



## Implicit vs. Indirect Conflict Talk: A Comparative Analysis

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### Abstract

*Conflict talk plays an important role in conversation analysis of pragmatics. There are two types of conflict talk: implicit conflict talk and explicit conflict talk, as well as direct conflict and indirect conflict talk viewed from different perspectives. However, implicit conflict talk and indirect conflict talk sometimes need clarification. Although they have some similarities, implicit conflict talk and indirect conflict talk differ in some respects. The purpose of this paper is to examine the similarities and differences between implicit conflict talk and indirect conflict talk.*

*Conflict talk is a form of conflict communication in which, when two parties are engaged in conflict, one turns, and talks to a third party on the scene, but the purpose of their conversation is to threaten the face of the other party rather than that of the third party. Through the analysis of examples, the paper concludes that implicit and indirect conflict talk have two points in common, two points in difference, and one link. The two things they have in common are that they both belong to conflict talk and face-threatening acts. There are two distinct types of conflict talk: implicit conflict talk occurs between two parties in interaction, and indirect conflict talk occurs between one of the two parties and a third party at the scene. There is a common link between implicit conflict talk and indirect conflict talk, which is that implicit conflict talk may develop into indirect conflict talk.*

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## المخلص

يلعب الحديث الصراعي دورًا مهمًا في تحليل المحادثات من منظور علم التداوليات. هناك نوعان من الحديث الصراعي: الحديث الصراعي الضمني والحديث الصراعي الصريح، بالإضافة إلى الحديث الصراعي المباشر وغير المباشر وفقًا لوجهات نظر مختلفة. ومع ذلك، قد يتطلب الحديث الصراعي الضمني والحديث الصراعي غير المباشر توضيحًا في بعض الأحيان. على الرغم من وجود أوجه تشابه بينهما، إلا أن الحديث الصراعي الضمني والحديث الصراعي غير المباشر يختلفان في بعض الجوانب. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين الحديث الصراعي الضمني والحديث الصراعي غير المباشر.

الحديث الصراعي هو شكل من أشكال التواصل الصراعي، حيث، عندما يكون طرفان في حالة صراع، يتجه أحدهما للتحدث مع طرف ثالث موجود في الموقف، ولكن الهدف من هذه المحادثة هو تهديد صورة الطرف الآخر بدلاً من صورة الطرف الثالث. ومن خلال تحليل الأمثلة، يستنتج البحث أن الحديث الصراعي الضمني وغير المباشر يشتركان في نقطتين متشابهتين، ونقطتين مختلفتين، و رابط واحد. النقطتان المشتركتان هما أن كلاهما ينتمي إلى الحديث الصراعي ويُعتبران أفعالاً تهدد الصورة. أما الاختلاف، فإن الحديث الصراعي الضمني يحدث بين طرفين يتفاعلان مع بعضهما البعض، بينما الحديث الصراعي غير المباشر يحدث بين أحد الطرفين وطرف ثالث في الموقف. أما الرابط المشترك بينهما فهو أن الحديث الصراعي الضمني قد يتطور ليصبح حديثاً صراعياً غير مباشر.

## 1. Introduction

A common language phenomenon known as conflict talk is complex and challenging to understand. People occasionally have conflict conversations daily due to different values, goals, desires, or personalities. The universal nature of conflict talk has attracted the attention of scholars in numerous fields, such as sociology, psychology, linguistics, and communication studies. Conflict talk has been studied from a wide range of perspectives and has produced a variety of findings, and there is a wide variety of literature on conflict talk. However, there is still a large area of research to be explored, and conflict talk is an intriguing topic that deserves further investigation.

