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论 文 题 目

幽默言语的语用研究：赵本山小品中的幽默言语行
为和语用策略

**A Pragmatic Approach to Humorous Utterances:
Humorous Speech Acts and Strategies in Zhao
Benshan's Comic Sketches**

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**A Pragmatic Approach to Humorous Utterances:
Humorous Speech Acts and Strategies in Zhao Benshan's Comic
Sketches**

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person or material which has to a substantial extent been accepted for the award of any other degree or diplomat at any university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

Zhao Benshan's humor enjoys vast popularity in China; nevertheless, from the literature available, it can be found that most researches on Zhao's comic sketches focus on the linguistic features and styles and few tentative studies have been conducted to account for Zhao's humor from the perspective of sociolinguistics.

This thesis, through a case study of Zhao's comic sketches, attempts to study humorous speech acts within the framework of speech act theory, with the aim to interpret how verbal humor in Zhao's comic sketches is produced and find out what the most effective strategies are in the production of humor, which contributes to extending the approaches to the analysis of humorous utterances (HU) in comic sketches and conversational texts.

Throughout this research, John Austin's Speech Acts Theory and Searle's development to the Speech Acts Theory are adopted to classify humorous utterances. According to Austin (1962), the humorous speech act in my corpus consists of three sub-acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. Based on Searle's revision to Austin's classification of illocutionary acts, humorous utterances in Zhao's comic sketches are classified into six categories: Declarations, Representatives, Expressives, Directives, Commissives and Other. Then in the light of Hay's study on pragmatic strategies, the effort is made to discuss the dynamic interaction between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts in which humor is involved in and what strategy is the most frequently used in the production of humor. And these are done with taxonomy of three categories: Solidarity, Aggression and Defense types of perlocutionary acts.

The present research selects 42 cases out of 708 cases taken from 29 comic sketches of Zhao Benshan. The frequency distribution of humorous speech acts in

Zhao's comic sketches shows that Expressives are the most extensively used and Declarations the least. And among the five types of illocutionary acts, Expressives are the most effective to perform perlocutions. Aggression-based strategy is the most preferred in Zhao's comic sketches.

Though it is not the first time to study Zhao Benshan's comic sketches, it is the first time to analyze them with Speech Acts Theory. Thus, it is a creative try, shedding some light on the future studies of other linguistic phenomena from the perspective of Speech Acts Theory.

Key Words: humorous utterances; speech acts; pragmatic strategies; Zhao Benshan's comic sketches

中文摘要

在中国，赵本山的小品深受广大观众的喜爱，然而，从现有的文献看来，大部分的研究主要针对于赵本山小品的语言特点及语言风格，从社会语言学角度进行深入研究的却寥寥无几。

本文将赵本山小品作为个案研究对象，以言语行为理论为支撑，研究幽默言语行为，旨在探究赵氏小品中言语幽默产生的原因及寻找有效的幽默语用策略，从而为喜剧小品中幽默话语的研究开辟了新的思路和方法。

在研究过程中，根据约翰·奥斯汀的言语行为理论，将言语行为分为以言指事，以言行事和以言成事三个层面。按照塞尔对“以言行事”的分类，作者将幽默话语分为六类：宣告类，阐述类，表达类，指令类，委任类和其他。然后在 Hay (2000) 对语用策略研究的基础上，将幽默话语的“以言成事”行为分为团结型、攻击型和防卫型三种，探讨了这三种“以言成事”行为分别在“以言行事”行为中的分布情况，从而得出在赵氏小品中哪一种“以言行事”行为最能有效地实现幽默的“以言成事”行为，和赵氏小品中哪种幽默策略广为采用。

作者从 29 部赵本山的喜剧小品中收集到 708 个个案研究对象，其中本文精选了 42 例。通过对赵氏小品中幽默言语行为分布情况的统计和分析，本研究发现：表达类言语行为在赵氏小品中最为普遍，宣告类很少使用；表达类言语行为最能有效地实施幽默的“以言成事”行为；攻击型策略使用频率最高，最能有效地制造幽默的效果。

虽然本文不是第一次研究赵本山的喜剧小品，却是第一个从言语行为角度深入研究赵本山小品的全新的尝试，希望本文对从言语行为角度研究其他语言现象有所裨益。

关键词：幽默话语；言语行为；语用策略；赵本山小品

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

As a human phenomenon, humor is pervasive throughout social interactions and cultural artifacts. Appropriate humor can contribute to ameliorating human relationships and improving the communicative atmosphere and the use of humor is endowed with the symbol of personal wit, glamour and education. And the study on humor has been fascinating countless researchers to engage in. Many disciplines such as philosophy, physiology, sociology and psychology, try to explain humor from their own angle, and some of them have put forward influential theories on humor. In contrast, the linguistic study on humor is rather a newcomer, especially the pragmatic study of verbal humor. Salvatore Attardo (2003) claims that it is fair to say that linguistics mainly stays away from humor twenty years ago. However, we have seen a continuous increase of interests and numbers of participants in the linguistic study of verbal humor during the past two decades. In the meantime, the past twenty years has also experienced the booming of pragmatics as an independent and influential branch of linguistics. Pragmatics, which studies the genuine language use in concrete communicative contexts, has presented an enormous explanatory capacity and diversified working mechanisms with buoyant pragmatic approaches and theories. Therefore, the interdisciplinary study of verbal humor and pragmatics has turned out to be one promising field for the study of humor.

When it comes to humorous performance in China, Zhao Benshan's comic sketches are often talked about. Having passed through twenty years, Zhao's comic

sketches have been enjoying immense popularity and have already become an indispensable course of the feast for the lunar New Year's evening party. His humorous language not only amuses the audience, but also reflects the wisdom and creativity of the Chinese people. Many researchers have approached Zhao's comic sketches from different perspectives, however, from the literature available, most of the researches are conducted to analyze the linguistic features and styles, and few have been done to explain Zhao's humor from the pragmatic perspective.

The present study is a tentative endeavor to explore Zhao's humor from a brand-new perspective—by employing Speech Acts Theory. In this research, John Austin's Speech Acts Theory and Searle's development to Austin's Speech Acts Theory are adopted to classify humorous utterances. Hay's (2000:709-742) category of humor strategies are borrowed and revised to discuss the perlocutionary acts.

1.2 Research Questions

In order to achieve the above objectives, there are several questions needed to be answered, roughly in accordance with this basic question: How to use humor to do things?

- How is humor involved in a speech act?
- How humorous utterances, abbreviated as HU, are completed through illocutionary level to perlocutionary level in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches?
- What can we do with humor in verbal communication?
- What type of humorous speech act is the most pervasive in Zhao's comic sketches?

By answering these questions, important research findings are to be presented, which, to be sure, will enrich the studies of Zhao Benshan's comic sketches.

1.3 Research Methodology

1.3.1 Case study

The approach begins from selecting appropriate cases which are to serve our research objects. Humor, in Zhao's comic sketches, is presented through a vast and varied array of facial expressions, typical gestures, ironies, riddles, puns and so on. Here,

however, we only confine the scope of our research to verbally expressed humor in Zhao's comic sketches. The gamut of cases fitting into our category is unmanageably large, thus making it impossible to conduct detailed examinations of all in the thesis. An alternative approach, descriptive one, is employed instead to study particular types of humor in manageable cases, offering a detailed description of the workings of the chosen cases of humor. Of the 708 cases, 42 are taken after careful consideration to be the examples in the thesis.

1.3.2 The Source of Data

The data adopted in this thesis are exclusively taken from Zhao Benshan's comic sketches. 29 works are selected as the object of our research, among which 20 works are from the Spring Festival Gala, the other nine from local television stations and Super Variety Show in CCTV.

Those chosen comic sketches from the Spring Festival Gala are listed in a chronological order as follows: *Blind Date* (相亲, 1990), *Xiao Jiu and Lao Le* (小九老乐, 1991), *I Want a Home* (我想有个家, 1992), *New Year's Visit, the Old Version* (老拜年, 1993), *Door-guards* (门神, 1994), *Uncle Niu "Promoted"* (牛大叔提干, 1995), *The Cart Driver* (三鞭子, 1996), *A Model Team Named Red Sorghum* (红高粱模特队, 1997), *New Year's Visit* (拜年, 1998), *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (昨天, 今天, 明天, 1999), *Employed Conversationalist* (钟点工, 2000), *Selling Crutches* (卖拐, 2001), *Selling a Wheelchair* (卖车, 2002), *Mental Anguish* (心病, 2003), *The Worker Delivering Water* (送水工, 2004), *Kung Fu* (功夫, 2005), *Conversation* (说事, 2006), *Plot* (策划, 2007), *The Torchbearer* (火炬手, 2008), *Got The Money Anyway* (不差钱, 2009). And those from other sources: *The Treasured Seat* (宝座, 1988), *Actors' Troubles* (演员的烦恼, 1993), *Lao Nian's Getting Married* (老蔫完婚, 1993), *Before and After the New Year* (年前年后, 1995), *The Old Couple* (老伴, 1996), *My Son Has Grown up* (儿子大了, 1998), *I Will Become a Millionaire* (有钱了, 2001), *A Great Trickster, the New Version* (新编大忽悠, 2004), *Happy Birthday* (生日快乐, 2009).

1.3.3 The Criterion for Data Collection

It is a risky task to identify humors in Zhao's comic sketches. Zhao intends almost

every turn of the conversation to be humorous and trigger the audience's laughter, however, the audience may fail to catch it due to various reasons, for example, different sense of humor, different cultural background. Attardo and Chabanne (1972) claim that the perlocutionary goal of a humorous text is to amuse the hearer. We assume that where there is a burst of the present audience's laughter, there must be humorous utterances. Therefore, in this thesis, the audience's response, namely laughter is one major criterion for the identification of humor and Zhao's intention to be humorous serves as a supplement. And the corresponding word of "laugh" in Chinese, "笑", is placed in brackets exactly after the words which make the audience burst into laughter.

This process resulted in a corpus of 708 items of humorous utterances in Zhao's comic sketches. And the scripts of the examples cited in this thesis were first searched on the Internet and some revision, correction and supplement were made for the problematic scripts. And for those with no online scripts, a faithful transcript was done.

1.3.4 The Processing of Data

The data will be first classified in the illocutionary level of speech acts by borrowing Searle's classification for the purpose to see how humor is employed in the general speech acts. The frequency distribution will be presented in long-linear models in order to reveal which humorous illocutionary act is the most prevalent in the corpus and which is the least frequently used. Then, the data will be classified further in the perlocutionary level of speech acts based on the following three categories: Solidarity, Aggression and Defense. The same model is done to see the distribution of the perlocutionary act of humorous utterances in each type of illocutionary act of humorous utterances in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches and which humorous illocutionary act is the most effective in performing humorous perlocutionary acts. Also, careful explanations and analysis of the examples are carried out.

1.4 The Layout of the Thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters and a bibliography.

Chapter One introduces the research background, research questions, research methodology and the overall design of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents an overview of humor, its definitions, and the main theories

especially from the perspective of pragmatics and highlights the Speech Acts Theory, so as to lay the necessary theoretical ground for the extended explorations in later chapters.

Chapter Three illustrates the illocutionary acts of humorous utterances in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches and analyze the statistics in the data to see how humor is involved.

Chapter Four explores the perlocutionary acts and how they interact with illocutionary acts. This research falls into three categories---Solidarity, Aggression, Defense with cases study and statistical analysis.

Chapter Five draws a conclusion out of the findings in the previous chapters and points out the implication and limitation of the present study as well as the suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humor is a universal human phenomenon, bearing upon all aspects of human life, relationships, and interactions, however, it maybe one of the hardest subjects to study. Above all, no easy way is available to define or describe humor for the simple reason that there is not a single definition acceptable to all investigators in this area.

The absence of a unified definition of humor, however, does not hold back researchers' dogged explorations, and encourages a diverse and growing corps of researchers and scholars to get involved.

