

Conversation Analysis of Conflict Talk between Couples in *Why Women Kill*

Xiaoli Xie

School of Foreign Studies, China University of Petroleum, Qingdao 266580, China

Abstract: Conflict talk is a natural but complicated language phenomenon and is one of the main focuses of linguistic research. Based on the Conversation Analysis Theory, this paper uses the TV series *Why Women Kill* as the source of corpus and is concerned with the development process and manifestation of the conflict talk in the initiating moves, oppositional moves and terminating moves. Through the observation and analysis of the conflict talk, the paper shows that the speaker's identity, status, the social era in which he or she lives, and ethnicity all contribute to the choice of turn-taking.

Keywords: Conflict talk between couples, Conversation analysis, Initiating move, Oppositional move, Terminating move.

1. Introduction

Conflict and reconciliation are two common states in interpersonal communication, and they are also the two constants of discourse choice (including speech acts, utterances, vocabulary, and so on) and the game of linguistic power in the context of language use. Conflict resolution is the eternal theme that communication subjects strive to achieve, which is inherent to human social development and human nature. Only when conflicts are harmonized or dissolved, interpersonal interactions can be formed and interpersonal relationships can be harmonious. Conflict talk, as an inevitable aspect of people's daily interactions, is a universal socio-cultural phenomenon, and its construction and transformation is one of the important topics of contemporary sociolinguistics and pragmatics, especially social pragmatics research. Conflict and reconciliation in communication are transformed into each other with the different choices of speakers' discourse, which are deeply influenced by their psychological, social status and identity factors. Based on the analytical framework proposed by Zhao [1], this paper takes the corpus collected from the American TV series *Why Women Kill* as the research object, and tries to analyze the development process of conflict talk between couples and explore the pragmatic factors affecting the choice of conflict talk.

2. Literature Review

Conflict talk is first introduced by Grimshaw [2], who called it "conflict talk", Krainer named it "verbal discord"[3], and Schiffrin called conflict discourse "oppositional argument"[4]. But no matter which term is used to name conflict talk, they all share a common place, that is, one party's discourse is in conflict with another party's discourse, and this conflict is mainly manifested by one party's opposition to the other party's words, actions, or behaviors, or by the fact that both parties hold different opinions about someone or something, which leads to discourse conflict. Conflict talk is a very general concept, and in a broad sense, many speech acts and speech events, such as arguing, disputing, quarreling, opposing, squabbling, are included in conflict talk.

The linguistic concern of domestic scholars for conflict talk

begins in the 21st century. From a disciplinary perspective, there are mainly conversation analysis and pragmatics analysis, but also sociolinguistic and cognitive linguistic analysis of conflict talk. Kakavá reviewed different studies on conflict talk in language use and its main linguistic structural features, and divided similar studies into three areas, which provided the theoretical basis for later analysis [5]. Zhao used structural analysis to divide conflict talk into three parts: the initiating moves, oppositional moves and terminating moves [1]. It provided a sociological basis for the analysis of conflict talk construction, but its shortcoming is that the boundary between the initiating moves and oppositional moves is not obvious, and there is an unbreakable connection between the two moves. Ran discussed the definition and features of conflict talk, summarized the research results of relevant scholars at home and abroad, and proposed the scope and main topics about conflict talk, which enriched the theoretical basis of conflict talk and points out the direction for future research on conflict talk [6]. The analysis of conflict talk between couples mainly focuses on the cooperation principle, relevance theory, and adaptability theory [7, 8, 9], which focus on analyzing the construction mode, causes, pragmatic functions, and pragmatic strategies of conflict talk between couples, ignoring the social factors behind conflict talk between couples. This paper focuses on the conversation analysis of conflict talk between couples and tries to explore the social influencing factors behind it.

