Illocutionary Acts from the Perspective of Identity Theory with Pu-Yi's Lines in The Last Emperor against the Tobacco-Prevalent Backdrop

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Abstract

The end of Qing Dynasty was a time where tobacco was prevalent. The social context exerted great influence on group members' behavior. The central idea of Identity Theory is that the languages we use are actually controlled, or at least affected, by both ourselves and the situations we are in. However, the analyses of illocutionary acts from the perspective of identity are short of due attention.This article is designed to detect illocutionary acts from the perspective of Identity Theory to find out a brand-new way to approach the reasons why different illocutionary acts are chosen by speakers and also will offer the answer to the question of how illocutionary acts reflect speaker's social identities. After analyzing the seven examples, this paper arrives at two main conclusions i.e. Pu-Yi's illocutionary acts change with the changes of identities and the illocutionary acts make it possible for reflecting his various social identities. Furthermore, with the examples of Pu-Yi's lines in *The Last Emperor,* this study might be more understandable, more interesting and with, more or less, an added historical value in the specific tobacco-prevalent social context.

Keywords: illocutionary acts; identity theory; tobacco-prevalent backdrop; the Last Emperor

Tobacco came into China ever since the Ming Dynasty and it has soon become part of agricultural life by the early 20th century in China. The end of Qing Dynasty was a time where tobacco was prevalent.Guangxu emperor pointed out that since the abolition of the ban of tobacco, it had done harm to the country.Similar to the modern society, there was youth access to the tobacco products.[1]Those who smoked opium had lost their jobs and become sick and bankrupt. However, the warning the implementation of tobacco control policies failed to lead to the decrease in smoking prevalence.[2] Later on, the Opium War broke out and led to the end of Qing Dynasty. Pu-Yi is the last emperor in China. After that, he fled to Machukuo and became the king of the Japanese puppet state. After the

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foundation of People's Republic of China, he was sent to jail as a prisoner.

The film *The Last Emperor* is a biographical one which has recorded the changes of Pu-Yi's several identities in his life.

The true essence of natural language is that the process of performing utterances is actually doing things.[3,4]Of the three speech acts, "illocutionary act" turns out to be the focus of Austin's interest. When it comes to the term speech act, this kind has been referred to exclusively.[5]That is what Austin's main point of saying something is doing something. For fifty-nine years now, the speech act theory has constituted a leading framework in pragmatic studies, which have carried out analysis of the different illocutionary acts of utterance.[6-11]The concept of "identity" was traced back to the ideas of Symbolic Interactionism and Perceptual Control Theory. Identity Theory proposed by Burke and Stet[12]has been adopted to explain the specific meanings of individuals' claimed multiple identities. During the past decades of years, many studies conducted on illocutionary acts were put forward for the purposes of explaining human mind and behavior confined in the field of philosophy, or distinguishing literal meaning and actual act as pragmatic studies. Howerver, the analyses of illocutionary acts from the perspective of identity are short of due attention.

It is out of the above considerations that the study has been carried out. Moreover, this papertook Pu-Yi's lines in *The Last Emperor* as examples to analyze the illocutionary acts based on Identity Theory because of his unique and multiple identities in the modem history of China. The author also believes that the study might set a new angle to analyze illocutionary acts and in addition, be more easily understood, more interesting and with, more or less, an added historical value.

Speech Acts obtain the most concerns and interests in both philosophical and linguistic fields.Austin[1] believed that the object of language study should not be confined in the focus on vocabularies and sentences, but the actions performed through sentences. In brief, saying something is actually doing something. As an essential explanation of language, the illocutionary acts happen almost everyday but are not noticed by everyone. However, analyzed from the perspective of identity, the outputs of one's behavior are based on his or her identities. The study observes why illocutionary acts change from Identity Theory and how the illocutionary acts reflect the social identities as well.