The following brief review of theories on humor throws light on and provides ready reference for the later discussions.

2.1 Definitions of Humor

The nature and definition of humor has aroused widespread curiosity and interest since ancient times. In spite of the lack of a precise definition, a survey of some attempts at defining humor gives a helpful insight into the concept. We will approach the definition, on the one hand, through the authoritative definitions from dictionaries, on the other, through views proposed by some scholars. The closing part of this section will make it clear the working definition of humor adopted in this thesis.

In the following dictionaries, humor is defined as:

the quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech.

(New Oxford English Dictionary)

the quality of being laughable or comical and the ability to perceive or express what is comical, witty, etc.

(The American Heritage Dictionary Of the English Language)

something that arouses amusement, laughter or the capacity for recognizing , reacting to, or expressing something which is amusing, funny, etc.

(Longman Modern English Dictionary)

the quality which appears to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous or the mental faculty of discovering, expressing or appreciating the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous; something that is designed to be comical or amusing.

(Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)

As is stated in the above definitions, the diversity of definitions reflects different aspects of humor.

Etymologically, the term "humor" has its origin in the Latin word of the same spelling, meaning "fluid" or "moisture." In the ages before the 19th century, scholars believed that there were four basic bodily humors: choler, melancholy, blood, and phlegm. A normal healthy person was balanced in these four humors, that is, he was "in good humor." Any kind of imbalance was said to be "out of humor." It was believed that laughter facilitated the balance. The present sense of humor started roughly two hundred years ago: before that, a "humorist" was a person who was ridiculously "actor of humor" and was a victim of laughter; after that, a "humorist" became a person who was highly skilled at producing amusing, incongruous, ridiculous ideas and events (McGhee, 1979:4—5).

With the passage of time, "humor" has gradually come to refer to one's mood or state of mind in the general sense (Xu, 2003:15).

Psychologically, humor is regarded to be essentially a masked aggression, which gives one the gratification one desperately craves (Freud, 1976:299). After Freud, the various disciplines of humor studies branched out.

From a physiological point of view, humor is a form of communication in which a complex mental stimulus illuminates, amuses, or elicits a stereotyped predictable response: the laughter reflex. Koestler (1993:682) claims that spontaneous laughter is

generated by the coordinated contraction of fifteen facial muscles in a stereotyped pattern and accompanied by altered breathing.

Socially, Nash (1985, 9) holds that “the act of humor” is a ‘genus’ or derivation in culture, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, typical practices, characteristic artifacts, etc.” and thus viewing humor as some cultural and social entity and not psychological phenomenon or a mere physiological quality.

Linguistically, Attardo (1994) has a more practical approach of defining humor. He argues that the definition of what humor is ultimately relies on the purpose for which it is used. In the field of literary criticism, for instance, it is a need of a fine-grained categorization whereas linguists have often been happy with broader definitions, discussing that whatever triggers laughter or whatever is felt to be funny is humor. To put it another way, humor is whatever is intended to be funny, amusing and laughable, which is generally considered a practical and acceptable approach to the definition of humor.

In our research, we confine ourselves exclusively to verbal humor. As we know, the gamut of humorous phenomenon in Zhao’s comic sketches is a combination of visual, verbal, physical and situational humor; therefore, an integrative approach to the study is unmanageably large and impractical. Our major concern in this thesis is to apply linguistic theories to interpret verbal humor in Zhao’s comic sketches.

2.2 Survey of Theories of Humor

The compelling power of humor makes it a recurrent topic for research in many fields. Three theories on humor creation emerge in humor research: the superiority theory, the incongruity theory, and the relief theory.

Superiority Theory

We can give two forms to the claims of the superiority theory of humor: (1) the strong claim holds that all humor involves a feeling of superiority, and (2) the weak claim suggests that feelings of superiority are frequently found in many cases of humor. It is not clear that many superiority theorists would hold to the strong claim if pressed, but we will evaluate as a necessary condition nonetheless.

Neither Plato nor Aristotle makes clear pronouncements about the essence of humor, though their comments are preoccupied with the role of feelings of superiority in our finding something funny. In the "Philebus," Plato tries to expose the "mixture of pleasure and pain that lies in the malice of amusement." He argues that ignorance is a misfortune that when found in the weak is considered ridiculous. In comedy, we take malicious pleasure from the ridiculous, mixing pleasure with a pain of the soul. Tragedy deals with subjects who are average or better than average; however, in comedy we look down upon the characters, since it presents subjects of lesser virtue than, or "who are inferior to," the audience. The "ludicrous," according to Aristotle, is "that is a failing or a piece of ugliness which causes no pain of destruction" (*Poetics*, sections 3 and 7). Going beyond the subject of comedy, Aristotle defines wit as "educated insolence," and describes jokes as "a kind of abuse" which should ideally be told without producing pain. Rather than clearly offering a superiority theory of humor, Plato and Aristotle focus on this common comic feature, bringing it to our attention for ethical considerations.

Thomas Hobbes developed the most well known version of the Superiority theory. Giving emphatic expression to the idea, Hobbes, in the 8th chapter of *Human Nature*, says "that the passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly". Motivated by the literary conceit of the laugh of triumph, Hobbes's expression on the superiority theory looks like more of a theory on laughter than a theory on humor.

Incongruity Theory

The incongruity theory is the reigning theory of humor, since it seems to account for most cases of perceived funniness, which is partly because "incongruity" is something of an umbrella term. Most developments of the incongruity theory only try to list a necessary condition for humor—the perception of an incongruity—and they stop short of offering the sufficient conditions.

In the *Rhetoric* (III, 2), Aristotle presents the earliest glimmer of an incongruity theory of humor, finding that the best way to get an audience to laugh is to setup an

expectation and deliver something “that gives a twist.” After discussing the power of metaphors to produce a surprise in the hearer, Aristotle says that “[t]he effect is produced even by jokes depending upon changes of the letters of a word; this too is a surprise. You find this in verse as well as in prose. The word which comes is not what the hearer imagined.” These remarks sound like a surprise theory of humor, similar to that later offered by René Descartes, but Aristotle continues to explain how the surprise must somehow “fit the facts,” or as we might put it today, the incongruity must be capable of a resolution.

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Immanuel Kant gives a clearer statement of the role of incongruity in humor: “In everything that is to excite a lively laugh there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing” (I, I, 54).

Arthur Schopenhauer offers a more specific version of the incongruity theory, arguing that humor arising from a failure of a concept to account for an object of thought. When the particular outstrips the general, we are faced with an incongruity. Schopenhauer also emphasizes the element of surprise, saying that “the greater and more unexpected [. . .] this incongruity is, the more violent will be his laughter” (1819, I, Sec. 13).

As stated by Kant and Schopenhauer, the incongruity theory of humor specifies a necessary condition of the object of humor. Focusing on the humorous object leaves something out of the analysis of humor, since there are many kinds of things that are incongruous which do not produce amusement.

Relief Theory

Relief theories attempt to describe humor along the lines of a tension-release model. Rather than defining humor, they discuss the essential structures and psychological processes that produce laughter. The two most prominent relief theorists are Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud. We can consider two versions of the relief theory: (1) the strong version holds that all laughter results from a release of excessive energy; (2) the weak version claims that it is often the case that humorous laughter

involves a release of tension or energy. Freud develops a more specific description of the energy transfer mechanism, but the process he describes is not essential to the basic claims of the relief theory of humor.

In “The Physiology of Laughter” (1860), Spencer develops a theory of laughter that is intimately related to his “hydraulic” theory of nervous energy, whereby excitement and mental agitation produces energy that “must expend itself in some way or another.” He argues that “nervous excitation always tends to beget muscular motion.” As a form of physical movement, laughter can serve as the expressive route of various forms of nervous energy. Spencer did not see his theory as a competitor to the incongruity theory of humor; rather, he tried to explain why it is that a certain mental agitation arising from a “descending incongruity” results in this characteristically purposeless physical movement. Spencer never satisfactorily answers this specific question, but he presents the basic idea that laughter serves to release pent up energy.

In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud develops a more fine-grained version of the relief theory of laughter that amounts to a restatement of Spencer’s theory with the addition of a new process. He describes three different sources of laughter—joking, the comic, and humor—which all involve the saving of some psychic energy that is then discharged through laughter. In joking, the energy that would have been used to repress sexual and hostile feelings is saved and can be released in laughter. In the comic, cognitive energy to be used to solve an intellectual challenge is left over and can be released. The humorous involves a saving of emotional energy, since what might have been an emotion provoking situation turns out to be something we should treat non-seriously. The energy building up for the serious emotional reaction can then be released.

2.3 Pragmatics Theories of Humor

Based on the literature available, we find that linguistic research into humor has been conducted from different aspects: phonetic and phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and discursive. Recently, the study of humor has increasingly captured more attention from the perspective of pragmatics in that humor is employed

largely to make people laugh and amused. The theories below are the most widely acceptable to account for humor.

2.3.1 Cooperative Principle

H.P.Grice first put forward the theory of cooperative principle. Grice assumes that we are able to converse with one another because we recognize common goals in conversation and specific ways of achieving these goals. In any conversation, only certain kinds of “moves” are possible at any particular time because of the constraints that operate to govern exchanges. These constraints limit speakers as to what they can say and listeners as to what they can infer.

Grice (1975:45) maintains that the overriding principle in conversation is one he calls the *cooperative principle*: ‘Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.’ You must therefore act in conversation in accord with a general principle that you are mutually engaged with your listener or listeners in an activity that is of benefit to all, that benefit being mutual understanding.

Grice lists four maxims that follow from the cooperative principle: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The maxim of *quantity* requires you to make your contribution as informative as is required. The maxim of *quality* requires you not to say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack adequate evidence. *Relation* is the simple injunction: be relevant. *Manner* requires you to avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity, and to be brief and orderly.

Of course, everyday speech often occurs in less than ideal circumstances. Grice points out that speakers do not always follow the maxims he has described, and, as a result, they may implicate something rather different from what they actually say. They may violate, exploit, or opt out of one of the maxims, or two of the maxims may clash in particular instance.

Grice notes that a participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfill a maxim in four ways:

- (1) He may quietly and unostentatiously violate a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead.

- (2) He may opt out from the operation both of the maxim and the CP; he may say, indicate, or allow it to become plain that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. He may say, for example, *I cannot say more; my lips are sealed.*
- (3) He may be faced by a clash: he may be unable, for example, to fulfill the first maxim of Quantity (Be as informative as is required) without violating the second maxim of Quality (have adequate evidence for what you say).
- (4) He may flout a maxim; that is he may blatantly fail to fulfill it. On the assumption that the speaker is able to fulfill the maxim and to do so without violating another maxim (because of a clash), is not opting out, and is not, in view of the blatancy of his performance, trying to mislead, the hearer is faced with a minor problem; How can his saying what he did say be reconciled with supposition that he is observing the overall CP? This situation is one that characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature; and when a conversational implicature is generated in this way, I shall say that a maxim is being exploited.

The flouting of the maxims of CP sometimes contributes to the production of humor.

2.3.2 Relevance Theory

The relevance theory was formally put forward in 1986 by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in their work *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, in which the two scholars give a detailed elaboration of the basic theoretical framework of RT.

As an inferential theory of communication, the Relevance Theory aims to explain how the audience infers the speaker's intended meaning. And the history of its application has proved that it is a comparatively mature cognitive theory. Sperber and Wilson define "relevance" in terms of cognitive effect and processing effort. Cognitive effect is achieved when the new information interacts with a context of existing assumptions in any one of the following three ways:

- (1) By strengthening an existing assumption
- (2) By contradicting and eliminating an existing assumption.

- (3) By combining with an existing assumption to yield a contextual implication (that is, conclusions derived from new information and context together, but from neither the new information nor the context alone).

