Therefore, the audience's desire for more knowledge can be satisfied to a large extent. Moreover, this kind of questioning can greatly arouse the audience's

great admire towards the guest, which will greatly upgrade and elevate the guest's social status and prestige in related fields as well.

3.3.2. Questioning as Mitigation Strategy

As is known to all, improper use of language will cause unfriendly results in the course of verbal communication, for it will lead to the possible risk of threatening listeners' face to a certain degree, which will then impede and check the successful development of the communication. Brown & Levinson(1978) argue that everyone in the society has two kinds of face wants: both to be respected as an individual and to be liked as a member of the group. When improper language is used, the listener may feel that he/she is humiliated, judged or offended. Such can definitely hurt the listener's face wants and feelings.

Compared with declarative, imperative and other sentence patterns, interrogative sentences avoid some verbal acts (such as direct abrupt criticism and challenges)threatening to listeners's face. Meanwhile, questions can perform their unique pragmatic functions, such as discussing, consulting, compromising, requesting, etc. As a result, in terms of mitigation, questioning radiates its prominent advantages. It is common that the host and the guest will sometimes differ in their opinions and thought on some matter. And sometimes, the host can't figure out the reasons why the guest says something or does something that is hard to be understood by the public, most of which may be disappointing, annoying or even outraging. Therefore, to show his/her wonder, doubt, disagreement or some other negative emotions on the guests' choice and behavior, the host prefers to use questioning patterns that sound much more polite and friendly, so as to ease the passive and negative influences contained in the content of the questioning as well as maintain the constant harmonious atmosphere of the communication. In this way, the guest will feel comfortable and be ready to answer the question and explain his/her real thought and reasons. For example,

Example 8

Host: zheme youxiu, ni weishenme buyao ne?

'He is so outstanding. Why did you refuse to hire him?' (Question 1)

Guest: dangshi zhege, houlai zhege xuesheng jiu gei wo xie feng xin, yaoqiu jian wo. wo shuo hao a. wo zhidao ta feichang bufuqi ma, shiba. ta dao na'er doushi yao de, zenme dao ni wanke ni jiu buyao shi ba? women jiu jianmian le, jianmian de shihou, ta shuo:"qing ni dangmian gaosu wo, ni buyao wo de liyou." wo shuo:"ni tai youxiu le."

'At that time, the student wrote to ask to visit me. I agreed. I knew he could not believe that I should refuse to hire him, for he was welcome in many companies. So he wanted my explanations. Therefore, we met with each other. And then he said:"Please tell me why you don't want to hire me to my face."I replied:"Because you are so outstanding. "'

Host: tai youxiu yeshi yizhong zuiguo ma?

'Is being so outstanding a sin?' (Question 2)

Dialogue: The Annual Employer

Example 8 is an apparent one with questioning serving as mitigation strategy. In the first underlined questioning above, the host showed his doubt why the guest refused to accept a college graduate, since he was "so outstanding". In the second questioning, based on the guest's narrative in the first adjacent pair, the host emphasized his doubt by uttering "is being so outstanding a sin" to indicate that he was wondering the guest's true reason for his refusal to accept the student, which was also the audience's doubt. Such questioning is much more polite, gentle and mild compared with a direct question "why did you refuse to accept him since he is so outstanding?" or (you believe that being so outstanding is his sin, right?" or direct statement "you think that being so outstanding is a sin, so you don't want him". Both ways of utterances seem straightforward, rash, offensive and/or aggressive, which may lead to the guest's

unfriendly reaction and answer if he feels that his face is threatened by such questioning or statement. Meanwhile, the host's questioning also well displayed the audience's doubt, which can draw their attention and help them focus on the guest's choice and reasons.

3.3.3. Questioning as Appreciation and Approval Elicitation Strategy

Questioning can be treated not only as mitigation strategy in expressing different ideas or doubt but also as appreciation and approval seeking strategy in sharing same ideas or viewpoints. Sometimes, the host will utter his/her questioning in order to emphasize what the guest is talking about by seeking the guest's agreement with his/her belief and agreement contained in his/her questioning. Look at Example 9.

Example 9

Host: danshi nin buhui yaoqiu women zhishi mai shucai ba, zhe zhishi yige lizi, duibudui?

'But absolutely, you will not require that we just sell vegetables here. This is just an assumption, isn't it?'

