

A Pragmatic Analysis of Discourse Markers in Sichuan Dialect

-- Take the Modal Particles "sa"、"ga" and "ha" as Examples

Cui Wu

Guilin University of Technology, Guilin, 541006, China

Abstract

This paper starts from the Sichuan dialects such as “卅”、“噶”and “哈” to analyze the differences of language effect in their respective contexts, and discuss reasons why they have these differences. Therefore, it is concluded that the functions and language effects of the same prompt discourse markers in different contexts are different. Similarly, the functions and language effects of different prompt discourse markers in the same contexts are also different. Discourse markers, a linguistic phenomenon, achieve better language communication.

Keywords

Sichuan dialect; Prompt discourse markers; Modal particles; Language effect; Pragmatic effect.

1. Background of Discourse Markers

In 1953, Randolph Quirk gave a lecture entitled "Casual Conversation--Some Features of Ordinary Spoken Language", in which he spoke explicitly for the first time about some of the recurring modifiers-you know, you see and well. His lecture attracted the attention of linguists to discourse markers. He pointed out: We can easily show that, from the point of view of grammatical structure, these modifiers play no role in the transmission of information; ...Since it is crucial for the strong desire to speak that the hearer is having something to share with the speaker, these shared means (ingredients) , the signals that often appear in our daily conversations, are of considerable value. Therefore, it can be seen from his discourse that discourse markers do not have grammatical features, and discourse markers are a common language phenomenon in life. Discourse markers generally include partial conjunctions, adverbs, interjections, and partial phrases or clauses. What they convey is not the literal meaning of their own content, but the procedural meaning that provides information markers for discourse understanding and thus guides discourse understanding (Ran Yongping, 2000).

2. Discourse Markers in Sichuan Dialect

Discourse markers are also very common in Sichuan dialect. As Quirk said, these discourse markers do not play a role in conveying content in information transmission. How the context understands the hidden meaning conveyed by the speaker. Sichuanese often use “卅”、“噶”和“哈” to convey their inner feelings to the hearers. This paper includes these four modal particles into discourse markers, and analyzes how speakers use them to convey their emotions and thoughts to listeners in different contexts.

3. The Analysis of Discourse Markers in Sichuan Dialect

3.1. The pragmatic function of “卅”

Example 1:

小王:不要吃呀饭里有名堂。

小吴:这么胖还要吃,小王。

小王:宁可胖得精致,不愿瘦得雷同卅。

Xiao Wang's sentence “宁可胖得精致,不愿瘦得雷同卅”(I'd rather be fat and delicate than thin and thin) responded to his friends' ridicule about his figure. The modal particle "卅" itself has no meaning, but in this sentence it shows that Xiao Wang doesn't care about Xiao Wang's sarcasm, highlights his humor and wit, and skillfully counters Xiao Wu who says he is fat. "卅" has the function of defense, implying such a simple truth that people don't want to be the same and don't blindly follow the trend. The modal particle "卅" has the effect of softening the tone.

Example 2:

小王:今天去实体店买了一件裙子,这件裙子特别好看。

小吴:(看一下)还不错,好多钱?

小王:500。

小吴:这么贵(两人还是学生)!淘宝上才卖两百多。

小王:我这个是在实体店买的,肯定不一样卅。

Xiao Wang bought a skirt in a physical store, and it felt good, but Xiao Wu felt that the skirt was a bit expensive and not worth buying. So he told Xiao Wang that it only sold for more than 200 on Taobao. The meaning of the words is that Xiao Wu is expensive to buy, so she should buy it on Taobao. But Xiao Wu said that her dress was different those on Taobao. Xiao Wu added a modal particle "卅" at the end of his words. On the one hand, she used a gentle tone to counter Xiao Wu's decision that it was not worth her to buy a dress. On the other hand, the quarrel between the two that may be caused by the price of the skirt is avoided to a certain extent, and the friendship between the two is maintained. If there is no tone particle "卅", Xiao Wang's words will appear very tough, which will make Xiao Wu feel uncomfortable.

3.2. The pragmatic function of "哈"

"哈" is mainly an onomatopoeia in modern Chinese, imitating the laughter that people burst into when they are happy. Usually this kind of laughter is open, toothy, and loud. In Sichuan dialect, the frequency of "ha" is also very high, and it is mainly used in contexts such as between people who have a relatively close relationship, or to shorten the relationship or to relieve embarrassment.

Example 1:

小明:打球的都出发了吗?

小毛:耶!

小风:你今天打球吗?

小王:我也准备出发了?