3. Theoretical Foundation

Conversation analysis begins in the late 1960s and early 1970s and focuses on the study of the patterns between natural conversations. In the school of conversation analysis, the common knowledge of everyday life is both the object and the means of study. The basic method of conversation analysis is to use the researcher's common knowledge of everyday life to understand the behavior of the communicator in the analyzed conversation session, and then to account for the everyday rationality utilized by the communicator [10]. The founders of conversation analysis research, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, explicitly point out that human speech usually occurs in the specific contexts and is the product of communication in specific contexts. For example, the time and place where the communication occurs, as well as the gender and identity of the communicators are important

factors that influence communicators' construction of his turn taking and understanding of other's turn taking [11]. Therefore, from the perspective of pragmatics, in the process of analyzing conflicting talk, the researcher should not only consider the linguistic structure (question-answer structure) to which both interlocutors have to conform, but also consider more non-linguistic contextual factors, including the social context and social rules in which the communication takes place, the communicative purpose of the interlocutors and so on, in order to reveal the causes behind the conflict talk.

4. Research Questions

1. What are the types of move structure in conflict talk between couples?
2. What are the pragmatic reasons that influence the choice of conflict talk between couples?

5. Discussion

In terms of corpus selection, it is often difficult to obtain first-hand corpus due to the suddenness of conflict talk and the protection of others' privacy. The 2019 American TV series *Why Women Kill* is a classic American show. The show tells the story of three women of different generations, different identities and different personalities who have different problems in their marriages. All three couples face problems in their marriages because of their husbands, and conflict talks are constantly generated, which is a more ideal corpus for the study of conflict talk between couples. In this study, there are 24 excerpts of conflict talk in *Why Women Kill*, 7 excerpts from the first couple, 10 excerpts from the second couple, and 7 excerpts from the third couple. (Note: The criteria for excerpting are that one of the parties in the conflict has an obvious expression of displeasure, speaks at a significantly faster rate, speaks at a significantly louder volume, or has overly exaggerated body language)

Zhao used the method of structural analysis to divide conflict talk into initiating moves, oppositional moves and terminating moves [1]. The author further summarizes that there are four types of conflict initiating moves in *Why Women Kill*, namely, inquiry, elaboration, command, and statement; six types of conflict oppositional moves, namely, avoidance, denial, rhetorical questioning, argument, verbal abuse, and joking; and five types of conflict terminating moves, namely, change of topic, withdrawal of one party, victory of one party, third party intervention, and compromise of one party. Each of them will be studied and discussed below.

5.1. Conflict Initiating Moves

5.1.1. Inquiry

- T1 Robert: Penny for your thoughts?
(2.5)
- T2 Ann: Oh::I was just (1.7) thinking about (1.7) silly things.
(3.0)
- T3 Robert: What kind of silly things?
- T4 Ann: I was wondering when you'll die.

In verbal communication, one party often asks questions to the other party, hoping to get answers from the other party, but sometimes the other party returns with negativity, rhetorical questions, changing the subject, vague responses, etc. We call this inquiry conflict initiating move. Here the husband sees that his wife is contemplating and takes the initiative to send out an interrogative Turn.1 In the face of

Robert's question, Ann, the wife, is thinking back to what she heard the female neighbors talking about during the day at the supermarket and knows about her husband's cheating behavior. But without family status, she doesn't have the courage to pick the truth out, so she answers irrelevant words in Turn 2. Robert is an aerospace engineer, his career success makes him the main financial source of the family and in a dominant position in the home, but also lead to Robert's disrespect for his wife. His wife, Ann, is a housewife whose entire life is focused on taking care of her husband's daily life and has no hobbies or friends of her own. As long as her husband knocks a cup, she has to get up to add a cup of coffee for him, and has no dignity to speak of in the family.

Status is the basis for people's social activities. In traditional families, women tend to be in a subordinate position, with men being responsible for earning money to support the family and women being responsible for raising the children. The relationship between Ann and Robert in the 1960s is in line with the perception of the traditional family. The traditional family model implies the subordination of women to men. When one thinks of the traditional family, one associates the woman as the subordinate of the man. Ann, the wife, gave up her dream of becoming a pianist in order to be a good wife. She has always been a good wife with a humble and submissive character, who never fails to answer her husband's questions, but after learning that he is cheating on her, she begins to make changes little by little. Here she did not have the courage to say the fact of her husband's cheating directly, but she also used the word "die" to express her displeasure implicitly in Turn 4. The offensive words of the wife make the husband deeply upset, and the conflict talk is thus launched.

Elaboration

- T1 Ann: I:: bought a new dress.
T2 Robert: Did you?
T3 Ann: Yeah.
(4.8)
- T4 Robert: That the dress?
T5 Ann: It is.(1.0) What do you think?
(2.0)
- T6 Robert: It's nice.