Guest: zuo yige jiashe ba.

'Just make an assumption.'

Dialogue: College Students' Business Establishing Class

Sometimes, the host will cut the guest short with a questioning utterance as to remind the audience and other guests at present of what the guest's statement means as well as to help them understand this guest's thinking pattern. In the host's questioning in Example 9, before the host's questioning, the guest was just talking about how to grow vegetables, which seemed irrelevant to what the host asked in previous turns. Therefore, the host interrupted him by uttering this questioning, to ask for the guest's confirmation that what he was talking about was just an assumption. So, his questioning here can be seen as a strategy for seeking approval and appreciation, which is often uttered by interrupting the guest's answer.

3.3.4. Questioning as Compliment Strategy

Such strategy is always used in TV interview programs to help build solidarity by flattering the guest in the form of questioning. For example:

Example 10

Host: suoyi jintian fanfu fu le zheme duoci de yanjing, dajia yong zhangsheng lai gei ni yixie xinxin. jintian xingxiang feichang hao, duibudui?

'You adjusted your glass for several times. Take it easy. Let's applaud to give you some confidence. Today you look gorgeous, right?'

Guest: xiexie.

'Thank you.'

Dialogue: College Students as Village Officers

Example 11

Lu Yu: nin kan nin pifu duohao a, shibushi haoduoren dou shuo nin xiande tebie nianqing?

'Well, your skin looks so delicate! Are there many people marvel at your skin and say you look very young?'

Guest: dou shuo wo pifu hao. wo muqin yibeizi mei kua guo wo, jiu kua yiju: "xiao laowu pifu hao."

'Yes. They often compliment me on my skin. My mother never praised me in her life, except saying: "Little Laowu have good skin."'

Lu Yu You Yue: Wen Jieruo

The host's questioning in Example 10 and 11 serve as a compliment strategy. In Example 10, the host used questioning in praise for the interviewee's appearance so as to strengthen the interviewee's confidence and ease his nervous feelings. Example 11 was uttered at the beginning of the interview. Here, the host started with the question about the guest's good skin. This can be seen as a warming-up, which helps cultivate the warm and amicable air for the following discussion. To be flattered is human beings' basic psychological need. We do love other people's compliment and appreciation. In the field of linguistics, compliment has always been the focus of pragmatics. In interview programs, it is common that an excellent and experienced host will make appropriate flattery to meet the guest's psychological need, which can make the following interview easy to develop. Besides, flattery can also accomplish some communicative goals in some degree. For example, it will lead to the establishment of solidarity. Obviously, in the above example the host's compliment has successfully won the guest's active response as the host desired. From this example, we can see that the guest was very pleased with what the host said, thus it definitely helped push the interview move forward. What's more, questioning as a compliment strategy is much more common to see in informal interview programs compared with formal ones because of their distinctive interview orientation, atmosphere and tasks.

3.3.5. Questioning as Humor Cultivation Strategy

Humor is the embodiment of wisdom for human beings. Successful use of humorous language, to some extent, helps people a lot in getting a better understanding of each other. This will shorten their pragmatic distance and psychological distance. In interview programs, in order to activate the scenic atmosphere, amuse the guest and entertain the audience, the host sometimes may deliberately make some humorous utterances.

Example 12

Lu Yu: meiyou yige hanguo nvhai'er ma?

'None of them were Korean Girls?'

Guest: en, meiyou.

'None.'

Lu Yu: ting yuqi ni hen shiluo a?

'You seem very disappointed, right?'

Guest: bu shiluo, you zhongguo liuxuesheng na ye tinghao de ya!

'No, I'm not disappointed. I felt good at that moment, for many Chinese students in South Korea asked me for signature.'

Lu Yu You Yue: Feng Xiaogang

The host's questioning in the above examples is designed to cultivate humorous atmosphere. In the guest's stated description previous to this turn, the guest had told the host that there wasn't a Korean girl fan asking his actors for signature and that only Chinese students in South Korea asked him for signature. Based on his description, the host intended to amuse the director by presenting her questioning to check whether he was disappointed at this. Therefore, this questioning acts as an adaptation to the host's psychological motivation to create a humorous air for the conversation.