Other things being the same, the greater the cognitive effect achieved by processing the newly presented information is, the greater its relevance. However, the processing of the new information and the deriving of these cognitive effects require some mental effort, and the greater the effort needed to derive them, the lower the relevance will be. The processing effort required to understand an utterance is determined by two main factors: first, the effort of memory and imagination needed to build a suitable context; second, the complexity of the utterance itself. Greater complexity implies greater processing effort (Deidre Wilson, 1994). The greater the processing effort, the lower the relevance will be, and the greater risk of losing the hearer's attention:

Relevance:

- (a) The greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance.
- (b) The smaller the processing effort, the greater the relevance

And it can be transferred to this equation:

Relevance = Contextual effects / Processing effort (Goatly 1997:139).

2.3.3 Presupposition Theory

Whenever an utterance is made, there must be some referees or something that the speaker supposes to be true. As Humphrey Palmer (1985:39) claims, "The statement 'George hit Bill', if made, must be made by someone and to somebody", that is, the speaker and the hearer. Also, "both must have in mind the same two characters called 'George' and 'Bill', to refer the message to." "To make this further requirement we say the statement 'presuppose' George and Bill". (ibid.) To put it another way, "George" and "Bill" are the presuppositions of the statement "George hit Bill".

There are diverse definitions of presupposition proposed by different scholars, from philosophers, semanticists to pragmatists. Though their definitions are not exactly the same, the essence is that there must be something true to an utterance, obvious to the speaker and/or the hearer.

Below is an example offered by He Zhaoxiong (2000:279)

(1) John is married.

(2) John exists.

(3) John is not married.

Here if sentence (1) is true, sentence (2) must be true. The existence of John is a precondition of John's being married. On the other hand, if sentence (3) is true, sentence (2) is true as well. Even when John is not married, it is still true that there exists such a person named "John". So sentence 2 is the presupposition of sentence 1.

In a word, "A statement A presupposes a statement B if B is a precondition of the truth or falsity of A" (Levinson, 2003:172).

There are two types of presupposition: semantic presuppositions and pragmatic presuppositions. The former refers to the presupposition directly inferred from the utterance, while the latter refers to what the speaker holds true towards the context of the utterance. (He Zhaoxiong, 2000:278-284)

2.3.4 Speech Act Theory and Its Applicability to the Study of HU

The preceding sections have clearly depicted that numerous scholars have studied humor from different aspects, pursuing different goals and taking different assumptions. In this section, we will focus on Speech Acts Theory to conduct a careful examination of humor. Meanwhile, our primary concern goes to the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

Speech Acts Theory was originally proposed by Austin. He holds that people do not just use language to say things (to make statements), but to do things (perform actions) in *How to Do Things with Words*. This theory examines what kind of things we do with words and how we do things with words. He first made a distinction between performative and constative acts. After failing to find a distinct demarcation between performatives and constatives, he put forward a general theory of illocutionary acts. The various performatives and constatives are just special sub-cases of the illocutionary acts. In this general theory then, every utterance is a speech act, consisting of three sub-acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. That is, in saying something, the speaker simultaneously performs these three acts.

- (1) Locutionary act: uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference.
- (2) Illocutionary act: utterances which have a certain (conventional) force, such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, etc. So it is also referred as illocutionary force.
- (3) Perlocutionary act: what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even surprising or misleading. (Austin, 1962:109)

In the 12th chapter of *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin attempted a preliminary classification of illocutionary acts. According to illocutionary force of the utterance, he classifies illocutionary acts into five general classes: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives.

However, Searle argues that Austin's classification of illocutionary acts confuses illocutionary verbs with illocutionary acts and fails to give a clear principle of classification. Based on Austin's work, Searle revised and expanded the Speech Acts Theory. He developed an alternative taxonomy of illocutionary acts, namely representatives, expressives, directives, commissives and declarations. Searle's categorization has been influential and widely accepted and has paved the way for further study of illocutionary acts. The following chapter will witness the application of Searle's classification to the exploration of Zhao's comic sketches.

2.3.4.1 Illocutionary Act and Perlocutionary Act

Austin never makes an adequate distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. He claims "unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will not have been happily, successfully performed" (Austin, 1962:116). He also proposes a verbal test for perlocutionary action. "In saying something I perform an illocutionary action. By saying something I perform a perlocutionary action" (Austin, 1962:110). The prepositions "in" and "by" distinguish the illocutionary act from the perlocutionary act.

To explain these new notions further, Austin used "Shoot her" as an example. The illocutionary act performed in saying it may be described as "He urged /advised/ordered

me to shoot her”, as in different contexts, it may have these different illocutionary forces. When you are fighting with a woman, who is going to kill you with the weapon in her hand, then your friend in saying “Shoot her” is offering you a piece of advice. If you are a soldier and the woman is an escaping criminal who is on the verge of success, then this utterance from the mouth of an officer is an order. The perlocutionary act, as is explained, concerns the effect of a locution. Somebody’s saying of “Shoot her” may lead you to the actual shooting of the woman referred to, and this act may be described as “He persuaded me to shoot her”. If, on the other hand, you did not shoot the woman willingly, then you can be said to have been forced to shoot her. The utterance may also have the effect of frightening the woman concerned, or produce in you an irritation towards the speaker. These are perlocutionary acts performed by the speaker of “Shoot her”, too, though they may not be what he had intended originally. This brings up another difference between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, i.e. one is related to intention and the other not. So far it is clear that the illocutionary act is performed via the conventional force and is consequently determinate. By contrast, the perlocutionary act is the process to realize or to complete the speaker’s intention to achieve a certain function, so the perlocutionary act is specific to the circumstances of insurance and involves the effects intended or unintended and is therefore often indeterminate. In the present research, function and intention are viewed as indispensable components of perlocutionary act. The perlocutionary process is performed along with the illocutionary acts of saying something. Therefore, the boundary is blurring and sometimes they may overlap. This can be illustrated with the equation below:

perlocutionary act=locutionary act +illocutionary act

||

function +intention

V

↓

Force

Most speech act theorists have focused on illocutionary acts, however, perlocutionary acts are rarely touched on. Thus, the field of perlocutionary acts of HU is open for us to explore.

2.3.4.2 Applicability of Speech Acts Theory to the Study of HU

From the literature available, we find few researchers have attempted to conduct the speech act analysis of humor, among whom Raskin (1985) is perhaps the first person to try at it. Even he himself just mentions speech act briefly in *Semantic Mechanism of Humor*. He puts forward a definition of the speech act of joking in exactly the same way it was made for other types of utterances. In the same way as Searle has done for assertions, questions, promises, etc., he formulates a set of effective and adequate types of humorous illocutionary acts as follows:

$$X+Y=Z+Z'$$

X= locutionary acts

Y=illocutionary acts: Representatives, Expressives, Directives, Commissives and Declarations

Z= perlocutionary acts

Z'=humorous perlocutionary acts

Attardo (2003) states that the perlocutionary goal of a humorous text is to amuse its hearer. He argues that the speaker intends to achieve more than one goal through humor. When performing humorous speech acts, the speaker not only does the general speech acts like describing, ordering, promising, expressing, or declaring, but also does another thing, that is, amuse the hearer. To create amusement, extra effort has to be made during performing general speech acts, such as wordplay, irony, violation of cooperative principles, etc.. Why does the speaker bother to make such extra effort? There must be some other reward he can get along with the amusement, namely the humorous perlocutionary act.

Z'=humorous perlocutionary acts: amuse the hearer to reinforce solidarity, to impose aggression or defend oneself, etc.

In light of what has been discussed in previous sections, the Speech Acts Theory

provides the feasibility for the study of humorous speech acts, and therefore encourages the present study. In the following chapters, case studies will be conducted to test the hypotheses below:

- (1) Humorous speech acts accomplish general illocutionary acts while amusing the hearer.
- (2) Humorous perlocutionary acts are performed mainly for Solidarity, Aggression and Defense.

Chapter Three

ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF HU IN ZHAO BENSHAN'S COMIC SKETCHES

This chapter focuses on the second layer of speech acts—illocutionary acts of HU in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches based on Searle's theory, aiming to see how humorous speech acts are performed along with the general speech acts.

3.1 Classification of Speech Acts

Austin (1962:151) brings forth five general classes of illocutionary acts: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives. Since its introduction, this classification has aroused many theorists' keen interest in the subject and arguments as well. Searle in his *Speech Acts* proposes his revision to Austin's classification. He says that the successful classification of illocutionary acts shows that "there are a rather limited number of basic things we do with language: we tell people how things are, we try to get them to do things, we commit ourselves to doing things, we express our feelings and attitudes and we bring about changes through our utterances" (1979:29). Searle classifies illocutionary acts into five basic categories: representatives, expressives, directives, commissives and declarations.

Searle suggests five illocutionary points:

Representatives	Speakers present their belief about the truth of a proposition
Expressives	Speakers express their feelings or emotional response
Directives	Speakers want hearers to do something
Commissives	Speakers commit that they themselves will do something in future
Declarations	Speakers' utterances change the external non-linguistic situation

Searle also provides a further explanation for the force of direction of each speech type.

Table 2 Direction of fit:

Speech act type	Direction of fit	S=speaker X=situation
Representatives	words to the world	S believes X
Expressives	none	S feels X
Directives	the world to words	S wants X
Commissives	the world to words	S intends X
Declarations	both	S causes X

Searle's classification is widely accepted by the linguists and paves the way for further study of illocutionary acts. This thesis employs Searle's classification categories as a basis for our classification but adapts it to suit the specific context of comic sketches.

3.2 Classification of HU in Zhao Benshan's Comic Sketches

The humorous speech acts we deal with in Zhao's comic sketches will be classified according to Searle's five categories.

3.2.1 Declarations

Declarations are speech acts which change the state of affairs in the world via their utterance. For example, during the wedding ceremony the act of marriage is performed when the phrase *I now pronounce you man and wife* is uttered. The speaker in this type is required to have a special institutional role, in a specific context, in order to make a declaration appropriately. And the utterances in a declarative situation must be in a very serious and formal form. Any words which are not matched by the format are inappropriate. Take a look at the following example.

[1] (Scene: Zhao and Fan are bidding for the wheelchair.)

1. 赵本山：不行，孩子们花钱给我做的你怎么能收藏呢？
2. 范伟：花多少钱我给啊！
3. 赵本山：花多少钱啊？
4. 蔡维利：两千！
5. 范伟：我出两千！
6. 赵本山：我给两千五！
7. 范伟：我三千！
8. 赵本山：我三千五！
9. 范伟：我四千！
10. 赵本山：我五千！
11. 范伟：成交！（笑）

《功夫》

From Line 5 to Line 11, it can be seen that the conversation turns to an auction. Zhao, the seller, is bidding for his own wheelchair, and Fan, the potential buyer, bidding with Zhao, declares Zhao gets the deal. It sounds funny for the buyer acts as the host of the auction and announces the seller wins the auction.

Since declarations have to be made on special occasions, very few utterances are of this type in this corpus (say, just six, according to the data). Thus, the utterances of Declarations are placed in the category of Others.

3.2.2 Representatives

Representatives describe states or events in the world, including such speech acts as asserting, stating, describing, telling, concluding and reporting. This can be illustrated by example [2] and [3].

[2] (Scene: In the son's office, they are talking about Sauna.)

1. 赵本山：还挺忙啊，天天洗桑拿啊？

2. 刘卫平：是，这不又新开一家，又去桑拿按摩去了。
3. 范伟：跟我爹说那干啥？他也不懂
4. 赵本山：我啥不懂啊？我没洗过，我还没听说过呀？洗桑拿就跟农村焐地瓜差不多（笑），连洗带蒸，最后上屉冲嘛（笑）。
5. 范伟：行行，你说完没你呀！

《儿子大了》

As case [2] exemplifies, Zhao explains what Sauna is in his opinion. His analogy of Sauna to steaming sweet potatoes sounds amusing, and makes the audience break into laughter.