According to Grimshaw (1990: 282), conflict talk can be divided into different types. Conflict talk can be divided into implicit conflict talk (hereafter referred to as ICT) and explicit conflict talk (hereafter referred to as ECT). The concept of ICT is a new one. There are still many questions that remain unanswered. A question that needs to be addressed is how to distinguish it from other types of CT. Indirect conflict talk can be compared to virgin territory. If we explore it, we will understand CT better and ultimately better understand it. In order to determine how indirect conflict talk differs from ICT, this work will provide appropriate examples and reasonable analysis. This work serves as a preliminary step for further research on indirect conflict talk and sheds some light on the differences and similarities between ICT and indirect conflict talk.

### 1.1 Conflict Talk

Conflict talk has been studied extensively by scholars who have contributed much to a comprehensive definition. Due to this, conflict talk uses a variety of different terms, including the adversative episode (Eisenberg & Garvey, 1981), oppositional arguments (Schiffrin, 1985), quarrels (Antaki, 1994), conflicts, disputations, and disorderly discourse (Brenneis, 1988; Kotthoff, 1993). The term 'conflict talk' was first used by Grimshaw (1990). After Grimshaw (1990) uses the term "conflict talk," conflict talk as a term enters pragmatics. Grimshaw also mentions that conflict talk can be classified into two dimensions—direct and indirect (from now on, abbreviated as indirect CT). As (Grimshaw, 1990, p. 294) claims, "conflict talk, like all discourse, can be: (1) direct and indirect..."

Honda (2002) distinguishes two levels of conflict talk. In the narrow sense, conflict talk is a discourse in which two parties attempt to maintain their own positions through opposition. In the second sense, conflict talk is a process of opposition involving the manifestation of opposition as well as the process of provoking, facilitating, developing, and managing opposition.

Eisenberg, Ann R. "Conflict talk," as defined by Garvey and Garvey (1981:150), occurs when opponents oppose requests for action, assertions, or actions, and this interaction results in an adversarial relationship. An *adversative episode* is a sequence that begins with an opposition and ends with a resolution or dissipation of the conflict. In their study, and others like it, they provide one of the most coherent definitions of argument in the psychological literature. Their study has been critical in explaining various basic structures found in arguments.

In contrast to previous studies on conflict talks conducted abroad, domestic research is also in progress. Yingling Zhao (2004) examines the background, meaning, and research methods of CT; she conducts a detailed investigation and research relating to CT. She divides conflict talk into three phases: the phase of starting conflict talk, the phase of developing conflict talk, and the phase of terminating conflict talk. Starting conflict talk involves four basic modes: expressive mode, expositive mode, directive mode, and inquiry mode. There are several sub-formats within each phase. There are ten modes of developing conflict talk during the phase of developing conflict talk. The modes are all-in-one conversation, calling in questions and queries, saying no and avoiding the topic, correcting and expressing, illustrating the reasons, holding each side's views firmly, stating views openly, repeating and reproducing, filing abuses, and using humor. A CT can be terminated in seven ways: changing the topic at present, compromising, a third party intervening, losing or winning, withdrawing, and ending in humor.

## 1.2 Implicit Conflict Talk

Several scholars have recognized implicit disagreement in studying verbal behavior disagreement before the term ICT was formally proposed. Similarly, Garcia (1989) divides disagreement into confrontational and non-confrontational disagreements, while Helmut (1998) classifies disagreement into overt and pragmatic disagreements. Non-confrontational disagreements and pragmatic disagreements are both related to ICT. A study by Georgakopoulou (2001) suggests that disagreements in the data are systematically implied and indirectly constructed. According to Scott (2002:310), he researched American television shows dealing with issues. In terms of explicit and implicit degrees of disagreement, she divides confrontational disagreement into backgrounded, foregrounded, and mixed disagreement.

According to Zhuang Meiyong (2011), implicit confrontations against verbal offenses are classified according to their types and methods, but her analysis is restricted to implicit responses. Xun Changpeng (2011) uses ICT as an example of how humor may be used to resolve political conflict. However, they should have followed up on their findings by conducting further research.

Given this background, Yang Wenxiu (2012a) introduces the concept of ICT and defines it as conflict talk in which both parties of interaction are implicitly attempting to achieve their conflicting communicative goals.