Speech act theory studies the unsaid meaning. Speech acts refer to something that is done by utterance. This idea constituted the basis of Austin's[3] later theory. Later on, he proposed that three kinds of speech acts made up all the utterances. The locutionary act is the actually said words, meaning people say something to convey the meaning of adjusting to the syntax rules. As for the illocutionary act, it reveals the intention of the speaker, meaning they expect the adressee to do something.The third speech act, that is, theperlocutionary act,refers to the effect of the utterance, meaning the influence carried out by the addressee for what is said by the speaker. The illocutionary act differs from the perlocutionary act in that the former is an utterance said by the speaker in order to the addressee doing something for that. While the latter is the effect caused by the utterance. For the present study, it focuses on the analysis of illocutionary act.

Speech acts have been classified into five categories as verdictives, exercitivescommissives, behabitives and expositives.[3]Different from the aforementioned classification, Searle's[4]improvement is based on a principled basis--the felicity conditions, in which there are four important ones. Instead, according to Searle,[4]there are five categories of illocutionary acts as Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declaratives. Representative justifies the truth of the proposition being expressed by the speaker. Directive attempts the speaker to make the hearer do something. Commissive aims at prompting the speaker to make a commitment to future actions. Expressive aims at expressing some psychological state or the speaker tries to express the truth of the proposition. And declarative brings the correspondence between the proposition content and reality.

In line with Searle's in-depth research on people's ordinary communication with each other, however, in most cases, the literal meaning

is not invariably identical with speaker's intention. That means, under certain circumstances, the content of communication is not what in fact the speaker wants to do. Therefore, Searle[13] deemed that speech acts must be divided into direct and indirect ones.

According to Searle's opinion, one indirect speech act contains two interdependent acts as a primary and a secondary illocutionary act. The primary one embodies in force of the secondary which is the utterance's literal meaning. We may, therefore, say that the primary illocutionary act carries overtones in which the words mean more than be said. Here the problem comes once again: the literal meaning is easily understandable, nevertheless the implication the overtone contains cannot be inferred correctly under certain circumstance by the hearer. For the purpose of solving this, Searle[4] excogitates a pyramid in whose eight-step program helps analyzing the performance of indirect speech act. These steps are believed to serve as a set of satisfactory method to reconstruct what really happens when indirect speech acts performed.

Identity theory can be considered as an interdisciplinary discussion anchored on the sociological theory of Structural Symbolic Interaction.[14]Current emphases of identity theory lie on three bases: interaction, structure and perception. This article is based on the last emphasis which views identity behavior as a function of the relationship. It embodies the connectionof perceived meanings of the self and standard meanings of the identity in some specific situation.[12]

Individuals occupy multiple identities owing to the fact that they usually possess more than one role.[12]When one or more than one of these roles are activated, certain meanings will be applied to maintain that identity. On the other side, in a lifelong process, individual's identity is endlessly created anew. This process is determinedby very various social constrains, social interactions, encounters, and wishes and it thus turns out to be very subjective and uniqueand.[15]

Structural Symbolic Interaction refers to the nature of the individual as well as the interplay between the individual and society.[13]As far as the source of Identity Theory is concerned, some researches played pivotal roles in developing Structural Symbolic Interaction.[16,17]

Individual's behavior on the one hand is controlled by ourselves, on the other hand, live up to others' expectations. It is concluded thatlanguage acts actually representidentity.[18] However, upon most occasions, individual's role performance does not match his or her social role, and also is lack of positive evidences for his or her self-identity. Therefore, while individuals are outputting behaviors or actions, they are in the cycle of adjusting the balance of the input perceptions and the output behaviors. This cycle will continue to go on until they both match the meanings of the identity standard. As a matter of fact, people have been in a constant research on the question of who they are. During the process, people may fall into embarrassment because of multiple factors intertwined.[19]

As a further developing theory of Structural Symbolic Interaction, Identity Theory more insightfully explains the relationship between individual and society from the intertwined perspective of sociology, psychology and especially in sociolinguistics.

The so-called social identity is rooted in human's primitive awareness of the distinction between the in-groups and the out-groups.[12] Only the sense of group belonging, in other words, only the sense of group identity is influencing the behavior of in-group. On the basis of the real factor of presenting group behavior, Social Identity Theory was proposed and the social identity was defined as a sense of belonging to a certain social group and the emotional and realization that being a part of the social group will provide some emotional and material value to the member.[20]

Postmes andHaslam[21] added that although social identities were represented in individual cognition, they were simultaneously properties of the social group itself because they depended on some degree of consensus among those who subscribe to this identity.

