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戀愛言談：告白中的說服、拒絕、與接受之策略研究  
Romantic Discourse: A Study on the Persuasive, Refusal, and  
Acceptance Strategies in Romantic Confessions

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*With the precision of an artist we turn my dream into a creation.  
It was a journey worth taking and finally we're at our destination.  
Though there aren't enough words to describe my appreciation,  
I honor those who assisted with their will, insight, and dedication.*

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## ABSTRACT



The study examines romantic confession as an interactive and co-constructed process of persuasion between romantic confessor and confessee. Specifically, we explore on a micro level the persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies devised by confessor and confessee to achieve communicative purposes. Furthermore, the study investigates on a macro level the discourse structure of romantic confession to demonstrate further the effects of conversational interaction and co-construction between romantic confessor and confessee. It is the goal of the current study to provide new insights on the important role language plays in romantic relationships and suggest the establishment of *Romantic Discourse* as a field of study in linguistics research.

Persuasion, a topic of study that can be traced back to its classical tradition in Greek philology, has long been recognized as the essence of rhetoric and is found to lie at the heart of communication (Burke, 1969; Hartelius and Browning, 2008). In the context of romantic confession, the confessor's intention and goal of communication are to persuade his/her romantic interest into establishing a relationship with him/her. And as for the confessee, the objective is to either reject or accept the persuasion initiated by the confessor. Thus, romantic confession can also be viewed as a form of deliberate persuasive communication in which the interlocutors adopt verbal and nonverbal strategies to influence each other's views and behaviors.

As romantic confession is a collaborative and co-constructed discourse between confessor and confessee, the present study analyzes and examines the data both qualitatively and quantitatively with concepts drawn from Conversation Analysis (CA) and communication studies to probe into the conversational interaction between interlocutors in the process of romantic persuasion. Based on the twenty-hour discourse data collected from the popular reality dating TV show, *Perfect Dating*, we propose models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies, in which communicative strategies are categorized into (1) reward-based strategies, (2) punishment-based strategies, (3) altruism-based strategies, and (4) rationale-based strategies to represent and discuss the patterns of strategy use in the context of romantic confession. We find that interlocutors in our data prefer using rationally or emotionally appealing strategies such as reward-based or rationale-based strategies to persuade, reject, or accept in romantic confessions.

Our study also develops a general structure of romantic confession to further reveal the characteristics of the conversational romantic confession discourse. To be more specific, four stages are identified in the discourse of romantic confession: (1) setting the scene, (2) making impressions & confessing feelings, (3) discussion & negotiation,

and (4) coming to a decision. The roles of the interlocutors are found to shift between these stages and each of these stages serves different purposes in the discourse of romantic confession.

Through proposing models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies to study romantic confession on a micro level as well as developing the general structure of romantic confession discourse on a macro level, our study aims to illustrate the context-specific characteristics in romantic confession. In addition, by providing insightful analyses and findings in our study, we seek to demonstrate the crucial role language plays in the development of romantic relationships. It is our goal to direct attention to the discourse between (potential) romantic partners in the field of linguistics and propose the importance for a line of research to contribute to the study of romantic discourse.

**Keywords:** romantic discourse, romantic confession, romantic persuasion, persuasive strategies, refusal strategies, acceptance strategies, conversation analysis, co-construction, discourse structure



## 摘要

本研究將告白視為告白者與被告白者間互動且共同建構的說服過程。本論文以微觀的角度探討告白者與被告白者如何利用說服、拒絕、和接受策略達成溝通目的，也以宏觀的視角檢視告白的言談結構，進而觀察告白者與被告白者間會話互動和共同建構等現象，本論文旨在彰顯語言在戀愛關係中所扮演的重要角色，並提倡在語言學中建立戀愛言談 (Romantic Discourse) 為一研究領域。

說服 (Persuasion)，早在古典希臘哲學時期已被尊為修辭學的精髓和溝通的核心 (Burke, 1969; Hartelius and Browning, 2008)；在告白的情境之中，告白者的溝通目的為說服心儀對象與之建立戀愛關係，而對於被告白者來說，主要的目標則是拒絕或接受告白者的說服；因此，告白亦是一種說服溝通的形式，在溝通過程中，談話者採用語言或非語言策略進而影響對方的看法及行為。

本研究以質化和量化的方式分析及檢視語料，也由於告白是透過告白者與被告白者間合作及共同建構而成的言談，我們參考會話分析和溝通研究的理論來深入觀察談話者在戀愛說服 (Romantic Persuasion) 中的會話互動。根據從真人實境戀愛告白節目《非常完美》所蒐集到二十小時的語料，我們提出說服、拒絕、及接受策略的三個理論模型，其中，我們將這些策略分為 (1) 獎勵式策略、(2) 處罰式策略、(3) 利他式策略、(4) 說理式策略，以進一步反映及討論告白情境中的策略使用與模式。研究結果發現，會話者傾向訴諸正向的理性及感性策略如獎勵式策略或說理式策略等方式以期在告白中達到說服、拒絕、或接受等溝通目的。

本論文也提出了告白的整體結構以展現告白言談中會話的特質。研究結果顯示，告白言談主要可分為四個階段：(1) 場景鋪陳、(2) 印象建立和情感告白、(3) 討論與協商、(4) 決議確立；在這個言談結構之中，每一個階段都有不同的溝通目的，會話者的角色也會隨之而有所調整與改變。

透過提出告白中的說服、拒絕、和接受策略的理論模型，以及告白的整體言談結構，本研究深入地描繪了告白語境中的會話及言談特質；除此之外，我們期待能藉著本論文的研究結果，來顯示語言在人類戀愛關係發展中的重要性，使語言學界能夠更重視伴侶的言談，進而使戀愛言談相關研究在未來能蓬勃發展。

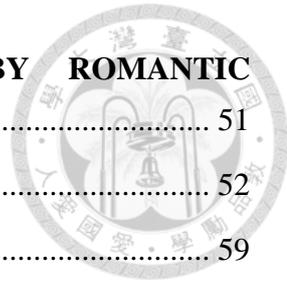
關鍵字：戀愛言談、告白、戀愛說服、說服策略、拒絕策略、接受策略、會話分析、共同建構、言談結構



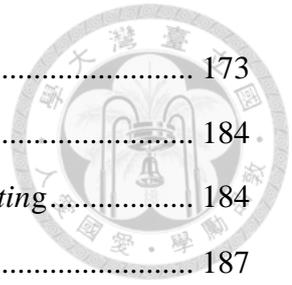
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# TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS



## Unit

Intonation unit	<u>LINE</u>
Truncated intonation unit	—
Truncated word	-

## Speaker

Speaker/turn attribution	SPEAKER;
--------------------------	----------

## Transitional Continuity

Final	.
Continuing	,
Appeal	?

## Manner/Quality

Manner	<MANNER> unit<
--------	----------------

## Metatranscription

Gestures	((GESTURE))
----------	-------------

## Pause

Long	...
Short	..
Latching	=
Lag (prosodic length)	:

## Others

Text omission	[...]
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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 Overview

The study examines romantic confession as an interactive and co-constructed process of persuasion between romantic confessors and confesseees. Specifically, we explore on a micro level the persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies devised by confessors and confesseees to achieve communicative purposes. Based on the twenty-hour discourse data collected from the popular reality dating TV show, *Perfect Dating*, we propose models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies to represent and discuss the patterns of strategy use in the context of romantic confession. We find that interlocutors in our data prefer using rationally or emotionally appealing strategies such as reward-based or rationale-based strategies to persuade, reject, or accept in romantic confessions. Furthermore, the study investigates on a macro level the discourse structure of romantic confession to demonstrate further the effects of conversational interaction and co-construction between romantic confessor and confessee. It is the goal of the current study to provide new insights on the important role language plays in romantic relationships and suggest the establishment of *Romantic Discourse* as a field of study in linguistics research.

The present study examines romantic confession as *Romantic Persuasion* and further proposes models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies to explore the

tactics adopted by confessor and confessee to achieve communicative purposes.

Persuasion, a topic that has been considered to be important in the study of language and rhetoric's ever since the time of ancient Greece, is found to be pervasive in everyday conversation (Burke, 1969; Hartelius and Browning, 2008). In the context of romantic confession, the confessor's intention and goal of communication is to persuade his/her romantic interest into establishing a relationship with him/her. And as for the confessee, the objective is to either reject or accept the persuasion initiated by the confessor. Thus, romantic confession can also be viewed as a form of deliberate persuasive communication in which the interlocutors adopt verbal and nonverbal strategies to influence each other's views and behaviors.

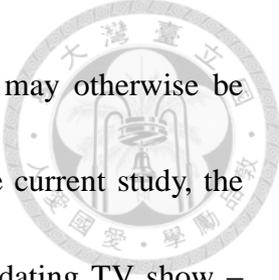
Our study also investigate the data from a more general perspective and proposes a discourse structure of romantic confession to further illustrate the conversational characteristics of the romantic confession discourse. As stated by Dascal (1992:35), "Some 'conversations' (e.g. a doctor-patient consultation; a round-table debate; a cross-investigation of a witness) are obviously 'structured' (i.e. they have a clear sequencing pattern, a more or less well-defined purpose and topic, and more or less accepted criteria of relevance)." Romantic confession, one of the most important conversations that facilitates and enables relationship establishment between potential couples, is found to demonstrate a complex and non-linear structure (See Chapter 6 for

more discussions on the discourse structure of romantic confession).



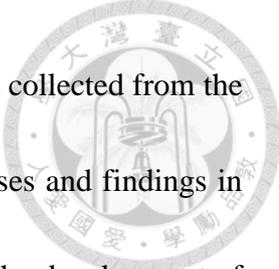
Previous studies in the field of romantic relationship and relationship initiation have supported the view that conversation and communication are critical in the development, maintenance, and improvement of relationship (Guerrero and Mongeau, 2008; Derlega, Winstead, and Greene; 2008). In language and linguistics studies, however, only a relatively small number of studies have been conducted in the past to examine the language and conversation between lovers and couples (Channell, 1997; Gould, Kurzman, and Dixon, 1994; Pasupathi, Lucas, and Coombs, 2002; Veroff et al., 1993; Ranganath, Jurafsky, and McFarland, 2013; Wilkins and Gareis, 2006). Unlike some of the more developed subfields of discourse analysis studies (political discourse, clinical discourse, pedagogical discourse, etc.), the language and conversation between romantic partners are seldom studied by linguists due to the difficulty of data collection. Thus, many questions regarding how language can be used to establish, maintain, and improve the quality of our love life are still left to be answered. Fortunately, with the increasing popularity of romantic TV reality shows in recent years, linguistics researchers now may have better opportunities to further explore and investigate the role language plays in romantic relationship.

Since television has become the “dominant medium of social discourse and representation in our society” (Hall, 1982: 75), popular TV shows might become a good



platform for linguistic researchers to collect the type of data that may otherwise be comparatively more unattainable in everyday life. In the case of the current study, the discourse data of romantic confession is acquired from the reality dating TV show – *Perfect Dating*. Through conducting a study with a huge amount of conversational data (i.e., approximately 20 hours), we seek to contribute to the field of romantic discourse analysis and provide new insights on the important role language plays in romantic relationships. It should be noted that although reality TV shows can be good medium for linguistics researchers to study contexts and topics that are usually private and exclusive, the “double-framing” effect of reality TV shows (i.e., interlocutors on the show are oriented to the co-present interlocutors as well as the general audience watching the show) may still result in dynamics that are different from everyday conversation. However, it is for that very nature, the current study was able to gain a perspective on the more “preferred” ways to persuade, reject and accept in a romantic confession. That is, since the interlocutors also have to consider the “imagined” public opinion on their communicative behaviors, they may tend to communicate in ways that are more “ideal” and “socially acceptable.”

In short, our study aims to illustrate the context-specific characteristics in romantic confession through proposing models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies to study romantic confession on a micro level as well as developing the general



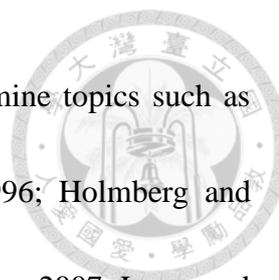
structure of romantic confession discourse on a macro level with data collected from the romantic reality TV show. In addition, by providing insightful analyses and findings in our study, we seek to demonstrate the crucial role language plays in the development of romantic relationships. It is our goal to direct attention to the discourse between (potential) romantic partners in the field of linguistics and propose the importance for a line of research to contribute to studying romantic discourse (romantic confessions, phone calls or text messages between lovers, wedding proposals, breakup conversations, etc.).

## **1.2 Motivation**

This section introduces the motivation behind studying romantic confessions as well as the reason for analyzing the data from the perspective of persuasion, refusal, and acceptance.

### **1.2.1 Why Romantic Confession?**

Romantic love and relationship are essential to the life of human beings. Throughout history, related topics have received much scholarly attention in various disciplines. It is generally agreed by researchers that the formation of romantic relationship serves important biological, psychological, evolutionary, and social purposes to humanity. In the fields of sociology, psychology, communication, and

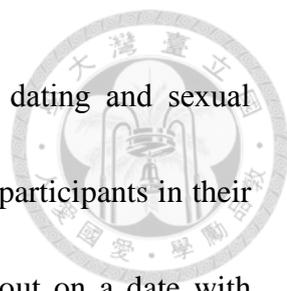


relationship studies, many researches have been conducted to examine topics such as dating attitude and behavior (Alksnis, Desmarais, and Wood, 1996; Holmberg and MacKenzie, 2002; Bartoli and Clark, 2006; Gao, 2001; Ferng and Yen, 2007; Laner and Ventrone, 2000; Marston, Hecht, and Robers, 1987; Yen, Liu, and Cheng, 2009), relationship development and maintenance (Afifi and Lucas, 2008; Cupach and Spitzberg, 2008; Derlega, Winstead, and Greene, 2008; Knee and Bush, 2008; Graziano and Bruce, 2008; Guerrero and Mongeau, 2008; Metts and Mikucki, 2008; Perlman, 2008; Seki, Matsumoto, and Imahori, 2002; Stafford and Canary, 1991; Wenzel and Kashdan, 2008), and the influence of media on romantic relationships (Ferris et al., 2007; Holmes, 2007). These studies, although not designed specifically to examine the effects of language and communication on romantic relationships, have pointed out the important roles language and communication play on building, maintaining, and improving the romantic life of human beings.

Among all the types of conversations between romantic partners, romantic confession, as one of the earliest persuasions/conversations that allows a romantic relationship to be established, is extra crucial in Asian dating culture. When dating, Asian daters tend to establish an exclusive romantic relationship with a person first before engaging in the “actual” process of dating or sexual activities<sup>1</sup>. As pointed out in

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that hookups and one night stands are not discussed in our study. We consider romantic dating as a process in which both partners are willing to commit to each other with a view to developing a long-term romantic relationship. Researchers in the past have also indicated that dating and

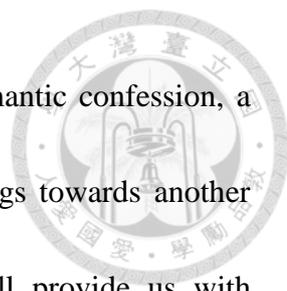


Ferng and Yen's (2007) study on the attitude and experience of dating and sexual behaviors among Taiwanese university students, the majority of the participants in their study have indicated that they would be more comfortable to go out on a date with someone after knowing or befriending that person for two to six months. Furthermore, intimate behaviors such as kissing, caressing upper and lower parts of the body, and having sex are generally considered as behaviors that are unacceptable before a romantic relationship has been established (Ferng and Yen, 2007). As a result, romantic confession is crucial because it allows the possible achievement of two important goals at the initial stage of a romantic relationship – confessing one's romantic interest and willingness to commit to another person and formulating a romantic relationship. Without this conversation between potential partners, further romantic development for the two to advance as a couple would be quite unlikely to happen in Asian dating cultures.

Past researches in the field of relationship initiation have also supported the view that conversation and communication are crucial in the developing stages of romantic relationships. In order for acquaintances or friends to move on to the next level and become lovers, they would need to rely on communication and self-disclosure to deepen the bond and make that friends-to-lovers transition (Guerrero and Mongeau, 2008;

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hookup are different and should not be discussed as similar concepts (Bogle, 2008; Glenn and Marquardt, 2001).

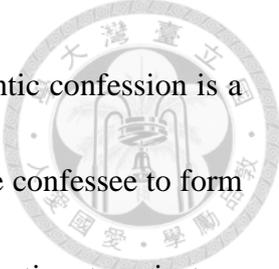


Derlega, Winstead, and Greene; 2008). As a result, studies on romantic confession, a conversation that allows one to not only disclose his or her feelings towards another person but also propose romantic relationship establishment, will provide us with further insights into the dynamics between language, love, and romantic relationship and how romantic relationships are formed through persuasion and negotiation. For this reason, the focus of our study is the discourse of romantic confession.

### **1.2.2 Why Persuasion, Refusal, and Acceptance?**

Persuasion, a topic of study that can be traced back to its classical tradition in Greek philology, has long been recognized as the essence of rhetoric and is found to lie at the heart of communication (Burke, 1969; Hartelius and Browning, 2008). According to Burke (1969: 72), “Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is meaning, there is persuasion.” These words illustrate the pervasiveness of persuasion in both deliberate persuasive communication as well as everyday conversation. Many studies have also been conducted to examine the verbal and nonverbal strategies used by interlocutors in persuasion and propose models to illustrate the characteristic of persuasions in different situational contexts (See Chapter 2 for further review on this topic).

In the context of romantic confession, since the main goals for a confessor to initiate a romantic confession are to confess his/her feelings to the confessee and request



the establishment a romantic relationship, it can be seen that a romantic confession is a process of persuasion in which the confessor is trying to convince the confessee to form a romantic relationship with him/her while the confessee is attempting to reject or accept the confessor's offer. Thus, throughout the discourse of romantic confession, the confessors' utterances are in fact specific strategies devised in order to convince the confesseees to take the offer of becoming romantically involved, whereas the confesseees' utterances are strategies adopted to co-construct and direct the confession into an ending in which the decision of relationship establishment will be made.

In the field of conversation analysis and communication studies, researches of persuasive strategies and refusal strategies are often conducted to investigate human behaviors and verbal interactions in different contexts (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Chen and Zhang, 1995; Dillard, Segrin, and Harden, 1989; Harper and Hirokawa, 1988; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Liao, 1994; Marwell and Schmitt, 1967; Newton and Burgoon, 1990; Schenck-Hamlin Wiseman, and Georgacarakos., 1982; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Yang, 2008). These studies provided us further views on how communicative functions (i.e., persuasion, refusal, and acceptance) are achieved through strategic planning. Nonetheless, these researches often remained on a semantic or pragmatic level and concentrated on either persuasion or refusal. Although examples of strategies were given, the contexts in which these strategies were used were not



analyzed in detail. Furthermore, these studies had focused primarily on the person who conducted the persuasion or refusal, so the effects of interaction and co-construction between interlocutors were not examined (See Chapter 2 for more details). In order to bridge research gaps and to provide a thorough analysis on the discourse of romantic confession, it is the goal of the current study to examine the role of both interlocutors from the perspective of persuasion, refusal, and acceptance. We aim to inspect how confessors and confessees adopt strategies to achieve communicative purposes as well as study the effect of interaction and co-construction on a discourse level in romantic confessions.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

With a view to bridging the research gap on the study of language and romantic relationship and further establish romantic discourse studies in the field of discourse analysis, the present study aims to investigate the persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies adopted in romantic confessions. The focus of this study is to analyze what the use of these strategies reveals about the interactive process and the co-construction between confessors and confessees, and to investigate the structure of the discourse of romantic confession. The specific research questions are:

1. What are the persuasive strategies used by confessors in romantic confessions?



2. What are the refusal and acceptance strategies used by confessees in romantic confessions?
3. What is the structure of the discourse of romantic confession?
4. What do the strategy selection and the discourse structure of romantic confession reveal about the interaction and co-construction between romantic confessors and confessees?

