Gender Expression under Dormitory Conflict Discourse

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Abstract

Dormitory interpersonal conflict is an important problem students face in college life. On the micro level, it affects students' study life and physical and mental health. It also affects social opinion and student affairs management to a certain extent on the macro level. However, the expression patterns of different genders in the process of dormitory conflict are different. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the different expressions of males and females under dormitory conflict. We analyzed the gender expression of dormitory conflict in college students from the perspective of linguistics, communication, and sociology. We found that females are more sensitive to certain trivial things influenced by patriarchal society.

Keywords: Conflict Discourse Analysis, Dormitory conflict, Male and female college students

1 Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

In China, the dormitory size is usually 4-6 people. The dormitory area is small but the number of students is large. College students are mostly in adolescence. Generally speaking, some of their personalities are relatively strong and stubborn and easily cause conflict. The purpose of this study is to explore the social background and deeper reasons reflected in the discourse expression of different genders in the process of dormitory conflicts. The results may be used to improve the dormitory management level of the college and reduce the frequency of unpleasant conflicts in the dormitory. Next, we would like to define the concept of conflict discourse and gender expression in this study.

Conflicting language is called "conflict talk", which means that one party's discourse conflicts with the other party's discourse [5]. This conflict manifests as one side opposing the other side's words, actions, or behavior and finally results in a discourse conflict. There are three stages of conflict discourse: the starting step, the conflicting step, and

the ending step. Males and females have different ways of expressing dorm conflicts. Gender expression is the physical and behavioral manifestation of one's gender identity. People vary greatly in how they hold and convey gender thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Gender expression refers to the way people convey their gender through mannerisms behaviors or expressions [1].

1.2 Theoretical Framework

British linguist Jenny Thomas pointed out that the pragmatics of language mainly focus on interaction in verbal communication. Language communication is a dynamic process. The relevance theory of pragmatics is based on psychological cognitive factors to explore the discourse analysis mechanism of both sides in communicative acts. The language function of meta-cognition can be reflected in understanding and studying discourse conflicts, as well as exploring the intentions of communicators from a psychological cognitive perspective. Gender conflicts are guided and regulated by both sides' meta-pragmatic awareness. There is a subjective cognitive process of language selection. When conflict happens, both genders will independently make language choices based on context and communicative purposes in order to achieve their own communicative goals. Due to discourse conflicts, people do not have sufficient time to make judgments and choices. The entire process is made unconsciously and reflected by the communicator at a conscious level based on the needs of the context and communicative purpose. This is known as the regulation and guidance of meta-pragmatic awareness. We use this theory to guide conflict avoidance.

2 Research Questions

At the personal level of college students, poor interpersonal relationships in dormitories can lead to negative emotions such as emotional instability, boredom, and irritability. Living in an environment with a strong sense of conflict is even more detrimental to mental health and physical health. In the case of poor physical and mental health, college students may not be able to successfully complete their daily studies. For school administrators, the poor interpersonal relationships in students' dormitories reflect a lack of responsibility in school management and education. So to what extent does dormitory interpersonal conflict affect college students' lives?

According to the above literature review, gender difference could be a blank field in the research process of conflict discourse. In the process of observation and experience, the question "Is there a certain correlation between the occurrence of conflicts and gender?" was triggered. We also propose this hypothesis: Do the different expressions in the conflict process reflect social background and class?

3 Research Method

3.1 Questionnaire

The Chinese university dormitory area is small, whereas the number of students living in it is large. We set up relevant questionnaire questions to specifically analyze this situation. A questionnaire is a form used for statistics and surveys to investigate issues

in the form of questions. We used the questionnaire survey method and collected 252 questionnaire responses, of which 42.06% were male and 57.94% were female. In the design of the questionnaire, we divided it into five parts. This included basic information, the conflicting stage of dormitory conflict discourse, the construction stage of dormitory conflict discourse, the termination stage of dormitory conflict discourse, and the impacts of dormitory conflict discourse.