Elaboration refers to the statement of objective facts, but in the process of verbal communication, the two parties often have different views on objective things due to their interests, social status, and education, and so on. When they communicate with each other, the difference in their views will lead to conflicts. In the United States in the 1960s, the "Miss America" pageant represents the subservient status of women, who are treated as objects and dressed up for male aesthetic standards. Both Ann, the wife, and April, the third party, are dressed in the typical blonde, Barbie doll image popular with American men at the time, representing a kind of "submissiveness".

Here Ann listened to April and thought that the reason her husband Robert cheated on her was because she had become a housewife and did not pay attention to dressing herself and lost her charm, so she deliberately went to get a manicure, changed her hair and bought new clothes, hoping to get her husband's praise. However, the career-oriented husband did not notice his wife's careful grooming. The wife had to start the conversation by stating the fact that she had gotten a new dress in Turn 1 and leading the conversation with the question What do you think in Turn 5, hoping that her husband would sincerely praise her. However, the husband's use of the word

“nice” to praise his wife only became the trigger of the conflict.

5.1.2. Statement

T1 Robert: What is wrong with you? You’re acting like you’re drunk.

T2 Ann: Am I? Oh:: that might be the pot.

Elaboration focuses more on the expression of objective facts, while the statement refers to the discourse containing the speaker’s strong subjective consciousness, and the main types of statements are accusatory. Accusatory discourse is usually used to reprimand the other party in a conversation, including complaints and criticisms, which can easily cause the hearer’s emotional discontent and lead to conflict. Here, Robert, the husband, takes his wife Ann to a dinner party at his boss’s house, but the wife, who has always been humble and submissive, becomes the focus of the party by talking and laughing. The husband feels that his dominant position in the family is threatened and that his wife has embarrassed himself, so he accuses her in Turn 1 of acting like she is drunk.

In 1963 Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* was published, and Ann’s Italian female neighbor, Sheila, is deeply influenced by it. After learning that her husband had cheated on her, Ann believes that it was because she was not good enough that he had found another lover, so she is bent on getting him back. But Sheila encourages her to take the initiative and try to defend and shape the marriage she wants. Ann, the wife, begins to live a more self-centered life as she spends time with her Italian neighbor, who is deeply influenced by feminist ideas, and April, a third party who is financially independent and pursues her own dreams. In the face of her husband’s accusations, she does not express any apology in the Turn 2, but directly admits what she has done, which represents Ann began to slowly independent from the family subordinate position, but the wife’s perversity caused her husband’s displeasure, the conflict of words thus began.

5.1.3. Command

T1 Taylor: In fact, this is what’s gonna happen right now. You and I are gonna take a tour of this house, and you’re gonna show me where you’ve been hiding your stash.

(1.8)

T2 Eli: There’s no stash. //I just...

T3 Taylor: And you know what, Eli,

put all that shit down, because you have absolutely no reason to unpack.

You’re going to rehab first thing in the morning.

Generally speaking, a command is to drive or stop someone from doing something and is generally mandatory. And the person giving the order is usually the higher and more powerful party in the conversation, such as a supervisor to a subordinate, a teacher to a student. In the third couple, Taylor, the wife, is a feminist, who is not only financially independent, but also relies on her career independence to obtain economic independence, and no longer depends on men, and the husband has no source of income and relies on his wife in the family, but is in a vulnerable position.

In the early 1990s, the United States was experiencing the third wave of the feminist movement, and the third movement sought to include more types of women, with a greater percentage of black women. The third heroine, Taylor’s story, takes place in 2019. Taylor is a black woman, a feminist, and a successful lawyer who subverts the traditional image of

black people as poor and downtrodden and poorly educated. She takes on the responsibility of providing for her family, and her husband, though a screenwriter, has not sold a script in two years and is muddling along at home. The entire family is supported by the wife, who controls the power of speech, showing that the social status of black people is no longer below that of white people. The wife bears the expenses of her own open marriage, showing that the dominant power in this marriage is the woman, and that the wife is in a strong position. As female social status and economic power continue to rise, the man’s position as the sole breadwinner for the family is no longer as strong as it once was. Here the wife, Taylor, immediately stops the rest of her travel schedule after finding drugs in the trunk of her car and tells her husband Eli to drive home. Once home, the wife immediately orders her husband to find every drug stash in the house in Turn 1, and interrupts his explanation in Turn 3 to directly arrange for him to go to rehab tomorrow. Usually, simple and straightforward orders are obeyed and complied with, but the coercive nature of the commands easily provokes resistance from the listener, and conflict ensues.