[3] (Scene: Zhao dreamed of winning a lottery of 1.8 million. After waking up, he is planning with his wife (Gao) and the head of the village (Fan) how to spend the money.)

- 1.赵本山：我有想法了，不能咱们两口子一家人花，这么多钱，先把村委会给他装修装修，改变一下全村的面貌。
- 2.范伟：哎呀，哥，你接着说，接着说。
- 3.赵本山：把村委会毁掉，盖起二层小楼，周围修起一丈两尺高的围墙，围墙上边拉起铁丝网，（笑），四角修四个炮楼，（笑），用民兵端着钢枪昼夜把守，整两扇大铁门，把门一锁，门的后边蹲两只大狼狗，（笑），订作一个八斤半的锁头，把门砸死。（笑）谁也别想进，你也别想出。（笑）
- 4.范伟：这有点像监狱是吧。。
- 5.赵本山：No .

《有钱了》

In Line 3 of [3] , Zhao describes his idea of redesigning the building of village committee. However, his description does not match the image of the building of a village committee, a prison instead.

3.2.3 Expressives

In Expressives, the speaker expresses feelings and attitudes towards something, such as like, dislike, joy, sorrow. They include these speech acts such as thanking, praising, complaining, apologizing, criticizing, etc. Consider the following three examples:

[4] (Scene: After complaining of the head of the town, the old couple realizes he has been promoted rather than degraded, thus regretting what they have done.)

- 1.赵本山：我鞋哪？完了完了，产房传喜讯，人家升了。（笑）该！我说不

让你来不让你来偏来，这回咋样？小样，我觉你耗子给猫当三陪你挣钱不要命了！（笑）

2.高秀敏：那你都怨我呀？

3.赵本山：不怨你怨谁呀？

《拜年》

As illustrated in [4], Zhao blames his wife (Gao Xiumin) for her persistence to visit the head of township (played by Fan Wei)

[5] (Scene: Fan is expressing how life became after being deceived by Zhao.)

范伟：没法整，没法生活了！真的！压力太大了！但是，今天不一样。咱们辽宁体育馆这么多人，对我是这么的友好，这么礼貌，给我全是微笑，比那些人素质高多了。我就纳闷了，同样是生活在咱们沈阳的老百姓，做人的差距怎么就那么大呢！（笑）啥也别说了，朋友们，缘分啊！（笑）谢谢啊！（笑）太好了！

《新编大忽悠》

In [5], Fan Wei thanks the audience for their friendliness and enthusiasm and expresses his astonishment at the great difference between the people present in the stadium and those living or doing business in his neighborhood.

3.2.4 Commissives

Commissives commit the speaker to do something in the future, such as promising, threatening, refusing, and pledging. Example [6] and [7] are given as follows:

[6] (Scene: Zhao feels very proud for having 1.8 million Yuan and recalls one day when his neighbor, Tian, greeted him with a nonsense phrase “鼓捣猫呢”。

1.高秀敏：我说老头子，这回咱可有钱了，我看着村上的人谁还敢小瞧咱们。

2.赵本山：小瞧咱儿？180万那不是小数字，在全村，全乡，乃至全县，咱也算老大。看那隔壁那田老三，这家伙，一年扣个大棚，整那一两万块钱，瞧把他得色的，把他闺女还送外语学院去了。那天回来，我好心好意跟他说句话，我说你姑娘回来了，他跟我那家伙不说人话，鼓捣猫呢，（笑），鼓捣猫呢，（笑），鼓捣猫呢，（笑），这回咱看见他我就告诉捣腾狗呢。（笑）

3.高秀敏：对，对老头子，他再抱猫出来得色，咱就拿狗招他。（笑）

4.赵本山：对，招他。

《有钱了》

In [6], Zhao commits to say “捣腾狗” when he sees their neighbor, Tian the third, next time.

[7] (Scene: Having invited Bi to dinner, Zhao is ordering the dishes in the restaurant, with ShenYang being the waiter.)

- 1.赵本山: 啥玩意儿呀你? 你说这吃啥呀?
- 2.毕福剑: 来点儿家常便饭。民间的。
- 3.赵本山: 民间的是吧? 来民间的吧, 这样, 孩子, 来个小野鸡炖蘑菇。
- 4.小沈阳: 没有。(笑)
- 5.赵本山: 这个可以有。
- 6.小沈阳: 这个.....真没有。(笑)

《不差钱》

In Line 6, Shen Yang assures Zhao there is no such a dish as stewed chicken with mushroom in this restaurant.

3.2.5 Directives

Directives include such speech acts as ordering, suggesting, advising, requesting inviting and asking questions, etc. By which the speaker is attempting to get the hearer to do something. Take [8] and [9] as examples:

[8] (Scene: Zhao pretends to order the expensive dish—a lobster.)

- 1.赵本山: 四斤的龙虾一只。
- 2.小沈阳: 对不起, 没那么大的!(笑)
- 3.赵本山: 有多大的?
- 4.小沈阳: 有一斤多的呀。
- 5.赵本山: 一斤多的有吗?
- 6.小沈阳: 有, 还是没有啊?(笑)
- 7.赵本山: 现在, 我跟你讲啊, 有没有这是你开的店呢, 你还不明白, 这不差钱!
- 8.小沈阳: 哦, 那没有!

《不差钱》

In Line 5, Zhao asks Shen Yang whether there is half kilogram of lobster, after being told by Shen Yang there is. Then, Shen Yang asks Zhao whether there is or not. It sounds funny because the waiter (Shen Yang) is asking the customer (Zhao Benshan) whether there are such lobsters or not in the restaurant.

[9] (Scene: Upon seeing his wife, Zhao ends his boasting about his superior position in his family and turns to humility.)

- 1.赵本山: 我跟你们介绍一下我家情况, 我媳妇小名叫小九, 纯牌我家二把手。啥事我说定了, 她马上举手, 我说八, 她不说九, 我说没, 她不敢说有, 我说站那, 她可以随便走(笑)。刚才我吹牛你都听着啦? 我这点毛病你不知道吗? 就痛快痛快嘴呗(笑)。这不你告诉我的吗? 注意男子汉形象, 对外可以猛吹, 回来看见你马上就堆(笑)。你看你究竟怎么的了? 你说话啊!
- 2.赵本山: 我嘛, 哪点要做得要不对的话, 你吧当领导的该批评就批评(笑)。

《小九老乐》

In Line 2 of [9], Zhao, the husband, advises his wife to criticize him whenever it is needed, after he boasted in the absence of his wife he had the final say in the family.

3.2.6 Others

The speech acts in my corpus which do not fit into the main categories identified are labeled as "Others". This involves mimicking, and intimidating.

[10], an example of mimicking:

(Scene: Zhao is displeased to hear Huang's local tone.)

1. 黄晓娟: 应该叫太太呀!
2. 赵本山: 哎呀妈呀! 舌头!
3. 黄晓娟: 叫太太!
4. 赵本山: 不对, 你就叫老伴多实惠, 还太太呀! (笑)
5. 黄晓娟: 你别气我了, 快走!
6. 赵本山: 这还一个牌牌呢! (笑)

《老蔫完婚》

In Line 4 and 6 of [10], Zhao mimicks Huang's tone used at the beginning of the sketches. It sounds funny since at first Zhao was annoyed at Huang's imitation of the local tone in Shenzhen.

[11] (Scene: In order to make Fan believe him again, Zhao is making up stories.)

1. 赵本山: 请问, 一年来这拐你拄没拄过?
2. 范伟: 我拄什么拄! 我压根没病!
3. 赵本山: 完了, 我担心的事终于发生了!
4. 高秀敏: 当时我说不让你卖拐, 你不信么, 这回看你咋整~~~
5. 赵本山: 我说他完了! 媳妇儿, 就你这眼力你看看, 一年来有什么明显变化? 往上看~~~
6. 高秀敏: 要说变化好像那脑袋比去年更大了。(笑)
7. 赵本山: 对了! 由于你一年没有坚持拄拐, 导致你的病毒迅速的往上涨, 你两条腿有两根大筋, 好比是两条高速公路, 病毒以每小时一百八十公里的速度迅速往上转移, (笑), 你完了, 无情的病魔正在吞噬着你的大脑健康细胞, 一个崭新的植物人即将诞生! (笑)
8. 范伟: 忽悠, 接着忽悠! (笑) 忽悠! 你是不是想让我再走两步?

《卖车》

In [11], Zhao is lying and intimidating Fan Wei so that Fan will believe there is really something wrong with his legs and buy his wheel.

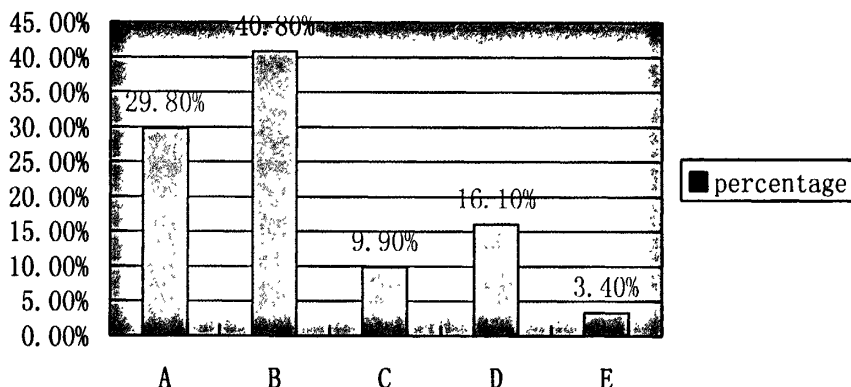
3.3 Statistical Analysis and Results

The table and bar chart below show the number of HU in Zhao's comic sketches, and the frequency distribution of illocutionary acts.

Table 3 Frequency distribution of illocutionary HU

Speech Acts	A	B	C	D	E
Data	211	289	70	114	24
Percentage	29.8%	40.8%	9.9%	16.1%	3.4%

A: Representatives B: Expressives C: Commissives
 D: Directives E: Others



The table and bar-chart illustrate the answers to the following questions:

- What type of humorous illocutionary act is the most prevalent in Zhao's comic sketches?

Expressives make up the largest percentage (40.8%) among all the five categories. Comedians prefer using humor to compliment, to thank, to complain, to apologize, to criticize, etc. When they are doing Expressives in speech acts, humor is most likely to involve in.

- What humorous utterances in Zhao's comic sketches are most often about?

As is seen from the data, almost every aspect of humorous utterances was reflected in Zhao's comic sketches. It is highly practical to spot some general trends from investigating the frequency distributions.

Representatives are the next overwhelming in Zhao's comic sketches. Comedians tend to use humor very often to tell, to describe, to assert, to conclude, etc. Directives and Commissives follow on the list in order of frequency. We find Commissives are the least occasions on which humor occurs (9.9%).

The above-mentioned analysis deal with "what humor in comic sketches is about". To answer the question of "why", we must move to the next section of our research, namely perlocutionary acts analysis.

Chapter Four

PERLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF HU IN ZHAO BENSHAN'S COMIC SKETCHES

The speaker attempts to create humor in order to accomplish more than illocutionary level can achieve. Perlocutionary action is then made to the aims of speakers to accomplish more than language or conventional force can convey. To explore the perlocutionary level of humorous utterances, we should, in this chapter, investigate deeper about the extra accomplishments humorous utterances can achieve, that is to say, what effects humorous utterances can have on the hearer.

4.1 Defining the Categories

Yule (2000:53) points out that the classification of illocutionary acts categories is based on the functions performed by illocutionary acts. It inspires us to look into the functions of humor in communications in the course of discussing the perlocutionary acts of humorous utterances.

As has been made clear in the previous chapters, the perlocutionary act is the process of an illocutionary act fulfilling a function that the speaker intends to achieve. To say something is to do something, so each speech act is done with the intention to achieve this function. Consequently, in this research, function and intention are viewed as indispensable components of perlocutionary acts. The two variables in defining perlocutionary acts are humorous illocutionary acts and functions of humor. The

different types of illocutionary acts have already been clarified in the previous chapter, so the present task is to categorize the other variable: the function of humorous utterances.