3.2 Interview

The interview comprises the basic research method of understanding the psychology and behavior of interviewees through face-to-face conversations between interviewers and interviewees. The interview method has different forms due to the nature, purpose, or objectives of the research question [3]. The group members set specific questions according to the discussion contents and collected opinions from 25 people in China who currently or once had dormitory life experiences. At the same time, the interviewees included 14 females and 11 males with a reasonably balanced gender ratio. They paid attention to the gender differences and the reflection of social background in dormitory conflicts.
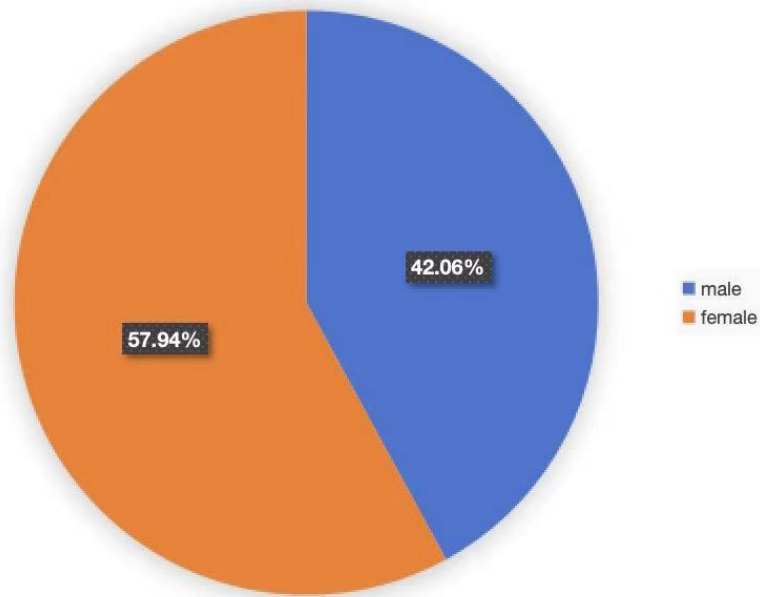
4 Division of roles & responsibilities

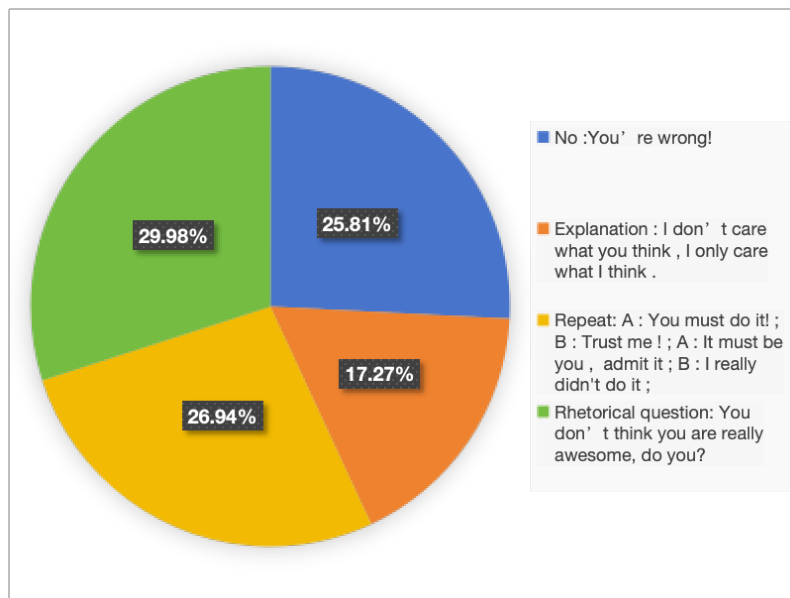| Name	Role	Responsibility
Liangqi Gui	Leader	Project concept and task allocation
Xiaohan Li	Literature reviewing	Presentation draft revising and polishing
Haoyang Guan	Interviews conducting	Videos making and analysis
Mengxin Cui	Resource investigator	Create and collect questionnaires
Jiaqi Li	Teamworker	PowerPoint making
Xu Hao	Teamworker	Report making