#### **1.4 Significance**

This study is one of the first comprehensive and in-depth studies on the discourse of romantic confession with such a huge amount of data collected from the reality TV dating show. On a micro level, analyses on the functions and usages of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies adopted by confessors and confessees in romantic confessions are discussed in details. We adopt concepts from conversation analysis studies and propose models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies that represent the communicative strategies used by confessors and confessees in our data. Furthermore, on a macro level, the discourse structure of romantic confession is developed to reveal the overall structure as well as the effect of interaction and co-construction between interlocutors in different stages of the romantic confession discourse.

The simplified version of the three models we proposed are listed below (See Chapter 3 for more details on the definition of each strategy in the three models):



### **Model of Persuasive Strategies Used by Romantic Confessors**

**Reward-Based Strategies:** ingratiation, promise, and debt.

**Punishment-Based Strategies:** aversive stimulation, guilt, and warning.

**Altruism-Based strategies:** counsel, favor, and altruism.

**Rationale-Based Strategies:** direct request, logic, commonalities, self-promotion, hinting, and determination.

### **Model of Refusal Strategies Used by Romantic Confesseees**

**Reward-Based Strategies:** condition for future acceptance, alternative, thanks, compliment, and empathy.

**Punishment-Based Strategies:** threat and criticism.

**Altruism-Based Strategies:** help-seeking, let requester off the hook, and statement of regret.

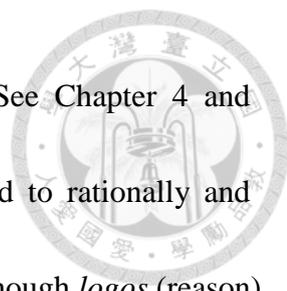
**Rationale-Based Strategies:** direct refusal, reason, challenge, and avoidance.

### **Model of Acceptance Strategies Used by Romantic Confesseees**

**Reward-Based Strategies:** ingratiation, promise, and thanks.

**Rationale-Based Strategies:** direct acceptance, hinting, and challenge.

With the analysis of strategy selection and the proposal of the persuasive, refusal, and acceptance models in our study, we are able to come up with findings that contribute to the field of romantic discourse and provides us with a better understanding on how relationship can be initiated and established through language. To be more specific, confessors and confesseees in the data are found to favor devising strategies that



are rationally or emotionally appealing in romantic persuasion (See Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 for more discussions on the strategies that are designed to rationally and emotionally appeal to the interlocutors in romantic confessions). Although *logos* (reason) and *pathos* (emotion) have long been established by philosophers and researchers to be basic elements of a good and effective persuasion (Aristotle, 1954; Higgins and Walker, 2012; Holt and MacPherson, 2010; Zinn and Manfreda, 2000), our research is one of the first studies to identify the importance of incorporating both rational and emotional appealing components in the context of romantic confession. It is also demonstrated through our analyses of the strategies in our models that romantic confessors and confesseees should be tactical in terms of strategy selection and observant of the interlocutor's responses if they wish to increase the chances of achieving communicative goals.

Our study has also proposed a discourse structure of romantic confession that identifies the important conversational stages in romantic confession and allows the further discussion on the collaborative and co-constructed nature of the romantic confession discourse. Generally speaking, four stages are found in the discourse of romantic confession: (1) setting the scene, (2) making impressions & confessing feelings, (3) discussion & negotiation, and (4) coming to a decision (See Figure 1). The roles of the interlocutors shift in between these stages and each of these stages serve



different purposes in the romantic confession discourse. The conversational nature of romantic confession being a process of persuasion between interlocutors results in a more complex and non-linear structure in which certain stages may be skipped or returned to for different communicative purposes. (See Chapter 6 for more discussions on the discourse structure of romantic confession).

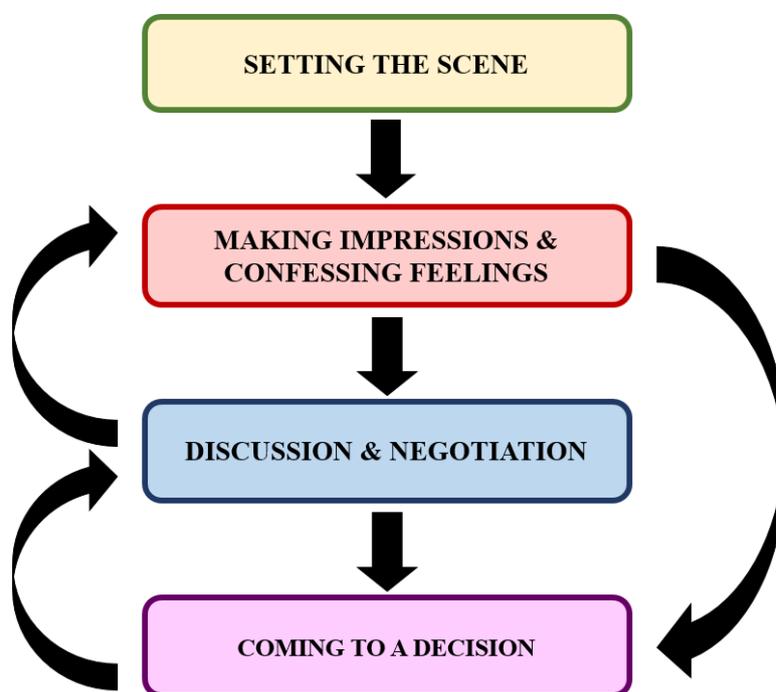


Figure 1. Discourse structure of romantic confession (macro aspect)

To sum up, the findings from the study have important implications on the ways to persuade, reject, or accept in a romantic confession for confessors and confesseees. The results have shown that the most preferred ways to achieve communicative goals in the context of a confession would be to include both emotional appeal and logical reasoning during the process. Moreover, it is important to be flexible and pay attention to the



effects of conversational interaction and co-construction so that strategies can be tactfully devised in different stages to achieve communicative purposes. It is the goal of the current study to establish romantic discourse studies as an important field of study in linguistic research so that more light can be shed on the interplay between language, love, and romantic relationships.

## **1.5 Organization of the Thesis**

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides a review of the studies of romantic discourse as well as the basic ideas and findings in past literature of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies. Chapter 3 outlines the method, theoretical framework, and the proposed models adopted in the analyses of romantic confessions. In Chapter 4, thorough analyses and discussions on the persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors in the data are presented. Moreover, Chapter 5 offers detailed analyses and discussions on the refusal and acceptance strategies adopted by romantic confessees in the data. In Chapter 6, the discourse structure of romantic confession is developed and further discussed. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes with a summary of major findings and contributions of the study as well as suggestions for future studies.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

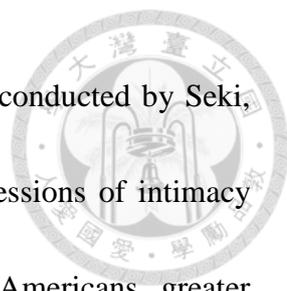


### 2.1 Romantic Discourse

The study of language, love, and romantic relationships is an important topic of research for such studies can provide us with further understanding of the role language and communication plays in human love life and romantic relationships. Our study, specifically, aims to propose the establishment of romantic discourse as a topic of study in linguistics research to explore the dynamics between language, love, and romantic relationship.

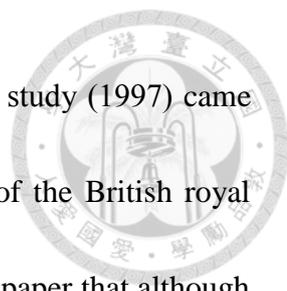
In romantic relationships, many important stages are often built upon self-disclosures, conversations, and discussions between potential partners (romantic confessions, phone calls between lovers, wedding proposals, breakup conversations, etc.). Furthermore, as pointed out in a review on the emotional, cognitive, and psychological aspects of romantic love (Noller 1996), verbally expressing love and emotional support is one of the key elements to a happy and successful relationship. Therefore, establishing romantic discourse as a field of research in linguistics and communication studies would allow more attention to be drawn to this area of study; and implications on how people can enhance their love life through language can be made.

In the field of language and communication studies, researches have been carried



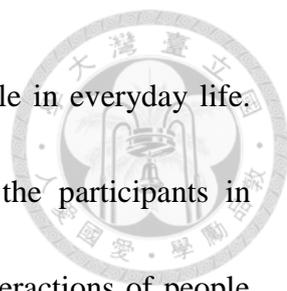
out to examine the ways to express love. In a cross-cultural study conducted by Seki, Matsumoto, and Imahori (2002), the differences between the expressions of intimacy between Americans and Japanese people are examined. For the Americans, greater openness, expressiveness, and physical contact are used in expressing intimate feelings, whereas greater understanding within the couple is found to be a major way for Japanese couples to show intimacy. Although the behavioral patterns may seem different, these expressions of love and intimacy between couples are often manifested in couples' discourse and communication. Furthermore, a small number of studies on couple's narrative (Gould, Kurzman, and Dixon, 1994; Pasupathi, Lucas, and Coombs, 2002; Veroff et al., 1993) or domestic discourse (Cohan and Kleinbaum, 2002; Maher and Singleton, 2003; Sanford, 2003) have also been conducted to investigate how romantic partners communicate in different situational contexts. Although previous studies are found to investigate the communication between lovers, the difficulty to collect everyday data from the conversation of (potential) couples, and especially in the period when the relationship is slowly beginning to blossom, had resulted in the comparatively rare studies on how romantic relationships are initiated and maintained from a conversational perspective.

A study conducted by Channell (1997) on love and desire on the telephone is one of the few studies that was able to analyze lovers' conversation and its function of



relationship maintenance with real-life data. The data of Channell's study (1997) came from a full transcript of a private conversation between members of the British royal family published by the British newspapers. The author wrote in her paper that although the data had already been published by newspapers, there might still be doubts regarding using such data. This research has once again demonstrated the difficulty to acquire everyday data in the study of romantic discourse. Nonetheless, the popularity of reality dating TV shows in recent years may perhaps provide researchers with a chance to investigate further the interplay between language, love, and romantic relationship.

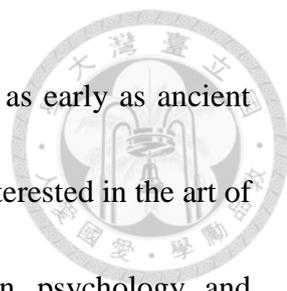
As discussed in Chapter 1, TV shows are able to reflect certain level of reality. According to Bignell (2005: 62), "Television always aims to contain and explain the real, especially through the form of narrative, in order to comply with expectations of cultural verisimilitude (adopting realisms grounded in cultural understandings of the real)." Studies have also found that viewers' behaviors may be influenced by TV shows and that people may extract parts of the shows to compare and incorporate into their personal lives (Bandura, 1994; Ferris et al., 2007; McKinley, 1997). Since TV shows, and especially reality TV shows, may have an impact on the viewers' perceptions of reality (Cohen, 1997; Gerbner et al., 1994) and are becoming an important source for learning interpersonal behaviors (Bandura, 1994; Talbot, 1995), they provide a platform for researchers to observe and investigate topics (i.e., those within the scope of romantic



discourse) that may otherwise be more exclusive and less accessible in everyday life. However, it should be noted that the actions and behaviors of the participants in romantic reality TV shows may still be different from the daily interactions of people off-camera due to the effect of “double-framing” (Thornborrow and Morris, 2004). Participants on reality TV shows may have higher awareness in maintaining a “good” identity and/or image on TV than in real life since they orient themselves to not only the co-present participants but also the general audience that may be watching the show. As a result, with the large amount of data collected from the romantic reality TV show in our study, we examine romantic persuasion and propose models and discourse structure that may be representative of a more “ideal” and “preferred” process of romantic confession. The findings and implications of our study may provide new sights on how communicative goals can be skillfully achieved in romantic confessions, and it is also our goal to encourage more studies in the field of romantic discourse so that we can gain further understanding on the role of language in establishing, maintaining, and improving romantic relationship.

## **2.2 Persuasion**

Persuasion is the interactive process by which one attempts to influence another person’s beliefs, attitudes, motivations, or behaviors to varying degrees (O’Keefe 2002).



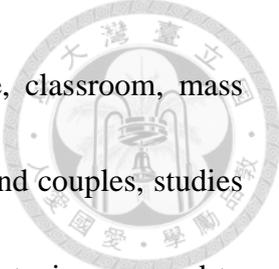
As discussed earlier, the study of persuasion can be traced back to as early as ancient Greece and its importance has always been noticed by researchers interested in the art of discourse. Many studies in the fields of linguistics, communication, psychology, and sociology have been conducted in the past to examine the subject of persuasion and its related terms such as influence, compliance-gaining, request, etc. One of the earliest studies on the messages of persuasion was conducted by sociologists Gerald Marwell and David Schmitt in 1976. Their study established 16 types of compliance-gaining techniques that later inspired persuasion researchers to develop and extend the models of the verbal and nonverbal strategies used in persuasive communication as well as investigate the situational differences in strategy selection (Burgoon et al., 1982; Burke, 1989; Harper and Hirokawa, 1988; Miller, 1983; Miller et al., 1977; Newton and Burgoon, 1990; Schenck-Hamlin, Wisemen, and Georgacarakos, 1982).

Some researchers have conducted typological studies that categorize the strategies into clusters in their models to gain a better understanding about the structure of strategy use in the context of persuasion (Erftmier and Dyson, 1986; Knudson, 1994; Harper and Hirokawa, 1988; Miller et al., 1977; Newton and Burgoon, 1990; Schenck-Hamlin, Wisemen, and Georgacarakos, 1982; Weiss and Sach, 1991). For instance, Schenck-Hamlin, Wisemen, and Georgacarakos (1982) presented the distribution of compliance-gaining properties in a tree diagram and grouped the



strategies into ones that are based on sanction, need, explanation, and circumvention in their study. Alternatively, in Harper and Hirokawa (1988), the 19 influence strategies in their model were further categorized into reward-based, punishment-based, altruism-based, and rationale-based strategies. In their study, male managers are found to rely more on punishment-based strategies, whereas female managers tend to rely more often on altruism-based and rationale-based strategies when convincing subordinates to agree to an obligatory request. In creating more structural classifications of persuasive strategies based on their functions or properties, researchers were able to carry out more systematic analyses and in-depth discussions on the overall tendencies of strategy use across different situational contexts of persuasive communication.

Depending on the situational contexts, the identities of the speakers, and the goals the persuader wants to achieve, different preferences and patterns of persuasive strategy use can be identified from previous literature. Persuasion studies that focus on the effects of gender (Harper and Hirokawa, 1988; Kline, 1994; Procter, Schenck-Hamlin, and Haase, 1994), age (Erftmier and Dyson, 1986; Weiss and Sach, 1991), culture (Burgoon et al., 1982; Neuliep and Hazelton, 1985), interpersonal power (Leichty and Applegate, 1991; Sagrestano, 1992; Wang, 2011), and rational/emotional approaches (Higgins and Walker, 2012; Holt and MacPherson, 2010; Petty, Favrigar, and Wegener, 2003; Zinn and Manfreda, 2000) have been carried out to explore persuasive



communication in a variety of settings such as family, workplace, classroom, mass media, etc. Furthermore, in terms of the persuasion between lovers and couples, studies have also been conducted in the past to examine how persuasive strategies are used to influence the decision or behavior of romantic partners (Bronner and Hoog, 2008; Christopher and Frandsen, 1990; Kim and Lee, 1996; Kirchler, 1990; McCormick, 1979; Noar, Morokoff, and Harlow, 2004; Oriña, Wood, and Simpson, 2002; Zvonkovic, Schmiege, and Hall, 1994). These studies explored the persuasive communication between romantic partners in the context of sexual behavior engagement, marital satisfaction, and important purchase decisions (i.e., home/car/new furniture purchase and family vacation decision-making).

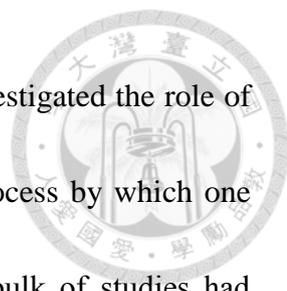
After reviewing these studies, we may notice that persuasion is a widely studied topic that has attracted the attention of researchers from various disciplines. Nevertheless, a number of limitations still remain in the literature.

First, although many studies had been carried out to examine the use of persuasive strategies, the methods adopted in most of these studies (i.e., questionnaires, discourse completion tests, and role-plays) were unable to provide observations on how these strategies were used in real-time communications. The self-reported and the experimental/hypothetical nature of the methodology prevented previous researchers from gaining a realistic picture on how verbal and nonverbal strategies are adopted in

persuasive communication.

Second, previous studies examined persuasive strategies only on a sentential level and did not view the persuasion as a conversational process. As mentioned before, persuasion is an interactive process, in which persuasive strategies are strategically planned to achieve the goal of influencing others. Thus, persuasion should be examined on a discourse level and the use of persuasive strategies should be investigated as a series of deliberate verbal and nonverbal planning by which the speakers attempts to accomplish their objectives of influencing others.

Third, although studies have been conducted in the past to inspect the persuasion between lovers and married couples, they focused more on persuasion events in everyday life and not the important persuasive conversations pertaining to the development of relationships. As discussed before, romantic confession is one of the earliest and most important conversations between potential couples. When making a confession, one confesses his/her affection towards the other person, indicates his/her willingness to commit, as well as attempts to persuade the other person to become romantically involved with him/her. Despite the fact that some understanding on the persuasive behavior of everyday events between couples was gained in previous studies, many questions regarding how persuasion may be used to negotiate and establish romantic relationships still remained unanswered.



Last, past studies were often persuader-centered and rarely investigated the role of the people being persuaded. Again, persuasion is an interactive process by which one tries to influence another person's attitude or behavior. While a bulk of studies had emphasized on studying the production of persuasive strategies from the perspective of the persuader, the refusal or acceptance strategies adopted in a persuasion from the perspective of the person being persuaded were often overlooked. Even if studies on the perceived effectiveness of persuasive strategies were conducted (DeTurk and Miller, 1983; Burgoon, Dillard, and Doran, 1983; Fu and Yuki, 2002), they only provided discussions on the perception of persuasive strategy use and not on how the people being persuaded verbally and non-verbally participated in the persuasion. Considering how persuasion is an "interactive" process, the role and the participation of the persuaded should also be taken into consideration when studying strategy use in persuasive communication.

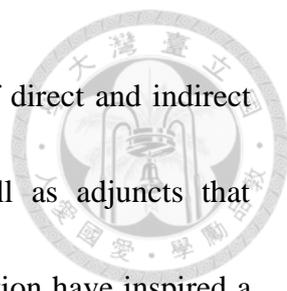
### **2.3 Refusal and Acceptance**

Refusal and acceptance are often the responses that a speaker gives to reject or accept another speaker's persuasion in the interactive process of persuasive communication (Gass and Houck, 1999). In other words, they are the responses given by the people being persuaded during the process of persuasion. Previous studies in

conversation analysis have found that refusal and acceptance follow quite different patterns in naturally occurring conversations (Heritage, 1984; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999).