5.2. Conflict Oppositional Moves

5.2.1. Avoidance

T1 Ann: How else did Emily get out into the street? Perhaps you could come up with another explanation. Think.

(4.0)

T2 Robert: I’m not feeling well.

(1.8)

T3 Ann: My darling.

You can’t possibly imagine how important this moment is to me.

Avoidance is when two parties in conflict are talking about a certain topic, and when one party brings up something, the other party does not respond directly and tries to change the subject, while the other party insists on bringing up the topic that the other party wants to avoid, so the conflict inevitably becomes more intense. In this conversation, Ann already knows that the real reason for her daughter’s death was not because of her own negligence, but because of Robert’s cheating partner. So she asks her husband in Turn 1, intending to give him one last chance to confess. But the husband is very selfish and self-serving and does not confess the truth. When confronts with his wife’s questions, he tries to escape in Turn 2 on the pretext that he is not feeling well, which makes the conflict between the couple even more intense.

Silence usually expresses different meanings at different moments. Sometimes it expresses reflection, sometimes it expresses the absence of words. But in this conflict talk, silence expresses a silent defiance, resentment and struggle. Here the four-second-long silence shows the intense struggle in the husband’s mind, but ultimately his evasion strengthens the wife’s determination to murder him. The wife’s decision eventually leads to her own double liberation of mind and body. Ann, is a traditional housewife figure, with no job and no financial resources, relying on her husband for all her living expenses and completely dependent on him emotionally. This is the traditional family model in 1960s America. Compared to her contemporary neighbor Sheila, who also appeared to the audience as a housewife, but she is deeply influenced by feminism and does not rely on her husband as much as Ann; while April, a restaurant waitress whom Robert cheated on, has a stable income, is relatively

independent financially, and has a clear plan for her future career. After becoming close friends with them, Ann is no longer content to bind herself for her husband, especially after learning that her daughter died because of her husband. She is angry at her husband's infidelity and unrighteousness, so she joins forces with her female neighbors who have been suffering from domestic violence for a long time and decides to use their husbands' character to make them eat their own words.

5.2.2. Denial

T1 Eli: Six months?

T2 Taylor: Yeah.

T3 Eli: Uh, you told me that you met Jade just a few weeks ago.

T4 Taylor: I'm pretty sure I said "months".

T5 Eli: No. No. You absolutely did not.

In the process of conflict talk, one party expresses direct negation of the other party's questions, instructions, requests, and other verbal behavior, and this strong negation often stimulates the other party's resentment. The third couple is an over-the-top family model with an "open marriage". Taylor met her white husband Eli at the Women's March, where she was speaking about abolishing patriarchy, and Eli was captivated by her intelligence and temperament. As a bisexual woman, Taylor does not hide or compromise, but wants her partner to fully respect her sexuality, so they try an "open marriage". The wife is the main breadwinner for the family, so she doesn't feel the need to report her whereabouts to her husband at all times, and the independent spirit of the new age woman is perfectly reflected in Taylor. In this conversation, Taylor had told her husband that she met her lover a few weeks ago, but the truth is six months ago. The husband asks his wife in Turn 1 if she met her lover six weeks ago, and the wife first confirms it in Turn 2. But in Turn 3, the husband clearly states that the wife explicitly said it was a few weeks ago. The wife corrects her expression in Turn 4, trying to make the husband think he is mistaken, but the husband remembers clearly and uses "No" two times in Turn 5, expressing a strong denial and intensifying the conflict.

5.2.3. Rhetorical Questioning

T1 Karl: Darling, if I could just...

T2 Simone: Tell me his name.

(4.8)

T3 Karl: Winston.

T4 Simone: What's his last name?

T5 Karl: I-I don't know.

(3.0)

T6 Simone: Is he the only one or have there been others?

(6.0)

Here's what's going to happen.