4. Conclusion

By collecting and analyzing the naturally occurring data produced in interviews, the study implemented a discussion about questioning in TV interview programs in great details. Based on the above analysis, the study comes up with the following conclusions:

Firstly, as a speech act and a kind of language use, questioning does contain these three properties of language: variability, negotiability and adaptability. Before the host utters his questioning, he strives to make a choice from a wide various and negotiable range of questioning to make related adaptation.

Secondly, questioning is dynamic and active, which should be explained in specific contexts. In terms of the dynamic adaptation process of questioning, the present analysis finds that in TV interview programs, the host tends to try his/her best to make his/her questioning as a continuously conscious/unconscious adaptation to physical materials, social conventions and rules as well as mental motivations. This well verifies and tests the rationality of Jef Verschoren's Linguistic Adaptation Theory.

Finally, questioning in TV interview programs can perform various functions, such as topic management, stance taking, information elicitation, etc. It can also be used as all kinds of strategy according to different situations, so as to push the whole communication to move smoothly and friendly.

In a word, the study may shed some light on the illustration and perfection of Linguistic Adaptation Theory. It can also provide some insight into the relationship between language use and social, cultural and psychological contextual components. Finally, since interview conversation is a face-to-face communication, the study of questioning in interview conversations may help to improve language users' communicative competence through appropriate use of questioning strategies.

Acknowledgements

This work was financially supported by Social Science Research Programme of Fujian (FJ2016C157) and pre-research Foundation of National Social Science Foundation of Quanzhou Normal University(2016YYS K11).

References

- [1] Alice F. Freed, 1994. The Form and Function of Questions in Informal Dyadic Conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 12(6): 183-228.
- [2] Amy Tsui, 1992. *A Functional Description of Questions: Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis*. Malcolm Coulthard: Routledge.
- [3] Brown P., & S. Levison, 1978. Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena. In Goody N. (ed.), *Questions and Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Bull, P., J. Elliott, D. Palmer & L. Walker, 1996. Why Politeness Are Three-Faced: The Face Model of Political Interviews. *British Journal of Social Psychology* 35: 267-284.
- [5] Churchill, L., 1978. *Questioning Strategies in Sociolinguistics*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.
- [6] Elliott, J. & P. Bull, 1996. A Question of Threat: Face Threats in Questions Posed during Televised Political Interviews. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 6: 49-72.
- [7] Green G. M., 1989. *Pragmatics and Natural Language Understanding*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- [8] Graesser, A. C., 1992. Mechanisms That Generate Questions. In *Questions and Information Systems*. London: Routledge.
- [9] Gu Yueguo, 1990. Politeness Phenomena in Modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(2):237-257.
- [10] He Gang, 1995. On Cultural Functions of Pragmatic Question. *Journal of Foreign Languages* 2:11-16. (In Chinese).

-
- [11] He Gang, 1998. Pragmatic Definition of Questioning. *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching* 6:22-26. (In Chinese).
- [12] Ilie, C., 1994. *What else can I Tell You? A Pragmatic Study of English Rhetorical Questions as Discursive and Argumentative Acts*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.
- [13] Ilie, C., 1999. Question-response Argumentation in Talk Shows. *Journal of Pragmatics* 31:975-999.
- [14] Jia Yuxin, 2004. *Of Intercultural Communication*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. (In Chinese).
- [15] Jucker, A., 1986. *News Interviews: A Pragmalinguistic Analysis*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- [16] Kearsley, G., 1976. Questions and Question Asking in Verbal Discourse: a Cross-disciplinary Review. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 5:355-375.
- [17] Kecskes, I., 2014. *Intercultural Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [18] Leech, G., 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- [19] Levinson, S., 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [20] Luo An'yuan, 1996. *Modern Chinese Grammar*. Beijing: Press of Minzu University of China. (In Chinese).
- [21] Mey, J.L., 2001. *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- [22] Mchoul, A.W., 1987. Why There Are No Guarantees for Interrogators. *Journal of Pragmatics* 11:455-471.
- [23] Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik, 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.
- [24] Verschueren, J., 1999. *Understanding Pragmatics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [25] Xu Shenghuan, 1998. On the Pragmatic Transmutation of English Interrogatives. *Foreign Languages Teaching and Research* 4:27-35. (In Chinese).
- [26] Xu Xiaochun, Xu Shenghuan, 1999. Strong Interrogation and Weak Interrogation. *Foreign Languages* 3:14-21. (In Chinese).