*The introduction to Implicit Conflict Talk (Yang, 2012)* defines ICT. In order to understand what ICT is, she distinguishes it from explicit conflict talk. Additionally, the study discovered that ICT sometimes appears before explicit conflict talk, usually serving as a signal of the latter. Conflict talks can sometimes develop from implicit to explicit, but not all can become explicit. In addition, she uses the goal principle advanced by Liao Meizhen (2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2009) to explain why this is the case.

*Strategies of Implicit Conflict Talk (Yang et al., 2012)* illustrates the strategies employed by two parties in ICT, the challenger and the respondent. Comparative analysis reveals that the two parties use similar strategies, including questioning, stating, mentioning, and promising. It has also been discovered that the two parties' strategies differ in some respects. In contrast, the challenger tends to employ satirizing and commenting, while the respondent uses quoting and token agreement. This study provides new insights into the study of conflict talk and communication strategies.

*In Uncovering the Veil of Implicit Conflict Talk (Yang, 2013)*, the author identifies 11 speech figures related to implicit conflict, illustrating them using examples from literature texts, films, and plays. Additionally, the paper explores why interlocutors implicitly make relatively more cognitive efforts to accomplish their goals, using Habermas' concept of communicative rationality in Communicative Action Theory.

*ICT is the subject of the Adaptation Approach to Implicit Conflict Talk (Xu & Yang, 2013a)*, which analyzes ICT's linguistic performance and pragmatic function. According to Verschueren's linguistic adaptation theory, ICT is the language result intentionally chosen by communicators for particular purposes, revealing adaptive characteristics.

Based on *the Development Model of Implicit Conflict Talk (Xu & Yang, 2013b)*, there are two development tendencies for ICT: the first tendency is to develop ICT into ECT when two parties in communication use ICT to achieve their goals but fail; the second tendency is to abandon, transfer, suspend, or interrupt one or two parties' goals.

### 1.3 Face-Threatening Acts

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the "face-threatening acts" (now abbreviated as FTAs) arise from Goffman's notion of the face (1967). In their view, the face is a form of public self-image that all members strive to claim for themselves, and it applies to all cultures. An FTA means "certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts which are in direct conflict with the desires of the addressee or the speakers" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). The individual must maintain two faces on their face—one is the negative face, which represents the desire to act independently and autonomously. The other is the cheerful face, representing the desire to be liked, appreciated, accepted, and approved by others. Although it is in everyone's best interest to maintain their faces in daily life, certain speech acts are inherently face-threatening and tend to damage or threaten the faces of speakers or hearers. According to Brown and Levinson, there are two strategies available for FTAs: (1) on record and (2) off record (Wood & Kroger, 1994). Usually, on-record strategies

do not attempt to minimize the threat to the face of the listener. The use of such a strategy will often shock or embarrass the recipient. The off-record strategy utilizes implicit language and removes the speaker's potential to be intrusive.

## 2. Research Design

Data analysis, the comparison technique, and the inductive method are used in this study. Before writing, I studied plays and books, watched movies, and watched popular TV shows to find indirect CT and ICT examples. I start by turning those spoken dialogues from movies into written dialogues. After I have instances of ICT and indirect CT. Classifying and analyzing examples into two categories is the next stage. Next, I thoroughly compared the cases using the data analysis method. On the one hand, I discuss the relationship between indirect CT and ICT using the inductive method during this procedure. However, I employ the comparative method to examine the parallels and the differences between the two.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Indirect Conflict Talk

Despite bringing up the concept of "indirect CT," Grimshaw does not define it precisely or conduct any research on it. Even worse, so few academics focus on indirect CT and how it relates to ICT. It is necessary to provide an example to clarify the notion of indirect CT, as it is still hazy. As a result, the example that follows will appear. Here is the dialogue:

Example (1):

Lynette: Look, I think it's sweet that you volunteered to help Penny make her costume.