Martineau (1972) identifies humor to solidify social bonds, demoralize, increase internal or external hostility, foster consensus or redefine relationships.

Fine (1983) admits that a full list of functions can amount to hundreds, yet he narrows them down to three basic functions. He argues that the performance of humor can promote group cohesion, provoke conflict and provide social control.

Dundes (1987) and Morrow (1987) agree that the functions humor serves can be psychological as well as social. Black or sick humor in disaster jokes, for instance, has often been explained as a way to cope with unpleasant experiences, both individually and collectively, and more generally to distance oneself from negative emotions such as fear, grief or shame.

Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2001) discern four main social functions of humor, including meaning making, hierarchy building, cohesion building, and tension relief.

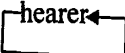
Hay (2000), in her paper *Functions of humor in conversations of men and women* published in *Journal of Pragmatics*, classifies functions of humor occurring in the discourse of 18 New Zealand friendship groups under the three broad labels of solidarity-based, power-based and psychological functions.

For the current study, we summarize the functions identified in the literature and adopt the basic ones and adapt the terms to suit the context of Zhao's comic sketches.

The categorization of perlocutionary acts is made based on their effect on the interaction and personal relationships between both interlocutors. The impacts of humorous perlocutionary acts in the communication, as is illustrated below, are triformed. The arrows show the direction of the impact of perlocutionary acts on the object.

Solidarity: speaker \longleftrightarrow hearer

Aggression: speaker \rightarrow hearer

Defense: 

Given the direction of force of perlocutionary acts of HU, the distinctions are obvious. A detailed explanation for each category will be presented in the following sections with examples from Zhao's comic sketches. It is possible for an instance of humor to simultaneously fit into more than one category. For instance, it is likely for a single example to perform both aggressive and defensive actions. Those examples that cannot be categorized into the three labels are simply categorized as Others.

In the following sections, we define and illustrate each category with examples in the corpus and offer the corresponding data to show how humor was used in Zhao's comic sketches.

For the sake of convenience, "A, B, C, D, E" are employed to refer to the five types of illocutionary acts, and "a,b,c", to refer to the three types of perlocutionary acts. In order to show how each perlocutionary act is performed with the illocutionary acts, we adopt the equation of Austin: $X+Y=Z$. In it, Y refers to A, B, C, D, E and Z refers to a,b,c.

$Y = A, B, C, D, E$

A. Representatives: state, hypothesize, insist, swear (that), tell, assert, explain, describe, conclude, report, deduce, etc.

B. Expressives: thank, congratulate, apologize, condole, welcome, greet, compliment, praise, complain, criticize, forgive, lament, make statements of pleasure, likes, dislikes, joy, sorrow, surprise, , shock, pain

C. Commissives: promise, threaten, refuse, offer, permit, pledge, predict, wish, suppose

D. Directives: command, request, invite, suggest, order, ask, beg, plead, invite, advise, warn, dare, defy, challenge to do, ask questions

E. Others: mimick, intimidate, fabricate

$Z = a, b, c$

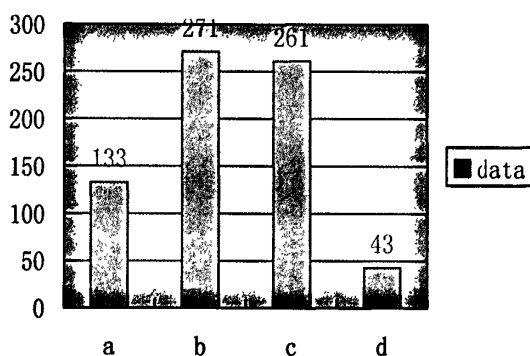
a: Solidarity

b: Aggression

c: Defense

Table 4 Distribution of perlocutionary acts of HU

Perlocutionary Acts of HU	a	b	c	Others
Data	133	271	261	43
Percentage	18.79%	38.28%	36.86%	6.07%



The above table and bar chart prove the previous hypothesis that Solidarity, Aggression and Defense are the most prevalent perlocutionary acts of humorous utterances made in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches. Among these three, Aggression is the most extensively used. It is often performed among subordinates, equals or friends. Thus, it is reasonable that speakers in Zhao's comic sketches prefer aggressions.

4.1.1 Solidarity

Humor is often used as a device to build in-group solidarity and enhance group cohesion. Koller (1988) believes when groups laugh together solidarity is reinforced. Also, humor works as a way to distinguish friend from foe by their shared knowledge and cultural background. Simultaneous laughter (as the overt expression of humor) generates a strong fellow feeling among participants and joint aggressiveness against outsiders. Sharing the same idea of funny things is not only a prerequisite to form a friendship, but very often the essentials to maintain a favorable friendship. According to Hay (1995), laughter forms a bond and simultaneously draws a line. If you cannot laugh with others, you feel an outsider. Norrick, in his paper *Issues in Conversational Joking* (2003), argues that joking serves as a means of establishing and enhancing group

cohesion, and works as a control on the kinds of talks and behaviors that are appropriate to participants in the interaction. Conversational joking helps participants to perform for their mutual amusement with a consequent enhancement of rapport. Humor may strengthen solidarity indirectly, since reacting properly shows shared attitudes and group membership.

Many cases of humor serve to maintain solidarity within a group or between particular members of a group. Whenever you make attempt at humor and it works, your status within the group is positively affected. You have amused the hearers and so demonstrate that you share their ideas of what is funny. When we hear a joke we laugh aloud, thus confirming the fact that the sender and the hearer are in the same social group who have social knowledge in common. This serves to create or maintain solidarity and creation of positive self-identity. (Hay, 2000)

The effect of solidarity acts of HU is interactive and bilateral because they benefit both the interlocutors.

Solidarity: speaker \longleftrightarrow hearer

Y=A Z=a

(A stands for Representatives, and a for Solidarity, as has been seen on Page 31.)

To illustrate this point, the following two examples are presented.

[12] (Scene: In the waiting room for the program *Marriage Seeking* on television, Huang and Zhao talk of their miserable marriage.)

1. 赵本山: 大哥我并不比你强, 我受过刺激, 受过强烈的刺激! 我离过异呀!
2. 黄晓娟: 我离过异? (笑)
3. 赵本山: 说普通话, 就是让人踹了。
4. 黄晓娟: 为啥呀?
5. 赵本山: 我们俩生活了不到二年, 突然给我提出一个非常严肃而且带有原则性的问题, 是在让我难以接受。
6. 黄晓娟: 什么问题呀?
7. 赵本山: 说我缺乏男子汉气派, 越看越像老太太。(笑)

Upon hearing Huang's story, Zhao talks of his unhappy marriage to comfort her. As Line 7 illustrates, Zhao tells Huang why his wife divorces him. After sharing their personal stories, they get to know they experience similar unhappiness, which helps to build an increasingly close relationship between them and leads to the final agreement

on their match at the end of the comic sketch. This case can be expressed in a much clearer way as follows:

Y=A: Telling personal stories.

Z=a: By doing Y, Zhao established solidarity with Huang.

[13] (Scene: Fan, a fashion designer, is guiding the model team how to act.)

1. 范伟: 好, 向前三步走。好, 挺胸, 收腹, 提臀, 斜视 45 度。看我干吗? 左上角 45 度。
2. 赵本山: 哦, 看出来。
3. 范伟: 好, 预备, (赵同时做喷农药动作) 这干吗呢你这是?
4. 赵本山: 范老师, 你太有生活了, 我服你了, 你不让我给果树喷农药吗? (笑)
5. 范伟: 这怎么能是喷农药呢? 这?
6. 赵本山: 刚才你不知不觉地就导演了一出给果树喷农药的劳动程序。
7. 范伟: 这怎么是劳动程序。
8. 赵本山: 收腹是勒紧小肚, 提臀是要把药箱卡住, 斜视要看清果树, 这边加压, 这边就喷雾, 他的节拍是这样的: 嗤、、、一嗤嗤 二嗤嗤 三嗤嗤 四嗤嗤。(笑)
9. 范伟: 我们无法沟通了, 我得赶紧回去了, 我得赶紧走了。

《红高粱》

In Line 8, Zhao explains why he thinks Fan was asking them to spray fruit trees with insecticide.

Y=A: Explaining

Z=a: Solidarity by explaining why he admires Fan.

Y=B Z=a

(B: Expressives a: Solidarity)

[14] and [15] are presented to exemplify this type.

[14] (Scene: Zhao is asking Niu about the value of the cock after he knows the cock has been killed and stewed.)

1. 牛群: 大叔, 你可不能开这个玩笑。你要违约退钱可就不是退两万了, 得四方。
(赵傻了, 宋丹丹接着哭)
2. 赵本山: 干啥呢? 打鸣呢你咋还?
3. 牛群: 大叔啊, 那鸡咋没抱来?
4. 宋丹丹: 抱不来了

5. 赵本山：午睡呢。
6. 牛群：鸡午睡？
7. 赵本山：这鸡呀连下蛋带打鸣，一个人兼两样，它累呀！来喝酒来，你说这鸡能值那么多钱呢？
8. 牛：大叔实话跟您说吧，这个鸡搁您二老手里头，一个子不值，不值钱。你们交给我了，我炒作，炒完了，这就值钱了。
9. 赵本山：你的意思是无论它是死的活的，都是值钱的？
10. 牛群：对了。
11. 宋丹丹：哎呀，老头子，你真是太有才了！（笑）

《策划》

In this case, Song, in Line 11, praises Zhao to be very talented. When she knows the cock has been killed and stewed, she gets very sad since they will be required to compensate 40,000 Yuan to Niu according to the contract. After Zhao's inquiry about the value of the cock, Niu tells them the cock is of great value whether it is alive or dead, which means they needn't compensate Niu any more.

Y=B: Praising

Z=a: By praising Zhao, Song reinforced solidarity with him.

[15] (Scene: Mao Mao, Zhao's granddaughter is expressing thanks to Bi before she starts to sing.)

1. 毛毛：这是为什么呢？就是我找着我姥爷了。（笑）我姥爷太好了，他能带我上那个溜光大道去。（笑）
2. 毕福剑：《星光大道》。
3. 毛毛：《星光大道》。我非常感谢我姥爷，你能给我这次机会。我太感谢你了！

《不差钱》

Mao Mao expresses her gratitude to Bi. As can be observed in Line 1, Mao Mao calls Bi "My grandpa", which sounds as if they were close relatives. By calling Bi in this way, the distance between the contestant (Mao Mao) and the judge (Bi) is shortened and the solidarity between them is further enhanced.

Y=B: Expressing gratitude

Z=a: Solidarity by thanking Bi

Y=C Z=a

(C: Commissives a: Solidarity)

[16] (Scene: Fan, the secretary, asks Zhao to impersonate the manager.)

赵本山: 那就定了。只要你给我装玻璃, 什么装经理啊, 装孙子我都干。(笑)

《牛大叔提干》

Zhao, in this case, promises Fan the secretary that as long as Fan installs the window glass for the village school, he is willing to do anything he is asked to.

Y=C: Promising

Z=a: By making a promise, Zhao enhanced solidarity.

[17] (Scene: Zhao pretends to crush the wheelchair and Fan believes him.)

1. 范伟: 大哥你太有诚意了! 孩子们说的对! 不能砸啊! 它不仅是我们重归于好的见证, 还是我以后避免上当的警钟, 我收藏了!

2. 赵本山: 不行, 学生们花钱给我做的你怎么能收藏呢?

3. 范伟: 花多少钱我给啊! (笑)

《功夫》

In Line 3, Fan assures Zhao he will pay for the wheelchair, which arouses extensive laughter because at the beginning Fan reminded himself of not being cheated any more, but at this moment he has forgotten about it and is involved in the deception unconsciously.

