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A Game-Theoretic Analysis of the Pragmatic Empathy of Directional Verbs “Lái/Qù”

—Compared with the Japanese counterparts “Kuru/Iku” —

Gan Nengqing

Abstract: Previous studies have pointed out that the asymmetry of directional verbs “Lái/Qù” in Chinese originated from the “shift in viewpoint of politeness”. From the perspective of game-and-decision theoretic pragmatics, however, this paper proposes that the asymmetry of “Lái/Qù” is essentially the outcome of both communicative players’ empathy and their choice of risk mitigation, whose purpose is to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of language use and to achieve the best utility of communication. Besides, similar findings can be attained by comparing “Lái/Qù” and the Japanese motion verbs, “Kuru/Iku”. The asymmetry between “Lái/Qù” in Chinese and “Kuru/Iku” in Japanese also originates from the difference in empathy and the choice of risk dominance among cultural communities.

Key words: “Lái/Qù”, Game-and-Decision Theoretic Pragmatics, Empathy, Risk Dominance

1 Introduction

There is a frequent use of directional verbs “Lái/Qù” in modern Chinese and motion verbs “Kuru/Iku” in modern Japanese, but it is challenging to specify the moving directions implied by these words and their usage. Over the years, research has been conducted from different aspects of the linguistic field. A significant one among these is associated with the asymmetric “viewpoint” of “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku”. Discussions on the “viewpoint”, or reference point¹, are carried out from multiple dimensions. As can be

¹ The “reference point” discussed in this paper and it mainly applies directional verbs “Lái/Qu”.

seen from the literature review, most of the related studies on the viewpoint of the directional verbs “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku” are static research. These studies prove limited in that they only emphasize the role of the “speaker”, while little attention is paid to the role of the “hearer”. Some questions need to be further investigated. For example, most of the previous studies argue that the asymmetry of the Chinese words “Lái/Qù” can be regarded as the result of “shift in viewpoint of politeness”. However, it is unclear whether such asymmetry of the directional verbs is purely a ‘shift in viewpoint of politeness’ and why and how the viewpoint can be shifted. More underlying questions of such have not been explicitly discussed or analysed.

This paper attempts to explore and analyze the above questions from the perspective of game-and-decision theoretic pragmatics. Empathy theory will be adopted to ensure a rational and reliable analysis by comparing the Chinese “Lái/Qù” with the Japanese “Kuru/Iku”.

2 Literature Review and Research Questions

There are quantities of studies in relation to the verbs “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku”. In view of the research scope, some are micro-studies or comparative studies that focus either on Chinese or Japanese verbs, while others are contrastive studies of Chinese and Japanese verbs. In light of the guiding theories, most of the existing studies are conducted from the perspectives of both traditional and emerging disciplines, such as semantics, syntax, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics. Among these studies, the viewpoint of “Lái/Qù” has been a significant topic of discussion, and some meaningful research has been conducted.

Qi (1996: 54–63, 1998), Ma (1997: 16–22), and Guo (2002: 65–69) all point out that both words imply a specific direction, and come up with several reference points used to confirm a position, such as speaker, hearer, actor, subjective reference point² and objective reference point³, etc.

By analyzing the Chinese sentences “A.wǒ lái nǐ nà er ba。 / B.wǒ qù nǐ nà er ba。” (I will be there for you.) and “A.wǒ lái nǐ bànɡōngshì zhǎo nǐ。 / B.wǒ qù nǐ bànɡōngshì zhǎo nǐ。” (I will go the office to meet you.), Chen (2005: 84–86) states that

It refers to the directional point of view of the speaker and it is slightly different from Reichenbach’s (1947) idea of ‘the point of reference’ that is related to the fixedness of the speaker’s point of view.

2 It refers to one’s own position, a position closely related to himself in his mind.

3 It refers to the persons or things which are being described.

both sentence A and B convey a similar meaning in the same context and speakers are in a movement. The difference between the sentences lies in the reference points selected by the speaker. In sentence A, the location of “nǐ” (You), or the end of the movement, is selected as the reference point whereas in sentence B, the location of “wǒ” (I), or the start of the movement, is chosen as the reference point. In daily conversation, the speaker is inclined to use “Lái” rather than “Qù”. Such inclination represents the so-called “shift in viewpoint of politeness” in which case the reference point is not fixed at the speaker’s location, but transferred to the hearer’s. By saying “wǒ lái”(I’ll come) instead of “wǒ qù” (I’ll go), politeness and respect is manifested.