Jane: Hey, I hope I didn't overstep. You know, it's just, before medical school, dabble a bit in fashion design.

Lynette: Of course you did.

Jane: It's nothing. Couple of semesters in Paris. Ah, Paris. C'est la plus belle ville du monde, non?

Tom: **oui, oui, oui. Yes. She's--She's teaching me.**

Lynette: **Of course she is. Anyway, making penny's Halloween costume is sort of a...mother-daughter tradition.**

Tom: **Since when?**

Lynette: **Since always. Actually, I started it already, and I don't want to oversell, but it's gonna be pretty great.**

Jane: I'm sorry. She didn't say anything.

Lynette: I'm sure she didn't want to hurt your feelings.

Jane: Well, if you change your mind, it's really no trouble. I've already made a bunch of costumes for the kids in the cancer ward. ( the sixth episode of eighth season )

The above conversation begins with Lynette praising Jane for her assistance making her daughter's costume. Jane replies, "I hope I did not overstep," and mentions that she has dabbled in fashion design to suggest she could make the costume for her lover's daughter. However, Lynette also acknowledges Jane's dabbling in fashion design by using the pun 'of course you did'. Jane understands only the second meaning, so she continues to demonstrate her learning experience in Paris and her close relationship with Tom by saying in French that Paris, the city in which they fall in love, is beautiful. During this conversation, Tom interrupts and explains that Jane is teaching him French. In addition to the pun, Lynette uses another phrase, saying, "of course she is.". Despite explicitly admitting that Jane is teaching Tom French, this sentence implicitly complains that Jane teaches Tom how to betray his wife, thereby becoming the third party between Lynette and Tom's marriage. As a counterattack to Jane's showing off, Lynette points out that Penny's Halloween costume represents a "mother-daughter tradition" to convince Jane that Penny will not replace her mother. Although Jane still insists that she design a costume, Lynette denies her kindness and informs Jane she has already begun doing it herself, which Penny does not inform Jane to avoid hurting her. Jane gives up and makes an excuse for her actions.

From Lynette's first pun to Jane's showy response, it is clear that the two women are competing against one another. This conversation would remain ICT if Lynette counterattacked again implicitly against Jane. Tom interrupts Jane at this point and answers her question. From the words "oui, oui, oui. Yes. In Tom's phrase, "She's teaching me", ICT develops into indirect CT (marked in bold). At this point, Lynette's comments both chide Tom and respond to Jane's showy behavior. It is a case involving one individual versus two individuals. Additionally, Lynette does not directly threaten Jane. Instead, she averts her target to Tom and uses him as a third party to strike Jane's peacock behavior. Thus, Lynette indirectly threatens Jane's face.

This example provides a preliminary understanding of indirect CT. During a conflict, indirect CT occurs when one of the parties turns and talks to the third party at the scene to threaten the other party rather than the third party. As can be seen, indirect CT has two essential characteristics. The first is that at least three parties are involved. Indirectness is another aspect of conflict - the conflict between two main parties is indirect, and one side turns to the third party for assistance.

Even though three parties are involved, only two are involved in conflict negotiations. For example (1), Lynette and Jane are the parties involved in the conflict. As soon as Tom interrupts, he becomes a third party. However, it is essential to note that third parties may play different roles in different situations. It is not uncommon for a third party to volunteer to participate on occasion. On another occasion, he/she is invited by one of the two parties. Jane invites the third party, Tom, to participate in the discussion in example (1).

### 3.2 The Similarities and the Link between Implicit Conflict Talk and Indirect Conflict Talk

The next is the relationship between ICT and indirect CT. The similarities come first. Since ICT and indirect CT are sometimes mixed up, the two terms must have something in common.

Firstly, it's obvious that ICT and indirect CT both belong to conflict talk and face-threatening acts. Next, an ICT example will be given to compare with example (1) above.