While acceptance would generally be immediate, direct, and straightforward, refusals would often be somewhat delayed, subtle, and lengthy. The complexity of refusal may be due to its comparatively more face-threatening, impolite, and “dispreferred” nature (Gass and Houck, 1999; Sifianou; 2012). In order to mitigate the situation, “refusals are often played out in lengthy sequences involving not only negotiation of a satisfactory outcome, but face-saving maneuvers to accommodate the noncompliant nature of the act.” (Gass and Houck, 1999:2). The complexity and unique nature of refusals have further sparked interests among linguistics researchers to study the strategic verbal/nonverbal planning as well as the effects of cultural and gender regulations on the maintenance of face and politeness in refusals. As a result, more studies on refusals have been carried out compared those on acceptance.

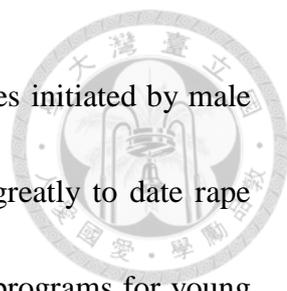
In the studies of refusal, the model that is perhaps the most well-known and frequently cited is the Classification of Refusals developed by Beebe and her colleagues (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987). Their studies were designed to examine the pragmatic competence and transfer of Japanese learners of English. Through analyzing the written content of refusals to 12 situations (i.e., 3 requests, 3 invitations, 3 offers, and 3 suggestions) produced by these speakers, the



researchers categorized refusal responses into semantic formulas of direct and indirect refusal strategies that can be used to perform a refusal as well as adjuncts that accompany but do not perform a refusal. Their study and classification have inspired a line of researches adopting and extending the model to examine the pragmatic competence and transfer manifested in the refusals produced by language learners of different native tongues (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1991; Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Chang, 2009; Lyuh, 1994; Yang, 2008).

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that there are also researchers that established taxonomies and approaches of their own to probe into the subject of refusal (Bresnahan, Cai, and Rivers, 1994; Kline and Floyd, 1990; Liao, 1994; Liao and Bresnahan, 1996). Kline and Floyd (1990), for instance, analyzed 320 undergraduate students' response to a refusal task and developed a nine-level coding system that could serve as the theoretical framework for refusals messages. Or as in the study of Liao (1994), a list of refusal strategies that are commonly practiced by speakers of Mandarin Chinese was created using a series of elicitation techniques such as interviews, participant observations, discourse completion tests, etc.

In the conversation between lovers or (potential) couples, the amount of literature on the refusal responses to requests or persuasions is even more limited in numbers. These researches were often conducted to examine the use and effectiveness of refusal



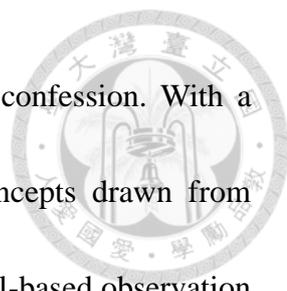
skills adopted by women in the settings of unwanted sexual advances initiated by male dating partners. The findings from these studies have contributed greatly to date rape prevention and the design of assertiveness training and social skill programs for young women (Byers, 1988; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Muehlenhard, Andrews, and Beal, 1996). In the study of Muehlenhard, Andrews, and Beal (1996), it was learned from 424 self-reports of men participated in the research that even after prior communication about sexual limits, a high percentage of men would still attempt to initiate sexual behaviors during dates. Moreover, refusal responses (“I’m tired and I have to get up early” “No!” “This is rape, and I’m calling the cops.” etc.) given by women during the date were effective to varying degrees, but giving these responses would sometimes risk influencing the relationship negatively. Kitzinger and Frith (1999) stated in their studies that young women often struggle to reject unwanted sex due to multiple social or psychological reasons. In computer-mediated communication, a study on the strategies used to refuse requests for romantic dates was also carried out to examine how the features in dating website allow new ways for romantic rejection in the dating context (Tong and Walther, 2010).

Although related studies on refusal and acceptance can still be found in the literature, some problems remain to be solved. First, similar to the limitations of persuasion studies discussed in the previous section, most of the studies on refusal and



acceptance acquired their data through interviews, questionnaires, discourse completion tests, and self-disclosure, instead of recordings from real-time conversations between interlocutors. Although these methods are effective in controlling the context and gaining data directly related to the topic of study, they are less likely to reflect the verbal and nonverbal behaviors in actual situations. Second, previous literature examined refusal and acceptance strategies only on a sentential level and not the entire conversational process. Since refusal and acceptance are made to reject or accept another person's persuasion, they should also be studied as an interactive process, in which verbal and nonverbal tactics are strategically adopted to achieve the goal of refusal or acceptance. Lastly, despite the fact that previous studies have been conducted to examine the refusal between potential couples, the number and the extensiveness of studies on the refusal and acceptance in romantic discourse is scarce in numbers to provide us a full understanding of the couple's response to persuasion, request, invitations, etc. As reviewed earlier, the main concerns of these studies were only on the refusal to sex or date initiation and not on how the use of refusal and acceptance strategies affects the development of romantic relationships.

Aiming to fill the research gap in persuasion, refusal, and acceptance studies as well as enrich the field of romantic discourse, our study seeks to examine the persuasive strategies adopted by romantic confessors and the refusal and acceptance strategies used



by romantic confessees to co-construct the discourse of romantic confession. With a huge amount of data collected from reality dating show and concepts drawn from conversation analysis studies, we are able to provide a conversational-based observation and develop models on the specific communicative strategies (i.e., persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies) used in romantic confessions. Furthermore, we also present a more generic analysis on the discourse structure of romantic confession so that the co-construction and interaction between interlocutors can be discussed on a macro level. It is the goal of the present study to suggest the importance of establishing romantic discourse in linguistics studies so that we can further probe into the dynamics between language and romantic/interpersonal relationship.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY



The chapter presents the method of data collection, the theoretical framework, and the proposed models (i.e., model of persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors, model of refusal strategies used by romantic confesseees, and model of acceptance strategies used by romantic confesseees) adopted in the study to investigate and analyze the discourse of romantic confessions.

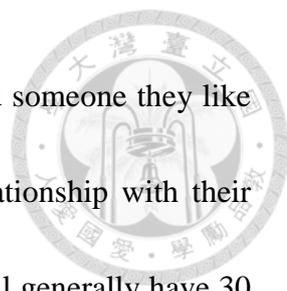
### 3.1 Data Collection

The data of this research is collected from a reality dating TV show *非常完美* *Perfect Dating*. This show is produced by *貴州衛視* *Guizhou TV (GTV)* and is first aired in China on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. In 2013, the show was introduced to Taiwanese audience by *中天綜合台* *CTi Variety*, a satellite cable channel operated by *中天電視* *Chung T'ien Television* in Taiwan. In addition, *GTV* has also started live streaming and uploading full episodes of *Perfect Dating* on its official YouTube<sup>2</sup> channel – *非常完美官方頻道* *Perfect Dating Official Channel* – since the year of 2013. Ever since then, the show has continued to gain popularity in China and Taiwan, as well as many overseas Chinese communities in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, etc.

*Perfect Dating* welcomes women to come as guests and interact with regular male

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<sup>2</sup> An online public platform for people to upload, share, and watch videos.



cast members<sup>3</sup> on the show so that they would get a chance to find someone they like and eventually confess their feelings and establish a romantic relationship with their love interests. For each female guest that comes to the show, she will generally have 30 minutes to introduce herself, interact with the regular male cast members, and receive/make confession from/to male confessor(s). The entire process will be carried out in 9 mini-segments: (1) 才藝表演 ‘*Talent Performance*,’ (2) 愛情宣言 ‘*Love Declaration*,’ (3) 遊戲互動 ‘*Interaction through Games*,’ (4) 選擇心動與不心動男生 ‘*Choose Dream Man and the Least Dreamy Man*,’ (5) 影片訊息 ‘*Video Information*,’ (6) 文字訊息 ‘*Text Information*,’ (7) 私密問答 ‘*Private Q & A*,’ (8) 為愛轉身 ‘*Turn around for Love*,’ and (9) 告白時間 ‘*Confession Time*’ (See Appendix A for more details on the format and the mini-segments of the show).

The data of the current study consists of all the episodes<sup>4</sup> aired and uploaded onto its official YouTube channel from October to December 2015. The average length of the episodes is 85 – 95 minutes and each confession is about 8 – 12 minutes. In total, 107 confessions are identified in the 26 episodes (approximately 20 hours of confession time out of the total 39-hour full episode time) included in the data. In each confession, there

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<sup>3</sup> In the show, a group of men is selected as the regular male cast members. Since these men are mostly doing the show on the side and still have their own jobs or other businesses to attend to, sometimes a few of them might not be able to participate regularly in the filming process of the show. Thus, the 15 regular male cast members on the show slightly vary from week to week. New cast members will be added to the show when an original member of the cast successfully establishes a relationship with one of the female guests.

<sup>4</sup> During the data collection period of our study, the show aired two episodes each week. Starting in 2016, the show only airs one episode per week.



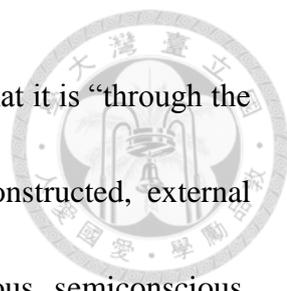
are a confessor and a confessee. In our data, the confessors include 36 men (34 %) and 71 women (66 %), and the confesseees comprise 71 men (66 %) and 36 women (34 %). In terms of nationality, there are 17 Taiwanese (16 %), 82 Chinese (77 %), 5 overseas Chinese (5 %), and 3 foreign<sup>5</sup> (3 %) confessors in the data. On the other hand, there are 26 Taiwanese (24 %), 66 Chinese (62 %), 7 overseas Chinese (7 %), and 8 foreign (7 %) confesseees included in the study.

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

The data acquired in the present study is transcribed and examined qualitatively and quantitatively with concepts drawn from Conversation Analysis (CA). In the 1960s, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson initiated conversation analysis as an approach to studying how people organize and develop spoken discourse in everyday conversational interactions (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 1982, 1986). Generally speaking, conversation analysis deals with both the specific phenomena observed in various situational contexts as well as the more general sequence of structure to investigate the effects of co-construction and conversational interaction in spoken discourse (Heritage, 1984; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 1982, 1986). According to

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<sup>5</sup> The foreigners identified in the data were Koreans and Russians.



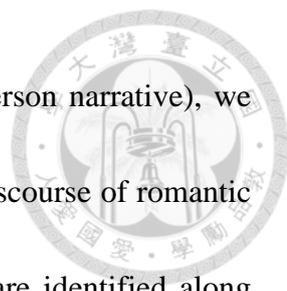
Jacoby and Ochs (1995:175), the beauty behind co-construction is that it is “through the spontaneous playing out of the sequentially contingent and co-constructed, external flow of interactional events that human beings bring these conscious, semiconscious, and unconscious internal constructs and potentialities to bear on the constitution, management, and negotiation of social reality and social relationships.”

Our objective is to probe into the specific strategies adopted by confessors and confesseees to achieve communicative purposes in the context of romantic confession as well as the general sequence of structure of romantic confession discourse. We followed the Conversation Analysis Procedure as recounted by Seedhouse (2004) as our general guideline to study our data. First, we go through the data with an open mind to discover patterns and linguistic phenomena. In our study, we paid extra attention to the communicative strategies (i.e., persuasive, refusal, and acceptance) that were used by interlocutors in romantic confession. After a strategy has been identified, we move on to the next step and search through the entire data for more occurrences of the same phenomena, coding them as a specific strategy and building up our models (Please refer to Section 3.3 for more details on how the data is coded and the models we developed in our study). Next, we observe the patterns of strategy selection among interlocutors and examine how they are tactfully used to persuade, dissuade, or accept in the process of romantic persuasion. Finally, based on the patterns of strategy use in the context of

romantic confession, we propose the discourse structure of romantic confession to further demonstrate the co-constructed and interactive nature in the context of romantic confession.



For the discourse structure of romantic confession, we draw concepts from William Labov's analytical framework for narrative analysis (Labov, 1972; Labov and Waletzky, 1967) to study the overall structure of romantic confession between interlocutors. Although the framework was designed to study oral recounts of personal experience, the fact that this method takes a more functional approach is suitable for our analysis of the more communicative and interactive context of our data. According to Labov (1972), the complete structure of a narrative follows a linear pattern and consists of the stages of abstract (i.e., the stage that explains what the event is generally about), orientation (i.e., the stage that provides the background details of the event), complicating action (i.e., the stage that presents further information as to what happened in the event), evaluation (i.e., the stage that elaborates on the meaning of the event), resolution (i.e., the stage that describes an ending to the event), and coda (i.e., the stage in which remarks are made to finish the narrative). Since this framework is targeted towards the analyses of the one-speaker based narrative, we extend this approach to a conversational level to better discuss the co-construction and conversational interaction between the interlocutors in romantic confession. Through analyzing the use of communicative strategies based on



the turns between confessors and confesseees (instead of the one-person narrative), we observe general patterns and develop stages in the conversational discourse of romantic confession. Specifically, the function and purposes of each stage are identified along with the role shifts between interlocutors. Our goal here is to reflect the ways interlocutors organize their use of strategies to co-construct the conversation and demonstrate the context-specific characteristics of romantic confession discourse (Please refer to Chapter 6 for more details on the discourse structure of romantic confession).

With a view to bridging the research gap on the study of romantic confession discourse, it is the goal of the current study to probe into the specific communicative strategies (i.e., persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies) used by romantic confessors and confesseees through developing models as well as present a general analysis of the discourse structure of romantic confession to provide further observations on the co-construction and interaction between speakers in romantic confession discourse. Ultimately, we seek to establish romantic discourse studies as an important field of study in linguistic research through presenting meaningful and relevant findings that can contribute to various disciplines (conversation analysis, discourse analysis, couple's therapy, gender studies, linguistic anthropology language pedagogy, etc.)



### 3.3 Data Analysis

The data in the study is downloaded from YouTube, transcribed, and qualitatively examined with concepts drawn from conversation analysis studies and communication researches and further supported with quantitative numbers. We approach our data on a discourse level and view each speaking turn as the basic unit of analysis in the study. When identifying the communicative strategies (i.e., persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies) used by confessors and confesseees, a speaking turn, regardless of the length of speech, is generally the basic unit for analysis. In one unit/turn, a type of strategy would be counted as one token when identified no matter the length of the speech. It should be noted that more than one type of strategy could be identified within one unit. In fact, it is common for speakers in our data to adopt more than one strategies in a turn. For instance, in Excerpt 1, the utterance of the confessee would be considered as one unit and the utterance of the confessor would be analyzed as another unit. In the confessee's speaking unit, one token of the challenge strategy was identified. The confessee used this strategy to indicate that the confessor was not her dream man with a view to gaining more validation from the confessor. As for the speaking unit of the confessor, two strategies were identified – the strategy of logic and the strategy of determination – and were each counted as a token (See 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 for the definitions of the persuasive strategies adopted by romantic confessors and the



acceptance strategies adopted by romantic confesseees).

(1) CONFESSEE; ((微笑))

我現在想告訴你,

..我剛剛選的男嘉賓不是你.

((SMILE)) *I want to tell you now that you are not the male guest I picked earlier.*

CONFESSOR; ((收回手))

但是我覺得,

..生活當中百分之九十九的人都不是幸運的.

那麼,

..我既然想做那百分之一的話,

這百分之一就一定要我自己去爭取.

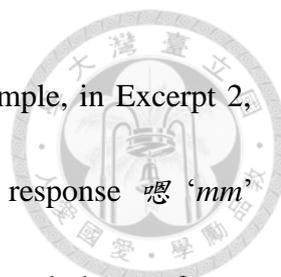
...所以說我並不在乎妳的心動男生是我還是不是我.

真的不重要. ((微笑))

((WITHDRAW LEFT HAND)) *But I think, 99 % of the people in life are not lucky. Then, if I want to be that 1 %, I would have to fight for that 1 % myself. So I really don't care whether your "dream man" is me or not. It's irrelevant.*

Nevertheless, there are also cases in which the speech of the previous person is still considered as one unit regardless of the switching of turns. This would happen when the speech flow of the previous speaker is not interrupted by the next speaker's utterance and when the same concept continues to be elaborated by the previous speaker even after the next speaker has made a brief utterance. Such brief utterances include minimal responses<sup>6</sup> like 嗯 'mm' or 喔 'oh', short expressions like 我知道 'I know' or 對 'right', or gestures (i.e., nod or smile). These utterances are used only to show that the interlocutor is listening and not to interrupt the flow of the previous person's speech, so

<sup>6</sup> In Schegloff (1982), such minimal responses are considered as *continuers* that are used for the listener to show understanding and that the speaker can keep talking because the listener decides not to interrupt the speaker's flow and thus is not proposing a turn to talk.



we still consider the previous person's speech as one unit. For example, in Excerpt 2, despite the fact that the confessee had responded with the minimal response 嗯 'mm' and nod, he did not interrupt the speech flow of the confessor and the confessor continues to elaborate on the same concept. Thus, the speech made by the confessor in this excerpt would still be considered as one unit. Within this unit, one token of the self-promotion strategy and one token of the promise strategy were identified (See 3.3.1 for the definitions of the persuasive strategies adopted by romantic confessors).

(2) CONFESSOR; 我想說:

..我覺得我確實:還算挺善良的女孩子了.

*I want to say that I think I am actually quite a nice girl.*

CONFESSEE; 嗯. ((點頭))

*Mm. ((NOD))*

CONFESSOR; ..懂事的話我也會做到的.

*I will also be thoughtful.*

CONFESSEE; ((點頭))

*((NOD))*

CONFESSOR; ..分享你的開心,

分擔你的不開心.

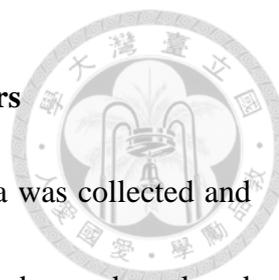
..做你的小棉襖,

...冬天給你溫暖,

..夏天給你清涼. ((微笑))

*(I'll) Share your happiness, share your unhappiness. (I'll) be your heavy jacket. (I'll) give you warmth in winter, and give you coolness in summer. ((SMILE))*

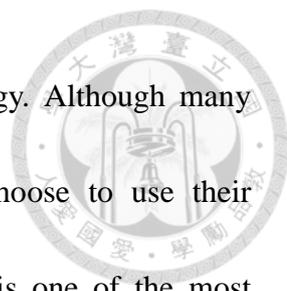
In the following sections, details on the models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies proposed to study the conversational interaction between the romantic confessors and the confesseees in our research are discussed.



### 3.3.1 Model of Persuasive Strategies Used by Romantic Confessors

The models in our study are devised inductively. After the data was collected and transcribed, the utterances of the confessors and the confesseees were observed, analyzed, coded, and categorized into classification schemes with concepts drawn from previous studies. Such an inductive method was also adopted by Falbo (1977), Clark (1979), and Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarakos (1982) in their studies of communication/persuasive strategies. By using this method, we are able to present the accurate description and capture the essence of strategy use in the context of romantic confessions. Furthermore, despite borrowing terms and concepts of strategy classifications from previous studies, all of the definitions for the strategies in our models are created based on our data and are thus more context-specific and representative of the romantic confession context.