Y=C: Assuring

Z=a: Establishing solidarity by assuring.

Y=D Z=a

(D: Directives a: Solidarity)

This can be exemplified as follows:

[18] (Scene: Zhao is pretending to crush the wheel chair.)

1. 赵本山: 我们俩的恩怨应该了结了吧, 还有它, 这几年耽误我们俩之间感情的就是这个罪魁祸首轮椅, 今天我必须当着你的面把它砸碎!

2. 王晓虎: 师傅不能砸啊!

3. 蔡维利: 师傅这轮椅是你老哥俩重归于好的见证啊!

4. 赵本山: 不要乱说, 我, 你不能拦我!

5. 王晓虎: 不能砸啊, 师傅!

6.范伟：大哥，你要砸你就砸我吧！（笑）

《功夫》

In Line 6, Fan requests Zhao to hit him if Zhao wants to destroy the wheelchair.

Y=D: Requesting

Z=a: By asking Zhao to hit him instead of the wheelchair, Fan regained solidarity with Zhao.

[19] (Scene: Having hurt Song, the employed conversationalist, Zhao is trying to make up.)

1.宋丹丹：走了，太伤自尊了！（笑）

2.赵本山：大妹子，马甲！

3.宋丹丹：你还我，你拿来。

4.赵本山：（穿上马甲）我穿上行吗？你讲。

5.宋丹丹：讲啥呀？

6.赵本山：你就讲，“这蛇钻水里去了，不一会我穿个马甲就上来了”（笑）。讲！那会乐了，哈哈哈哈哈。

7.宋丹丹：你说你这大哥呀，你这不挺懂幽默的嘛？怎么你儿子总说你闷闷不乐呢？

《钟点工》

In Line 6 of [19], Zhao advises Song to tell the joke again to make her happy, thus eliminating the embarrassing situation.

Y=D: Advising

Z=a: By advising Song to tell the joke, Zhao maintained solidarity.

Y=E Z=a

(E: Others a :Solidarity)

[20] (Bi asks Shen Yang to show himself.)

1.毕福剑：你这样，你还你说，还是自报家门。

2.小沈阳：昂，其实，毕老师，我的命运跟她是一样的，我也有一个姓毕的姥爷！（笑）

3.赵本山：你快拉倒，用不着，别套了，你该唱唱你的，你哪来这？

《不差钱》

Shen Yang is telling a lie that he also has a grandpa whose family name is also Bi to make their relationship closer than strangers, in the same way as Mao Mao employed.

Y=E: Lying

Z=a: By lying, Shen Yang tried to establish solidarity with Bi.

[21] (Scene: Having seen his wife get angry, Zhao tries to comfort her.)

1.赵: 亲爱的!

2.彤彤: 去!

3.赵: 噢!(笑) 又生气了!(笑) 难道你不爱我了么? 难道你真的不爱我了么了吗? 亲爱的! 噢!(笑)

《演员的烦恼》

Here, Zhao is mimicking Ju Hao's line and tone. In this comic sketches, Zhao's wife, an actress intends to practise hugging with the leading actor (played by Ju Hao) for the new TV-series. Being jealous of Ju Hao, Zhao keeps disturbing their practice, which makes Ju Hao stop every time at the first line *Darling, you don't love me any longer, really?* Due to Zhao's mischievous acts, the practice is suspended. Seeing his wife getting angry, Zhao borrowed Ju Hao's line to make her happy.

Y=E: Mimicking

Z=a: By mimicking the actor's line, Zhao maintained solidarity with his wife.

4.1.2 Aggression

Aggression in this category involves the acts which attack the hearer by such means as conflicts, imposing commands, expressing contempt or disapproval or ridicule, etc. Thus, aggressive acts threaten the hearer's face and serve to increase or sustain the speaker's superiority and power. It can be risky to direct this type of humor at social superiors or strangers because they may not share the related knowledge so that instead of the positive response to humor, laughter, tension will arise in this case. For this reason, aggressive humor is always directed at subordinates, equals or friends. When humorous acts occur, the speaker often does not attempt to minimize the aggressive intention. On the contrary, he/she may seek for ways of performing them, and the hearer often seems to accept them, whether willingly or not. It seems as if in such cases the speaker and the hearer tacitly agree to ignore face demands for the sake of the other interests, which is "to get amusement".

The direction of force in aggressive acts of HU is unilaterally pointed to the hearer

in that they result in negative emotions on the part of the hearers.

Aggression: speaker → hearer

Y=A Z=b

(A :Representatives b: Aggression)

Two examples are given below.

[22](Scene: The host , Liu Liu, is asking the two competitors, Song Dandan and Zhao Benshan to answer questions.)

- 1.刘流：好，请听第二题。第二道题呢，网友出的也是一个必答题，请问大叔大妈你们各自喜欢什么运动？
- 2.宋丹丹：游泳。
- 3.刘流：大妈喜欢游泳。
- 4.赵本山：就游了三天，我回来问她说你咋不游了呢？她说那游泳池里面的水不好喝！（笑）
- 5.刘流：哎呀，大叔啊您喜欢什么运动？
- 6.赵本山：我喜欢潜泳！
- 7.刘流：哎呦，潜泳，大叔您在水下能潜多长时间？
- 8.赵本山：这么说吧，
- 9.宋丹丹：那得看救生员啥前捞他，（笑），你要过一秒钟捞他，他就潜一秒，过一年捞他，那指定就泡芙了，搁那飘的那！（笑）
- 10.刘流：哎呀，好了好了好了，大叔大妈回答真风趣啊。

《火炬手》

In order to become the torchbearer of the Olympic Games, Zhao and Song are making each other lose face by telling the fact, as can be observed in Line 4 and Line 9.

Y=A: Telling the fact and explaining the reason

Z=b: Zhao and Song aggressed each other with the intention to exclude the other competitor.

[23] (Scene: The old couple is exposing each other's embarrassing stories.)

- 1.宋丹丹：啊.....俺们那圪塔有个挺老大个养鸡场，那都是我剪的。
- 2.赵本山：是，她剪完就禽流感了，第二天。（笑）当时，死了一万多只鸡，最后送她个外号，叫“一剪没”。（笑）
- 3.宋丹丹：那不说话能憋死你不？能憋死你不？！
- 4.赵本山：我能憋疯。
- 5.宋丹丹：怎么那么烦人呢你说你这人.....
- 6.赵本山：说点儿实话.....

- 7.宋丹丹：我不稀得说你那些事儿就拉倒了你，给你留着面子。（向崔永元）我不稀得说他！你说就他吧，就好给人出去唱歌，你这嗓子能唱吗那天呢，就上俺们敬老院去给人家唱去，总共底下坐着七个老头儿，他“嗽”一嗓子喊出来，昏过去六个。（笑）
- 8.崔永元：那不还有一个呢吗？
- 9.宋丹丹：还有一个是院长，拉着我的手就不松开，那家伙可劲儿摇啊，“大姐呀，大哥这一嗓子太突然了，受不了哇，快让大哥回家吧，人家唱歌要钱，他唱歌要命啊！”（笑）
- 10.赵本山：你好！你得得瑟瑟还上精神病院给人讲演去了。
- 11.宋丹丹：嗯。
- 12.赵本山：讲一天一宿。
- 13.宋丹丹：怎么的，精神病都出院了。
- 14.崔永元：有效果。
- 15.赵本山：大夫疯了。（笑）

《说事儿》

Zhao and Song are deliberately exposing each other's shameful anecdotes to make the other lose face and embarrassed.

Y=A: Telling stories

Z=b: Both faces were violated.

Y=B Z=b

(B: Expressives b:Aggression)

To illustrate this type, three examples are seen.

[24] (Scene: Zhao is coming to Fan's by wheelchair, with a special gesture.)

范伟：哎呀！哎呀！哎呀呀呀呀呀呀呀呀！这是什么造型啊？（笑）挺别致啊！（笑）非常六加七啊！（笑）这当年叱咤风云的大忽悠，怎么落到这步天地了？苍天啊，大地啊！这是哪位天使大姐替我出的这口气啊！（笑）猪撞树上了，你撞猪上了吧？（笑）追尾是不是啊？（笑）咋又改3了呢？

《功夫》

Upon seeing Zhao's gestures and sitting in the wheelchair, Fan gets very happy and laughs at Zhao.

Y=B: Laughing at Zhao

Z=b: Zhao was made fun of.

[25] (Scene: Zhao is telling Song about his unsuccessful attempt to dance with some old ladies.)

1. 宋丹丹: 你呀, 你只定是瞅着人家老太太长得漂亮, 是吧?
2. 赵本山: 拉倒吧, 她漂亮我挨顿揍还值, 还漂亮?
3. 宋丹丹: 嗯?
4. 赵本山: 那老太太长得比你难看呢! (笑) 啊不是, 我说她没有你难看!
(笑) 你呀, 比她难看哪! (笑)
5. 赵本山: 大妹子, 我老伤你自尊你说。
6. 宋丹丹: 大哥, 你别说了。
7. 赵本山: 嗯。
8. 宋丹丹: 你到底是啥类型我是百分之百看清楚了。
9. 赵本山: 啥类型?
10. 宋丹丹: 你绝对是属于那种没事找抽型的。(笑)

《钟点工》

In Line 4, Zhao expresses his unfavorable impression of the old lady's appearance. Meanwhile, due to the comparison between the old lady and Song, Zhao has hurt Song's feeling.

Y=B: Making unfavorable comment

Z=b: Song was offended by Zhao's words.

[26] (Scene: In Fan's house, after recalling Fan's childhood in her village, Gao expresses her reflection.)

1. 高秀敏: 你说要说这人那, 没处看去, 20 来年没见面, 你说你当乡长了, 上那说理去? (笑)
2. 范 伟: 我这个乡长当的还没处说理了? (笑)
3. 赵本山: 说那叫啥话呀?

《拜年》

Gao complains that Fan is not qualified to be the head of the town. As can be seen from Fan's words, Gao has challenged Fan, the superior.

Y=B: Complaining

Z=b: Fan was not glad to hear Gao's words

Y=C Z=b

(C: Commissives b: Aggression)

[27] (Scene: Mao Mao, Zhao's granddaughter is expressing thanks to Bi before she starts to sing.)

1.毛毛：我非常感谢我姥爷能给我这次机会！我太感谢你了！如果你要真能把领上道了，（笑），我都感谢你八辈祖宗！（笑）不是，我，我代表八辈祖宗都感谢你！（笑）忘不了你对我的大恩大德！我这辈子不会忘记你！我做鬼都不会放过你的！（笑）

2.毕福剑：姥爷，不是，她爷，我怎么越听这话越慎得慌。（笑）

《不差钱》

Mao Mao commits to thank Bi if Bi approves of her performing on the *Star Broadway* in CCTV3. Usually, people are cursing somebody by saying “all of your ancestors” (八辈祖宗) and “I will revenge on you even after I am dead and become a ghost. However, in this case, Mao Mao uses them to thank Bi, which is inappropriate and sounds funny. As can be found in Line 2, Bi feels rather uneasy upon hearing those offensive phrases.

Y=C: Making commitment.

Z=b: Aggression by committing to thank Bi inappropriately.

[28] (Scene: Gao and Zhao are trying to complimenting Fan and expressing good wishes to make him happy.)

1.范伟：我跟你你说你们呐，不用给我带高帽，有事儿就直说，好不好？

2.赵本山：她不让说。

3.高秀敏：没啥事，这不是吗，来到年了，我跟你老姑父合计，你说这范乡长一年把咱们全乡领导的这么好，我俩呀代表基本群众来给范乡长拜个早年。

4.范伟：谢谢谢谢谢谢！

5.赵本山：过年好！

6.高秀敏：我们衷心祝愿乡长，年年健康，岁岁平安，福如东海，寿比南山！

7.赵本山：永远活在我们心中！（笑）

8.范伟：呵呵~不是~您老是不是有点用词儿不当啊？（笑）你们有事儿就说事儿，要是没事儿的话，哎，我可走了噢。

《拜年》

In Line 7, Zhao promises to commemorate Fan forever. The wish is inappropriate and offensive, as can be observed from Fan's response in Line 8.