According to the novel *The Scarlet Letter*, a clergyman, who is prohibited from having sexual relations with any woman, gets the heroine pregnant. In an attempt to keep the secret hidden, he suffers from tremendous pressure and becomes ill. The husband of the heroine's physician is suspicious of the clergyman's purity and wants him to confess his crime. As a response, the clergyman makes every effort to deny it.

Example(2):

Clergyman: Where, my kind doctor, did you gather those herbs, with such a dark, flabby leaf?

Physician: Even in the grave yard here at hand. They are new to me. I found them growing on a grave, which bore no tomb stone, nor other memorial of the dead man, save these ugly weeds, that have taken upon themselves to keep him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his life time.

Clergyman: Perchance, he earnestly desired it, but could not.

Physician: And wherefore? Wherefore not; since all the powers of nature call so earnestly for the confession of sin, that these black seeds have sprung up out of buried heart, to make manifest an outspoken crime?

Physician: Then why not reveal them here? Why should not the guilty ones sooner avail themselves of this unutterable solace?

Clergyman: They mostly do.

Physician: Yet some men bury their secrets thus.

Clergyman: True; there are such men. But not to suggest more obvious reasons, it may be that they are kept silent by the very constitution of their nature. Or- can we not suppose it?- guilty as they may be, retaining, nevertheless, a zeal for God's glory and man's welfare, they shrink from displaying themselves black and filthy in the view of men.

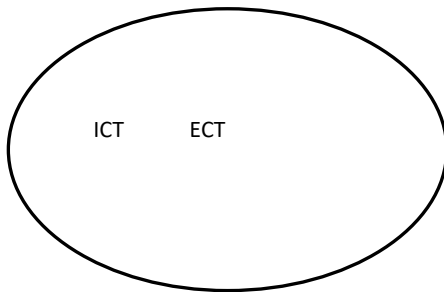
Physician: These men deceive themselves. (*The Scarlet Letter*)

This dialogue contains a conflict: whether or not the clergyman should confess his guilt. Despite the clergyman's decent appearance, the physician performs face-threatening

acts on him and suggests that he is dark on the inside. However, the clergyman attempts to save his face by arguing that he still loves God. This excerpt implies a threat of violence between the two characters in this excerpt. The similarities between this example and example (1) can be seen when comparing them. As shown in example (1), Lynette threatens Jane by suggesting that she is the mother of Penny and has the right to make Penny's costume.

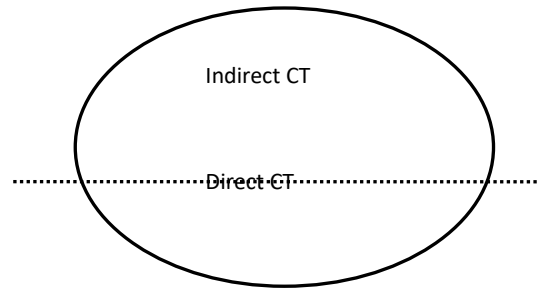
In contrast, Jane threatens Lynette's face by demonstrating a close relationship with Lynette's husband. These two implicitly perform face-threatening acts to each other, too. Therefore, both indirect CT and ICT are based on face-threatening acts. In order to better understand the similarities, please refer to the following three diagrams:

Conflict Talk



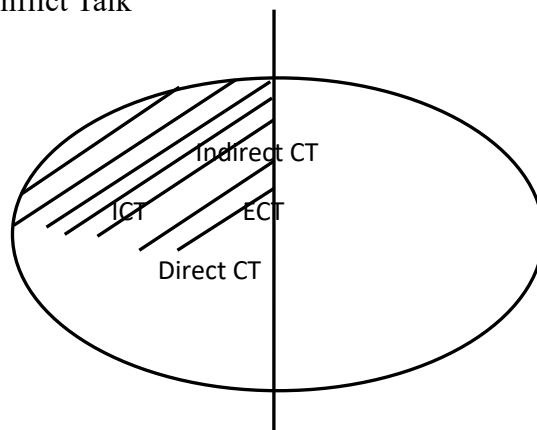
diagram(1)