5 Visual Analysis of Data

5.1 Analysis of the questionnaire

106 males and 146 females filled out the questionnaire. By collecting personal and dormitory information, we found that more than half of the subjects had encountered conflict discourse in the dormitory, and the most concentrated frequency was one or two, accounting for 35.71%, during the last six months. To our surprise, people who have conflicts often maintain normal relationships and even pretty good relationships at that. As for the number of people involved in the conflict, in most cases, two people participated, and the proportion was 79.76%.
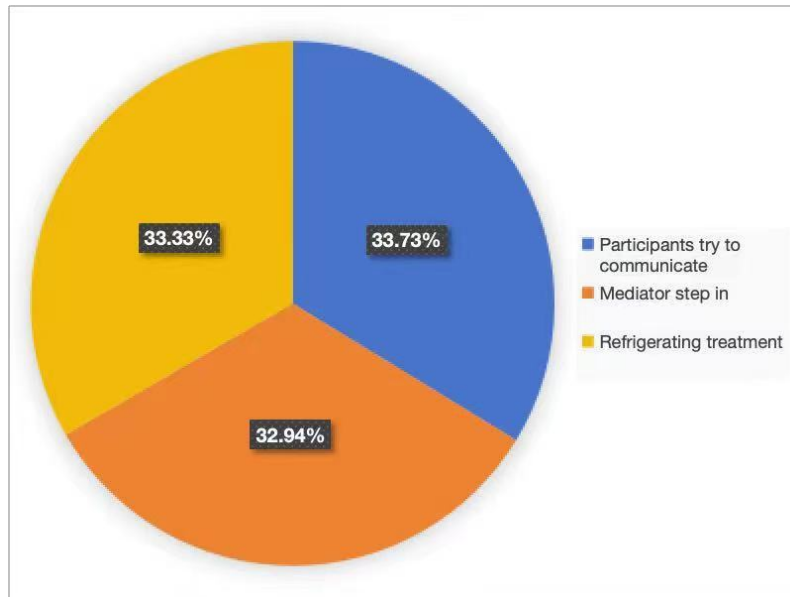
Figure 1: Gender

The first stage is the initial turn of the dormitory conflict discourse. Based on our questionnaire, we found that habits contribute most to conflict (82.54%). Values and semantic misunderstanding rank as the second and the third contributors respectively (68.65% and 55.95%). In this stage, the most used expression is that somebody's tongue is mocking and bitter, accounting for 86.11%.

Figure 2: Different expressions in the initial stage of conflict

The second stage is the construction of dormitory conflict discourse. According to the results of the questionnaire survey, we found that rhetorical questions may exacerbate further conflicts, which take up approximately 62.95%. But other modes of expression, including negation, interpretation, and repetition, can have the same effect during this stage.

Figure 3: Different methods to defuse conflict

The third stage is the termination of the dormitory conflict discourse. At this stage, people who are tested usually adopt the following three ways to resolve conflicts. The ways that participants try to communicate, mediate, step in, and use refrigerating treatment are effective in ending the conflict, and the proportions adopted for the three ways are similar, all about 33%. Looking in more detail, rational communication becomes the most important method to resolve conflicts in terms of the way of communication among participants, and that is 30.59%.

As for the negative impact of dormitory conflict discourse, the first thing to bear in mind is the deterioration of relationships. 73.41% subjects encountered this. Over half of the people experienced mental pressure (58.33%).

5.2 Analysis of interview videos

After collecting the questionnaires, we created a semi-structured in-depth interview based on the research objectives and relevant literature. Then, we conducted a simple experiment in the group, selected two team members to conduct an interview pilot, and slightly adjusted the interview questions according to their feelings about the questions, to improve the accuracy and rigor of the questions. We interviewed 25 current or former dorm dwellers in China and balanced their gender ratio. The specific questions we studied are as follows:

First, the differences in conflict. There are huge differences in the whole process of dorm conflict. In the beginning, development, and end stages of conflict, males and females have different forms of expression. For example, respondents rated females as more emotional and males as more rational; females care more about privacy, males care more about living habits; females are more likely to communicate and resolve, while males are more likely to seek third-party help, and if conflicts escalate in male dormitories, they can easily turn into fights.

Most importantly, almost every interviewee thought there was a gender expression in dormitory conflict, as a consequence of which, dorm routines can show the difference between males and females. A third of the population recognized that the difference was

due to social background.

In the context of a male-dominated society, males do not need to fight for their own rights to obtain corresponding rights, and then, in daily life, males will not feel a crisis of lack of rights because of contradictions, so the externalization is reflected: they seem to be more rational.

However, in the past few hundred years, females have been in a relatively dominant position, and they focus on the pursuit of equal rights and interests. With the development of feminism, female status is rising day by day, and the pursuit of equality is also becoming stronger, which promotes the development of social equality. As a result, females are more sensitive to respect issues, and in the small matters of dorm life, they may feel that they are not treated with equal respect. Interestingly, the majority of those who recognize this are female.