In this conversation, Simone is shocked to see a photo of her husband kissing another man, and after realizing that her husband, who has been married for ten years, is gay, she directly approaches him to confront him. The questioning in Turn 4 and 6 strongly expresses her shock. The fact that the husband did not even know the name of the man in the photo shows how messy his private life is. The husband's silence after being asked if there was anyone else in Turn 6 also indicates that this is not the first time. After realizing the situation, the wife commands him to move out in Turn 6.

In the 80s in America, homosexuality is a sensitive topic. From Simone's disgust when she learns that her husband has come out of the closet and asks him to move out quietly without telling the people at the party, to the disdain of her in-

laws when their secret is revealed, it can be seen that the attitude towards homosexuality in America in the 80s is on the negative side. The news that her husband is gay shatters the couple's happy and perfect life in an instant. Contrary to Ann, who sees her husband cheating on her but keeps it to herself and blames herself, Simone, who can't bear to see anything, is furious and tells Karl to pack his things and leave quietly right away. Although Simone is financially independent and shares equal status with her husband in the family, her divorce also needs to take into account the unspoken reason that her husband is gay and even she herself will be taunted if others know that her husband is gay. Therefore, she directly asks her husband not to show up at the party and move away secretly in order to save her face in Turn 6.

5.2.4. Argument

T1 Karl: Please understand. I was trying to prove I love you.

T2 Simone: By faking a suicide attempt?

T3 Karl: You don't respond to small gestures!

T4 Simone: I'm going to work out.

If you and your things are not out of this house by the time I get home, I

will call the police.

In the process of conflict talk, one party will refute the other party's point of view because they do not agree with the content, viewpoint or attitude of the other party, and each party insists on its own opinion without considering the other party's viewpoint, resulting in a deepening conflict. In the second couple, Karl, the husband, treats his wife with enough respect, and the wife has her own independence, which puts both parties in an equal position in the family. In the traditional perception, Asian women are often portrayed as the bottom of the social ladder in European and American series, while in the second couple, the wife Simone is a celebrity in the American high society, and her whole body exudes a confident light. From the famous paintings and expensive porcelain in Simone's home, to the successive charity parties, all show that Simone is not a down-and-out aristocrat, but an Asian woman with real wealth and status. In this conversation, after the wife finds out that her husband faked suicide by taking sleeping pills, the husband tries desperately to save the marriage in Turn 1, while the wife is very distressed that her husband faked suicide to deceive her feelings, so she asks him back in Turn 2. Karl refutes his wife in Turn 3, complaining that she is not concerned about the minor incident, which also reflects Simone's rational and calm character traits. However, their daughter's marriage forces the wife, who loves to save her face, to maintain a seemingly glamorous marriage. She cares too much about the outside world's opinion of her, and loves to save face more than anything else. Karl's betrayal of her must not be known, otherwise she will lose face. Everything about the divorce had to be done quietly. Simone is very angry with Karl for cheating on her in this way, she thought he truly loved her. Karl, on the other hand, thought Simone wanted was not love, but the approval and envy of the people around her. The two sides do not have the same viewpoint, which eventually leads to conflict.

5.2.5. Verbal Abuse

T1 Eli: What-- Why are you opening the trunk?

T2 Taylor: Because I want to know what's in there.

T3 Eli: Taylor!

((Wife getting out of the car and

opening the trunk))

Shit.

T4 Jade: Eli, your nose.

T5 Eli: Fuck. Wait.

((Husband getting out of the car))

T6 Jade: Oh, my God. Eli.

T7 Eli: I-I know that it looks bad.

T8 Taylor: Get in the car. We're going home.

T9 Eli: W-What about the retreat?

T10 Taylor: Oh, fuck the retreat.

Abusive words can easily offend the other party because they are often overtly offensive. In Eli and Taylor's family, Taylor, as the sole economic provider of the household and the initiator of the open family, has complete financial and psychological independence. In this family, white man and white woman depend on black woman's lifestyle, and black woman's identity achieves a transformation, breaking through the previous status of family subordination. In addition, Taylor's clothes are mostly professional suits, which fully reflect her identity as a social elite. All these show that Taylor is in a strong position in the family, so she is in a dominant position in the conversation and can express her feelings as she likes, unlike Ann in the 60s who needs to take into account her husband's feelings. Here the wife realizes that her husband is hiding something when she notices his nosebleed and a series of abnormal behavior. She gets out of the car and opens the trunk to find the drugs scattered in the trunk by her husband and gets very angry. On the one hand, it is because of her own negligence that she did not realize that her husband had relapsed into drugs, and on the other hand, it is also because of her husband's concealment. The words "shit" and "fuck" in Turns 5 and 10 express the husband's anger at being found with drugs and the wife's anger.