Conflict Talk



diagram(2)

Conflict Talk



diagram(3)

According to diagram(1), conflict talk can be classified into implicit conflict talk and explicit conflict talk based on the salience of the conflict. As shown in diagram(2), conflict can be classified into indirect and direct conflict talk by the salience of the directness



dimension. Diagram (3) indicates an overlap between ICT and indirect CT. As a result, it is apparent that ICT and indirect CT have one thing in common: both relate to conflict.

In addition to the similarities described above, there is a link between ICT and indirect CT. In other words, ICT may develop into indirect CT. As shown in example (1), neither party is willing to compromise. As a result, ICT develops into indirect CT. The following example will elaborate on this point in more detail.

Example(3):

Hua Fei: Talking about Xue Dingshan's west expedition, I should mention Fan Lihua, who tries to

gain her husband' heart but is abandoned by her husband for three times. If I were her, I would take the initial to get free to avoid husband's absent-minded behavior.

The Queen: Wives should be tolerant. No matter how husbands dote his concubine, the position of

wives will never be threatened. Though Xue Dingshan abandons Fan Lihua three times, he also has to ask her to come back three times.

Hua Fei: Anyway Fan Lihua was so lucky to be born as the most distinguished daughter of the

general family in Xiliang. And she was the oldest daughter of the legal wife. If not so, she

would not have so much power to save Xue Dingshan and would find a dead end, isn't it, my majesty?

Zhen Huan: **My majesty, why not watch another play *The Nanke Dream*? Watching play is not just for fun, but also for enlightening the folk. Life is full of ups and downs. The more distinguished, the easier to fall down to earth. The power and wealth are just like the nanke dream.**

The Queen: **Zhen huan gains more than us. No wonder the emperor likes to chat with you.**

Zhen Huan: I just comment on what you are discussing. (*Empresses in Palace*)

In this example, there are three women, one Queen, and two concubines. The first thing Hua Fei did was to perform FTA to the Queen by quoting a famous ancient play. According to Hua Fei, Fan Lihua tried her best to win her husband's affection, but in vain. In reality, she is laughing at the Queen implicitly, who, like Fan Lihua, is incapable of gaining the King's heart despite her noble status as the Queen. In response to Fan Lihua's request, the Queen states that wives should be tolerant, and the Queen's position will always remain the same by stating that, in the end, Fan Lihua is helpful to her husband. As a response, Hua Fei mentions Fan Lihua's origins to make the Queen consider her family background, as she

knows that the Queen is sensitive to the fact that Fan Lihua comes from a concubine. As the Queen is speechless, Zhen Huan interrupts and suggests they change the play. As a result of Zhen Huan's intervention, ICT developed into indirect CT (highlighted in bold). As a result, she becomes a third party in the discussion. She secretly helps the Queen by suggesting another play. In order to combat Hua Fei, the Queen praises her for her particular thoughts and mentions that the Emperor appreciates Zhen Huan. She is saying something positive to Zhen Huan on the surface. Hua Fei is satirized as narrow-minded and disliked by the Emperor due to her satirical remarks. She praises Zhen Huan instead of directly threatening Hua Fei's face. Thus, the former ICT between the Queen and Hua Fei has developed into an indirect communication. From this case, it can be seen that indirect CT is a link between ICT and CT.