Y=C: Promising

Z=b: Fan was not pleased.

Y=D Z=b

(D: Directives b: Aggression)

Take a look at the examples below:

[29] (Scene: Outside the door of Fan's, Gao and Zhao are inviting Fan to come in.)

- 1.高秀敏：乡长你进来吧，还外道啥呀？进来吧！（笑）
- 2.范 伟：这也不知到谁家了？（笑）
- 3.赵本山：你坐啊！
- 4.范 伟：哎！

《拜年》

In Line 1 and 3, Gao and Zhao invite Fan to come in and sit down. It is funny for the visitors are playing the role of the host.

Y=D: Inviting

Z=b: Fan was unhappy.

[30] (Scene: In order to prove there is something wrong with Fan, Zhao gives him questions to answer.)

- 1.赵本山：这样的？好，我给你出一个三岁小孩能答上来的脑筋急转弯。
- 2.范 伟：你别整三岁小孩的，有能耐你整四岁的。（笑）
- 3.赵本山：四岁的你行吗？
- 4.范 伟：五岁都不在乎。
- 5.赵本山：你看看，他只在这个年龄段混了，（笑），咱还怕他干啥。请听题！

《卖车》

In Line 2, Fan challenges Zhao to ask more difficult questions.

Y=D: Challenging

Z=b: Zhao was imposed to ask more sticky questions.

Y=E Z=b

(E: Others b: Aggression)

[31] (Scene: Zhao asks Fan to stamp his foot and makes up story to deceive him.)

- 1.赵本山：我早就给你调过来了。
- 2.范 伟：大哥，这是怎么回事呢？这是？
- 3.赵本山：别着急，你呀，小的时候，崴过腿，
- 4.范 伟：没有啊，我这只崴过呀？
- 5.赵本山：转移了！（笑）不知道吧，后来你的职业对你很不利，原来你不是颠勺，你是切墩，老是往这腿上使劲，就把这条腿压的越来越

重,越来越重~~~轻者踮脚,重者股骨头坏死,晚期就是植物人!
(笑)

6.高秀敏:哈哈 哈哈哈哈哈~~~

7.赵本山:干啥玩意?

8.高秀敏:我说啊,我头一回看他眼睛还会这样,哈哈

9.赵本山:你老实点!我在调病呢!

10.范伟:大哥,那什么我得用点什么药呢?

《卖拐》

In Line 5, Zhao is making up the reasons and intimidating Fan.

Y=E: Making up stories and intimidating

Z=b: Fan was imposed to believe Zhao's words which was in fact ridiculous.

4.1.3 Defense

Humor can serve as a means of creating psychological distance. According to Ziv (1984), humor can function as a defense mechanism. This can be observed easily in Zhao's comic sketches, where humor is used either to protect oneself or to obstruct group's relationship since it hinders feelings of intimacy and closeness from developing among the participants.

The force of Defensive acts of HU is intra-active for the speaker because humor in this type is used to defend the speaker himself.

Defense: hearer ←

Y=A Z=c

(A: Representatives c: Defense)

[32] and [33] best illustrate this type.

[32] (Scene: The host is making some movements to let the two competitors guess what sport it is.)

- 1.刘流:好好好,这道题出的更好啊!大叔大妈听好,这道题啊,是网友给咱们仨出的一道题。让主持人在现场呢,做一套动作,然后让你们二老猜这是什么运动,注意啊!(打太极)什么运动?
- 2.赵本山:打麻将!(笑)
- 3.宋丹丹:你咋连这玩意都不懂呢?很明显这是太极吗!
- 4.刘流:对啊,这是太极。
- 5.赵本山:他这做的明显就是打麻将!

6.刘流：怎么是打麻将呢？

7.赵本山：这不，洗牌，码牌，抓牌看牌，抓牌看牌，糊了！（笑）还是自摸呢！

8.宋丹丹：我受不了了，我受不了了！

《火炬手》

As is seen in Line 7, Zhao is explaining his answer “Playing Majiang” as he repeats the movements shown by the host (Liu Liu)

Y=A: Explaining

Z=c: Zhao defended himself from being ignorance.

[33] (Scene: Zhao is practicing his self-introduction with Huang. They both go to the program to seek a partner in life.)

1.赵本山:我叫赵英俊，三十五岁了，括弧，实际年龄跟长相有误差，（笑）不细看问题不大，这属于表面老化（笑）。

2.黄晓娟:还用加括弧啊？

3.赵本山；我必须得括上，我三十五别人老怀疑我五十三，多赔呀！（笑）

4.黄晓娟：那是得加括弧。

《我想有个家》

In Line 1, Zhao was introducing his age in much detail.

Y=A: Introducing himself

Z=c: Zhao saved himself from being regarded much older than his age.

Y=B Z=c

(B: Expressives c:Defense)

[34](Scene: The host , Cui, is asking Bai Yun about the scene she released her book.)

1.崔永元:我刚才看了您这书啊，第一章，就叫《回家》。说的就是上次做完节目回铁岭的时候，那场面，特别壮观吧？

2.宋丹丹:那怎么叫“特别”壮观呢？（笑）那是“相当”壮观哪！那家伙，那场面大的，那真是：锣鼓喧天，鞭炮齐鸣，（笑），红旗招展，人山人海，那……

《说事儿》

Song is boasting how magnificent the occasion was when they returned to their hometown after being interviewed in CCTV.

Y=B: Exaggerating

Z=c: Song was blowing her own horn for the purpose to increase her fame.

[35] (Scene: In Zhao's house, Song, the employed conversationalist, is taking herself as an example to persuade Zhao to change his lifestyle.)

1. 赵本山：行，但是那电脑钱贵呀！
2. 宋丹丹：你这消费观念不行。你看我，浑身上下都名牌。
3. 赵本山：啊。
4. 宋丹丹：我这鞋，阿迪达的。裤子，普希金的。衣裳，克林顿的。皮带，叶利钦的。（笑）你再瞧我，我这兜里头用的都是世界一流名牌化妆品。
5. 赵本山：啊。
6. 宋丹丹：美国著名明星麦当那抹啥我抹啥。（笑）
7. 赵本山：麦当那是谁呀？
8. 宋丹丹：你不认识呀？她妹妹你只定熟悉。
9. 赵本山：谁呢？
10. 宋丹丹：麦当劳么。（笑）
11. 赵本山：我吃过。

《钟点工》

In Line 4 and 6, Song is boasting she is very fashion-conscious and uses famous brands.

Y=B: Boasting

Z=c: Song was boasting to make Zhao admire and envy her.

[36] (Scene: Cui, the host, asks the old couple who courted first when they were young.)

1. 崔永元：那当时谈恋爱的时候是谁追的谁呀？
2. 赵本山：嘿嘿。
3. 宋丹丹：这事儿，你看别说了。
4. 崔永元：这属于个人隐私。
5. 赵本山：其实小崔你应该有这种眼力，当时——我用现在话说，小伙长的比较帅呆了，（笑）追的我。
6. 宋丹丹：你咋不实话实说呢？你让大伙瞅瞅你那老脸长得跟鞋拔子似的，（笑），我能上赶子追你呀？
7. 赵本山：这么不会审美呢？
8. 宋丹丹：怎的？
9. 赵本山：这叫鞋拔子脸那？这是正宗的猪腰子脸！（笑）
10. 崔永元：还不如鞋拔子呢。

《昨天，今天，明天》

In Line 9, Zhao expresses his disagreement with Song's description of his face in order to defend himself. Zhao's words sound amusing for neither description is easy on the eye.

Y=B: Statements of disagreement

Z=c: Zhao was defending his look.

Y=C Z=c

(C: Commissives c:Defense)

Take a look at the following examples.

[37] (Scene: Zhao pretends to feel regretful for his deception to Fan.)

- 1.赵本山： 没意思，我不是给你弄脑筋急转弯那个初级阶段了，我是向你赔礼道歉来了！三年了，在这个世界上最对不起的人就是范厨师，多么好的人，我常跟你们说，你说我忽悠他干啥？多么忠厚老实！你打我两下，你下不去手；（笑）你骂我两句，你张不开嘴。（笑）这样，反正你原谅我也来了，不原谅我也来了，原谅不原谅我都带着诚意扑面而来的！（笑）
- 2.范伟： 呀呀呀呀呀呀，还铺面呢！

《功夫》

In this case, Zhao predicts Fan will not be willing to beat him or scold him.

Y=C: Predicting

Z=c: Zhao protected himself from being beaten or scolded by Fan.

[38] (Scene: Zhao is listing his wife's unjustifiable accusations.)

1. 赵本山： 你一天能挑出我八十个毛病！你说我少说两句话，你说我变傻变蠢了；我稍微对你热情点，你说我格调太低了；我搁家表现表现干点活，你说我在外边做贼心虚了；更有甚者，你说我半夜说梦话，爱上人家莱温斯基了！（笑）
2. 宋丹丹： 那我还是瞎编你咋的？
- 3.赵本山： 你不瞎编不没班嘛你呀~
- 4.宋丹丹： 怎的？
- 5.赵本山： 我敢爱莱温斯基嘛？我真要爱莱温斯基了，咱家那小房早就挨空中打击了，（笑），就变成一片废墟了，你知道吗？

《老伴》

As can be observed in Line 5, Zhao makes a supposition to prove his innocence.

Y=C: Supposing

Z=c: Zhao was defending himself from misunderstanding.

Y=D Z=c

(D: Directives c: Defense)

[39] (Scene: As a routine, Cui is asking Zhao to make a one-sentence comment.)

1. 崔永元: 大叔, 要么您说, 一句话。
2. 赵本山: 我也剩一句啦?
3. 崔永元: 啊, 一句话, 对。
4. 赵本山: 来前儿的火车票谁给报了? (笑)

《昨天, 今天, 明天》

In Line 4, Zhao asks who will pay for their tickets.

Y=D: Asking

Z=c: Zhao saved himself from paying for the tickets themselves.

[40] (Li Lin misunderstands Zhao and thinks the birthday cake is bought for her.)

1. 李琳: 我切了, 咱俩吃啊。
2. 赵本山: 先别切, 这个我给切啊。咱们这样, 这蛋糕不能切, 不能破坏这上面啊。我有个新吃法(笑), 这个, 咱俩片着吃(笑)
3. 李琳: 你拉倒吧, 大哥, 哪能那么吃蛋糕啊?
4. 赵本山: 你看哪, 人们都感觉到这奶油在上面, 这营养就在上面, 其实都下沉了, 咱搁底头往上边吃, 行吧?(笑)
5. 李琳: 行, 你说咋吃都行。
6. 赵本山: 行吧, 那刮着吃吧(笑), 尽量不破坏团干, 这叫猛虎掏心命(笑) 你瞅瞅, 来来。看见吗? 你看看吗, 谁能看出来这动过。(笑)

《生日快乐》

In Line 2, 4 and 6, Zhao advises to cut the birthday cake in a new and queer way.

Y=D: Advising

Z=c: Zhao tried to protect the birthday cake he bought for his wife.

Y=E Z=c

(E: Others c: Defense)

The following two examples are to exemplify this type.

[41] (Scene: Zhao is guiding the model team after being inspired by Fan.)

1. 赵本山：注意，大家一定要找到这种感觉：这条通道，就是村头儿的八里庄大桥？记住，你们是劳模，你们是县级劳模，省级劳模，将来会成为世界的名劳模！克雷 什么 尔！（笑）听我口令：旺旺旺（笑）
2. 范伟：三个数！
3. 赵本山：1 2 3，好，很好，挺胸抬头，看，前边是一片火红火红的高粱地！这是玉米，这是黄豆，丰收了，丰收的农民在收粮食，只看所有的男同志挥舞着镰刀，欸欸欸欸 割完了一片高粱；看这边，所有的女同志，也就 欸欸欸欸 一片苞米。

《红高粱》

In Line 2, Zhao intends to mimick Fan' s English way of giving orders, however, his effort is not successful, thus causing laughter.