5.2.6. Joking

T1 Karl: Tommy Harte.

T2 Simone: I know he's a bit young...

T3 Karl: A bit? When I met him, he was eight.

T4 Simone: And you were heterosexual.

T5 Karl: And now this child is your lover?

Who knew there was such a fine line between adultery and day care?

T6 Simone: Bugger off, Karl. You have no right to judge me.

T7 Karl: I'm not judging you, I'm just teasing.

In actual communication, the conflict oppositional move is not always in the tit-for-tat situation, sometimes there may be humorous jokes. However, such jokes do not always have the effect of de-escalating the conflict, but rather make the other party more upset, thus leading to the continuation of conflict discourse. In the 1980s, the LGBT community stood up and spoke out together for the existence of the ego, and the sexual liberation movement reached its climax, but the outbreak of AIDS came with it. There was still a great deal of prejudice against homosexuals. Simone, a successful upper class woman who thinks it is pathetic not to have a man to love her, slowly accepts the love of another man. Here Karl finds out that Simone's lover is a young boy who has just turned eighteen and can't help but feel ridiculous, joking about the age of the young boy in Turn 5, not expecting to make Simone even more annoyed instead. Simone thinks that her husband himself is a homosexual, so he simply has no position or right to judge her behavior.

5.3. Conflict Terminating Moves

5.3.1. Change of Topic

T1 Eli: Uh, you told me that you met Jade just a few weeks ago.

T2 Taylor: I'm pretty sure I said "months".

T3 Eli: No. No. You absolutely did not.

T4 Taylor: Well, obviously I made a mistake. Who wants dessert?

After a few rounds of conflict talk, one party might find a new topic of conversation to divert attention in order to avoid the continuation of the conflict or to break the stalemate. As a new-age elite woman, Taylor gets everything that the traditionally perceived male role has. She is capable, has social status, financial power, and the freedom to choose her own form of marriage. However, there are problems with her "open" marriage. The fact that her husband has been without an income for a long time keeps him in self-doubt, which not only adds to his anxiety and stress, but also keeps her on guard, careful to protect her husband's poor self-esteem. Here the wife actually met her lover a long time ago, but in order not to make her husband think nonsense, so she hides the time she met him. But the lover does not know, in conversation with the husband, the husband knows that the wife met the lover a long time ago. The wife has to change the subject and terminate the current conversation in Turn 6 in order to maintain the man's self-esteem and avoid conflict.

5.3.2. Withdrawal of One Party

T1 Simone: I want a man who loves me so much
that he would kill another man if
I slept with someone else.

And I'm never gonna get that
from you, am I?

(1.8)

T2 Karl: No. (3.0) But you're my best friend.

T3 Simone: It's not enough.

(Wife going upstairs)

When the conflicting parties go through several turns, the confrontation between them is difficult to eliminate and the conflict is difficult to resolve, then the end of the turn is often terminated by the withdrawal of one party. However, the conflict is not resolved. In the 1980s, the woman's liberation movement in the United States is experiencing a second wave of high tide, and the status of women has improved significantly. But Simone still sees marriage as the greatest achievement and the greatest source of happiness for women, which shows that she does not yet have true spiritual independence and still ties the value of women to marriage. After learning about his wife's affair partner, Karl feels that their marriage can last, each playing his own game, and a divorce is not necessary, but Simone insists on divorce. In Turn 1 she expresses her thoughts that she simply wants a man who loves her deeply. Simone thinks it is sad that she is such a perfect woman who does not get a man's undivided love. Karl, not realizing the point of disagreement, says in Turn 2 that his wife is still his best friend. The two sides disagree and Simone, not wanting to continue the conversation with her husband, goes upstairs and withdraws from the conversation. The conflict talk ends.

5.3.3. Third Party Intervention

T1 Robert: What the hell?