### 3.3 The Differences between ICT and Indirect CT

The next step is to examine their differences in light of their similarities and links. It should be noted that ICT and indirect CT are different and should be distinct. The first part of the paper provides a preliminary definition of indirect CT. A significant difference between indirect CT and ICT can be observed when comparing and contrasting. There are only two parties involved in ICT. The third party, however, should always be addressed in indirect CT, apart from the two main parties in the conversation. With a third party, indirect CT will be possible. This point can be demonstrated by examples (1) and (3). In example (1), Lynette, Jane, and Tom are three parties. Tom is the third party. Without him, Lynette's ironic words would be directed at Jane, and there would be a direct conflict. In example (3), there are three parties: Hua Fei, the queen, and Zhen Huan. As a third party, Zhen Huan intervenes in the conversation between Hua Fei and the queen and becomes involved in the implicit conflict between them, thereby turning the direct conflict conversation into an indirect one. Therefore, one of the main differences between ICT and indirect CT is the number of parties involved. Only two parties are involved in ICT, whereas three are involved in indirect CT.

Another difference between ICT and indirect CT is that conflict must be implicit in ICT, while in indirect CT, conflict can be implicit or explicit. The following two examples expound on this point.

Example (4):

Diao Deyi: I just heard the Commander praising that you are so unusual. I admire you because you are so clever and brave that you can play tricks with the Japanese soldiers. You must have the patriotic mind to save our country from the Japanese domination. Otherwise you can not be so calm to save others at the risk of your life.

Aqing Sao: I don't deserve your compliments. I run this teahouse just for making money and I value personal loyalty first. Since the Commander Hu is a regular customer, I want to gain his support. And the Commander is so lucky to escape danger.

Diao Deyi: New Forth Army dwells in Sha Jiabang for a long time and the army is a good support. Since you contact them very often, it can be assumed that you must show more concern with them.

Aqing Sao: I welcome the customers from everywhere and I treat everybody the same way. And when they leave I will never think about them. What do you mean by saying I "show more concern with them"?

Diao Deyi: Being a teahouse runner, you are so smart with words. I admire you so much!

Aqing Sao: **Commander Hu, what's the meaning of his words?**

Commander Hu: **That's typical of him. You need not have it on your mind.**

Aqing Sao: It's nothing to me ... (*Sha Jiabang*)

Diao Deyi, in this case, is a member of the Nationalist Party of China. He suspects that Aqing Sao is helping the communist-led army in secret. When Aqing Sao becomes aware of Diao Deyi's intentions, she attempts to conceal her connections with communists. Aqing Sao's involvement with the New Forth Army is the primary conflict. First, Diao Deyi praises her intelligent and courageous behavior in front of the enemy, assuming that she intends to assist the communists in saving the nation. As a result of her actions, Aqing Sao does not owe the Commander any thanks for his compliments and instead implies that he is lucky enough to have escaped harm. Secondly, Diao mentions that the New Forth Army is located nearby, allowing Aqing Sao to confess her frequent contact with the army and release information to them. In response, Aqing Sao states that she runs her teahouse primarily for business purposes and values the brotherhood above all else. As a result of hearing this, Diao Deyi praises Aqing Sao once again on the surface. However, he is only trying to inform her that she is a member of the New Fourth Army and that he will never be deceived. When Aqing Sao comes to this point, he turns to Commander Hu to ask what Diao is trying to convey. A conversation with Commander Hu is invited. As a result of his bias toward Aqing Sao, who once saved his life, he comforts her and claims that this is typical of Diao Deyi's

behavior. The conversation between Aqing Sao and Commander Hu appears to be informal. She indirectly tells Diao that she is not affiliated with the communist-led army. Through Commander Hu, Aqing Sao's goal is indirectly expressed. Consequently, ICT becomes indirect CT as a result of this process.

The indirect conflict talk (marked in bold) is involved in this example when Aqing Sao turns to the Commander. In addition, Aqing Sao's goal is implicit rather than explicit. Indirect CT can, however, also be explicit. Let us look at another example from Zhang Ailin's *"The Golden Cangue"* to understand this point better.

Example(5):

Tai-chen: My, so many walnuts, practically all eaten up. It couldn't be anybody but Third Brother.

We had to shell them all morning, and he came along to enjoy himself.

Ch'i-ch'iao: Isn't it the same with money? We're always told to save, save it so others can take it out by the handfuls to spend. That's what I can't get over.