Gao (2007: 36–38) expresses a similar idea, stating that the use of “Lái/Qù” depends directly on how the reference point is established, and that the selection of a reference point is closely related to the narrative style, including “self-observation”, “onlooker” and “participant”. When “Lái/Qù” is used as postposed adverbial, “Lái” is used more frequently than “Qù”. This asymmetry is caused by the consistency between the selection of a reference point and a narrative style. It can also be supported by the politeness principle in pragmatics. In Example 1, if the position of B is determined as the reference point, B should have used “sòng guò qù(to send the book)” instead of “sòng guò lái (to return the book)”. Gao (2007) also points out that Example 1 can be explained as the “shift in viewpoint of politeness”.

Example 1. During a telephone call

A: Xiǎo lǐ nà běn shū nǐ kàn wánle ma?
 Little Lee that-dem_{dist} CLF book 2SG read finish-PFV Q

‘Mr. Lee, have you finished the book?’

B: Yō, bùhǎoyìsī, Zhāng lǎoshī, wǒ kàn wánle,
 Oh sorry Zhang teacher 1SG read finish-PFV

‘Oh, sorry about that, Mr. Zhang. I have finished.’

B: zhè jiù gěi nǐn sòng guò lái.
 this-demprox at once give 2SG send cross come

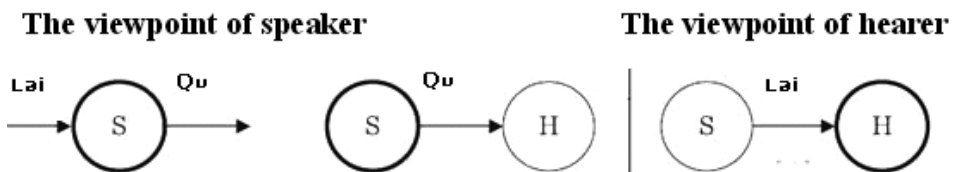
‘I will return it to you right away.’

The analysis by Sun (2007: 33–35) is complicated and hard to understand. In Sun’s opinion, the verbs “Lái/Qù” are not the components of the first principal plane, or narrative plane. Instead, the verbs belong to the second principal plane of discourse, whose function is to make a general evaluation of the discourse, or one of its components from the speaker’s perspective. In view of the second principal plane, there are no

specific components which can be separated from the narrative plane. Speakers in the second principal plane change their angles of thinking, and subjective evaluation is regarded as a property attached to the object described in the discourse.

Zhu (2008: 176–177) believes that “the reference point of speaker” can be used for further analysis. The property of “ego” is imprinted in the speaker’s sentences, which means that the speaker imagines himself being at a position related to his action and describes the action. Directional verbs “Lái/Qù” do not indicate an objective action, but carry a special property which arises when the speaker begins his action and gives himself an imaginary spatial reference point⁴. While the speaker is choosing the reference point, whether “Lái” or “Qù”, there are some objective limitations, which includes linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The limitation of linguistic factors depends on the grammatical person. The concept of spatial reference point is strongly associated with “the speaker”, who usually uses the first person pronoun in any conversations. The selection of reference point is restricted when the first person pronoun appears in the discourse. When the first person pronoun clearly refers to the speaker in this place and this moment, the verb used to express the direction towards “I” must be “Lái” and the one used to describe the direction away from “I” must be “Qù”. In this sense, there are no such expressions as “cháo wǒ zōu qù” or “lí kāi wǒ pǎo lái” in Chinese. However, when possessive pronouns like “my/our” are used by the speaker, these words do not necessarily refer to the speaker in this place and this moment. When “our home”, “our school” or “my office” is used in the conversation, these pronouns do not necessarily indicate the position of “I/We” at this moment. In this sense, the selection of reference point is not limited, as in “yǒu kòng lái wǒjiā zuòzuò/ yǒu kòng qù wǒjiā zuòzuò”(You are welcome to come to my house if you are free).

Based on the previous studies and according to Talmy's figure-ground theory, the cognitive schema of “Lái/Qù” can be presented as follows:



⁴ Spatial reference point refers to the location of speaker, but not the actual position when the speaker utters. The position is what the speaker imagines but relates to his actual action. The function of spatial reference point is to evaluate the actual direction of action.