In the present study, the model of persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors is developed after we observe our data and review models in previous persuasion researches (Dillard, Segrin, and Harden, 1989; Harper and Hirokawa, 1988; Marwell and Schmitt, 1967; Newton and Burgoon, 1990; Schenck-Hamlin Wiseman, and Georgacarakos, 1982). After identifying a strategy in our data, we analyze and code the entire database with concepts drawn from previous models and taxonomies to create our own model. The main taxonomy that we borrow the classifications and terms from is



the Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarakos (1982) typology. Although many models and taxonomies have been proposed in the past, we choose to use their taxonomy and naming of the strategies as references because it is one of the most commonly cited models in previous persuasive studies (Baxter, 1984; Dillard, Segrin, and Harden, 1989; Harper and Hirokawa, 1988; Neuliep and Hazleton, 1985; Newton and Burgoon, 1990).

In their pioneering study, Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarakos (1982) developed a model of compliance-gaining strategies based on the compliance-gaining messages written by 221 university students. The participants in the study were asked to write down their responses to hypothetical situations in which they were told to verbally influence their roommates. In their model, they divided the strategies they identified into four categories based on the properties of inducement (i.e., the type of motivation entailed in the strategies devised) associated with the strategy (Schenck-Hamlin Wiseman, and Georgacarakos, 1982):

- (a) Strategies based on sanction: ingratiation, promise, debt, esteem, allurements, aversive stimulation, threat, guilt, and warning.
- (b) Strategies based on need: altruism.
- (c) Strategies based on explanation: direct request, explanation, and hinting.
- (d) Strategies based on circumvention: deceit.

Among the strategies based on sanction, the strategies can be further grouped into



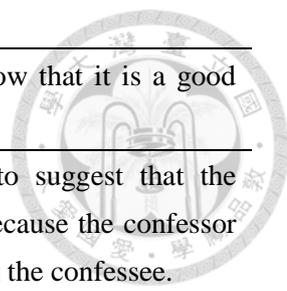
reward appeal and punishment appeal strategies (Dillard, Segrin, and Harden, 1989; Schenck-Hamlin Wiseman, and Georgacarakos., 1982). For this reason, we adopt the concepts and the terms of reward-based and punishment-based strategies invented by Harper and Hirokawa (1988) in our model to further compare between strategies that are devised to reward and punish the person being persuaded.

It should be noted that our study, following the conversation analysis procedure (Seedhouse, 2004) as a guideline, aims to reveal the linguistic phenomena observed in the context of romantic confession. Although previous studies have already established models and taxonomies for persuasive strategies, their models were developed with data collected from situational contexts (business, campus, or family settings, etc.) that are quite different from the one in the current study (i.e., romantic confession). As a result, we adopt an inductive method to develop our model so that the uniqueness of our data can be better revealed. Based on the strategies used by the romantic confessors in our data, we redefine and improve the categories and types of persuasive strategies. In total, there are 4 categories and 15 types of persuasive strategies in the model (See Table 1 and Appendix B for more details on the definition of each type of persuasive strategy).

Table 1. Persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors

Types of Strategies	Definition
<b>Reward-Based</b>	Strategies that reward the confessee or make him/her feel good so that he/she would agree to do what is asked.
Ingratiation	Provides goods, services, or compliments to make the confessee feel good before asking him/her to do what the confessor wants.
Promise	Promises to do something for the confessee in the future if he/she agrees to do what is asked.
Debt	Reminds the confessee of the things the confessor had done for him/her previously, and then asks him/her to do something in return.
<b>Punishment-Based</b>	Strategies that punish the confessee or make him/her feel bad so that he/she would agree to do what is asked.
Aversive Stimulation	Makes things unpleasant for the confessee until he/she complies.
Guilt	Makes the confessee feel bad or guilty by crying/sobbing or hinting at how unkind or immoral it would be if he/she did not comply.
Warning	Points out the negative outcome the confessee will experience if he/she refuses to do as requested.
<b>Altruism-Based</b>	Strategies that persuade the confessee by considering his/her viewpoint or indicating that the confessor is in need for him/her to do what is asked. Usually, this requires one person to give in to some extent for the benefit of another person.
Counsel	Implies that the confessor is willing to consider the standpoint of the confessee and perhaps provides additional assistance in helping the confessee make the decision to comply.
Favor	Asks the confessee to do something as a special favor because it is the wish of the confessor.
Altruism	Suggests that the confessee should agree to do what is asked because the confessor needs help.
<b>Rationale-Based</b>	Strategies that are devised based on the rationale behind the request.
Direct Request	States the request directly and sets forth the confessor's position in a straightforward manner.

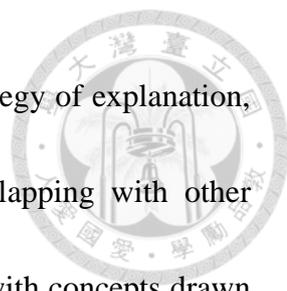




Logic	Provides logical reasoning or evidence to show that it is a good idea for the confessee to do as requested.
Commonalities	Refers to shared values or commonalities to suggest that the confessee should agree to do what is asked because the confessor shares common goals, interests, or beliefs with the confessee.
Self-Promotion	Highlights personal achievements or desirable characteristics of the confessor as further references that help the confessee make the decision to comply.
Hinting	Presents the situational context in a way that the confessee is led to conclude the desired action or response to the request.
Determination	Suggests that the confessor is determined and will not give up easily; and thus implies that the confessee should be the one to give in and comply.

To be more specific in terms of the differences between our model and the Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarakos (1982) typology, we draw concepts from the taxonomy of Harper and Hirokawa (1988) and categorize the strategies into reward-based, punishment-based, altruism-based, and rationale-based strategies so that a better representation of the data and a more systematic discussion between the patterns of strategy use among romantic confessors can be achieved. Moreover, strategies such as esteem, allurements, threat, and deceit are not identified in the data so are removed from our model to better represent the strategy selection of romantic confessors. On the other hand, strategies such as counsel, favor, commonalities, self-promotion<sup>7</sup>, and determination are added into our model to further illustrate the persuasive strategies that

<sup>7</sup> The strategies of counsel and favor are concepts from Harper and Hirokawa's Taxonomy of Influence Strategies (1988), whereas the concepts for the commonalities, and self-promotion came from Newton's Interpersonal Influence Strategy (Newton and Burgoon, 1990).



are perhaps context-specific to romantic confession. As for the strategy of explanation, we rename and define it as the strategy of logic to avoid overlapping with other strategies. After the model has been refined based on our data and with concepts drawn from previous persuasion researches, our model is assumed to provide complete and accurate representations of all the persuasive strategies used by the romantic confessors in our study.

### **3.3.2 Model of Refusal Strategies and Model of Acceptance Strategies Used by Romantic Confesseees**

The model of refusal strategies used by romantic confesseees is also devised inductively with the data in our study and concepts/terms drawn from previous refusal researches (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Chen and Zhang, 1995; Liao, 1994; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Yang, 2008). For our model of refusal strategies, we use Takahashi and Beebe's Classification of Refusals as our main reference because it is one of the most frequently cited model in past literature on refusal (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1991; Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Chang, 2009; Lyuh, 1994; Yang, 2008).

Takahashi and Beebe's classification of refusals (1987) was created to examine the pragmatic competence and linguistic transfer of Japanese learners of English. They analyzed the written messages of refusals in 12 different situations produced by these English learners and develop a model that categorized the refusal strategies based on their grammatical properties. As a result, the refusal strategies in Takahashi and Beebe's



classification (1987) were divided into the categories of direct or indirect refusals (i.e., strategies that can be used to perform a refusal) and adjuncts (i.e., strategies that accompany but do not perform a refusal):

- (a) Direct refusals: performative and non-performative statement.
- (b) Indirect refusals: statement of regret, wish, excuse/reason/explanation, statement of alternative, condition for future or past acceptance, promise, statement of principle or philosophy, attempt to dissuade interlocutor, acceptance which functions as a refusal, and avoidance.
- (c) Adjuncts: statement of positive opinion, statement of empathy, pause fillers, and gratitude/appreciation.

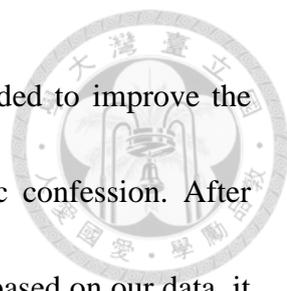
Instead of categorizing the strategies into semantic formulas and adjuncts like Takahashi and Beebe's classification of refusals (1987), we take a more communicative and functional approach and re-categorize the types of refusal strategies into 4 categories like those in our persuasion model (i.e., reward-based strategies, punishment-based strategies, altruism-based strategies, and rationale-based strategies) so that further comparison between models can be made. In total, there are 14 types of persuasive strategies in the model (See Table 2 and Appendix C for more details on the categorization and definition of each type of refusal strategy).

Table 2. Refusal strategies used by romantic confesseees

Types of Strategies	Definition
<b>Reward-Based</b>	Strategies that reward the confessor and make him/her feel better about himself/herself or his/her request.
Condition for Future Acceptance	Sets conditions for acceptance of the confessor's request in the future.
Alternative	Proposes a different option instead of the one suggested by the confessor's request, often indicates that the alternative is a better choice.
Thanks	Shows gratitude or appreciation in return for what the confessor has done or offered.
Compliment	Pays direct or indirect compliments to make the confessor feel good before turning down the request.
Empathy	Acknowledges the difficult situation the confessor is in or has gone through to make the confessor feel better about himself/herself or look good before turning down the request.
<b>Punishment-Based</b>	Strategies that punish the confessor and make him/her feel bad about himself/herself or his/her request.
Threat	Points out the negative consequences that either one or both parties would face if the request is accepted.
Criticism	Expresses negative feelings or opinions about the confessor or request.
<b>Altruism-Based</b>	Strategies that dissuade the confessor by considering his/her viewpoint or indicating that the confessee is in need for the confessor to drop the request. Usually, this requires one person to give in to some extent for the benefit of another person.
Help-Seeking	Seeks to gain help or empathy from the confessor in the hope that the confessor will drop the request himself/herself.
Let Requester off the Hook	Frees the confessor from the obligation/situation of the request.
Statement of Regret	Apologizes or expresses regrets for not being able to accept the request, and hints that the confessee seeks forgiveness for turning down the request.
<b>Rationale-Based</b>	Strategies that are devised based on the rationale behind the refusal.
Direct Refusal	Refuses the request directly by using denying vocabulary or

	statements that show unwillingness or inability.
Reason	Provides excuses, explanations, or reasons for turning down the request
Challenge	Expresses concerns or doubts about the confessor's intention or the feasibility of the request with a view to gaining more explanation from the confessor to confirm his/her decision to reject the request.
Avoidance	Attempts to avoid the request by using verbal (i.e., topic switch, joke, hedging, and pause filler) or nonverbal cues (i.e., silence and sigh).

Other than differing from Takahashi and Beebe's classification of refusals (1987) in terms of the categorization of strategies, our model is refined and developed to better represent the communicative nature in the refusal strategy patterns and selections of the romantic confesseees in our data. Specifically, the strategies of performative and non-performative statements in Takahashi and Beebe's classification (1987) are merged into the strategy of direct refusal in our model as the differences between performative and non-performative statements lie more in the grammatical differences rather than communicative or functional differences. Furthermore, strategies that overlap in our data are combined or regrouped (e.g., excuse/reason/explanation and statement of principle or philosophy are combined into the strategy of reason, pause fillers is merged into the strategy of avoidance, and promise is removed but the concepts behind it are merged into condition for future acceptance and alternative) so as to provide a better picture on how confesseees adopt refusal strategies to achieve communicative purposes



in the context of romantic refusal. The strategy of challenge is added to improve the model and better represent the refusal strategies used in romantic confession. After renaming, redefining, re-categorizing, and adding refusal strategies based on our data, it is expected that our model accurately illustrates all the refusal strategies adopted by the romantic confessees in the study as well as provides a more communicative and functional based classification scheme that can be used to examine romantic refusal in conversational context.

From our review in the previous section, it can be seen that the topic of acceptance did not receive as much attention from researchers as persuasion and refusal. It is thus difficult to find studies that provide systematical examination on acceptance strategies or ones that propose models/classifications to the verbal and nonverbal ways to achieve the communicative purpose of acceptance. As discussed before, the comparatively simpler nature of acceptance being more immediate, direct, and straightforward than refusal may be the main reason why previous researchers may find acceptance lacking the complexity to stand alone as a fruitful branch of studies. However, if the strategies of acceptance are viewed as the second pair units to the persuasive strategies used by another speaker and especially in the context of romantic confession, the strategic planning of acceptance during this interactive process is then extra crucial for it may have critical effects on the development of the confession and the establishment of



romantic relationship. For this reason, we create a model with our data using the inductive method to represent accurately the acceptance strategies adopted by confessees to attain the goal of acceptance and co-construct the discourse of romantic confession in our study (See Table 3 and Appendix D for more details on the definition of each type of acceptance strategy). We use our very own models of persuasive and refusal strategies as references to create the model of acceptance strategies. In total, there are 2 categories and 6 types of strategies in the model.

Table 3. Acceptance strategies used by romantic confessees

Types of Strategies	Definition
<b>Reward-Based</b>	Strategies that reward the confessor or make him/her feel good.
Ingratiation	Provides goods, services, or compliments to make the confessor feel good before accepting the request.
Promise	Promises to do something for the confessor in the future after accepting to do what is asked.
Thanks	Shows gratitude or appreciation in return for what the confessor has done or offered.
<b>Rationale-Based</b>	Strategies that are devised based on the rationale behind the acceptance.
Direct Acceptance	Accepts the request directly by using accepting vocabulary or statements that show willingness or approval.
Hinting	Presents the situational context in a way that the confessor is led to conclude that his/her request is accepted by the confessee.
Challenge	Expresses concerns or doubts about the confessor's intention or the feasibility of the request with a view to gaining more explanation from the confessor to confirm his/her decision to accept the request.



Compared to the other two models in the present study, the model of acceptance strategies consists of only two categories: reward-based strategies and rationale-based strategies. This is expectable for the situation is generally more positive in the context of romantic acceptance, it is thus unnecessary for confesseees to adopt punishment-based or altruism-based strategies when they are inclined to accept the confessors' persuasion (Please refer to Section 5.2 for more discussion on the categories and strategy use by romantic confesseees in romantic acceptance). Furthermore, the number of strategies identified in the acceptance model is also smaller than the other two models since the nature of acceptance is comparatively simpler and less elaborate than persuasion or refusal. Nevertheless, the acceptance model that we developed using inductive method is still assumed to be a complete representation of the acceptance strategies adopted by romantic confesseees in our data.

In this chapter, the method for data collection and analysis, the theoretical framework, and the models adopted to study romantic confession in our study are provided in detail. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, further analyses and discussions on the strategy use of romantic confessors and confesseees in our data are presented.

## CHAPTER 4: PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES USED BY ROMANTIC CONFESSORS

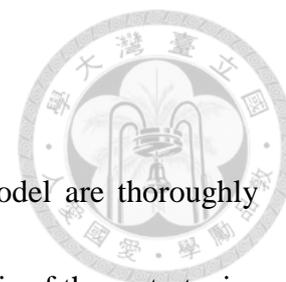


This chapter presents thorough analyses and discussions on the persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors in romantic confessions. Our aim is to investigate the communicative functions of these strategies in romantic confessions as well as discuss the effects of interaction, co-construction, and possible socio-cultural influences on speakers' choices of strategies in romantic confessions.

Out of the total 107 romantic confessions, we refer to 22 confessions (21 %) as successful confessions for they achieved both the goals of confessing one's feelings and establishing a romantic relationship. As for the other 85 confessions (79 %), we refer to them as unsuccessful because a romantic relationship was not formed at the end of the confession. In terms of the numbers of basic units of analysis, we identified a total of 1,713 units (874 from confessors and 839 from confesseees) in the 107 romantic confessions. That is to say, on average, there are approximately 16 speaking units in each confession. When separating successful and unsuccessful confessions, we can see that there are in total 281 basic units of analysis in the 22 successful confessions (on average 12.8 units per confession) and 1,432 basic units of analysis in the 85 unsuccessful confessions (on average 16.8 units per confession). In other words, successful confessions are slightly shorter than unsuccessful confessions as the number of basic units analyzed in successful confessions is generally less than unsuccessful

confessions.

In the following sections, the persuasive strategies in our model are thoroughly discussed. In addition, a general discussion on the results and analysis of these strategies is presented at the end of this chapter.



#### **4.1 Persuasive Strategies Used by Romantic Confessors**

The total tokens of persuasive strategies used by the 107 romantic confessors are 1,502 (See Table 4). On average, each confessor adopts about 14 strategies per romantic confession (See Table 5). Out of the 4 categories of strategies, all confessors tend to favor reward-based (49.7 %) and rationale-based (42 %) strategies much more than punishment-based (4.5 %) and altruism-based (3.8 %) strategies. Similar patterns can also be seen when the confessions are grouped into successful and unsuccessful confessions (See Table 4 & Table 5). Nevertheless, there are still subtle differences between the adoption of persuasive strategies in successful and unsuccessful confessions. While rationale-based strategies (49.3 %) are adopted the most out of the 4 categories by successful confessors, reward-based strategies (51 %) are used most frequently by unsuccessful confessors. This view can also be supported by the average numbers of the persuasive strategies used per confession (See Table 5).

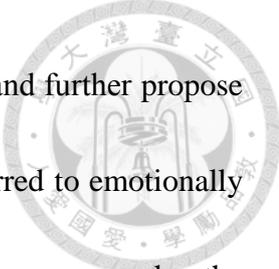
Table 4. Token numbers and percentages of persuasive strategies used by confessors

Categories	All		Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Token	%	Token	%	Token	%
Reward-Based Strategies	747	49.7	124	43.4	623	51
Punishment-Based Strategies	67	4.5	12	4.2	55	5
Altruism-Based Strategies	57	3.8	9	3.1	48	4
Rationale-Based Strategies	631	42	141	49.3	490	40
Total	1502	100	286	100	1216	100

Table 5. Average numbers of persuasive strategies used per confession

Categories	All	Successful	Unsuccessful
Reward-Based Strategies	7	5.6	7.3
Punishment-Based Strategies	0.6	0.5	0.6
Altruism-Based Strategies	0.5	0.4	0.6
Rationale-Based Strategies	5.9	6.4	5.8
Total	14	12.9	14.3

The main reason why reward-based and rationale-based strategies are much more favored than punishment-based and altruism-based strategies in romantic confessions may be due to the persuasive nature of romantic confessions. Since the goals of



romantic confessions are to confess one's affection towards another and further propose the establishment of a romantic relationship, it would be more preferred to emotionally appeal to the confessee and emphasize on the benefits and the reasons why the confessee should accept the confessor's offer. On the other hand, punishment-based and altruism-based strategies could make the confessee feel uncomfortable or give him/her the impression that the confessor is trying to pressure or force him/her to agree to the confessor's request. Furthermore, altruism-based strategies would create an imbalanced relationship between the confessor and the confessee because one might appear to be more in need than the other. Unlike the higher-status speakers that favor using altruism-based and punishment-based strategies to persuade lower-status interlocutors in Harper and Hirokawa's study (1988), these strategies are not preferred by confessors in the context of romantic confessions because the power relation between the confessor and the confessee is ideally an equal one. Studies on couple's relationship maintenance have also pointed out the importance of building an equitable relationship, one that both partners perceive a similar amount of input and benefit (Hatfield et al., 1985; Utne et al., 1984; Van Yperen and Buunk, 1990). As a result, using these strategies would not only make the situation awkward, but also create an imbalanced relationship between the confessor and the confessee that might possibly lower the confessee's willingness to accept the confessor's offer.