Tai-chen :That can't be helped. When there are too many people, if it doesn't go in the open it will go in the dark. Control this one and you can't control that one.

Little Shuang (mumbling): **Madame, Master-in-law is here.**

Ch'i-ch'iao: **Master-in-law's coming here is nothing to hide. You've got a lump in your throat or what?You sound like a mosquito humming.**

Tai-chen: So your brother has come to Shanghai too. It seems all our relatives are here.

Ch'i-ch'iao: He's not to come to Shanghai? With war inland, poor people want to stay alive too.( *The Golden Cangue*)

As shown in the example above, Tai-Chen is the eldest son's wife, while Ch'i-Chiao is the second son's wife in an extended family. The family's third son squanders money, which causes Ch'i-ch'iao to become angry. The family is saving money, while the third brother is spending money on water when Tai-Chen mentions that the third brother has eaten all the walnuts she cracked. Ch'i-Chiao points out that the family is saving money while the third brother is spending money on water. She implicitly criticizes the third brother's sumptuous behavior. According to Tai-Chen, so many people are in the family, and besides the third brother, some secretly spend money. According to her, Ch'i-ch'iao also privately gives money to her brother's maid, Little Shuang, who interrupts her when she is about to counterattack and informs her that her brother has arrived. Ch'i-ch'iao should take advantage of this opportunity. On the surface, Ch'i-Chiao criticizes Little Shuang for being so shy in notifying her brother's arrival. At the deepest level, she expresses her innocence regarding herself and her brother and informs Tai-Chen implicitly that she has overstepped. Little Shuang's intervention breaks the competition between the two sides. As a result, Ch'i-ch'iao uses her scolding of Little Shuang to respond to Tai-chen's provocative remarks. ICT develops into indirect CT (marked in bold). Due to Little Shuang's apparent inferior position, Ch'i-Chiao rebukes her maid severely, indicating a conflict between them.

From the above two examples, it can be seen that indirect CT can be either implicit or explicit. All in all, the difference between ICT and indirect CT can be shown as below:

## ConflictTalk

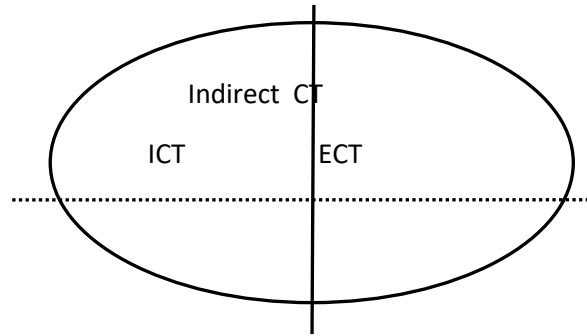


Diagram (4)

The diagram(4) shows that if conflict talk is divided into ICT and ECT by the vertical line, the left is ICT, and the right is ECT. Conflict talk is divided by the horizontal line into indirect and direct CT, with the upper part being indirect CT. In the indirect CT part, both ICT and ECT are included. Accordingly, the difference between ICT and indirect CT is that indirect CT can be implicit or explicit.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a result, it is evident that while Grimshaw suggests that conflict talk can be divided into implicit and explicit conflict talk and indirect and direct conflict talk, ICTs and indirect CTs must be distinct. Indirect conflict talk is a type of conflict talk in which both parties of interaction implicitly attempt to achieve their communicative goals that conflict with one another. An indirect conflict occurs when two parties conflict, and one turns to a third party present at the scene to threaten the face of the other party rather than the third party.

ICT and indirect CT have a few things in common despite some differences. First of all, both are conflict-talking and face-threatening acts. Moreover, in some cases, ICT may develop into indirect CT. In contrast, indirect CT differs from ICT in two critical respects. The first is that only two parties are involved in ICT, whereas at least three are involved in indirect CT. Indirect CT can also be implicit or explicit.

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