Figure 1 Cognitive Schema of the Chinese verbs “Lái/Qù”⁵

Nakazawa (2002), Morita (1968, 2002), Oba (1997), Yamamoto (2000), Murata (2001) have studied the use of Japanese directional verbs “Kuru/Iku”. The studies on “Kuru/Iku” are similar to those on “Lái/Qù” in terms of research content and perspective, covering disciplines like semantics, syntax, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics. In these studies, much attention is paid to the “viewpoint”. It can be seen in almost all the researches that “viewpoint” is one of the important aspects that affect the use of “Kuru/Iku”. Considering Japanese people’s habits of expression, Morita (2002) argues that Japanese people tend to consider themselves at the center of the conversation and express their relationship with other people in the conversation. According to Morita (2002), the directional verbs “Iku” and “Kuru” at the end of a sentence are useful to distinguish the relations between one and others, and to recognize whether the direction of movement is towards the speaker’s own position or the hearer’s. For example, “Iku” indicates “an action in which the speaker moves towards a specific direction and something moves away from the speaker”, while “Kuru” indicates “an action in which something moves closer to the speaker.” (Takano 2011: 32) In this regard, “it is impossible to put the speaker aside and take the hearer as the central point in the Japanese language.”; “If the speaker is the subject in the action, the hearer’s position cannot be the end of the movement of ‘Kuru’”. (Nakazawa 2002) Thus, “Iku” is used in the Japanese conversation, implying a movement towards the hearer. The corresponding cognitive schema is as follows:

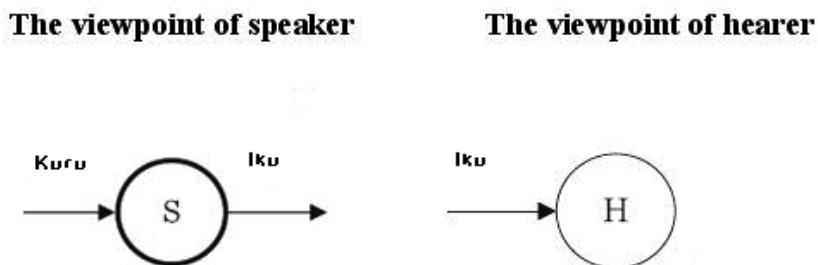


Figure 2 Cognitive Schema of the Japanese verbs “Kuru/Iku”

In recent years, attention has also been paid to contrastive studies on both the Chinese verbs “Lái/Qù” and the Japanese verbs “Kuru/Iku”. Scholars like Xu (2011:

⁵ The thick line means the location of ‘the viewpoint’, which is the same in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

50–55), Peng (2008: 7–14), Sheng (2013: 27–31), Arakawa (1994, 1996), Maruo (2000, 2001, 2004), Fukui (2010), Sugimura (1983, 2000), Takahashi (2001, 2003), Shimoji (1997, 2004), Koga (2012) have examined related topics. Contrastive study on “viewpoint/reference point” is believed to be one of the significant aspects. It is generally suggested that the difference in the choice of viewpoint leads to the asymmetry of “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku” and determines how these verbs are used. For instance, the Japanese sentence “osaki ni dōzo, boku mo sugu ikimasu kara (You go first and I will follow you)” is basically rendered in Chinese as “nǐ xiān qù ba, wǒ mǎshàng jiù lái” (You go first and I will follow you), and it is less likely to say “wǒ mǎshàng jiù qù”.

Based on the previous studies, the cognitive schema of “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku” can be expressed as below:

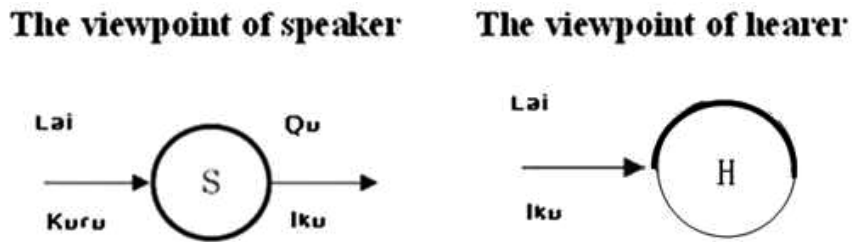


Figure 3 Cognitive Schema of the Chinese verbs “Lái/Qù” and the Japanese “Kuru/Iku”

The directions of movement suggested by “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku” can be summarized as: “Lái/Kuru” indicates a movement toward the reference point while “Qù/Iku” indicates a movement away from the reference point. The difference between these words lies in the selection of viewpoint (reference point).