When we consider the factor of gender, a similar pattern can also be found in the data. In successful confessions, rationale-based strategies (Male: 50.9 %; Female: 48.3 %) are the most frequently adopted strategies while reward-based strategies (Male: 41.8 %; Female: 44.3 %) are the strategies with the second highest percentages in the data. As for unsuccessful confessions, female confessors adopt reward-based strategies (52.7 %) most commonly and rationale-based strategies (37.9) second most frequently in the data (See Table 6). For unsuccessful male confessors, although the strategies used the most are rationale-based strategies (50.4 %), reward-based strategies (44.9 %) are still widely adopted in the data.

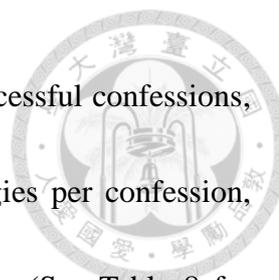
Table 6. Token numbers and percentages of persuasive strategies used by successful/unsuccessful confessors of both genders

Categories	Successful				Unsuccessful			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Token	%	Token	%	Token	%	Token	%
Reward-Based Strategies	46	41.8	78	44.3	105	44.9	518	52.7
Punishment-Based Strategies	4	3.6	8	4.5	2	0.9	53	5.4
Altruism-Based Strategies	4	3.6	5	2.8	9	3.8	39	4.0
Rationale-Based Strategies	56	50.9	85	48.3	118	50.4	372	37.9
Total	110	100	176	100	234	100	982	100



Similar to the previous discussion, reward-based and rationale-based strategies are also favored over punishment-based and altruism-based strategies when the gender of the confessors is being considered. Rationale-based strategies were used commonly in the data because regardless of the emotions involved in the process, a good romantic persuasion cannot be without evidence and reasoning to convince the other person to comply. As for reward-based strategies, although they were used most frequently by unsuccessful confessors as a whole, it is mostly because unsuccessful female confessors adopted these strategies so often that they became the most frequently adopted category for unsuccessful confessors. This may be a result of the format of having female one-time guests and male regular cast members on the TV show. Since female confessors have comparatively more time to prepare for their individual confession before coming to the show, they have more time to prepare gifts, services, and compliments for the confesseees (See Section 4.1.1 for more details). Thus, reward-based strategies were found to be used quite often by female confessors in the data.

From the average numbers of persuasive strategies used by successful and unsuccessful confessors of both genders per confession, it is shown that female confessors generally adopted more persuasive strategies than male confessors (See Table 7). On average, female confessors used 14.7 tokens of persuasive strategies per successful confession, whereas successful male confessors only adopted 11 tokens of



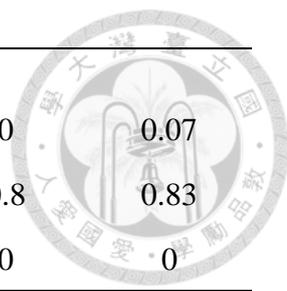
persuasive strategies per confession. The same is also seen in unsuccessful confessions, in which female confessors used 16.6 tokens of persuasive strategies per confession, and male confessors devised 9 persuasive strategies per confession (See Table 8 for further details on the average numbers of each persuasive strategy type used per confession).

Table 7. Average numbers of persuasive strategies used by successful/unsuccessful confessors of both genders per confession

Categories	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Reward-Based Strategies	4.6	6.5	4	8.8
Punishment-Based Strategies	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.9
Altruism-Based Strategies	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.7
Rationale-Based Strategies	5.6	7.1	4.5	6.3
Total	11	14.7	9	16.6

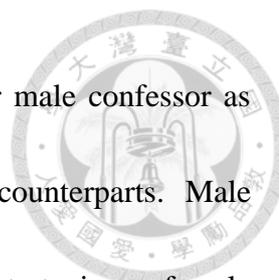
Table 8. Average numbers of persuasive strategies used per confession (by types)

Types of Strategies	All	Successful		Unsuccessful	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Reward-Based</b>					
Ingratiation	5.91	3.5	5.42	3.27	7.58
Promise	1.04	1	1	0.77	1.17
Debt	0.04	0.1	0.08	0	0.03



<b>Punishment-Based</b>					
Aversive Stimulation	0.04	0	0	0	0.07
Guilt	0.58	0.4	0.58	0.8	0.83
Warning	0.01	0	0.08	0	0
<b>Altruism-Based</b>					
Counsel	0.2	0.1	0.08	0.27	0.2
Favor	0.28	0.3	0.17	0.08	0.39
Altruism	0.06	0	0.17	0	0.07
<b>Rationale-Based</b>					
Direct Request	0.67	1	1.58	0.46	0.53
Logic	0.73	0.3	1.08	0.42	0.86
Commonalities	1.06	0.9	0.92	0.77	1.24
Self-Promotion	0.77	0.7	0.5	0.88	0.78
Hinting	2.25	2.4	2.83	1.62	2.39
Determination	0.42	0.3	0.17	0.38	0.51

In order to understand the reason for such difference in the average numbers of persuasive strategies used per confession between the two genders, the factor of co-construction between the confessors and the confesseees should be taken into consideration. It seems that when the confesseees are men, they tend to adopt more refusal strategies or present more challenging questions when responding to a confession, whereas female confesseees would respond and announce their decisions in a less elaborate manner (See Section 4.2 for further discussion). As a result, female confessors had more chances of convincing and negotiating with the male confesseees in

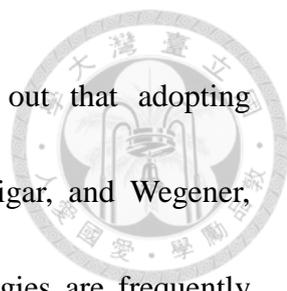


the confession. On the other hand, female confesseees did not offer male confessor as many opportunities to continue the persuasion as their male counterparts. Male confessors, hence, had fewer chances to adopt as many persuasive strategies as female confessors in the data.

In the following sections, persuasive strategies from the 4 categories are further discussed in details. Specifically, the strategies are: (1) reward-based strategies: ingratiation, promise, and debt; (2) punishment-based strategies: aversive stimulation, guilt, and warning; (3) altruism-based strategies: counsel, favor, and altruism; and (4) rationale-based strategies: direct request, logic, commonalities, self-promotion, hinting and determination.

#### **4.1.1 Reward-Based Strategies**

In the category of reward-based strategies, ingratiation, promise, and debt are the three persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors in the data. These strategies are devised with a view to rewarding the confessee or making him/her feel good so that the chances of him/her agreeing to the confessor's request will increase. As discussed earlier, since the goal of romantic confession is to confess one's feelings and to persuade the confessee to be romantically involved with the confessor, it is preferable to leave good impressions and charm the confessee into agreeing with the confessor by adopting strategies that are comparatively more rewarding and emotionally appealing to the



confesseees. Findings from affective science have also pointed out that adopting emotional approaches can be effective in persuasion (Petty, Fabrigar, and Wegener, 2003). Thus, in the data of the current study, reward-based strategies are frequently adopted by romantic confessors.

### **Ingratiation**

The ingratiation strategy consists of verbal or nonverbal tactics such as giving gifts, providing services, and paying compliments with a view to making the confessee feel good about himself/herself or the confessor. For instance, confessors would bring handmade cards, homemade ice cream, stuffed animals, jewelry, etc. as gifts for the confesseees. Or, they would give the confesseees a shoulder massage, sing a song or dance to show their love, teach the confesseees a new language, etc. In addition, the confessors would pay direct compliments such as praising the confessee for looking good or having admirable achievements and personalities. The confessors would also indirectly compliment the confesseees by saying that they rarely confess their loving feelings toward another person (and let alone on TV). This implies that the confesseees are truly special or else the confessors would not have decided to make a confession (See Excerpt 3).

(3) CONFESSOR; 我心動了.

...這是我第二次跟女嘉賓告白.

..因為我真的:

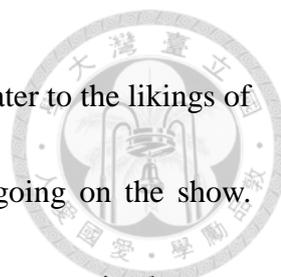
..很少會在台上看到真的我喜歡的類型.

*(You make) my heart beat. This is the second time I confess to a female guest. Because I rarely see the type (of woman) that I really like on the show.*



From the average numbers of persuasive strategies used per confession, we can see that ingratiation is adopted the most out of all the types of persuasive strategies identified in the data. On average, there are 5.91 tokens of ingratiation strategy used by confessors per confession (See Table 8). In the context of romantic confession, the main goals are to confess one's feelings toward their love interest as well as win over the person's heart. By doing things for the confesseees and making them feel good about themselves, confessors are more likely to leave a more favorable impression and gain confessee's affection and trust. That is to say, using the ingratiation strategy in romantic persuasion may allow the confessors to have better chances in persuading the confesseees to be in a relationship with them. Other studies have also found that the strategy of ingratiation (giving gifts, providing services, paying compliments, etc.) is often used during courtship and relationship initiation (Clark, Shaver, and Abrahams, 1999; De Weerth and Kalma, 1995).

When considering gender differences, we can see that female confessors adopt more strategies of ingratiation (See Table 8) than male confessors in the data. The reason behind this may be more of an effect of the format of this show instead of gender preferences. Since the men in the show are regular cast members and women are one-time guests, female confessors usually have much more time to prepare for their



unique ways of romantic confessions that show their own styles or cater to the likings of a specific male cast member that she has had a crush on before going on the show. Consequently, the female confessors would adopt more ingratiation strategies because they are often more prepared in terms of giving out gifts, doing sweet and kind things, or paying compliments to their confesseees.

### **Promise**

The strategy of promise is used when the confessor guarantees to do something for the confessee in the future should he/she choose to agree to the confessor's request. This strategy serves as a verbal assurance about the reward that the confessee will receive for agreeing to be romantically involved with the confessor. Usually, these statements include things that the confessor will do for the confessee as a partner in the relationship. As shown in Excerpt 4, the confessor is indicating her willingness to take care of the confessee and cater to his needs in the future. This strategy is often marked by expressions such as 我願意... 'I am willing to...' or 我會... 'I will...'

(4) CONFESSOR; 我願意照顧你,

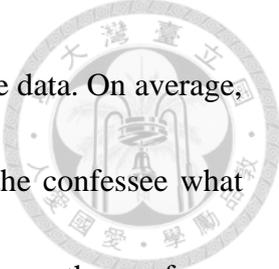
..在你:拍攝辛苦的時候,

為你遞水打風扇.

我也願意在你拍攝遇到寒冷天氣的時候為你帶大衣,

願意做你的一個冷暖空調.

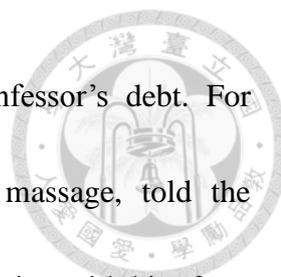
*I'm willing to take care of you. When you are having a hard time on your (photo) shoots. (I will) bring you water and fan. I am also willing to bring you a coat when it's cold on your (photo) shoots. (I am) willing to be your air conditioner.*



Promise is one of the top five strategies used by confessors in the data. On average, 1.04 tokens of promise can be found per confession. By showing the confessee what he/she would get after being romantically involved with the confessor, the confessee might be more tempted to comply in order to gain the reward. These statements of promise would also paint the confessee a picture of what it would be like to be in a relationship with the confessor. If what the confessor proposes is what the confessee is looking for in a relationship, the chances of the request being accepted would increase. Therefore, confessors are found to favor this strategy to persuade the confesseees over some of the other persuasive strategies in the model.

### **Debt**

This strategy is used to persuade the confessee to agree to the confessor's request as something in return by reminding him/her of the things the confessor had done for the confessee in the past. This is one of the least used strategies by the confessors. Due to the format of this show, the men and the women only have limited time to interact with each other before the confession. Thus, it is harder for the confessors to refer to specific "past" favors that he/she has done for the confessee and to further ask for something in return. Nevertheless, this strategy is still found to be used by romantic confessors, especially as a follow-up strategy to the ingratiation strategy. After giving gifts, doing something nice, or paying compliments to the confesseees, the confessor



would playfully suggest how the confessee was now in the confessor's debt. For instance, one confessor, after giving the confessee a shoulder massage, told the confessee that she should pay him back for his massage service by being with him for a lifetime (See Excerpt 5).

(5) CONFESSOR; 我忘記告訴妳了,  
我按摩是要收費的。  
...就是我幫妳按一下,  
..妳要陪我一年。  
我剛剛幫妳按了大概:  
...好像有幾十下了,  
..可以一輩子了。

*I forgot to tell you, I charge for my massages. That is, I massage you once, you have to be with me for a year. I just massaged you for about maybe 10 times. (That) can be a lifetime (together).*

By saying that he does not massage for free, the confessor further indicated that the confessee would have to repay him by being with him as a couple. Although not all uses of this strategy led to desirable result of gaining the confessee's consent, the confessor did get the confessee to agree being in a relationship with him in this case.

Another reason for the low occurrence of this strategy in the data may be that this strategy is comparatively more face-threatening than the other reward-based strategies. Claiming that the confessee is in the confessor's debt might make the confessee feel uncomfortable especially when the two are only meeting in person for the very first time. In other words, this strategy can be a risky move for the situation could get awkward if the confessee has no intention to comply.



#### **4.1.2 Punishment-Based Strategies**

The category of punishment-based strategies consists of aversive stimulation, guilt, and warning. These strategies are adopted in order to punish or make the confessee feel bad so that the chances of him/her agreeing to the confessor's request will increase. Similar to the previous discussion, although the ultimate goal of the confessor is to persuade the confessee to be in a relationship with him/her, pressuring or forcing the confessee into taking the offer would not be the most preferred scenario for establishing a romantic relationship. As a result, punishment-based strategies are one of the least adopted categories by confessors in romantic persuasion and are usually used as a last resort after the confessee are starting to show signs of doubt or rejection (See Table 8).

##### **Aversive Stimulation**

The aversive stimulation strategy aims at making things unpleasant for the confessee until he/she agrees to do what is asked by the confessor. Since this strategy is comparatively more face-threatening than others and would risk making the confessee feel uncomfortable, it is only used as a "desperate" move to persuade the confessee to change his/her mind after the confessee has shown signs of rejection to the confessor's request (See Excerpt 6). As demonstrated by the excerpt, such a strategy is often accompanied by sobs and cries, indicating how the confessor is getting emotional and perhaps even irrational to some extent when adopting this persuasive strategy.

(6) CONFESSOR; 既然你不肯牽我嘛:

...那我就天天纏著你好了.

我會纏到,

<哽咽>..你習慣了我,>

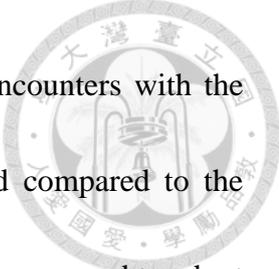
<哽咽>不能沒有我纏你的那天.>

*Since you won't take my hand, I'll stick to you every day. I will stick to you until < CHOKE WITH SOBS AND AM UNABLE TO SPEAK> you are used to having me around> (and) < CHOKE WITH SOBS AND AM UNABLE TO SPEAK> the day that you can't stand not having me stick to you.>*



In the current data, only unsuccessful female confessors resort to this strategy after a series of other strategies have been used and the male confesseees were still refusing to accept the request. For these female confessors, they got to know these men on TV and through social media platforms before coming to the show. These women had usually had a crush on or were obsessed with the male cast members for quite some time already. Therefore, when being rejected, these female confessors would tend to get emotional and were less willing to accept the refusal, and hence, they would make the desperate attempt of making the male confesseees feel so bad in the hope that they would reconsider their proposal.

In successful confessions, such a strategy is unnecessary and the use of it might even make the situation so uncomfortable for both parties that it hurts the chances of gaining acceptance. Thus, aversive stimulation is not found in successful confessions. Unsuccessful male confessors did not use this strategy in their confessions might be because, as regular cast members of the show, male confessors were more experienced



and more used to being rejected on the show. Furthermore, their encounters with the female guests on the show were brief and might be less profound compared to the “fan-like” female confessors. Consequently, they might not feel the strong need to adopt a drastic measure in the hope of gaining acceptance for any specific girl they come across on the show. In addition, the regular male cast members, as reality TV personalities, are under more pressure to maintain a “polite” or “gentleman-like” image on TV. Previous studies have also pointed out the importance for TV personalities to maintain a good public image for social and commercial purposes (Collins, 2008; Gordon, 2011; Summers and Morgan, 2008). In a nutshell, unsuccessful male confessors might avoid the aversive stimulation strategy because either they were not as invested and did not find it necessary to adopt such a drastic strategy, or they wanted to avoid making things too unpleasant or appearing to be somewhat irrational or pushy on TV.

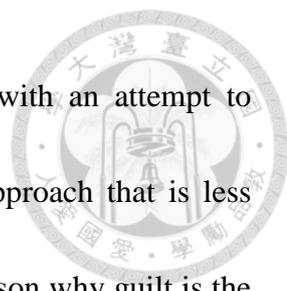
### **Guilt**

This strategy attempts to make the confessee feel bad or guilty by crying/sobbing or hinting at how unkind or immoral it would be if he/she does not agree to the confessor’s request (See Excerpt 7).

(7) CONFESSOR; 我來之前我就想到說:

<啜泣>..你可能不會和我牽手.>

*Before I came here I already thought about how <SOB> you might not take my hand.>*



Relatively speaking, although this strategy is still designed with an attempt to pressure the confessee into doing what is asked, it is a weaker approach that is less irrational or intense than aversive stimulation. This is mainly the reason why guilt is the most commonly used strategy in the category of punishment-based strategies.

From the average numbers of guilt strategy used per confession, it is found that unsuccessful confessors tend to use this strategy more than successful confessors (See Table 8). As stated before, punishment-based strategies were usually used after the confesseees were showing signs of doubts or rejection to the request of the confessors. Since such signs of rejection were shown more frequently in unsuccessful confessions, guilt was thus used more commonly as a measure to see whether the confessee was willing to change his/her mind in unsuccessful confessions.

In the data, it is also shown that female confessors tend to adopt the strategy of guilt slightly more than their male counterparts (See Table 8). As discussed in the previous strategy, regular male cast members might have greater tendencies to maintain a good public image by appearing to be more polite and considerate. As a result, despite the strategy of guilt being a less forceful or irrational strategy than aversive stimulation, it is more likely that male confessors would try not to use this strategy too much to avoid making the confesseees feel uncomfortable or putting the confesseees on the spot in their confessions.

## Warning



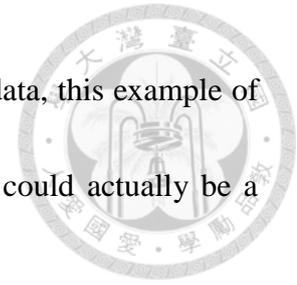
The strategy of warning hints at the negative outcome that the confessee will experience should the confessee decide to reject the confessor's request. In the data, only one token of this strategy is found. Specifically, this strategy was used by a successful female confessor. After confessing her feelings and proposing that the confessee should agree to be in a relationship with her, the confessor faced a challenging question from the confessee asking her whether the distance between them would become a problem. Due to the fact that the two were living in different cities at the moment, the confessee expressed his doubts and worries about getting into a long-distance relationship. The confessor then responded by hinting at how the guy might have to bear with the negative consequences of regret if distance was the reason that made him give up on the chance to be with someone that he likes/loves (See Excerpt 8). Immediately after the confessor's warning of the negative consequences the confessee might experience if he turned down the request, the confessee agreed to be in a relationship with the woman.