T2 Ann: If you're not going to notice what I'm wearing,

why should I bother to wear anything

at all?

(4.0)

T3 Robert: Honey!

T4 Ann: You want to see the same old Beth?
Fine. Here she is in all her glory.

T5 Robert: Honey!

((The supervisor appearing at the door))

A conflict talk is often terminated by a third party intervention. In the United States in the 1960s, beauty pageants were prevalent and images of blondes and Barbie dolls were highly coveted. Ann has always dressed herself according to the traditional aesthetic standards of men. In this conversation, she dresses up well, but her husband is oblivious. She is angry that her husband does not see her change, however, her husband explains to his wife: no matter how she dresses, he looks at her personally, not externally. After hearing her husband's words, Ann takes off all her clothes and appears in front of him and expresses her dissatisfaction with his neglect in Turn 2 and 4. In the mid-1860s, the prevailing social norm was that women should be grounded in the home. Robert's implication is self-evident: he does not care what she wears as long as she takes care of his food, clothing, and living. The conflict comes to an abrupt end when Ann took her clothes off, not realizing that Robert's boss appeared at the door.

5.3.4. Victory of One Party

T1 Simone: Why are you trying so hard to hold onto me?

T2 Karl: Because I love you, my darling.

T3 Simone: Well, I'm not sure that's enough.

T4 Karl: Well, try this one beside. I actually like you.
How many of your husbands can say that.

After several rounds of conflicting talk, it ends with one party being convinced to agree with the other. Here Simone is angry with her husband for being gay and hiding it from her and refuses to rehearse the dance with him. The wife, a radiant socialite, has all the wealth and status. After knowing that her husband is cheating on her, she thinks she is a failure that no man really loves her. It is evident that the wife is desperate for a complete love inside. Knowing this, Karl expresses his love for his wife in Turn 2, which she thinks is not enough, and he reiterates it in Turn 4, eventually convincing her to rehearse the dance with him and win.

5.3.5. Compromise of One Party

T1 Robert: This something more:

(2.8)

will it keep you from making me delicious dinners?

T2 Ann: No.

T3 Robert: Then you have my permission to do whatever makes you happy.

(3.0)

But just so you know: I intend on sticking around for a while.

(5.0)

T4 Ann: Okay.

The parties in a conversation are often unequal in status and power, and therefore unequal in discourse. In a conflict talk, the two sides of the conversation originally have their own opinions and do not give in to each other. The weaker party may be reluctant to continue the conflict because of fears. Robert is a typical macho man who doesn't want his wife to be out. Ann is in a dependent position in the family, a typical housewife, no job, no hobbies, all she does is to take care of her husband. She is not financially independent and has no

identity in the marriage, and no social status or social identity outside the marriage. In this gender value system, men are superior to women, and female will is subordinated to male. When Ann realizes that her husband is cheating on her, she feels like her world is falling apart and she realizes that she can no longer rest on her laurels and wants to change herself. Robert granted her request in Turn 3. Although the process of changing is a long one, here Ann has to follow her husband's order for her own vital interests.

6. Conclusion

Based on Conversation Analysis Theory, this paper takes the conflict talk between couples as the corpus and classifies the three moves of conflict talk between couples in more details. It is found that there are four types of conflict initiating moves: inquiry, elaboration, instruction, and statement, among which inquiry occurs most frequently; six types of conflict oppositional moves: avoidance, denial, rhetorical questioning, argument, verbal abuse, and joking, mainly rhetorical questioning and argument, and denial occurs only once; five types of conflict terminating moves: change of topic, withdrawal of one party, victory of one party, third party intervention, and compromise of one party, among which the withdrawal of one party is the most frequent. This paper also attempts to elucidate the pragmatic reasons for the production of conflicting talk. It is found that the speaker's gender, status, position, the social era in which he or she lives, personality, and ethnicity all influence the choice of the turn-taking. Among them, status and position are the most important factors, and they are symbols of power in society. Similarly in the family, the party that has a higher status position enjoys the dominant power in the conversation and shapes the image of the dominant one, while the party in a subordinate position is prone to be in a weak position in the conflict and obey the instructions of the strong one. The harmony of spousal relationship is conducive to family harmony, so the study of conflict talk between couples has great practical significance.

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