In summary, as has been shown in the previous studies on “Lái/Qù”, the asymmetry of “Lái/Qù” is a common phenomenon, and the use of “Lái” in place of “Qù” can be seen as a shift in viewpoint, or “shift in viewpoint of politeness”, a conversational style that shows the hearer's respect. However, some questions remain to be unclear. Why is the speaker capable of shifting viewpoints in the same context? Can all the changes of viewpoints be considered as the “shift in viewpoint of politeness”? If the answer is positive, why is the Chinese sentence “nǐ xiān qù, wǒ jiù lái” rendered in Japanese as “osaki ni dōzo, boku mo sugu kimasu kara.”, without a shift in viewpoint of politeness? The findings in previous studies are far from convincing to answer these questions, and

this paper is intended to approach them with recourse to the theory of pragmatic empathy, one of the aspects of game-and-decision theoretical pragmatics.

3 Pragmatic Empathy in Game-and-Decision Theoretic Pragmatics

Game-and-decision theoretic pragmatics (GDT pragmatics) is an interdisciplinary study that covers pragmatics and game theory⁶. GDT pragmatics regards verbal communication between the speaker and the hearer as communicative games, on which pragmatic research is conducted from the perspective of game theory. According to GDT pragmatics, the players in communicative games are “economic man” with bounded rationality, whose utterance and actions follow the principle of maximum utility. In addition, the players’ expectation on strategic utility is related to what they observe (such as utterance or action) and the corresponding analysis. With the purpose of obtaining maximum utility, the players (both the speaker and the hearer) will update their beliefs and select the action based on the other party’s utterance and action so that Nash equilibrium or even Pareto Optimality is achieved. When analyzing the other party’s action, “S-speaker” and “H-Hearer” in the communicative games are influenced by charity principle and empathy principle. Charity principle means that communicative players believe that the other party is in a sincere state of mind. Empathy principle refers to the ability to think in other people’s positions and perceive their inner thoughts. (Wu 2009: 113) The players in the communicative games will deliberate their utterance according to the principle of maximum utility, and base the utility expectation on their own degree of empathy. (Wu 2009: 131) Pragmatic empathy plays a critical role in communicative games, particularly in selecting viewpoints.

3.1 Classification of Pragmatic Empathy

In psychology, empathy is usually divided into three types, namely cognitive empathy, Emotional empathy and cultural empathy. He Ziran (1991: 11–15) divides empathy into pragmatic-linguistic empathy and social-pragmatic empathy. The former has mainly to do with the use of deixis, whose function is to illustrate the speaker's inclination towards,

⁶ For details on Anton, Benz, Gerhard Jager, Robert van Rooij (2005), Chen, Fangze, Gan, Nengqing (2013), Wu, Bingzhag (2009).

and expressing positive emotions to, the hearer; the latter, however, mainly involves a mentality of thinking in others' position based on the cultural backgrounds and accommodating foreign cultures in cross-cultural communications. In this sense, the latter one belongs to cultural empathy. (Li 2012: 120).

The key point of pragmatic empathy is to highlight the centrality of the other party, which means "to think in other people's positions". The speaker in verbal communication intentionally expresses empathy to the hearer, which is called the accommodation of subjective perspective. It has been found that pragmatic empathy can be classified into four types, namely "perspective-taking empathy", "emotional convergence empathy", "identity empathy" and "altruism empathy". Perspective-taking empathy refers to the capacity to put oneself in another person's position and learn about the person's condition and needs, which is the cognitive and basic form of pragmatic empathy. Emotional convergence empathy means that the speaker cares about the hearer's emotions and accepts his/her emotions. Identity empathy is associated with the respect and recognition of the hearer's authority, status and identity, which can be shown from the speaker's restriction on his own conversation. The initiative to control the conversation will be given to the hearer, highlighting the hearer's superior position. (Li 2012: 121) Altruism empathy concerns the fulfillment of the hearer's needs, which is the external form and ultimate expression of empathy. Altruism is the visual form of empathy. Every type of empathy possesses the feature of "benefiting people". (Li 2012: 119)

3.2 Pragmatic Empathy and Pragmatic Stance

Ran (2007: 331–337) proposes that there are pragmatic viewpoints in communicative games. Pragmatic viewpoint, which is included in the category of "pragmatic stance", refers to the position where the speaker makes utterance. Verbal communication involves the selection of not only linguistic forms and strategies, but also stance or viewpoint. Pragmatic stance reveals the pragmatic relations between linguistic components and its contexts. (Field 1997) The selection of pragmatic viewpoint may be influenced by contextual factors, especially the speaker's attitude, emotions and judgment towards the hearer or people on the hearer's side. Moreover, these factors can reflect the speaker's emotional and cognitive inclination.⁷ (Field 1997) In this sense, the speaker in the verbal

⁷ Emotional inclination includes emotions, tone of voice, attitude, etc. Cognitive inclination

communication will inevitably mark out his pragmatic viewpoint in a direct or indirect manner. The choice of lexicon, syntax, phoneme, turn-taking and sequencing in the context is likely to directly reflect or indicate the pragmatic viewpoints selected by communicative players. The existence of pragmatic empathy or de-empathy in verbal communication is one of the vital expressions of pragmatic viewpoint.