(8) CONFESSOR; 如果說你喜歡的女生:

..在別的城市,  
...但是又因為距離的問題,  
然後你放棄了.  
你覺得你會後悔嗎?

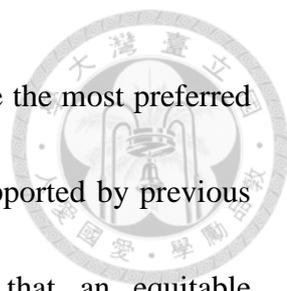
*If the girl that you like is in another city, but once again because of the problem of the distance and you give up, do you think you will regret?*

Although only one occurrence of this strategy is found in the data, this example of success has shown that if used wisely, the use of such a strategy could actually be a turning point in romantic persuasion.



#### **4.1.3 Altruism-Based Strategies**

The altruism-based strategies found in the data are counsel, favor, and altruism. Strategies in this category are devised with an attempt to convince the confessee by considering his/her standpoint or indicating that the confessor is in need for the confessee to do what is requested. In other words, when either one of the parties (i.e., confessor or confessee) is or is asked to be the bigger person and do something that's more in favor of the other person instead of himself/herself, the strategies used would be considered as altruism-based strategies. For the nature of altruism-based strategies being ones that seem to be doing or asking a favor from the confessee, it creates an imbalanced relationship between the person granting and the person receiving the favor. In addition, there are higher chances for the confessee to feel uncomfortable because he/she is being put on the spot to receive or provide help. In the context of romantic confession, such strategies might not be as favored compared to the ones in other categories. This may be because it is crucial for the confessee to feel like the other person will be able to have similar input in the relationship and is not just asking for partnership because he/she is weak or needs help. In other words, portraying oneself or



the other as weak or in need of assistance from the other may not be the most preferred strategies in forming a relationship. This finding can be further supported by previous studies on relationship maintenance. It has been established that an equitable relationship, in which romantic partners feel that the amount of input and outcome is similar and fair, is generally more satisfying than an inequitable one (Hatfield et al., 1985; Utne et al., 1984; Van Yperen and Buunk, 1990). As a result, altruism-based strategies, strategies that imply an inequitable situation, is another category that is not as frequently adopted by confessors in romantic confessions (See Table 8).

### **Counsel**

Counsel is a strategy that shows the willingness of the confessor to consider the viewpoints of the confessee and that the confessor is prepared to provide additional assistance in helping the confessee to make a decision about agreeing to the request. This strategy is often phrased in the interrogative form as the confessor is seeking to gain more information on the reason why the confessee is hesitant about complying. From the perspective of co-construction and verbal interaction, this strategy may be a risky one to use in the process of a romantic persuasion. When being asked about why he/she has doubts about agreeing to the request, the confessee will be given the chance to voice unsolvable problems or doubts in mind as responses to the confessor's question and avoid initiating this face-threatening topic by himself or herself. In other words, by



using this strategy, the confessor could make it easier for the confessee to turn down his/her request as the confessor already provides a reason and an opportunity for the confessee to present the refusal. For example, in Excerpt 9, the confessor was trying to understand why the confessee was not willing to be in a relationship with her after the confessee had shown signs of rejection.

(9) CONFESSEE; ..但:

But..

CONFESSOR; 你在:糾結什麼?

*What are you struggling with right now?*

CONFESSEE; ...妳現在:在北京嗎?

*Are you currently (located) in Beijing?*

CONFESSOR; ..沒有.

..我現在沒有在北京.

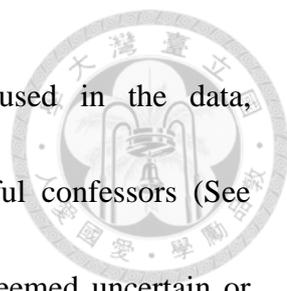
..我在貴陽.

*No. I'm not in Beijing. I'm in Guiyang.*

CONFESSEE; ...最重要的是我現在:在北京

*The most important (thing is that) I am currently in Beijing.*

The confessee in this example revealed that he was hesitant to be in a relationship with the woman because of the distance between them (He already learned this information when the confessor introduced herself in earlier segments of the show). In this example, it can be seen that the confessor eventually was unable to provide a satisfying answer to the confessee or further convince him to agree to her request. However, by adopting this strategy, it showed that she was willing to consider the standpoint of the confessee and offer necessary information to make his decision process easier even if it might lead to an undesirable result.



As shown in the average numbers of counsel strategy used in the data, unsuccessful confessors adopted this strategy more than successful confessors (See Table 8). Since this strategy was often used when the confessee seemed uncertain or was avoiding the confessor's request, it was more likely to be adopted in a setting in which the confessee was more inclined to turn down the offer. As a result, unsuccessful confessors would use this strategy more commonly in their confessions.

### **Favor**

The strategy of favor is devised to ask the confessee to do something as a special favor to satisfy the wish of the confessor. The confessee, in this case, would be asked to be the bigger person and grant the request of the confessor as a favor. Take the following excerpt as an example. The confessor was not too tall. And although height was not an important factor for him in selecting a mate, he got self-conscious when standing next to the confessee that wore high heels. He then strategically tested the confessee's willingness to be with him by indirectly asking her to take off her heels as a favor.

(10) CONFESSOR; 其實我對身高的要求沒有特別高,

...但是:

..可能:

..或許會有壓力

...不知道您能為我:

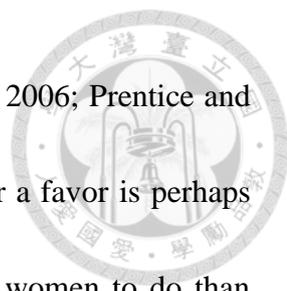
*Actually, I don't have high standards for height. But.. Possibly.. Maybe (felt) some pressure. (I) don't know if you can (take off your shoes) for me...*

CONFESSEE; ((脫下高跟鞋))  
*((TAKE OFF HIGH HEELS))*



As mentioned before, such a strategy of asking a favor from another person creates an imbalanced relationship between the person granting and the person receiving the favor. It would also put the confessee on the spot when the confessee is being asked to comply as a favor. Previous studies have also pointed out that asking favor is one of the face-threatening and imposing acts that call for redressive measures (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Goldschmidt, 1996; Wilson, Aleman, and Leatham, 1998). Therefore, this strategy is not used as often as strategies in other categories (See Table 8).

A noteworthy difference between successful and unsuccessful confessors of the two genders can be found in the average number of favor strategies used per confession (See Table 8). While successful male confessors (0.3) adopted the strategy of favor in their confessions slightly more than successful female confessors (0.17), unsuccessful female confessors (0.39) used this strategy more frequently than unsuccessful male confessors (0.08) did in the data. To make sense of this subtle gender differences between successful and unsuccessful confessors, we would have to understand the different socially preferred characteristics for men and women and their effect on the favor-asking behaviors between the two genders. It has been found in previous gender role studies that although qualities of being self-reliant, independent, assertive, and strong are traits all people may desire to have, it is stereotypically more expected and



avored for men to possess these characteristics than women (Peng, 2006; Prentice and Carranza, 2002; Zhang and Norvilitis, 2001). As a result, asking for a favor is perhaps something that is more common and more socially acceptable for women to do than men are in the society because the person asking the favor would tend to be associated with being weak and needing assistance or kindness from others. For this reason, men may be more likely to avoid asking for favors, and especially to people that they do not know too well or when they feel like the chances of getting rejected are high. However, since the confesseees would often co-construct and send signals of acceptance in successful confessions, the male confessors would perhaps feel “safer” to persuade the confesseees by asking them to do them the favor of being in a relationship with them. As a result, the confessors in the data generally do not like to adopt the favor strategy and even more so for male confessors in unsuccessful confessions.

### **Altruism**

This strategy suggests that the confessee should agree to do what is asked because the confessor needs help. The strategy of altruism can be seen as a stronger approach of the previous strategy. While the confessors were only asking the confesseees to comply as a favor by using the previous strategy, confessors directly pointed out that they were in need of the confesseees’ compliance by adopting the strategy of altruism. For instance, in Excerpt 11, the confessor is hinting at the fact that she needs the confessee to be the

one to be in charge for her.

(11) CONFESSOR; 我需要一個人:

..來為我獨當一面.

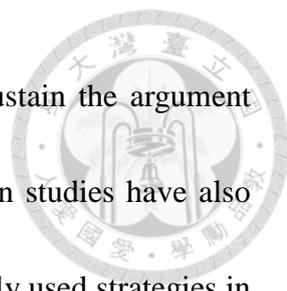
*I need a person to take charge for me.*



The fact that only female confessors had used this strategy in the data is another support of our previous discussion on the gender differences in asking for a favor or requesting help. Presenting oneself as weak or desperately in need of help from another person would generally not be considered as a good move to make for confessors, and especially male ones, if they were trying to convince their confesseees that they would make a good romantic relationship partner. Thus, not only did male confessors avoid this strategy entirely, but female confessors also adopted the altruism strategy less frequently in their confessions (See Table 8).

#### **4.1.4 Rationale-Based Strategies**

As identified in the data, rationale-based strategies adopted by romantic confessors are direct request, logic, commonalities, self-promotion, hinting, and determination. These strategies are used to provide reasons why the confessee should agree to do what is requested by the confessor. By presenting objective/subjective evidence, explanation, reasons, or perspectives, confessors is trying to persuade the confessee to comply by providing the rationale behind the request as well as why the confessee should grant the request. Although a good romantic confession is not without its emotional and sentimental elements (created by using strategies in other categories), it is still necessary

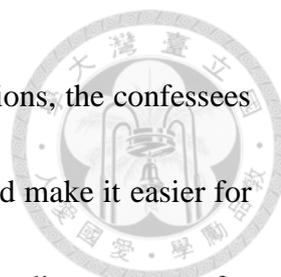


to present a comparatively more factual and realistic support to sustain the argument and the request of the confessor. Findings from previous persuasion studies have also found that logical reasoning strategies are some of the most frequently used strategies in various situational contexts (Kim and Lee, 1996; Kirchler, 1990; Oriña, Wood, and Simpson, 2002; Schenck-Hamlin, and Haase, 1994). In our study, rationale-based strategies are also some of the most frequently adopted strategies identified in the data (See Table 8).

### **Direct Request**

This strategy presents the confessor's position in a straightforward fashion and directly proposes to the confessee to be in a relationship with him/her. Such a strategy is usually phrased in the interrogative form. Expressions that indicate future willingness like 會 'will' or 願意 'willing to' are often used in sentences to formulate the request. For instance, sentences like 你願意做我對的那個人嗎? 'Are you willing to be my "right" person?' or 我會是妳的另一半嗎? 'Will I be your other half?' are some of the direct requests found in the data.

As can be seen in the average numbers of direct requests used per confession, successful confessors tend to adopt this strategy more than unsuccessful confessors. This might be a result of co-construction between the confessors and the confesseees. Due to the straightforward nature of this strategy, this strategy is rarely used without a



series of strategies have already been adopted. In successful confessions, the confessee would show more signs of cooperation and acceptance; thus, it would make it easier for the confessors to build up their persuasion and proceed to make the direct request for relationship establishment. On the other hand, unsuccessful confessors might not receive enough positive feedback from the confessee to feel confident enough to use direct request in their persuasion. Hence, direct request would be used more frequently in successful confessions than in unsuccessful confessions.

### **Logic**

Confessors use logic as a strategy to present objective/subjective reasoning or evidence with a view to convincing the confessee that agreeing to the request would be a good idea. Confessors would quote words from experts, state popular beliefs, or explain their personal views as arguments or evidence to support their request. For example, in Excerpt 12, the confessor was trying to use views from expert(s) to convince the confessee that they did not necessarily have to be complements of each other after the confessee had rejected the confessor's offer by stating how she believed people that were similar were not good matches.

(12) CONFESSOR; 可是不是有專家說嗎？

..其實:兩個人在一起,

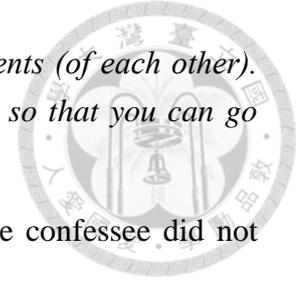
不一定要找就是-就是互補的.

一定要找相近的兩個人才能:

..走得更遠.

*But isn't there expert(s) that said that when two people are*

*together, it's not necessary to find complements (of each other). (You) must find two people that are similar so that you can go farther.*



In this case, using this strategy was a good move because the confessee did not continue to argue about this point later on in the confession. Although the confessee still managed to use other strategies to reject the confessor, the fact that the confessor was able to come up with rational and “credible” evidence to support his views on why they would be good together had made his persuasion more solid and convincing.

From the average numbers of the logic strategy used per confession, we can see that female confessors used this strategy more frequently than male confessors did in both successful (Male: 0.3; Female: 1.08) and unsuccessful confessions (Male: 0.42; Female: 0.86). This gender difference, as discussed before, may be due to the effect of co-construction between confessors and confesseees. Male confesseees often respond to female confessors’ request with questions that either challenge or confirm the confessors’ sincerity and further evaluate the feasibility of establishing a relationship with the confessor (See Chapter 5 for more discussions on romantic confessee’s use of strategies). As a result, female confessors would often be given more chances to further explain their rationale and motivation for their proposal by responding to the challenges initiated by the confesseees, and thus, this would lead to higher frequencies in the usage of this strategy by female confessors. On the other hand, since female confesseees tend to adopt fewer refusal strategies and formulate shorter refusals to turn down a confessor’s

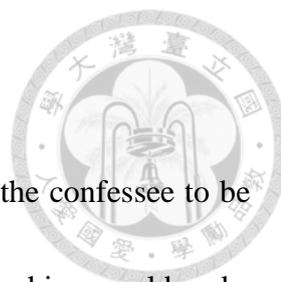
request, male confessors were not given as many opportunities to provide logical explanations to sustain or reinforce their arguments.



### **Commonalities**

The strategy of commonalities is used to refer to shared values in order to suggest that the confessee should agree to do what is asked because the confessor and the confessee both have similar goals, interests, or beliefs. This strategy is often found to be phrased with lexical units such as 也 ‘also,’ 都是 ‘both are,’ 像 ‘alike,’ or 一樣 ‘same.’

In the data, commonalities is one of the most frequently used strategies. Although “opposites attract” is true in the world of physics, when it comes to human interaction and relationships, we are still more drawn to people that share common interests, views, and values with us. Especially when looking for romantic partners, we tend to gravitate towards people that we can better relate to or associate ourselves with (Carter and Glick, 1976; De Raad and Doddema-Winsemius, 1992). Or as in romantic relationships and marriages, similarity and compatibility are often being viewed as a determining factor on the level of happiness and satisfaction the couples would experience (Acitelli, Kenny, and Weiner, 2001; Gonzaga, Gian, Compos, and Bradbury, 2007; Wilson and Cousins, 2003). As a result, emphasizing commonalities is important and can be quite convincing in romantic persuasion because it suggests that the two would make a compatible



match.

In the following excerpt, the confessor was trying to convince the confessee to be with her by explaining how their age and similar outlooks in relationships would make them a good couple that could grow old together.

(13) CONFESSOR; 因為我們畢竟:

..不是 20 幾歲的小孩子了.

..我們都想渴望一份特別穩定的感情.

我們不想再這樣折騰了.

然後希望就是—

我覺得你也是,

..感情比較專一的人.

你也是希望一直,

...就是相守到老這樣.

*Because we, after all, we are not kids in their twenties. We both desire a steady relationship. We don't want to struggle anymore. And I hope that — I think that you are also someone that is more loyal in a relationship. You also hope to always stay by (each other's) side until (we're) old.*

Despite the fact that the confession ended up being unsuccessful, the confessee did not disagree with the confessor's argument on their commonalities and actually had to further explain in details of other reasons why perhaps being compatible might not be enough for them to build a good relationship to reject the confessor's request. This shows that the strategy of commonalities could be quite powerful in romantic confessions, and thus it was found to be the second most frequently used persuasive strategy in the data (See Table 8).



## Self-Promotion

The strategy of self-promotion highlights personal achievements or desirable characteristics of the confessor as further references to convince the confessee that he/she would make a good romantic relationship partner. For example, in the following excerpt, the confessor promoted herself by saying that she is a “nice girl.”

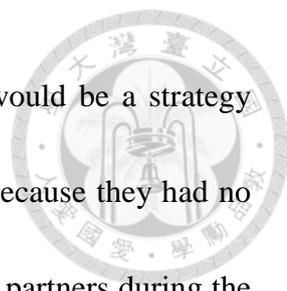
(14) CONFESSOR: 我想說:

..我覺得我確實:還算挺善良的女孩子了.

*I want to say that I think I am actually quite a nice girl.*

As discussed before, people look for partners that can contribute and have similar input into the relationship. In order to convince the confesseees to accept the confessors' offer of establishing a romantic relationship together, the confessors would first have to help the confesseees get know them better while further promoting themselves as worthy partners. Consequently, this is another strategy commonly adopted by confessors in the show.

From the average number of self-promotion strategy used per confession, it can be seen that male confessors adopted this strategy more frequently than female confessors did. This might yet again have more to do with the format of the show instead of different patterns of gender communication. While the female guests had a longer period of time (about 20 to 30 minutes) to introduce and promote themselves in previous segments of the show, male confessors could only make use of the limited time that they had during the confession to convince the confesseees why they are good



romantic partners for the confesseees. As a result, self-promotion would be a strategy slightly more favored by male confessors in romantic confessions because they had no choice but to highlight their merits and promote themselves as ideal partners during the confession, whereas female confessors already had been introducing their desirable qualities before the confession and would use the strategy comparatively less in their confessions.

### **Hinting**

The hinting strategy would be identified when the confessor presents the situational context in a way that the confessee is led to conclude the desired action or response to the request. In the data, hinting is found to be used verbally and nonverbally to persuade the confessee to take the offer of being romantically involved with the confessor. For instance, instead of directly asking to be in a relationship with the confessee, the confessor hinted at the request by saying that she wanted to be the person that the confessee loves and travels around the world with (See Excerpt 15).

(15) CONFESSOR; 你說過你想跟心愛的人環遊全世界,

我想做:

..那個心愛的人.

*You once said that you want to travel around the world with the person that you love. I want to be that person that you love.*

Or as in Excerpt 16, the confessors would often hold out one of their hands as a way to “ask for the hand” of the confesseees to be in a relationship.