小洁:我来不了,还在成都。

小吴:睡足了出发。

小蓝:幸福哈。

Xiao Ming asked his friends to play basketball. Everyone was asking about the game. Only Xiao Wu looked lazy and said, "Get enough sleep and go." Playing ball is already an appointment among friends, but Xiao Wu has to wait until he has enough sleep before going to play basketball. So Xiao Lan said "幸福哈" in a mocking tone. The word "哈" not only reflects the closeness among friends, but also makes Xiao Lan's words have a mocking tone.

Example 2:

小王:草莓好甜啊!

小刘:哈哈,我回家吧草莓和香蕉一起打了汁,给点酸奶,味道很好!

小王:到现在还在回味呢,坚决一直回味到五一后哈。

Xiao Wang and Xiao Liu are discussing what to eat. Xiao Wang is fond of strawberry and banana juice and has been thinking about it for a long time. The "哈" at the end of the sentence shows an undisguised happiness and satisfaction.

Example 3:

小吴:我已经安全到家。

小王:好的哦,好担心哪,没送你到家,不好意思哈。

小吴:没事,谢谢你。

Two friends live in the same community, and both go to play at the house of a friend they met. When they came back in the evening, Xiao Wang drove Xiao Wu to a subway station, and then drove home. After returning home, Xiao Wu sent a message to Xiao Wang online, thinking that Xiao Wang was worried about her safety, and told Xiao Wang that she had gone home safely. It happened that Xiao Wang also surfed the Internet. Xiao Wang quickly understood the prerequisites for Xiao Wu's words, and immediately expressed his concern for Xiao Wu, and tried his best to show his courtesy. Brown & Levinson (1978) pointed out that one of the main purposes of social interaction is to maintain or even enhance "面子" (face) in conversational communication (Wang Yufang, 2007). The "哈" in the sentence softens the tone of the apology and weakens the seriousness of the apology, so as to shorten the distance between two. In this context, "哈" is no longer a substitute for laughter, but a modal particle with a hypocritical function, which is used to ease the atmosphere and maintain one's face.

3.3. The Pragmatic Function of "噶"

"噶" is also often used in Sichuan dialect, generally expressing doubts, or asking the hearer's opinion, or making the hearer agree with what the speaker says.

Example 1:

小吴:今天中午炒个回锅肉吧,改善下伙食。

小刘:哇,见者有份噶?

Xiao Wu told Xiao Liu that he would improve the food today and make a double-cooked pork. Twice-cooked pork is a home-cooked dish unique to Sichuan, and it is also a delicacy that everyone loves to eat. The two hadn't eaten it for a long time, so when Xiao Wu said this to Xiao Liu, he was very inconceivable, and hurriedly asked "Wow, does anyone who sees have a share?". "噶" is equivalent to an interrogative here- expressing a question, which expresses the eagerness of the listener Xiao Liu to hear the speaker Xiao Wu's answer.

Example 2:

小王:今天我和男朋友吵架了。

小刘：为啥呀？

小王：他把我最喜欢的口红不小心踩坏了。

小刘：他是不小心的嘛，又不是故意的。你们难道一天都没有联系？

小王：已经4个小时没联系了。我应该主动联系他噻？

Xiao Wang quarreled with her boyfriend today because of a trivial matter, and is now telling her friend about it. Her friend Xiao Liu feels that since her boyfriend was unintentional, she should forgive her boyfriend. After hearing this, Xiao Wang thought it was very reasonable, and secretly asked Xiao Liu whether she should contact her boyfriend with "噻" which expresses the speaker's hope that the listener would agree with her point of view.

4. Conclusion

Prompt discourse markers are used to attract attention and are common in everyday conversation. Since Chinese discourse markers are a very complex phenomenon, this paper only makes a rough analysis of several common tone discourse markers in Sichuan dialect. Discourse markers such as “卅”、“哈”and “噻”in Sichuan dialect convey different emotions and purposes of speakers in different language environments. At the same time, it is worth noting that changes in the speaker's emotion and purpose also change the tone and length of these modal particles. For learners who want to understand Sichuan dialect, knowing these modal particles will help better understand the deep meaning behind these modal particles.

Through the analyses of these discourse makers, two important conclusions are drawn: First, the language effects of the same prompt discourse markers in different contexts are different. In this case, the speaker's attitude, tone, and the different communicative relationship between the speaker and the hearer are the main reasons for the difference in language effect. Second, the language effects and functions of different prompt discourse markers in the same context are also different. In addition to the tone and attitude of the speakers, the reasons for this difference include the relationship, status, cultural background, and educational level of the two sides of the conversation.

All in all, prompt discourse markers play an increasingly important role in achieving discourse coherence and successful communication, and should be paid attention to.

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