For the individual, a better social identity can satisfy his natural desire of a high self-esteem. Stets and Burke[22]concluded the reason for joining groups as a sense of belongingness and self-worth. Everyone is born with the nature that he is supposed to be accepted and valuedby others. A high level of self-worth can bring one the positive feelings of security of who they are and what they do.Higgins[23] declared two

important reasons for having social identity as a group member, which include self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction. The former refers to the situation where individuals are eager to find out positive information about themselves which is recognized by others. Membership in groups gives rise to positive distinctiveness or the idea that one's own group is superior toany other alternative group.[24] The essence of this membership belonging is in fact a process of social comparison, during which group members are comparing with the features of the in-groups and the out-groups then seek the similarities of the in-groups and the distinctiveness of the out-groups,[25] i.e. a mental activity of confirming the in-groups positively and judging the out-groups negatively. Besides, one social identity can also help individual's uncertainty reduction. Everyone psychologically wants his situation and environment is on hold and predictable. After joining groups, group members count on the prototypes to help guide their own behavior as well as others' behavior and it will inevitably facilitate the predictability over one's environment.[24]

There are two steps before a social identity is chosen by individuals in a certain situation. The first isaccessibility and the second is fit.[26]Accessibility refers to plain available categories individuals easily belong to, such as gender, color, grade in school, etc. Next, they may ask themselves, to what extent these understandable categories explainthe similarities and differences among individuals in the situation,that is, the comarative fit, or to what extent these categories explian individual's behavior in the situation, that is, the normative fit.[12]If the fit fails to help account for individual's behavior or satisfy the sense of worth-based self-esteem, then individuals will rechoose other social categories which best fit the situation where they are in.

To this day, studies on illocutionary acts are mainly conducted in the framework of philosophy. In terms of the discussion of communication, illocutionary acts are mainly used as a perspective for studying the relationships between literal meaning, interpersonal metaphor and communicative intension. As for the identity study, Identity Theory is mostly used for explaining speakers'

identities in international communication and language acquisition as a subfield of sociolinguistics. Therefore, the present study would like to detect illocutionary acts from the perspective of Identity Theory to find out a brand-new way to approach the reasons why different illocutionary acts are chosen by speakers and also will offer the answer to the question of how do illocutionary acts reflect speaker's social identity. Moreover, by exemplifying P'u-Yi's lines in *The Last Emperor,* this study might be more easily understood, more interesting and with, more or less, an added historical value.

The Last Emperor is a biopic produced based on the life of AisinGioro Pu-yi's life, known as the last emperor in China. This film reproducing the historical events from P'u-Yi's ascent to the throne to his imprisonment and political rehabilitation by the Chinese Communists. To analyze the protagonist's lines from a sociolinguistic perspective, this study is aimed to adopt the Identity Theory for the observation of the illocutionary acts of the hero. Fourteen representative lines will be analyzed and explained with historical narrations.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, it focuses on the following research questions:

RQ1. What are Pu-Yi's illocutionary acts?

RQ2. What are the reason for the change of Pu-Yi's illocutionary acts?

RQ3. How do Pu-Yi's illocutionary acts reflect his social identities?

METHODS

From the perspective of sociolinguistic, this research is designed as a qualitative study which takes the Identity Theory to establish a sociolinguistic framework to analyze the illocutionary acts of the hero in the film. In the following analysis, eight representative lines of Pu-Yi will be chosen to describe and explain in detail with added historical narrations. Therefore, the analysis will not only combine the explanation and description for the sake of the thesis's reliability, but offer the historical referral fort its vitality and understandability.

Data Collection

The lines that have been chosen for analysis are extracted from the film, The Last Emperor, which is produced in accordance with the history. At the 60th Academy Awards, the film won 9 prizes altogether. The author adopts observational method to select eight examples for illustration. Most of the occurrences of the lines are accompanied with the ringing of the background music. Apart from that, the first-appearing lines of Pu-Yi along with the years or era change have also been selected as the film is authored as a chronical play. According to the theoretical framework which includes the differentiated features in Social Identity Theory and the types of interruptions in Identity Theory, the collected lines can be divided into two groups for each of the sub-frameworks. The two groups of lines are listed at the end the study.

