

The Identity Construction of Characters in *Green Book* by the Theory of Linguistic Adaptation Theory

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Abstract

According to Jef Verschueren's study about Linguistic Adaptation Theory, a person can get what he wants to be and portray the character, by using different expressions and words. Because of different choices, it may involve different factors, such as communicative identity, communicative purpose, communicative occasions and so on. This paper analyzes the role of different characters in the film *Green Book*, their identity, and how they choose words to examine and construct their own identity. This story occurred in the United States, 1960s. at that time, Black's status in the Northern part has got some improvement, but there is a large degree of discrimination in the South. After the analysis of the two characters, a deeper understanding of language adaptation theory and identity construction will be clearly shown, which will exert a great influence on our daily communication with others, in other words, it helps us communicate more effectively.

Keywords: linguistic adaptation theory, racial discrimination, friendship

1. Introduction

For understanding Pragmatics, Jef Verschueren has proposed a new perspective on language use and assumed that language use was a process of constantly making choices in a set of words with different purposes. This theory is based on the theory of Animal Adaptation, and the dynamic process of language use also expounds it. In the past few decades, it has been mainly used in the field of language translation and plays an important role in the development of translation. In order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social communication, this paper uses Language Adaptation Theory to analyze the real characteristics and situations to understand how to conduct effective communication from the point of view of Pragmatics.

1.1 *The Green Book*

The Green Book, awarded at the 91st Academy Awards in 2019, is based on a true story directed by Peter Ferrari. It has a reputation at home and abroad, mainly around the issue of Racial Discrimination, what is the story? This is a story about Italian Tony and a famous black musician Don Shirley. They come from different families and educational backgrounds, have very different personalities, and to some extent represent their own country, or, like history, blacks and whites, and Americans tend to be naive and enthusiastic. Don Shirley, fluent in spoken and official English, lives a lonely life; Tony, despite being white, is educated to look more like a "black man" in the traditional sense. "Their relationship has fundamentally changed the character and values of their lives. Narrowly speaking, for Tony, the trip helped him rebuild his identity, and for him it was to free Don Shirley from Racial Discrimination and be accepted by more white people. Of course after this journey, they both are being a better person. At the time, *The Green Book* was designed to introduce hotels and restaurants for blacks to live in, and while the situation of blacks in the North had improved considerably at that time, the South was very different. White people pride them on their innate sense of racial superiority, which is the foundation of Racial Discrimination. With each other's help, they all became the people they wanted to be. On the way, despite of their differences, but eventually they built an unbreakable friendship and mutual trust. According to Jef Verschueren's research on language adaptation theory, a person can get who he wants to be and portray the role, for example, if he or she wants to be an elegant person, when he or she talks to a superior or leader, they tend to choose more formal words to get his or her purpose. For example, when a linguist talks to a lawyer, he uses the word "murder" rather than "kill" because it represents a completely different meaning, the former refers to the fact that the offender killed the victim with a clear target, and the latter refers primarily to the fact that a person has been killed by another person. This is the crux of the choice of words, at the same time, a variety of words express the attitude of the speaker. When I use murder instead of kill, it shows my anger and rage at the criminals, my sympathy for the victims. So that's how we use words to build our own identity.

1.2 Background information of this film

The background of the film leaves a deep impression on the audience, and leaves more room for understanding and reflection on historical Racial Discrimination. Don Shirley, a black musician,

was planning to tour the depths of the South when, while Racial Discrimination had improved, the rights of black Southerners were still not guaranteed. So Shirley hired a white driver, Tony, who was good at handling relationships for the safety of the entire journey. At the same time, their character also represents their own country, Tony is often naive, optimistic, Don Shirley tends to retain and lonely. On the way to the South, the constant contradictions about outlook on life and values also led to many arguments, but in the end, they all got rid of their prejudices and stayed with each other for a long time. We can analyze their words to analyze their differences to get a clear picture of how they are built with different identities.