Half of them recognize that with the development of society and the advancement of equality between males and females, the gender boundary is increasingly blurred, and people are more likely to be angry about certain topics, language expressions, or lifestyle habits. Therefore, when talking about this issue, the first thing to think of the inherent differences between the sexes is gender bias or the inherent impression of gender. At the same time, we found that young people aged 18-21 have a deeper understanding of gender issues and a more subjective and clear cognition of gender bias, and the inherent bias cognition of gender shows an age trend.

There is still a long way to go for equal rights between males and females, and the methods for resolving dorm conflicts are getting better and better.

6   Summary

Conflict and mitigation are two states in interpersonal communication. Resolving conflicts and realizing the harmony of interpersonal relationships are eternal themes. This concerns not only the need for the development of human society but also an inherent requirement of human nature [2]. Conflict and mitigation in communication change with the speaker's choice of speech and act, and affect communicative human relations. Its restriction and transformation mechanism is one of the important topics in contemporary sociolinguistics and pragmatics [6]. The study of discourse conflict and its construction model is conducive to reducing college students' discourse conflict in actual communication and promoting greater communication. On this basis, our group studied the different gender expressions of dormitory conflict among college students. According to meta-pragmatic theory, both parties in gender conflict are guided and regulated by their meta-pragmatic consciousness, and there is a subjective cognitive language selection process. We analyzed the triggering factors and then explored effective constraint strategies to guide college students to make corrections. Understanding and properly handling the issue of dormitory conflict discourse can promote the harmonious development of interpersonal communication, and also provide useful reference and value for the study of interpersonal conflicts among college students.

We need to guide college students to use effective ways to communicate and communicate. College students need to consider their language choices. For example, an interviewed college student mentioned that their roommates were still talking on the phone during their night break, and a roommate said, "Hang up the phone now. Are other people making noise like you?" So, both sides attacked each other. Another roommate, upon seeing this, said, "Bro, everyone needs to wake up early tomorrow

morning. Just rest well. I'll treat you to breakfast tomorrow." Obviously, the latter roommate's touching words not only conveyed positive information but also effectively resolved the roommate's conflicting words.

College students are prone to all kinds of contradictions and conflicts in their dorm life. Our research can help guide college students to correctly understand and deal with the problem of conflict discourse, promote the harmonious development of interpersonal communication, and provide a beneficial reference value for the study of college students' interpersonal conflict.

The most important means of information dissemination is linguistic, and the different choices made by males and females in information transmission reflect different gender expressions, which are closely related to social background. Dormitory life is an important means of communication, and we need to study gender expressions to obtain a more significant understanding of communication tendencies and help students solve conflicts in dormitory life.

Patriarchal ideology is an objective spiritual force established by a patriarchal society through a series of gender systems and a set of means and facilities to discipline individual gender temperament [4]. In the coercion and encirclement of this spiritual force, no gendered individual can escape the real world and meaningful world defined by patriarchal ideology and must construct their own "reasonable" social gender attributes in accordance with the logical rules designed by them. The differences between males and females reflected in dormitory conflicts have deeper social reasons besides physiological reasons.

From the perspective of sociology, the reason for gender differences in dormitory conflict discourse is the inner inequality of females caused by the oppression of females by patriarchal society. Traditional China is a typical patriarchal society, and patriarchy is an extension of familialism. In ancient China, the small peasant economy was the main mode of production, and the main characteristics were those of males farming and females weaving. Coupled with the differences in physiological structure, this led to females losing their chance to associate with society. Most females lost the right to participate in politics, which led to females' unequal status in society. The oppression of females, in the final analysis, is a problem of a particular stage of civilization development. After entering modern society, especially in China after reform and opening up, the level of civilization development has improved, females have received more opportunities for education, and globalization has increasingly become a trend. An open mind has gradually penetrated into the consciousness of modern females, and both males and females have the opportunity to obtain the fruits of labor through their own efforts and talents.

With the improvement of the status of modern females, they are more willing to pursue their own rights, which has also caused them to become very sensitive to "rights protection", which is reflected in the discourse of dormitory conflicts. For example, in a female dormitory, someone will cause a conflict because of the unfair distribution of some resources. This resource can be understood as fruit or snacks purchased by someone. She will feel that she lost the right to enjoy the food, which will cause a psychological gap and may also lead to the formation of cliques in the dormitory, which will eventually lead to the intensification of conflicts. Females are more sensitive to certain trivial matters, which are caused by the violation of their rights in the final analysis.

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