Pragmatic empathy, by realizing the emotional convergence between the hearer and the speaker, aims at shortening their psychological distance and establishing rapport so as to achieve the maximum utility. In most interpersonal communications, the speaker is required to put himself in the hearer’s position, or to consider, understand and satisfy the hearer’s (material, psychological or emotional) needs. In this sense, the utterance from the hearer’s viewpoint may be considered as the result of pragmatic empathy. Accordingly, de-empathy may be regarded as the emotional and psychological divergence between the two or more parties in communication. Divergence may be presented as emotional or psychological exclusivity, or even antagonism. Pragmatic de-empathy highlights the emotional and psychological divergence between the speaker and the hearer, which brings about social distance between them. Pragmatic de-empathy is one of the important linguistic means or strategies that speaker adopts to intentionally show his dissatisfaction to the hearer and to show their emotional distance.

While pragmatic de-empathy shows the emotional or psychological divergence between the communicative players, pragmatic empathy the convergence. Pragmatic empathy, in terms of communicative effect, can facilitate consistency and mutual recognition between communicative players, to enhance communicative acceptability, and to realize the desired communicative effect. By contrast, pragmatic de-empathy is likely to reduce the communicative acceptability and cause disagreement and disputes between communicative players or other negative effects. (Ran 2007) It is believed that pragmatic empathy showcases communicative players’ empathy while pragmatic de-empathy is the result of risk dominance chosen by communicative players. Pragmatic de-empathy may be considered the opposite of pragmatic empathy. Whether to select empathy or de-empathy depends on communicative players’ decision, which, aimed at the maximum utility in communicative games, is made according to their empathy and their choice of risk dominance.

refers to the beliefs or knowledge of communicative players.

3.3 Empathy and Risk Mitigation

Empathy enables communicative players to perceive the other party's thoughts since they can mitigate risk in the games and receive a high payoff. However, empathy is not an innate ability for each individual, but an ability gradually developed through embodied cognition in communities. It is generally believed that empathy is not only one of the inheritable abilities like sensation, perception and memory, but also a collective unconsciousness shared by cultural communities. (Wu 2009: 127)

According to the cooperative principle proposed by Grice, conversation is the product of cooperation. "Interactivity", a unique property of conversational behavior, makes it possible for communicative players to coordinate with each other. The coordination between communicative players may be influenced by many factors, among which forward induction, payoff dominance, risk dominance and sympathy are critical. In communicative games, equilibrium is the ultimate form of coordination, which generally includes Nash Equilibrium and Pareto Optimality. Nash Equilibrium refers to the situation where players comprehend the literal meaning of the conversations and Pareto Optimality is about the situation where players recognize the intention behind the conversations. According to GDT pragmatics, Pareto Optimality is preferred in verbal communication. However, players may fail to achieve Pareto Optimality due to the mechanism for risk mitigation, which exists among communicative players because of their empathy. In spite of the mechanism, it is possible that a high-risk action will be taken, though players will not take the risk when this mechanism disappears. That may explain why an eye contact between intimate partners is much more expressive than lengthy conversations between strangers. Furthermore, communicative players' risk awareness plays a considerable role in realizing the desired effect. When a communicative player prefers action A to action B, it may be because he or she believes that action A is more likely to achieve the desired effect. (Wu 2009: 127).

Example 2

Reporter (smiling): Xiǎo mèimèi, xiǎng hē kělè ma?
Little younger.sister~rdp think drink cola Q
'Hi, sweetie. Would you like some cola?'

Beggar: Xiǎng, āyí. (jì zhě dì guò qù yī píng kělè)
Think aunt (reporter pass cross go one CLF cola)
'Yes, madam.' (The reporter handed her a bottle of cola.)

Reporter: Tā shì nǐ jiā shuí yā?
He is 2SG family who ah-Q
‘Do you know that man?’

Beggar: Bù guān rénjiā dē shì, bú gào sù shuí !
NEG shut family POSS matter NEG tell who
‘It is not my business. I won’t tell anyone!’