2. Long South Road

In 1962, Racial Discrimination was still serious in this era, and in some cities, such as New York, blacks received minimal respect from whites. At the beginning of the film, a gorgeous song catches our eye. "Old Black Magic" by Harold Arians, performed by Chris Bowles, also corresponds to the journey ahead. Los Quados' hat shows that Tony is considered physically and morally brave. "Do you know who I am?" It also shows Tony's fearlessness and bravery. Then he came home and tried to move gently. From this part, we can sum up Tony as an indomitable man with a gentle heart for his family. The next morning, because something was wrong in the kitchen, it showed Tony and his family's discriminatory attitude toward black people. Tony's father defined the black son as a bag of coal, and Tony thought the black son was an eggplant because they all had a natural sense of pride and superiority. DeLorean's attitude toward blacks also provides clues for the next episode, as a main line to the entire film. For Italians, they thought it was a shame to stay in the same place with blacks, and like the famous civil rights movement in the United States, there were many places where blacks were not allowed in, especially in the depths of the South. Therefore, Tony's protection is quite necessary.

Then there's the important book, *The Green Book*, whose name comes from publications aimed at "helping" black people travel around hotels and restaurants, but it shows how they treat blacks in society as a whole - they're different. From the author's point of view, Tony is just a representative of the Americans, who they think are innocent and reckless. Although Dr. Shirley is also a representative of black people, they tend to ignore the fact that they are black. According to Dr. Shirley's innovations, tone and use of words, this is easy to feel. Their relationship is also key to our understanding of their differences and changes. At first, they all felt hostile, and then as the tour progressed, they began to change their original impressions and, most importantly, their relationship revealed a profound meaning that black identity was changing, and whatever you were, we were equal on Earth.

2.2 Warmth

"Dignity" - Pianist Dr. Shirley, a man who has defended his human rights with dignity for years, was insulted and bullied by white society because of his black race, despite his talent, education, education and wealth. Instead of using violence against all this injustice, he used his personality, courage and actions to defend his dignity and be respected by white people, including Tony.

"Lonely" - Dr. Shirley is very lonely, not only because he has been treated unfairly and discriminated against by all kinds of white society; He has no family, no friends, just on tour all the time. He's not a typical black man, he doesn't have much in common or a common language with the people at the bottom (there's a particularly moving scene where he looks into the eyes of the people at the bottom). It's not that genius is lonely, Dr. Shirley is musical genius, but music is followed by wine and loneliness, brotherhood, failed marriage, sexual orientation is special... Every time a person in the night, he himself is struggling who he is? As his wonderful verse roared in the rain: "I am neither white nor black, or even human, so tell me who it is?". The episode is the culmination of the whole episode and looks particularly moving.

"Courage" - Courage can be said to be the theme of the film, but also to inspire the public to resonate with the theme. Dr. Shirley knew that Racial Discrimination against black people was very serious in the south of the United States, and it became more and more serious that he went further south, but he chose to travel to Korea, to experience and break through his comfort zone, and to use his actions to influence and defend the public's feelings. Courage runs through Dr. Shirley's body, including eating fried chicken with his hands all the way, then going to black bars and black crowd parties, refusing to cancel shows without allowing himself to eat there, and finally going to Tony's for Christmas... In fact, Tony was brave. First of all, he has a social prejudice against black people. But then he gradually respected Dr. Shirley's musical talent and character, and gradually became friends. The film also points out the central line of the film's theme, "Courage" through the Doctor's Game Alliance - "Because genius is not enough, it takes courage to change people's minds." "Romantic" - Tony's endless letters to his wife are the warmest and most romantic parts of the film. Tony's level of education. At first, he couldn't even write a sentence clearly. He can only have one current account. Although he is vulgar and uneducated, his feelings and love for his wife are sincere. In the sentence Dr. Shirley wrote for him, not only was Tony's wife moved, but everyone present had goose bumps. Those sentences that only Shakespeare can write, do you mean romantic? "Warm" - The film continues from the start, and Tony's family, including his wife and children, are warm despite his difficult life. When he went south with the pianist, he gave his wife the salary envelope he had paid in advance to save it. Dr. Shirley's dazzling performance and Tony's gentle, appreciating applause were warm; The part of the doctor who taught Tony to write love letters was also gentle; Finally, Dr. Shirley and Tony's Christmas curtain-taker was very warm.