Y=E: Mimicking

Z=c: Zhao protected himself from being thought to be ignorant and out of fashion.

[42] (Scene: At Zhao's home, his wife is practicing hug with his partner, Ju Hao.

Zhao is trying to disturb them.)

1. 赵本山：去！（笑）去！干啥玩意？
2. 彤彤（妻子）：干什么？
3. 赵本山：小孩扒窗户。（笑）
4. 彤彤（妻子）：那哪有小孩呀？
5. 赵本山：撵跑了（笑）
6. 句号：哎，老赵，老赵，你们家这不是六楼吗？
7. 赵本山：那五层都地下室。（笑）

《演员的烦恼》

As is illustrated in Line 3, 5 and 7, Zhao is lying after his trick is uncovered.

Y=E: Lying

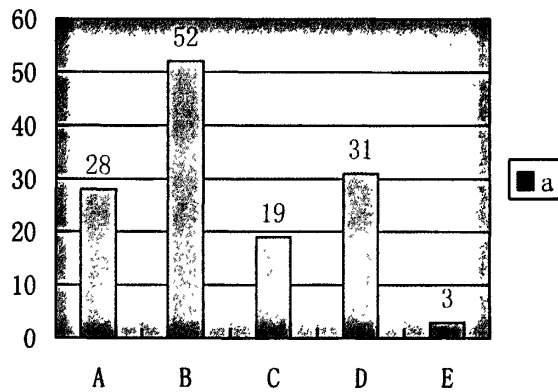
Z=c: Zhao tried to eliminate the embarrassment of his lies being exposed.

4.2 Statistical Analysis and Results

4.2.1 Solidarity and Illocutionary Acts of HU in Zhao Benshan's Comic Sketches

Table 5 Distribution of perlocutionary act type a--Solidarity in the types of illocutionary act of HU in Zhao's comic sketches

Illocutionary Acts of HU	A	B	C	D	E
Data	28	52	19	31	3
Percentage	21%	39.1%	14.3%	23.3%	2.3%

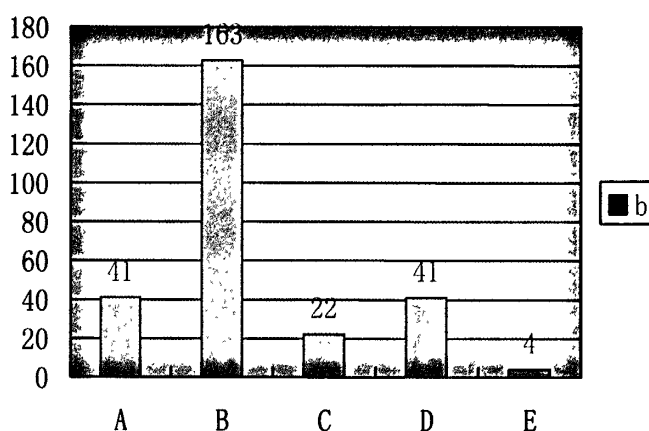


The above table reveals that by doing B--Expressives (including thanking, apologizing, praising, blaming, statements of pleasure, like, joy, sorrow, pain, surprise, etc.) with humor, the speaker is most likely to reinforce Solidarity. Apparently, E (Others) is the least likely used, which proves the previous statement that ABCD are the major speech acts. It will be seen that in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, E is in the same case. In order to avoid repetition, we'll not discuss E any more in the next two sections. Next to E, C (Commissives) is also less likely used.

4.2.2 Aggression and Illocutionary Acts of HU in Zhao Benshan's Comic Sketches

Table 6 Distribution of perlocutionary act type b--Aggression in the type of illocutionary act of HU in Zhao's comic sketches

Illocutionary Acts of HU	A	B	C	D	E
Data	41	163	22	41	4
Percentage	15.1%	60.2%	8.1%	15.1%	1.5%

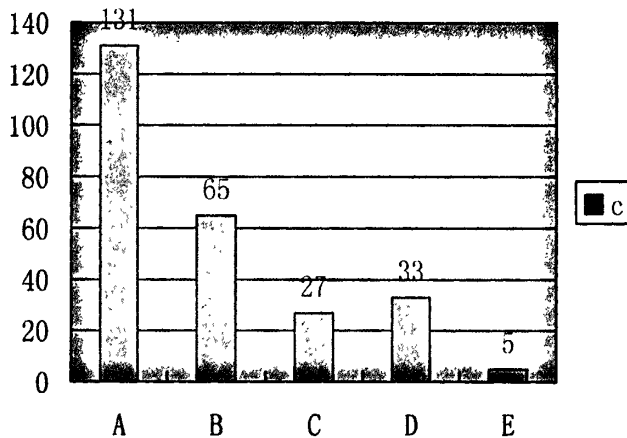


From Table 6, the trend is clear to see that humor-aided B (Expressives) is prevalent in performing aggressive speech acts. Next come A (Representatives) and D (Directives), accounting for the same percentage. It is easy to understand that D is often used in this category because the force of D is always directed to others. A holds a fairly significant share here for A (describing, telling, stating, for example) is the most neutral speech act among the four. The speaker uses C (Commissives) to commit to do something in the future. As is seen from the table, C is least likely to be aggressive.

4.2.3 Defense and Illocutionary Acts of HU in Zhao Benshan's Comic Sketches

Table 7 Distribution of the perlocutionary act type c-- Defense in the types of illocutionary act of HU in Zhao's comic sketches

Illocutionary Acts of HU	A	B	C	D	E
Data	131	65	27	33	5
Percentage	50.2%	24.9%	10.4%	12.6%	1.9%



From Table 7, we can spot the trends that the speaker is most likely to defend himself by doing A--Representatives (including telling, asserting, reporting, stating, describing, concluding, etc.) On the other hand, among the four basic speech acts, the speaker is less likely to perform C (Commissives) and D (Directives).

4.2.4 Overall Analysis

Table 8 Distribution of the perlocutionary act type, abc, in each type of illocutionary act of HU in Zhao's comic sketches, ABCDE

Illocutionary Acts of HU	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Solidarity	28	52	19	31	3	133
Aggression	41	163	22	41	4	271
Defense	131	65	27	33	5	261

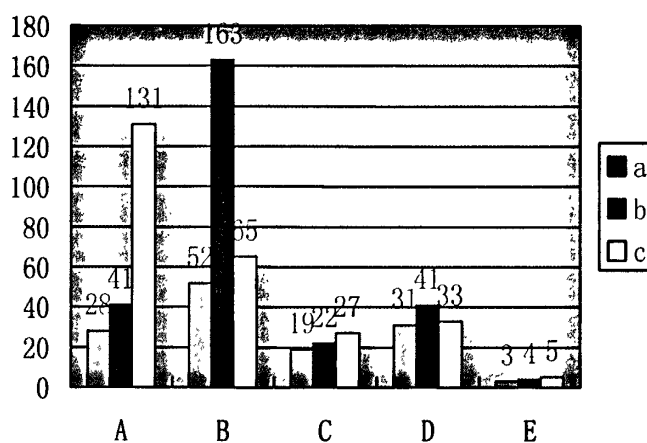


Table 8 shows the distribution of each perlocutionary act type, abc, in each type of illocutionary act of HU, ABCDE in Zhao's comic sketches.

From the above table, we can figure out these trends:

1. B (Expressives) is the most effective illocutionary act to perform perlocutions, whereas E (Others) is the least used one. And this proves that ABCD are the main speech acts.
2. In A (Representatives), with the help of humor, defending oneself is more likely to happen than reinforcing solidarity and performing aggression.
3. In D (Directives), aggression (b) is achieved more than solidarity (a) and defense (c). It makes sense because the force of directives is most often pointed to others, for

example, giving orders or requesting. And this can also explain why D is less effective in enhancing solidarity and defending oneself.

4. C (Commissives), by committing to do something in the future, is more often adopted to defend oneself than the other two. As is shown in the table, among the four main speech acts, C is the least extensive to perform perlocution.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter summarizes the major findings, states the significance, identifies the limitations of the research and finally makes some suggestions for future research on the topic.

5.1 Major Findings

The present research has attempted to explore how humor in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches is achieved under the framework of speech Acts Theory.

The investigation of Zhao's comic sketches in depth and the prudent analysis help to secure a scientific and verifiable result. A case study of Zhao's comic sketches and the analysis of regularities from the data lead to three findings.

Among the five illocutionary acts, Expressives are the most prevalent and declarations the least. Representatives are the next prevalent, followed by Directives and Commissives. Since declarations have to be made in serious and formal context with the announcer having a special institutional role, very few verbal humors are of this type in the corpus.

Second, illocutionary acts enhance aggression most. Since aggressive acts are often directed at subordinates, equals or friends rather than superiors, it makes sense that speakers in my research prefer aggressions to achieve humorous effect.

Third, with the aid of humor, Expressives are favored by the comedians to enhance solidarity and impose aggression, being the most effective illocutionary act to perform

perlocutions. Representatives are employed more likely to defend oneself than to reinforce solidarity and perform aggression. By making directives, aggression is achieved more than solidarity and defense in that the force of directives is most often pointed to others. That's why directives are less effective in enhancing solidarity and defending oneself. In this research, the comedians prefer performing commissives to defend themselves than the other two perlocutions.

5.2 Significance

Zhao's comic sketches enjoy tremendous popularity and have become a necessary appetite course in the Spring Festival Gala on the eve of the Chinese lunar New Year, thereby arousing widespread interest in the study on Zhao's humor. However, few go deep into Zhao's humor mechanisms with the established linguistic theories.

Employing Speech Acts Theory to interpret humor, in this thesis, has been new and challenging. Though it is not the first time that Speech Acts Theory is applied to explain linguistic phenomena, it is the first time of this thesis to study Zhao's comic sketches with the support of this theory. So it is a creative attempt, which makes the research valuable and appealing. In addition, the previous studies of humor are mostly limited in the semantic mechanisms of humor to the locutionary level or illocutionary level of the speech acts, and the perlocutionary level of humorous speech acts have long been ignored by researchers. This thesis on humor has operated an integrated practice on studying both illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, therefore to help construct a theory of pragmatic mechanism of humor. The findings of this research also shed some light on the future studies on other linguistic phenomena with Speech Acts Theory.

Second, this thesis can be beneficial for those sketch writers to learn from a deeper layer how to create more humorous works. The awareness of the applicability of Speech Acts Theory in humor production is directive and conducive for their work. And this thesis sets an example of making good use of linguistic theories which are the solid foundations of the sketch text writing.

Third, a good sense of humor is increasingly indispensable in daily communication. More and more people have realized the appealing power of humor and prefer to be

humorous. To be a humorous person, we should not only know how to appreciate or interpret humor, but also we should learn to create humor. This thesis, to a large extent, satisfies the current need.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Being the first attempt to explore Zhao Benshan's humor by applying the Speech Act Theory, the research bears the following limitations.

First, the thesis focuses exclusively on the verbal humor in Zhao's comic sketches, however, the equally important factors, for example, Zhao Benshan's facial expressions, gestures, postures and typical stage appearance, which also contribute a great deal to the effect of humor, are not discussed.

Second, the criterion for selecting data and the criteria for classifying data are obviously fraught with problems of indeterminacy and subjectivity.

Third, the theoretical framework of this thesis is mostly built on the basis of Searle's and Hay's models, which is not completely satisfying. The findings in this thesis are preliminary empirical results, not a general predictive theory.

Thus, it is hoped that a comprehensive analysis of humor in Zhao Benshan's comic sketches will be made in future and the theoretical model will be further refined and developed.

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