(A TVS news program broadcast on Feb. 5, 2007 Taiwan program – cited from Ran Yongping [2007: 334])

As Ran (2007: 334) observes, the reporter in the interview attempts to obtain relevant information and reveal the truth, thus words like “xiǎo mèimèi (sweetie)” and “nǐ jiā” are used to satisfy the little girl’s psychological needs and shorten their psychological distance. The use of these words shows pragmatic empathy, whose effect can be seen from the little girl’s reply “āyí”. However, when the reporter asked about the identity of the man standing nearby, the little girl answered “bù guān rénjiā dē shì, yě bú gào sù shuí” (It is not my business. I won’t tell anyone.) in stead of “bù guān nǐ dē shì, yě bú gào sù nǐ” (It is none of your business. I won’t tell you). The little girl’s reply expresses her emotional and psychological exclusivity and suggests the emotional and psychological antagonism between the reporter and the little girl, a case of pragmatic de-empathy in this context. For further analysis, the communicative game of example 2 may be divided into two subgames, g1 and g2.

g1

Reporter (smiling): Xiǎo mèimèi, xiǎng hē kělè ma?
Little younger.sister~rdp think drink cola Q
‘Hi, sweetie. Would you like some cola?’

Beggar: Xiǎng, āyí. (The reporter handed her a bottle of cola.)
Think aunt
‘Yes, madam.’

g2

reporter: Tā shì nǐ jiā shuí yā?
He is 2SG family who ah-Q
‘Do you know that man?’

Beggar: Bù guān rénjiā dē shì, bú gào sù shuí !
NEG shut family POSS matter NEG tell who

‘It is not my business. I won’t tell anyone!’

As is mentioned above, Pareto Optimality is preferred in verbal communication. If Pareto Optimality is achieved in the interview, the reporter will obtain the information so that the desired effect will be realized along with a relatively high payoff, while the little girl will get a low payoff. In order to achieve Pareto Optimality, it is necessary to raise the little girl’s payoff. Hence, the reporter makes use of empathy in g1, who attempts to perceive the little girl’s inner thought and lowers her own payoff in terms of wording. Generally, the desired effect is achieved in g1. Now in g2, if the little girl replies in accordance with the reporter’s illocutionary meaning behind her words, the little girl may be faced with unnecessary risks (such as criticism from the man). Risk dominance plays a key role in g2, which means that the little girl would rather reduce her own payoff and keep a psychological distance from the reporter for risk mitigation. The little girl chose to respond to the literal meaning of the reporter’s words. In terms of the whole dialogue, the Nash equilibrium is achieved. In other words, the reporter fails to achieve the Pareto Optimality and the desired effect.

In conclusion, communicative players possess empathy, and the realization of empathy and explicitness of empathy (Li 2012) may be affected by factors like forward induction, payoff dominance, risk dominance and sympathy. Under some circumstances, communicative players may fail to realize empathy or even get the opposite, de-empathy. In addition, empathy and de-empathy differ among individuals and cultural communities.

4 The Empathy of “Lái/Qù” and Risk Mitigation

Here is a dialogue from the television drama *Garden Street No.5*.

Example 3

Editor (talking on the phone): “lǎo Jiāng ā, nǐ xià lái yí xià.”
old Jiang ah 2SG down come-TENTt
‘Jiang, come down here please.’

Jiang: “á ? hǎo , wǒ mǎshàng jiù lái”
ah good 1SG immediately at once come
‘Well. I will be there right away.’

There are many moments similar to the dialogue in Example 3, which may be

simplified as follows:

A: B, lái yí xià.

B come-TENTt

‘B, come over here.’

B: Hǎo, mǎshàng jiù lái.

good immediately at once come

‘Okay. I will be there right away.’

It is clear that the speaker B will be moving towards the hearer A, so grammatically, it makes sense to use “Qù”. The dialogue can be further simplified as follows:

A: B, lái yí xià.

B come-TENTt

‘B, come over here.’

B: Jiù qù.

At once go

‘I will go there.’

In the same condition, it is acceptable to use “Iku” and say “hai, sugu ikimasu.” (I will go there) in Japanese. However, one is unlikely to use “Kuru” and say “hai, sugu kimasu.” (I will come there). Similarly, Chinese people may say “nǐ xiān qù ba, wǒ mǎshàng jiù lái” (You go first. I will be there soon). But Japanese people will say, “osaki ni dōzo, boku mo sugu ikimasu kara.” instead of “osaki ni dōzo, boku mo sugu kimasu kara.” (You go first. I will be come soon). (Fukui 2010)

In view of the direction of movement, both the Chinese and Japanese expressions imply that B is moving towards A. Their difference lies in linguistic conceptualization, or to be specific, the subjectivity of language. According to cognitive linguistics, the subjectivity of language chiefly originates from the viewpoint selected by the subject. In the above examples, the destination is adopted as the reference point in both Chinese and Japanese. However “Lái” is used in the Chinese sentence, which is based on the hearer’s pragmatic viewpoint, whereas the use of “Iku” in Japanese indicates the speaker’s.