(16) CONFESSOR; 如果可以的話,

..就: ((伸出右手)) ((低頭))

*If possible, then... ((HOLD OUT LEFT HAND)) ((LOWER HEAD))*



Other types of hinting include singing or dancing to express love and affection towards the confesseees as well as hugging or giving the confesseees a kiss on the cheek to show that the confessors want to take their relationship to the next level. As mentioned before, people in Mandarin Chinese speaking cultures tend to find kissing or other intimate physical contacts as behaviors that are acceptable only after a romantic relationship has been established (Feng and Yen, 2007). So by hugging or kissing the confesseees, the confessors are showing their affection and intention for relationship establishment. The wide variety of ways to adopt the strategy of hinting allows the confessors to customize their persuasion to suit their personalities or communication styles. While some people are good at expressing their emotions through words or gestures, others may be more skillful in conveying their affection through singing and dancing. And the preferences of the confesseees would also be taken into consideration when adopting the strategy of hinting. For example, in Excerpt 17, the confessor was from Hong Kong so his Mandarin Chinese was not very fluent. Nonetheless, after he learned from earlier interaction on the show that the confessee found men that could sing attractive, he volunteered to sing her a song as a way to confess his feelings for her in the hope of gaining her acceptance.

(17) CONFESSOR; 我見到妳的:關鍵詞中:提-說到:  
..嗯:會唱歌的男生:是很有:魅力的.  
..但是:我國語:不是太好,  
唱歌也不是太好.  
但是:  
..我也要:唱一首國語的歌,  
給妳聽,  
跟妳告白,  
(唱歌)



*I saw from your keyword that (you) find guys that can sing really attractive. But, my Mandarin Chinese is not really good, my singing is also not really good. However, I still want to sing you a song in Mandarin Chinese to confess to you.*  
(SING)

From the average number of the strategy of hinting used per confession, hinting is found to be one of the most frequently used strategies in the data (See Table 8). Again, due to the various ways for confessors to present a situational context for the confesseees to take the hint, this strategy was often adopted by the confessors to customize their request in confession. In addition, another reason for the preference of using the strategy of hinting may be due to how Mandarin Chinese speakers tend to favor persuading or requesting someone to comply in a more “polite” and less straightforward manner. The same finding can also be seen in Hong’s study on the features of request strategies in Chinese (1999). Hong (1999) has identified strong hints and mild hints as preferred request strategies for these strategies help Chinese speakers prevent embarrassment caused by rejection or disagreement to their requests.



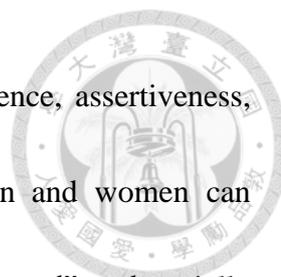
## **Determination**

The strategy of determination suggests that the confessor is determined and will not give up easily on his/her view, and thus, it further implies that the confessee should be the one to consider giving in and comply. This strategy was often used when the confessee expressed doubts or were hesitant to agree to the request of the confessors. Generally speaking, unsuccessful confessors tend to use this strategy slightly more often than successful confessors (See Table 8). As discussed before, since this strategy was commonly used as a way to further convince the confessee when they were showing signs of hesitance or rejection, confessors would thus adopt this strategy more frequently in unsuccessful confessions.

Furthermore, in successful and unsuccessful confessions, it can be seen that the two genders favored this strategy differently. Successful male confessors tend to use this strategy slightly more than successful female confessors do (Male: 0.3; Female: 0.17); whereas female confessors tend to adopt this strategy more frequently than male confessors do (Male: 0.38<sup>8</sup>; Female: 0.51) in unsuccessful confessions (See Table 8). In studies of dating behavior, men are generally expected to be more active and take the role of the initiator in dating and sexual relationships than women (Ferng and Yen, 2007;

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth noticing that although unsuccessful male confessors used comparatively less of the strategy of determination than unsuccessful female confessors, they actually adopted similar (and slightly more) number of this strategies when compared to successful male confessors. So, male confessors were generally more consistent in their usages of this strategy; and the discussion on the expectation for men to promote themselves as strong and assertive partners were revealed in both successful and unsuccessful confessions.



Laner, and Ventrone, 2000). Furthermore, characteristics of confidence, assertiveness, and defending own beliefs, despite being qualities that both men and women can possess, are found by previous studies to be more “masculine-oriented” and socially expected for men to have (Peng, 2006; Prentice and Carranza, 2002). Thus, taking a firm stand and using the strategy of determination might allow male confessors to further showcase “masculine” and desirable qualities to promote themselves as “ideal male partners” in relationships. On the other hand, unsuccessful female confessors may use this strategy for a slightly different function than men. When using this strategy, unsuccessful female confessors were trying to convince the confesseees that it was difficult for them to pluck up the courage and be here (often indicates that the social expectation is not for the woman to be relationship initiators), and yet, they were still determined to do it for the confesseees (See Excerpt 18).

(18) CONFESSOR; 我以前從來沒想過在:

..電視上還會:跟人:表白.

因為:我爸媽都是很傳統的人.

...他們看到這期節目估計要:

打斷我的腿了 ((大笑))

...但是我還是:想為了你勇敢一次.

*I never thought I would be on TV and make a confession to someone. Because, my parents are both conservative people. (After) they watched this episode they are probably going to break my legs ((LAUGH)). But, I still want to be brave for you once.*

Thus, despite the fact that the strategy of determination was used to further convince the confessee to accept the confessors’ offer, the approach may be slightly



different for different genders. While men used the determination strategy to promote themselves as assertive and confident male partners in a relationship, women adopted this strategy to show that they did something brave and were willing step out of their comfort zone only for the confesseees to appeal to them and make them feel special. As a result, in unsuccessful confessions, female confessors would take advantage of the fact that they “normally wouldn’t do this” for other men in the hope of increasing their chances of changing the confesseees’ minds.

## **4.2 Discussion**

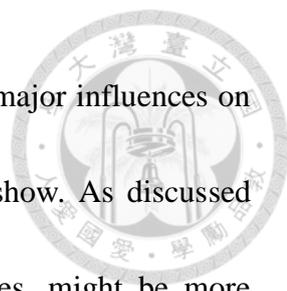
From the result and analyses of the persuasive strategies adopted by the confessors in the data, it can be seen that the categories of strategies used in romantic confessions further illustrate the fact that a good romantic persuasion should be a combination of both rationally and emotionally appealing factors. Reward-based strategies, strategies that tend to provoke positive emotions, are designed to tug at the heartstrings of potential romantic partners. On the other hand, a romantic persuasion would not be complete without requesting to establish a romantic relationship. Rationale-based strategies are thus important as they fulfill the more rational and logical requirements (i.e., logical reasoning, substantial evidence, or solid support) in persuasions. Although the persuasive strategies identified in the data are discussed individually in the previous

sections, it should be noted that these strategies by no means stand by itself. On the contrary, they were usually combined into a series of strategies throughout the romantic confession.



The analyses of this chapter have shown it is important that romantic confessors should pay attention to the responses from confesseees when devising persuasive strategies. For instance, when the confesseees were showing doubts or having questions about the confessors' proposal, if the confessors failed to provide a convincing argument or explanation, the confession would be very likely to end with no success in gaining compliance. This may further exemplify the fact that romantic confession is a co-constructed discourse in which both speakers are able to strategically influence the outcome of the conversation. (Please refer to Section 5.3 for further discussion on the effect of conversational co-construction and interaction between confessors and confesseees in romantic confessions.).

Some possible explanations behind the time and the purpose of strategy selection of romantic confessors are presented throughout this chapter. For instance, subtle gender differences can be identified when we take a closer look at the persuasive communication in romantic confessions. Before quickly jumping into conclusion and claiming that gender is the only factor that lead to the different patterns of strategy use in romantic confessions, we should keep two important factors in mind.



First, the design/format of the TV show is perhaps one of the major influences on how the men and women behave and adopt the strategies in the show. As discussed before, the men, being regular cast members and TV personalities, might be more responsible for and capable of keeping a good image of themselves on TV. On the other hand, the female guests that came to the show only once would be more inclined to do whatever it takes to achieve her confession goals. Thus, the different priorities that the two genders had might take effect on the strategies, responses, and behaviors they displayed during the confessions.

Second, the co-construction in romantic confessions may be another crucial factor that leads to different choices of strategies between confessors and confesseees of different genders. From the perspective of cooperation in communication, if a confessor adopted many strategies to impress and profess his/her feelings to the confessee, the confessee would also be obliged to adopt a considerable amount of strategies to explain and reject the confessee. This, in turn, would make the confessor feel necessary to use even more strategies to carry on the process of negotiation and discussion with the confessee, and vice versa. Furthermore, certain strategy choices would also bring about similar responses from the interlocutors. For instance, if the confessor uses reward-based strategies (i.e., ingratiation, promise, and debt), the confessee is more likely to use reward-based strategies in the refusal (i.e., condition for future acceptance,

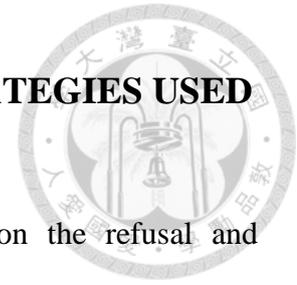
alternative, thanks, compliment, and empathy). For this reason, the effect of co-construction can also play a big part in determining the strategies adopted by male and female confessors and confesseees.



As a result, it should be noted that the goal of our study is not to pinpoint critical factors that governs confessors' strategy selection. Through presenting possible explanations to the strategy selections of romantic confessors in our data, we attempt to reveal the complex conversational nature of romantic confession and highlight the fact that communicative strategy selection can be a result of many different factors. Although some observations were presented in the study, further researches would have to be conducted before we can gain a clearer picture on the specific factors influencing the strategy use of romantic confessors.

In this chapter, results and discussions on the persuasive strategies in our persuasive model are provided. We also cover issues regarding the patterns and possible reasons for the strategy selection of confessors in the context of romantic persuasion. In Chapter 5, we continue to elaborate on how refusal and acceptance strategies in our models are adopted by romantic confesseees to co-construct the discourse of romantic confession.

## **CHAPTER 5: REFUSAL AND ACCEPTANCE STRATEGIES USED BY ROMANTIC CONFESSEES**



This chapter provides thorough analyses and discussions on the refusal and acceptance strategies used by romantic confesseees in romantic confessions. We aim to explore the communicative functions of these strategies in romantic confessions as well as elaborate on the effects of interaction, co-construction, and possible socio-cultural influences on speakers' choices of strategies in romantic confessions.

The strategies in our refusal and acceptance models are thoroughly discussed in the following sections. Then, a general discussion on the results and analysis of these strategies are presented at the end of this chapter.

### **5.1 Refusal Strategies Used by Romantic Confesseees**

The total tokens of refusal strategies used by the 107 romantic confesseees are 548 (See Table 9). On average, each confesseee adopts about 6.6 strategies per romantic confession (See Table 10). Out of the 4 categories of strategies, all confesseees tend to favor rationale-based (49.1 %) and reward-based (41.2 %) strategies much more than altruism-based (5.7 %) and punishment-based (4 %) strategies (See Table 11 for further details on the average numbers of each persuasive strategy type used per confession).

Table 9. Token numbers and percentages of refusal strategies used by confesseees

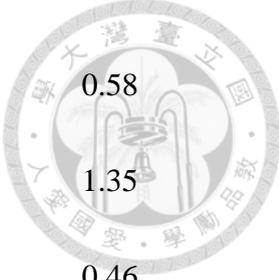
Categories	All		Male		Female	
	Token	%	Token	%	Token	%
Reward-Based Strategies	226	41.2	153	37.1	63	50
Punishment-Based Strategies	22	4	20	4.9	2	1.6
Altruism-Based Strategies	31	5.7	21	5.1	10	7.9
Rationale-Based Strategies	269	49.1	218	52.9	51	40.5
Total	548	100	412	100	126	100

Table 10. Average numbers of refusal strategies used per confession

Categories	All	Male	Female
Reward-Based Strategies	2.7	2.6	2.4
Punishment-Based Strategies	0.3	0.3	0.1
Altruism-Based Strategies	0.4	0.4	0.4
Rationale-Based Strategies	3.2	3.7	2
Total	6.6	7	4.9

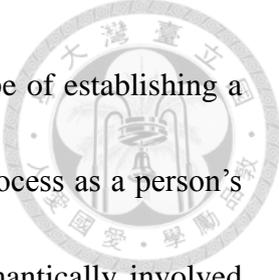
Table 11. Average numbers of refusal strategies used per confession (by types)

Types of Strategies	All	Male	Female
<b>Reward-Based</b> Condition for Future Acceptance	0.06	0.07	0.04



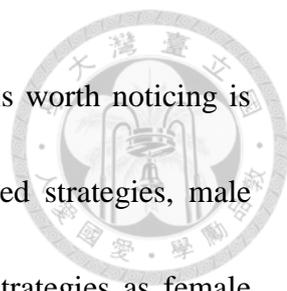
Alternative	0.58	0.58	0.58
Thanks	1.2	1.14	1.35
Compliment	0.71	0.81	0.46
Empathy	0.12	0.17	0.38
<b>Punishment-Based</b>			
Threat	0.06	0.08	0
Criticism	0.2	0.25	0.08
<b>Altruism-Based</b>			
Help-Seeking	0.02	0.02	0.04
Let Requester off the Hook	0.05	0.07	0
Statement of Regret	0.29	0.27	0.35
<b>Rationale-Based</b>			
Direct Refusal	0.05	0.05	0.04
Reason	1.47	1.81	0.69
Challenge	0.27	0.36	0.08
Avoidance	1.38	1.47	1.15

As discussed in Chapter 3, refusal is an act that has a more face-threatening, impolite, and “dispreferred” nature (Gass and Houck, 1999; Sifianou; 2012). When performing refusal, speakers would tend to plan lengthy sequences to mitigate the threat imposed when turning down someone’s offer. Romantic confession, a process of one



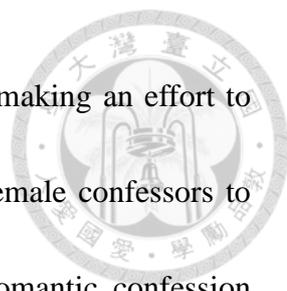
confessing his/her loving feelings towards another person in the hope of establishing a romantic relationship with that person, can be a highly emotional process as a person's heart is on the line. Thus, when rejecting the request of being romantically involved with the confessor, confesseees would tend to adopt a series of strategies to mitigate the situation and make the refusal less hurtful or embarrassing for the confessors. By doing this, the confesseees would not only make it easier for the confessors to accept the refusal, but it would also allow the confesseees to still maintain a good image (even after they performed a “dispreferred” act), and especially because the confessions took place on TV. From the data, it can be seen that romantic confesseees would adopt more rationale-based strategies to justify his/her refusal or reward-based strategies to make the confessor feel better. On the other hand, confesseees would also avoid using punishment-based and altruism-based strategies so that the confessors would not feel less or too bad about being turned down.

Similar tendency of favoring rationale-based and reward-based strategies over altruism-based and punishment-based strategies can also be found in the data when the factor of gender is taken into consideration. Nonetheless, there are still subtle differences between confesseees of different genders. When looking at the percentages of refusal strategies used by male and female confesseees, it may seem that male confesseees favored rationale-based strategies (52.9 %) the most and female confesseees preferred to



use reward-based strategies (50 %) the most (See Table 9). What is worth noticing is that although male confesseees did not adopt the most reward-based strategies, male confesseees actually use about the same number of reward-based strategies as female confesseees per confession (Male: 2.6; Female: 2.4). That is to say, what really sets male and female confesseees apart is not the numbers of reward-based strategies they used, but the numbers of rationale-based strategies they adopted (Male: 3.7; Female: 2). Furthermore, the average numbers of refusal strategies used per confession have also shown that male confesseees used more numbers of strategies to reject than female confesseees (Male: 7; Female: 4.9).

In Section 4.1, we have mentioned the effect of co-construction between the confessors and confesseees in romantic confessions. The gender differences that are shown in the average numbers of refusal strategies used by confesseees further support this point. It is found that male confesseees adopted more refusal strategies than female confesseees did to reject the request; and this would also be reflected in the numbers of persuasive strategies used by male and female confessors as discussed in the previous section (See Chapter 4 for more discussions). It seems that male confesseees tend to provide more explanations to justify their decisions for rejecting the request than female confesseees. In addition, male confesseees would attempt to challenge the request/requester by using more rationale-based strategies in their refusals. By giving



elaborate explanations for their refusals, the male confessors were making an effort to mitigate the face-threatening situation and make it easier for the female confessors to accept the rejection. Again, such a gender difference exists in romantic confession refusals is partly because the male regular cast members, as TV personalities, have comparatively higher pressure to maintain a good public image than the female one-time guests did. Thus, they would be more inclined to offer a more detailed explanation for the rejection to protect the face of the confessors. Also, another possible reason might be that in (East Asian) dating culture, it is still more conventional for men to be the confessor and the main initiator of romantic relationships (Feng and Yen, 2007). So, if a woman takes the initiative to confess her feelings to a man only to get turned down (on TV!), the level of embarrassment and humiliation a female confessor experiences would be much higher compared to a male confessor. A similar observation is also stated in Tong and Walther's study (2010) on the rejection towards romantic date request in computer-mediated communication. In their study, men are more likely to respond to online date requests than women are. Since men are more often initiators in romantic relationships, "when the roles are reversed and women initiate contact, men may be more sympathetic to the disappointment and face threat associated with rejection." (Tong and Walther, 2010: 503). In short, the number of (rationale-based) refusal strategies required to further justify the decision for rejection and lessen the



harm caused by this non-compliant behavior might be different depending on the gender of the confessor and the confessee.

In the following discussions, refusal strategies from the 4 categories are further analyzed in details. The specific strategies are: (1) reward-based strategies: condition for future acceptance, alternative, thanks, compliment, and empathy; (2) punishment-based strategies: threat and criticism; (3) altruism-based strategies: help-seeking, let requester off the hook, statement of regret; and (4) rationale-based strategies: direct refusal, reason, challenge, and avoidance.

### **5.1.1 Reward-Based Strategies**

The reward-based strategies adopted by the romantic confesseees in the data are condition for future acceptance, alternative, thanks, compliment, and empathy. These strategies are used in order to reward the confessor and make him/her feel better about himself/herself or his/her request. Although the act of turning down the confessors' offer, regardless of what strategies used, is already going to hurt the confessors' face to some extent, providing some type of reward as compensation would help the confessors feel better and minimize the damage caused by the rejection. Thus, this category of "feel-good" strategies was widely adopted by the confesseees in confession refusals.

#### **Condition for Future Acceptance**

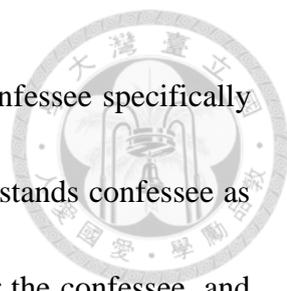
Confesseees use this strategy to reject the confessors' proposal for the time being



but set conditions for acceptance in the future. Confesseees would use this strategy when they were very tempted to agree to the request of the confessors, but still had reservations, doubts, or questions that could not be solved or answered at the moment.

So, the confesseees would set conditions to be fulfilled before accepting the request in the future. This is perhaps one of the most preferred and rewarding scenarios for the confessors of rejection for it still allows room for hope and improvement. Nevertheless, this strategy is rarely used by confesseees in the data (See Table 11) because the chances for them to get a confession from someone they like were low. And if they did get a confession from someone they were attracted to and were interested in, they usually would agree to be with the person instead of postponing the agreement and setting conditions for future acceptance. As a result, this strategy was not used as often as the other refusal strategies.