Data Analysis

The author has divided the collected lines into two groups for further analysis. The first group is analyzed to find out how the changes of illocutionary acts come into being under the influence of identity interruptions. The second group is analyzed to detect the impact of the differentiated features in Social Identity theory. In the analysis, the eight representative and classical lines of Pu-Yi are chosen to describe and explain in detail with added historical narrations. In this sense, the analysis will not only combine the explanation and description for the sake of the thesis's reliability, but offer the historical referral fort its vitality and understandability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Changes of Illocutionary Acts Activated by Broken Loop

In most occasions, individual's role performance does not match his social role and lacks positive evidences for his self-identity. Therefore, while individuals are outputting behaviors or actions, they are in the cycle of adjusting the balance of the input perceptions and the output behaviors. The cycle will continue until they both match the meanings of the

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identity standard. Once this cycle or so-called loop is destroyed, the identity operation breaks down with the disappearance of the input meaning and the output behavior.[18] Some broken loops of identity might be the turning points of life as a result of the transformed superficial identity and the underlying transformation of individuality and value system.[27]

As observed in the following example, illocutionary acts have changed by the activation of broken identity loop.

1) Pu-Yi: "What do you want me to confess? I do not understand.

Pu-Yi: "I was responsible for everything."

The first line was uttered by Pu-Yi as he was in custody as a criminal in Fushun. And he said the second one when he would be released soon. At the early stage of his imprisonment, he denied everything and tole lies to the governor of the prison. He thought he was doomed to be executed by the Communists eventually. After ten years' detention and education, Pu-Yi had acknowledged his crime and confessed.

The second line is thought to be Pu-Yi's illocutionary act of confessing, one of the representative illocutionary acts according to the classification of Searle. As a criminal, He never stops resistance, lies and noncooperation. However, as time passes by, he is gradually rehabilitated as a different person. This change of his illocutionary acts from resisting and lying to confessing can be ascribed to, in accordance with the Identity Theory, the broken loop of his kingly identity.

Changes of Illocutionary Acts Triggered by Inference

In the previous study on anxiety, the idea of interruption is somewhat similar to the identity interference. Problems in the smooth flow of self-regulation sometimes arise and result in anxiety when there arises a conflict between identity standards.[28] In this sense, interference brings about confusions by misleading people about their identity. In the movie, Pu-Yi's are frequently interfered by his dual identity from time to time.

2) Pu-Yi: What are you all looking at? What are you standing there for? You always wanted

to leave the Forbidden City. Now you're got an hour to park. So, go! Go! I always thought I hated it here. Now, I'm afraid to leave. Do you think they will kill me?

It is a cloudy day in 1924. Pu-Yi receives the exclusion order from Feng Yu-hsiang while he is playing tennis with his brother Pu-Chieh and his two wives, Wan-Jung and Wen-Hsiu in the Forbidden City. Beyond his expectation, it is more than another coup d'etatlaunched by another warlord as he has experienced before. In this example, Pu-Yi's illocutionary acts change constantly from reprimanding to stating, then ordering, expressing, and finally inquiring.

Observed from the perspective of Identity Theory, Pu-Yi is suffering from identity interference as he reads the exclusion order. Ever since he took the throne at the age of three, he never had a chance to leave the Forbidden City although he was desperate to leave palace. As an emperor, he reprimanded and ordered his brother and wives as showing his sovereignty. Nevertheless, it occurred to him that he might be executed as a convict and he expressed his feeling to his teacher and inquired him whether he would be killed or not. The change of his illocutionary acts are activated by his overlapped identity as the emperor in the Forbidden City and a convict facing death's threatening.

Changes of Illocutionary Acts Driven by Over-Controlled Identity

According to Burk andStet,[12] everyone knows who he is and what kind of personalities he has, that is, individual's over-controlled identity. In real life, one is frequently annoyed by deviations of identities as he defines himself.