The dialogue between A and B, whether in the Chinese or Japanese language, can be regarded as a communicative game, in which players follow the charity principle and empathy principle for the sake of the optimal effect. However, the pragmatic stance or pragmatic viewpoint of players is determined by the explicitness of empathy and other factors like forward induction, payoff dominance, risk dominance and sympathy.

In the above examples, “Lái” suggests the direction of the movement toward the

hearer instead of the speaker, and thus the hearer's location is selected as the pragmatic viewpoint. As is stated earlier, the use of “Qù” is grammatically correct in Chinese, but it cannot clarify the speaker's intention of going to the hearer's place, because the emphasis of “Qù” is put on the start of the movement and it is unnecessary to clarify where the movement ends. If “Qù” is used in the response, the hearer's needs may not be fully understood or satisfied. Through perspective-taking empathy, one is able to think in another person's position and comprehend his situation and needs, especially the wish to see the other party moving close to him. Another example is listed below.

Example 4 (a phone conversation)

- A: Xiǎo lǐ nà běn shū nǐ kàn wánle ma?
 little Lee that-dem_{dist} CLF book 2SG read finish-PFV Q
 ‘Mr. Lee, have you finished the book?’
- B: Yō bùhǎoyìsī Zhāng lǎoshī wǒ kàn wánle,
 Oh sorry Zhang teacher 1SG read finish-PFV
 ‘Oh, sorry about that, Mr. Zhang. I have finished.’
- B: zhè jiù gěi nǐn sòng guò lái.
 this-demprox at once give 2SG send cross come
 ‘I will return it to you right away.’

If the player B in the communicative game takes his location as the reference point, he is supposed to say “sòng guò qù(to send the book)” rather than “sòng guò lái(to return the book)”. The empathy enables B to perceive the player A's thought and illocutionary meaning of “having the book sent back”. Thinking from the viewpoint of A, B adopts the word “Lái” rather than “Qù”. As to whether B's use of “Lái” is the “shift in viewpoint of politeness”, the question needs to be further discussed.

Suppose “the book” is lent to B and he/she is required to finish reading and return the book within one week, but two weeks have passed since the conversation. In this context, B's reply cannot be deemed as a “shift in viewpoint of politeness”. Despite the effect of pragmatic empathy, B's words are “to make up for his improper behavior” and “for the well-being of others”.

However, pragmatic empathy in such context can be risky. As is mentioned before, the coordination between communicative players may be affected by a variety of factors, among which payoff dominance and risk dominance are the influential ones. Empathy coordinated by payoff dominance is inclined to be high-risk, while that coordinated by

risk dominance tends to receive a lower payoff. Thanks to empathy, communicative game players are provided with a mechanism for risk mitigation. In addition, their risk awareness is related to the chance of realizing the desired effect. In Example 4, it is risky to use “Lái” from the hearer’s viewpoint because the word is a bit “disrespectful” and to some extent intrudes on the hearer’s “territory” and “privacy”. As has been mentioned above, cultural empathy is included in the category of empathy. Under the macro-context of Chinese communication, the players are aware that perspective-taking is acceptable in the Chinese culture, the benefits of which exceed the detriments. Compared with “Qù”, “Lái” is more likely to realize the desired effect, or Pareto Optimality.

Differently, in the same context, “Iku” is used in Japanese instead of “Kuru”, which indicates that the player’s intense risk awareness may prevent empathy from occurring so that explicitness of empathy is approximate to zero. In Japanese, the speaker generally utters from the viewpoint of “I, this time, or this place”. (Shimoji 2004, Takano 2011), a viewpoint associated with the awareness of “ウチ” (inside) and “ソト” (outside). Utterance based on the awareness of “ウチ” is one of the most prominent features of the Japanese language. Such awareness can also be seen from the give-and-take expressions and honorific expressions. Given that awareness in the Japanese language, if the hearer’s location is chosen as the viewpoint, it may be regarded as a high-risk action that intrudes on the hearer’s privacy and incurs loss. This choice will also make it hard to achieve Pareto Optimality in communicative games. In this regard, the player chooses to give up perspective-taking empathy and mitigates risk instead. To achieve the desired equilibrium, the player chooses “Iku”, the word of low risk and low payoff when “Kuru” may bring high risk and high payoff.