The film has a strong narrative and expression ability, can easily capture the subtle emotional changes of the audience. The film may not go deep into the darkest depths of racism, but it gives us hope and underscores the importance of overcoming prejudice in some cases. The film gives a deep feeling. In an age of relative racism, perhaps we need an optimistic film to remind people that it has a strong narrative and expressive ability to easily capture subtle emotional changes in the audience. The film may not go deep into the darkest depths of racism, but it gives us hope and underscores the importance of overcoming prejudice in some cases. The film gives a deep feeling. In an age of relative racism, perhaps we need an optimistic film to remind people that this can be completely changed. We also need to remind ourselves that truly understanding ourselves and being kind to others is the best way to address prejudice. So, the film is very good. Tony didn't want to change his Italian surname

because Shirley was angry when she heard he had to use the outer toilet. But in the past two months, they have influenced each other, and although the two protagonists are employed, the American father-son relationship has given them a chance to be friends, fried chicken, wine, a symbolic thing that almost breaks each other's true feelings, the movie's fun climax in black bar music, and then a second police turn to prove that crows may not be generally black, wearing colored glasses, but not the most, in the end, the film embraces the ending in the usual warm way, American humor, Perfect music and agile transitions make the whole film compact, and everything is the look of a great feature film.

For example, how do you view cultural elegance and vulgarity? According to the background of that era, whites controlled the culture of elegance, enjoyed art, and accepted black performances. But as Donald said, he was an artist when he was on stage, but when he got off the stage, he had to endure white discrimination. This was reflected in the last performance. Upon arrival in Birmingham, organizers did not allow Donald to have dinner with a white audience in the living room. But Donald was the star of the night. At last, he gave up his restraint and gave in. Donald knew they were hypocritical, but he also knew that white people were trying to push for change, just like Kennedy, so he restrained himself and developed his art. Tony would shout out feeling uncomfortable and even beat up on the spot, Tony was a real attitude to his own real life, as he had always suggested Donald said eating KFC in the car and could enjoy making any investment only by working hard at work, eating, and laughing loudly. Another difficulty facing Donald is his awkward and uncertain identity. The art he wanted to play came from white professors and legacies. He learned to play Beethoven and Chopin. At the same time, with his fellow blacks, he was too far away, mixed among whites, unfamiliar with black music, and a traitor. The most moving part of the film is the friendship between the two men. Through the reading and analysis of the two characters in the Green Paper, Dr. Tony and Dr. Shirley, we have a clear understanding of their language adaptability and personality traits. Tony is an affectionate, reckless, impulsive man who likes to speak rudely. He is good at dealing with all kinds of problems. In the course of Nan, we can clearly see his strengths and weaknesses, but at the same time, he is not very ambitious from the doctor's point of view, he does not conform to her color, to the doctor's personality, he looks proud and elegant, although with elegant gestures and the use of language, but the heart is very lonely and inferior, his skin color and race. But after two months at the company, they've all changed dramatically, Tony understands the meaning of life, chooses a better person, puts aside prejudices against black people, the doctor chooses to open up, tries to communicate with others, tries to stop caring about other people's opinions, tries to connect with his loving brother, and at the same time, they build an indelible friendship, which is inspired by the real story, very moving.

3. Conclusion

Through this paper, we can have a better understand about the specific meaning of language adaptation theory and identity construction. What is the ultimate purpose of this article? The last point of this paper is that by analyzing the choice tone of their words, it tells us that in the future, in daily communication, in life, according to different communicative purposes, communication needs to

choose variable words, of course, this is very well-known in China's translation style, different writers, for example, have their own different language styles, language style refers to the choice of words, the author's way of speaking, and his or her narrative style. For example, Professor Zhao Shuli with simple language characteristics, easy to understand, This is closely related to his long-term living in the countryside, living in harmony with farmers, and trying to study the expression of farmers. At the same time, of course, what we are saying is the result of the work in our own description, in order to see if the listener understands what the reader is saying. The concept of the sameness has always been an important concept in sociology related to the concept of category and role. According to Professor Wang Ying, identity also reflects the relationship between the individual and society. Through identity construction and identity, we can not only improve self-esteem, but also improve the awareness of security, meet the needs of belonging and personality, eliminate the fear of death, find the meaning of existence. The theory of social identity provides a very useful theoretical framework for different members of society. At the same time, we can also realize the identity Chinese western society, and the understanding of identity construction is very different.

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