In the movie, Pu-Yi has no idea about what happened to him after he was appointed as king of the kingdom as a three-year-old child in 1909. The following dialogue happens right after he comes to the throne as he is bathing with the help of the eunuchs.

3) Pu-Yi: I'm the son of the Heaven! I'm the son of Heaven!

Eunuch: Yes! Oh, yes!

Pu-Yi: Ar Mo! I want to go home! I want to go home! I want to go home!

Ever since he moves in the Forbidden City, the little boy is aware of the change in his life. He has been told that he is the Son of Heaven and can do whatever he wants. However, he does not understand the meaning of the phrase and thinks it to be a theatre.

As he is standing in the bathtub and splashing water on the eunuchs' faces, he is producing the illocutionary act of representative. As his nanny comes, his illocutionary act turns into expressing his desire to go back home. From the transformation, we can conclude that the little still considers him to be the son of Prince Ch-un rather than the owner of the empire. It is his over-controlled identity of a little child that makes this change of illocutionary acts happen.

Changes of Illocutionary Acts Developed by Episodic Identities

The definition of episodic identities involves two aspects as frequency and unpredictability. It is believed that people tend to have multiple identities. The input perception serves as a social and cognitive process where individuals accomplish the mapping of meaning with raw sense-data. People involved in perception adopt social knowledge to understand the environment.[29]When the perceptions are out of line, the identity operation stands little chance to develop, thus the identity interruption takes place. The interruption of episodic identities leads to enhanced distress. Meanwhile, varied illocutionary acts change in term with the frequency and unpredictability of identities. This phenomenon appears in the section of Pu-Yi's wedding night.

4) Wan Jung: Perhaps he would like to see me face before he decides.

Pu-Yi: Yes, the Emperor would like to see the face of the Empress.

Wan Jung: Miss Windsor taught me how to do the dance of the quickstep. Does the Emperor know how to do the quickstep?

Pu-Yi: Will you teach me?

Wan Jung: If Your Majesty thinks it is old-fashioned to make the rain and the wind with a stranger, we can be like a modern couple, to begin with.

Pu-Yi: A modern couple?

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Wan Jung; Good night.

Pu-Yi: Good night. You must come to Oxford with me.

At the age of 16, Pu-Yi got married with Wan Jung, the Empress and Wen Hsiu, his secondary consort. These dialogues happen in the Emperor's wedding between Pu-Yi and Wan Jung. Deeply affected by the New Culture Movement and under the instruction from Johnson, Pu-Yi has developed into a supporter of new ideas and want to discard the fogeyish law and discipline.

In this dialogue, his first illocutionary act of stating reflects his identity as an emperor. As he removes Wan Jung's kait'ou, the young couple hug and kiss and whisper. Wan Jung knows what the junior emperor wants from his wife and tells him her speciality of the quickstep. Pu-Yi immediately accepts her as his wife and requests her teaching of the dance. The young couple stop the traditional way of spending the wedding night and say goodbye to each other. Pu-Yi realizes that they have a lot in common and invites her to go to Oxford with him. The changes of his illocutionary acts begin with sating to requesting, then expressing and eventually end up with directing are developed by his episodic identities as time sequence as an emperor, a husband, a modern lover and a good company of Wan Jung.

Illocutionary Acts as the Attributes of Group Prototype

Group prototype is a set of attributes describing the most-like ingroup member. As everyone lives in society, he is doomed to be a social member and engaged in some social groups. This prototype also works for the last emperor.

While Pu-Yi is dile about in Tientsin, the Japanese officials instigate him to re-ascend the throne in Manchuria and he finally decided to go to Changchun.

5) Pu-Yi: The Chinese Republic had broken every promise it ever made to me! Chinese troops desecrated the tombs of my ancestors! And Chinese troops didn't defend Manchuria form the Japanese! But Manchuria is still China! China has turned its back on me.

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In the early 1930s, he is officially invited to be the emperor of the newborn Manchukuo by the Japanese government. Both his Chinese teacher and his wife have seen through the conspiracy and objected to this suggestion. However, he has dreamt of being an emperor again and he despises and hates the Republic government.