Although in this context perspective-taking empathy is unlikely to occur in Japanese communication, identity empathy and other types of pragmatic empathy are attainable. Besides, another point should be noticed. In Japanese, the verbs “Kuru/Iku” have the same “謙讓語動詞” (humble verbs) and “尊敬語動詞” (respectful verbs), which are respectively “参る(mairu)・伺う(ukagau)・上がる(agaru)” and “いらっしゃる(irassharu)、おいでになる(oideninaru)、お越しになる(okoshininaru)”, and “参る(mairu)” can be used as the “丁寧語” (polite language) instead of “Kuru” and “Iku”.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that communicative game players will follow the empathy principles in order to obtain the best effect and achieve Nash equilibrium or Pareto Optimality. But pragmatic empathy does not occur at one’s will, which may be affected by factors like payoff dominance and risk dominance. The

asymmetry of “Lái” and “Qù” originates from perspective-taking empathy, which is not simply a shift in viewpoint of politeness or an action to show respect for others. Instead, this empathy aims at achieving Nash equilibrium or even Pareto Optimality in the game. In the process of perspective-taking reflected in the use of “Lái”, the awareness of payoff dominance plays a more significant role than risk awareness, so perspective-taking empathy is more likely to occur. By contrast, it is hard for perspective-taking empathy to take place if “Kuru” is used in Japanese communication due to the limitation of the linguistic context. On the contrary, identity empathy is obtained instead, which is another asymmetry between Chinese and Japanese.

5 Conclusion

This paper reviews the previous studies on the selection of viewpoints of directional verbs “Lái/Qù” and “Iku/Kuru”, and points out that the study on “shift in viewpoint of politeness” needs to be further discussed. Analysis is conducted based on the theory of pragmatic empathy, one of the aspects of the GDT pragmatics. From the analysis, it is shown that the selection of viewpoints of the verbs “Lái/Qù” is associated with perspective-taking empathy, which is essentially the outcome of both empathy and risk mitigation, rather than the “shift in viewpoint of politeness”. Perspective-taking empathy helps to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of language, and to achieve equilibrium and the best effect in communicative games. Besides, the asymmetry of the Chinese verbs “Lái/Qù” originates from the players’ perspective-taking empathy, which is a shift of viewpoint. Similarly, the asymmetry between “Lái/Qù” and “Kuru/Iku” is the outcome of the functioning of different types of empathy.

However, It should also be noted that pragmatic empathy involves risks in the sense that the dysfunction of pragmatic empathy may happen in real communication. In Example 4, for instance, if the player B uses the word ‘Qù’ rather than ‘Lái’, it will be hard to say that the player B is a ‘rational person’ as defined in the Game Theory. The voidness of pragmatic empathy and its influence on the use ‘Lái/Qù’ (Kuru/Iku) should be analysed from a different point of view. Considering the differences in perspectives, such questions will be discussed in another paper.

Appendix: List of Abbreviations in the annotations to Example 1-4

1	first person
2	second person
~	reduplication marker
CLF	classifier
DEM	demonstrative
DIST	distal
NEG	negation
POSS	possessive marker
PROX	proximal
PVF	perfective
Q	question marker
RDP	reduplication
SG	single
TENTt	tentative

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語用論的ゲーム理論に基づく移動動詞「来(Lái)/去(Qù)」 の感情移入的分析:日本語の「来る/行く」との対照比較

をかねて

甘 能清

要旨

拙論では、語用論的ゲーム理論 (Game-and Decision-Theoretic Pragmatics)、とりわけそのうちの「感情移入」理論に基づいて、中国語の移動動詞「来(Lái)/去(Qù)」について、先行研究の「定説」と言われる視点の転換の本質を分析してみた。そして、日本語の移動動詞の使用実態とも比較した上、以下の結論に達した。「去(Qù)」であるはずのところに「来(Lái)」が取って代わるというような非対称現象が起きるのは、「丁寧さによる視点の転換」から来るのではなく、それは言語ゲームのプレーヤーである話者が持つ「感情移入力」や「リスク優越意識」が働き、会話におけるナッシュ均衡かパレート最適均衡に達し、会話の効用と適切性の最大化を図っているためである。同様に、同じコンテキストであっても、日本語では「お先にどうぞ、すぐ行きますから」というように、「来る」が取って代わらずに「行く」で表現したり、「すぐ参ります」というように「参る」で謙譲の気持ちを表すのも、プレーヤーである話者が「感情移入力」や「リスク優越意識」に基づいた言語行動の結果だと言える。

キーワード: 「来(Lái)/行く(Qù)」、語用論的ゲーム理論、感情移入、リスク優越

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