The illocutionary acts in this example are stating the facts or blaming the government for desecrating the tombs of T'zu-Hsi and Quan-Long. As an offspring of the imperial lineage, it is reasonable to get angry with the deeds. The illocutionary acts of stating or blaming exhibit his present identity of the abdicated emperor and a member of the Manchurian.

Illocutionary Acts as the Characteristics of Depersonalization

Once people accept their identity of social members, they prefer to be an ingroup prototype rather than being a unique one. Once the social identity is activated, the role identity of a true self will remain under cover.

The following is the last dialogue of the hero in the movie.

6) Young Pioneer: Who are you?

Pu-Yi: I was the last emperor of China.

Pu-Yi was released in 1959 as detention in The Fushun Bureau of Public Security for ten years. After that, he got married with Li Shuxian and got a job as a gardener. This dialogue happens when old-aged Pu-Yi revisited his former home, the Forbidden City. He buys the ticket and goes into the hall of Supreme Harmony where he had been the emperor fifty-eight years ago. When he wanted to sit on the emperor's chair again, the little son of the guardian prohibited him and questioned his identity.

Here Pu-Yi's illocutionary act expresses his inner world. On one hand, it is an illocutionary act of answering the question. On the other hand, it implicates a great deal of his life. Looking back on his unusual life, Pu-Yi has manifested his illocutionary act of sighing with emotion. The past tense of the verb expresses an unsaid denying of his emperor's status and admission of a common citizen. As the embodiment of an ingroup member as an ordinary person, the

depersonalization takes effect and reflected in his illocutionary act.

Illocutionary Act as the Behaviors of Uniformity

As shown before, uniformity is built upon the perception. For individuals in the same group, they tend to have the same perception, which results in the uniform behaviors. As for Pu-Yi, the distinctive and unparalleled figure as the last emperor of China, there is still group-based identity.

7) Pu-Yi: He took lots of our land in Manchuria. I'm a Manchurian. Even after the republic, it's still country.

These lines appear during the lunch time while Mr. Johnson, Pu-Yi's teacher, was telling the story of recent assassinations on foreign emperors. At this time, Pu-Yi was fourteen years old and longing for the outside world. When he beard about the event of the Russian Tsar, as the leader of Manchurian, he felt indignant about the invasion.

His illocutionary act of stating here shows his anger when speaking. This group-based anger is a functional response from the negative situations or events related to the group.[30] Pu-Yi was then an emperor who was powerless and confined in the Forbidden City. Nevertheless, he still assumed to should the responsibility for the Manchuria's sovereignty and future. His illocutionary act of stating is considered to be the behaviors of uniformity based on his Manchurian identity whose hometown was robbed by foreign invaders.

Results of the study have initially provided us good insights of the factors leading to the changes of illocutionary acts. The outbreak of the Opium War and the overthrow of the feudal dynasty has constituted the social context of his identities. As one of the outputs of social behavior, the formation of illotcutionary act is on the basis of identity operation. Considering Pu-Yi's unusually multiple identities, the causes of the changes are identity interruptions. Pu-Yi's illocutionary acts are differentiated features of the ingroups which reflect his distinctive identities. In the process of analyzing his illocutionary acts, it is concluded that his salient identity as a Manchurian among his various identities in his lifetime is partly embodied in his illocutionary acts.

As a turning point, the ocean exploration in Ming and Qing Dynasty has caused great collision between Chinese and western culture and has extremely far-reaching influence. In terms of the persistence of time, the vastness of space and the intimacy of feeling, the impact of tobacco is truly unparalleled.

Study Limitations

The study is not without limitations. First, the data collection is limited. There are more lines worth discussion and investigating. In a broad sense, analysis of illocutionary act of one character is not enough for the credibility. Second, the study merely attached importance to the change of illocutionary acts and the function in reflecting social identities. Larger scale researches and more comprehensive studies are suggested to be carried out.

Implications for Practice and Suggestions for Future Research

This research attempted to make a tentative effort to set a new angle to study illocutionary acts from a sociolinguistic perspective, which might break a new area wherein later researcher will be interested in studying illocutionary acts breaking away from the view of philosophy and pragmatics.

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