When considering the factor of gender, we can see that male confesseees use this strategy slightly more than their female counterparts do. The reason for this might be the format of the show. Since male confesseees would continue to appear on the show until they find someone to be in a relationship with, it is more likely for the confessors to come back and confess to the same confesseees again, whereas for female confesseees, after they leave the show, the chances of them meeting the male confessors again in private life would be comparatively lower as the male confessors would keep looking



for love on the show. For instance, in the following excerpt, the confessee specifically said that after the several conditions (i.e., the confessor really understands confessee as a person, the confessor is still willing to come back to the show for the confessee, and the confessee's mind is clear at that time) are fulfilled, he will accept the confessee's offer and leave the show with her.

(19) CONFESSEE; 如果妳:真的有一天了解我,

...如果妳還回來,

..如果我能理清思緒,

我就跟妳走.

...行嗎?

*If you really understand me (as a person) someday, if you still come back (to the show), and if I can have a clear state of mind, I will go with you. Okay?*

As a result, the format of *Perfect Dating*, which allows male cast members (and not female members) to keep searching/waiting for love on the show, has given the chance for the female confessors to come back and confess to the confesseees again. This has led to the relatively more common use of the condition for future acceptance strategy for male confesseees than female confesseees in the data.

### **Alternative**

The strategy of alternative is one that turns down the confessor's request by proposing a different option instead of the one suggested by the confessor. This strategy is in the category of reward-based strategies because the confesseees often adopt it to suggest what they believed to be better alternatives for the two. In the data, the



alternatives proposed by the confesseees can generally be divided into two groups – offering to be friends or encouraging one to keep looking for the “right” person. For instance, in Excerpt 20, the confessee was proposing to become good friends instead of becoming lovers.

(20) CONFESSEE; 我覺得我們可以做:很好的朋友私底下.

*I think we can be really good friends in private.*

The strategy of alternative is one of the most frequently adopted strategies to reject the request of the confessor (See Table 11). Although the confesseees were saying no to the confessors, by pointing out different options, the confesseees were trying to suggest that the two parties could possibly benefit more from this alternative than what was originally requested by the confessors. In other words, the use of this strategy allows the confesseees to provide friendship as compensation for the refusal and/or make the confesseees feel better by indicating that something else better still awaits.

### **Thanks**

The confesseees in the data adopted the strategy of thanks to show gratitude or appreciation in return for what the confessors had done or offered. This is yet another commonly used refusal strategies in the context of romantic confessions (See Table 11). Romantic confesseees typically started off their refusal by using statements that showed gratitude and appreciation such as 謝謝 ‘Thanks’ or 非常感謝你 ‘Thank you very much’ after the confessors had adopted a series of strategies to impress and persuade the



confesseees. For example, in excerpt 21, after the confessor confessed his feelings to the confessee, the confessee began her rejection by thanking the confessor for turning around and choosing her.

(21) CONFESSEE; ..首先:

..特別感謝你能為我轉身.

*First, I am especially grateful that you turn around for me.*

She later moved on to telling him that she did not have a “love-at-first-sight” moment with him so she could not accept his offer and be in a relationship with him.

Previous studies have also found that Mandarin Chinese speakers would use expressions of gratitude or appreciation in their refusals (Chang, 2009; Hsieh, 2010). In the context of romantic confession, this strategy is not only devised as a verbal reward to the confessors’ effort and offer, but it is also used as a way to make the confessors feel better about themselves and their request. Thus, when the confesseees proceeded to reject the confessors, the confessors would not feel as if they were unappreciated or even humiliated by the confesseees. Furthermore, by being polite, considerate, and grateful to the confessors, the confesseees would be able to not only protect the face of the confessors but also maintain a good self-image in front of the confessors as well as everyone else watching the show. For these reasons, the strategy of thanks is found in almost every refusal in the data and is one of the top three most frequently used refusal strategies by the romantic confesseees.



## Compliment

The strategy of compliment is yet another way to verbally reward the confessor and make the confessor feel good before turning down the request. Like the strategy of thanks, this strategy is also frequently used immediately after the confessors confessed their feelings and proposed to form a relationship with the confesseees. Before turning down the confessors' requests, the confesseees would usually praise the confessors on their physical appearances or personalities with direct or indirect compliments. As seen in Excerpt 22, the confessee made a complimentary remark about the confessor after the confessor asked the confessee to be in a relationship with her.

- (22) CONFESSOR; 我:特別:想能-讓-  
參與到你未來的生活。  
還有希望—  
希望你做我宇宙的中心. ((微笑))  
你願意嗎? ((微笑)) ((伸出右手))  
*I especially hope to participate in your life in the future. And  
(I) hope that you will be the center of my universe. ((SMILE))  
Will you be willing (to do that)? ((SMILE)) ((HOLD OUT  
RIGHT HAND))*
- CONFESSEE; 妳是個非常好的女孩。  
*You are a very nice girl.*

Interestingly, after he said this, the confessor immediately caught the hint and asked him whether he was rejecting her. She later attempted to further persuade him but did not succeed. However, with the confessee using a combination of compliment, thanks, and other strategies, the rejection was generally a less “unpleasant” one. The two even ended up agreeing to become friends and said goodbyes with smiles on their

faces.



Different from other types of refusal, the rejection in the context of romantic encounters, and especially in romantic confessions, would often be more emotional and even painful to bear for the people making the request. The reason for this is that the confessors would be more likely to wonder whether the rejection might have something to do with them not being good or worthy enough partners for the man/woman of their dreams. Thus, the use of compliments in confession refusal is crucial because it would help build up the confessors' self-esteem and allow them to feel better about themselves and the rejection. Therefore, this strategy is also commonly used by confesseees in the data to minimize the stress and hurt the confessors may experience when being rejected (See Table 11).

### **Empathy**

Empathy is a strategy that is used to acknowledge the difficult situation the confessor is in or has gone through during the preparation stage or the actual confession process with a view to making the confessor feel better about himself/herself before turning down the request. Although this strategy might not seem as directly rewarding as the other reward-based strategies, by showing empathy and understanding towards the confessors, the confesseees were trying to make the confesseees feel better and appreciated for the amount of work and effort they invested in the confession.



Nonetheless, this strategy was not used as often as the other reward-based strategies and it would be adopted only after the confessors had gone through a great deal or go the extra miles to impress the confesseees. For example, the confessee acknowledges the amount of work and thought the confessee had put into preparing for the confession (See Excerpt 23).

(23) CONFESSEE; 妳:為我:

就是之前:做過那麼多事情.

不管是,

..回到:我台南的家鄉,

..然後去吃我:很愛吃的美食,

..包括:去到我的:高中,

..然後還有:大學.

我覺得那個是非常-很不容易的一件事情.

..因為畢竟要從:妳的:桃園,

..到我們台南,

就是要花:

比較:長的車程時間.

...然後:

又做出這一份:

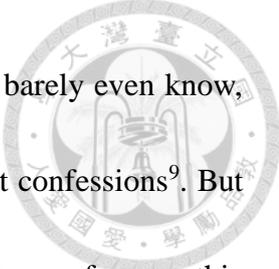
就是禮物.

我覺得妳真的:

非常用心.

*You did so many things for me (before). No matter it's going back to my hometown in Tainan, eating my favorite food, and going back to my high school and university were all the things that are not easy to do. Because after all, you have to go all the way from (your) Taoyuan to (our) Tainan, it takes a comparatively long time to travel by car. And, you also make this gift. I think you really put a lot of heart into all this.*

Despite being rejected at the end, the confessor thanked the confessee for understanding and acknowledging what she had gone through. Since not too many



confessors would be willing to invest so much in a person that they barely even know, the need for the confesseees to show empathy would be lower in most confessions<sup>9</sup>. But for those that had gone through a lot to confess their feelings to the confesseees, this strategy was used along with other “feel-good” strategies to further minimize the damage that could be caused by the rejection. For this reason, the strategy of empathy was not adopted as commonly as some of the other reward-based strategies (i.e., alternative, thanks, and compliment) were in the data (See Table 11).

### **5.1.2 Punishment-Based Strategies**

The punishment-based strategies found in the data are threat and criticism. The strategies in this category are devised to punish the confessor and make him/her feel bad about himself/herself or his/her request. Due to the fact that refusal is already unpleasant and face-threatening in communication, confesseees would tend to avoid making the confessors feeling even worse about being rejected. As a result, punishment-based strategies that were designed to make the confessors feel bad were not adopted frequently in the data. And when they were used, it was usually because many strategies from other categories had been used and the confessors still would not accept the refusal. Or, punishment-based strategies would be adopted when the situation was already unpleasant, mainly because the confessors have said or done something displeasing to

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<sup>9</sup> In most confessions, the strategies of thanks and compliment would be enough to save the face of the confessor and make them feel appreciated. It was only when the confessors had gone through a great deal to make the confession the confesseees would adopt this strategy as additional acknowledgement to the confessors' effort.

provoke the confesseees.



### **Threat**

The threat strategy is used when the confessee points out to the confessor the negative consequences that either one or both parties would face if the request were accepted. This punishment-based strategy was often used when strategies from other categories had been adopted and the confessor still would not back down. Consequently, the confessee had no choice but to warn the confessee of the negative outcomes that they would have to face if they really became a couple. For instance, after attempting to dissuade the confessor for a while with other types of strategies and not achieving the goal of rejection, the confessee decided to use the threat strategy to show the confessor how they might suffer from different dating behavior preferences (i.e., one likes to be with his partner all the time and the other likes to have time and space of her own) in relationships and suggest that their relationship would not work out (See Excerpt 24).

(24) CONFESSEE: ...妳說妳不喜歡太膩,

..但是偏偏我就是喜歡跟女朋友 24 小時在一起的人.

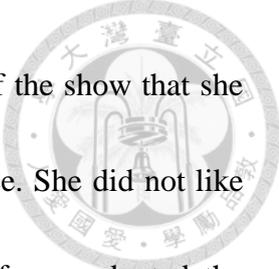
..我不喜歡就是:分開太久.

...分開太久我會不習慣.

*You said you don't like (relationships that are) too clingy. But I happen to like being with my girlfriend 24 hours a day. I don't like being apart for too long. I am not used to being apart for too long.*

CONFESSOR; ((震驚))

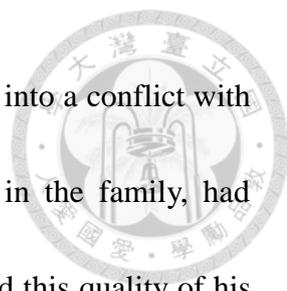
*((Shocked))*



In this case, the confessor had emphasized in earlier segments of the show that she valued her independence and enjoyed having her own time and space. She did not like relationship partners that were clingy or needy. So, when the confessor adopted the threat strategy by telling her the negative consequences they would face if they were in a relationship, the confessor was shocked and stopped trying to persuade the confessee that they would make a good couple; in other words, she finally accepted the refusal. Therefore, this strategy was proven effective for it gave the confessor a bad feeling about the request and eventually was hesitant about pushing the proposal through. Nonetheless, since punishment-based strategies would usually make the confessor experience negative emotions, threat was rarely used by confesseees in the already face-threatening situation of a romantic refusal (See Table 11).

### **Criticism**

The strategy of criticism is used to express the confessee's negative feelings or opinions about the confessor or request. Again, in order to avoid making the refusal even more awkward and unpleasant, this punishment-based strategy was not used commonly by confesseees in the data (See Table 11). However, there were times when the situation was already quite uncomfortable due to the things that the confessors had said or done earlier, so the confesseees were provoked to voice their negative opinions about the confessors or the request. For instance, one confessor cared a lot about



whether her future boyfriend would stand on her side if she ever got into a conflict with members of his family. The confessee, being the youngest child in the family, had always had an intimate relationship with his parents and siblings, and this quality of his was commonly brought up in the show. Hence, when the confessor asked him about whether he support her had she had an argument with his family, he told her he would value his family's opinion more. He went on to explain that his family members were reasonable people. And even if they somehow did have a conflict, he would try to negotiate between both sides. However, since both of his parents were getting older, he would hope that as a son, he could make them happy and would not have to be forced to go against his parents' will. The confessor, upon hearing the confessee's answer, was disappointed and started crying as well as making the confessee feel guilty for not giving her the answer that she wanted. This made the confessee upset and he felt that the confessor only liked him based on her own imagination and feelings of who he was and not who he really was (See Excerpt 25).

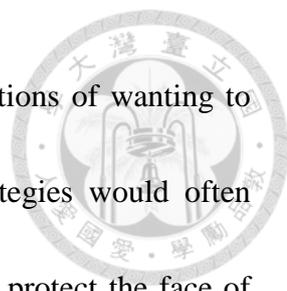
(25) CONFESSEE; 其實妳不了解我是什麼樣的人,  
..只是說憑感覺.

*Actually, you don't really understand what kind of person I am.  
You are only following your feelings.*

CONFESSOR; ((哭))

((CRY))

From Excerpt 25, it can be seen that the strategy of criticism was used when the confessee was distraught and was provoked to a point that he was unable to avoid



commenting negatively on the confessor and questioning her intentions of wanting to establish a relationship with him. As discussed before, such strategies would often impose more threat and were often avoided in romantic refusals to protect the face of both parties. Therefore, the confesseees in our data seldom used this strategy in their romantic refusals.

### **5.1.3 Altruism-Based Strategies**

The altruism-based strategies used by romantic confesseees are help-seeking, let requester off the hook, and statement of regret. Such strategies are used to dissuade the confessor by being considerate to the confessor's feeling/situation or indicating that the confessee is in need for the confessor to drop the request. Usually, this type of strategies would require one person to give in to some extent for the benefit of another person. Similar to our discussion in the previous chapter, altruism-based strategies would create an imbalanced relationship between the confessor and the confessee for one person is being or is being asked to be the bigger person. Therefore, in the context of refusal, altruism-based strategies were also a category that was rarely used. And for the few times these strategies were adopted, they were often devised with a view to making the confessors look good by presenting the confesseees as people that needed help, favor, or understanding from the confessors.



## Help-Seeking

In the data, there were a few times when the confessee adopted the help-seeking strategy to gain assistance or empathy in the hope that the confessor will drop the request himself/herself. Usually, this strategy was used after some refusal strategies had been adopted to indicate rejection, but the confessors had not given up and the refusal had not been finalized yet. In the following excerpt, the confessee pointed out how he was having a difficult time making a decision and looked as if he really was struggling with what he should do by frowning.

(26) CONFESSEE; ((皺眉))

對我來說，  
...現在真的很：  
..難的一個決定。

((Frowning))

*To me, now is really such a difficult decision.*

After the confessee had adopted this strategy to imply that he was in need of the confessor's understanding and assistance, the confessor decided to drop the request herself. The use of this strategy was usually effective because if the confessors really liked the confessee as much as they claimed, they would not want the confessee to be too distraught when rejecting the request. Thus, the confessors would sometimes not only drop the request themselves, but also attempt to console the confessee so the confessee would not feel too awful for turning down the request. Nevertheless, this strategy was rarely used in the data perhaps because suggesting that the confessors



should be the bigger person and retrieve their own requests might be a little too much to ask from the confessors especially when they already had to deal with the negative feelings of being rejected.

### **Let Requester off the Hook**

The strategy of let requester off the hook is used to free the confessor from the obligation or the situation of the request, often to save the confessee from further embarrassment. For example, one confessor prepared a “memory box” filled with notes of memories from past relationships. The confessor then asked the confessee to be in a relationship with her by telling him that she was ready to clear out the memory box and fill it in with new memories if only the confessee would help her (See Excerpt 27).

(27) CONFESSOR; 那:我準備好了 ((抱著裝了象徵性回憶紙條的回憶箱)),  
...你呢?

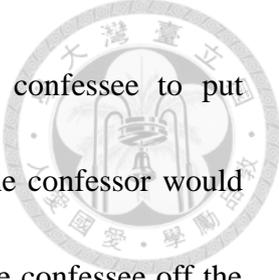
*Then, I'm ready. ((HOLD ON TO THE BOX THAT CONTAINS MEMORY NOTES OF PAST RELATIONSHIPS))*  
*Are you?*

CONFESSEE; 先-

先放下 ((示意 CONFESSOR 把回憶箱放下)),  
...先放下 ((直接接過回憶箱並放置在地上)).

*Put (it) down first. ((SIGNAL THE CONFESSOR TO PUT THE BOX DOWN)) Put (it) down first. ((TAKE THE BOX FROM THE CONFESSOR AND PUT IT ON THE FLOOR))*

Since the confessor had been holding the box the whole time while trying to convince the confessee to help her get rid of past memories, the confessee decided to make the extra effort to help the confessor out of the face-threatening situation created by carrying the memory box in her hands for a long period of time. This strategy was



also rarely used in the data for it was not very often for the confessee to put himself/herself in a situation too difficult or face-threatening that the confessor would feel obligated to be the bigger person and make extra effort to let the confessee off the hook before further turning down their request.

### **Statement of Regret**

Statement of regret is a strategy used by confesseees to apologize or express regrets for not accepting the request in the hope of gaining forgiveness from the confessors for turning down the request. Expressions such as 對不起 ‘sorry,’ 不好意思 ‘I’m embarrassed,’ or 是我不對 ‘it’s my bad’ were often used to phrased statements of regret.

This strategy is the most frequently adopted strategies in the category of altruism-based strategies. Previous studies have also identified expressions of regret as a commonly used message in refusals of Mandarin Chinese speakers (Chang 2009; Yang 2008). In our study, it is found that the confesseees were hoping to gain acceptance and forgiveness from the confessors for his/her behavior by saying sorry; on the other hand, the confesseees were making themselves look as if they were the ones that were at fault – for rejecting one’s kind offer and/or hurting one’s feelings to save the confessors’ face. Also, if the confessors granted forgiveness and let the confesseees off the hook, they would be viewed as the bigger person that was considerate and gracious in the situation



(See Excerpt 28).

(28) CONFESSEE; 如果是要:

..做為戀人走下去的話:

那我:

只能:

說對不起了.

*If it is to go forward as lovers, then I can only say sorry.*

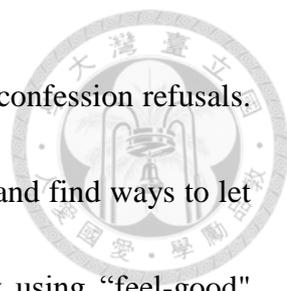
CONFESSOR; ...好沒關係.

*Okay, it's fine.*

In brief, statement of regret strategy was favored in confession refusal because it could bring advantages to the two parties. That is, it allowed the confessees to gain forgiveness and feel better about turning down the confessors' offer, and by apologizing and making themselves look as if they were the ones at fault, the confessees would skillfully make the confessors look good and gracious in the refusal. At the same time, the confessees were hurting their own face to make the confessors look good, so in turn, they are protecting their own face as well for being considerate and letting the confessors down easy would help create a good image in the eyes of others.

#### **5.1.4 Rationale-Based Strategies**

The refusal strategies of direct refusal, reason, challenge, and avoidance are the rationale-based strategies adopted by romantic confessees in the data. The confessees used these strategies to provide objective/subjective explanation, reasons, or perspectives for turning down the request with a view to dissuading the confessors from their request. As discussed before, a romantic persuasion would not be complete without



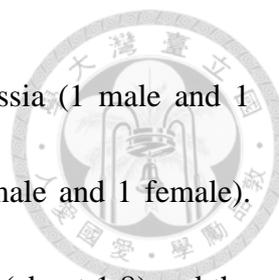
both emotional and rational elements. The same can also be seen in confession refusals. Since the main goals of the confesseees are to turn down the request and find ways to let the confessors down easy, on top of rewarding the confessors by using “feel-good” strategies, the confesseees would pay extra care in providing rational explanations for turning down the request to further dissuade the confessors. As a result, rationale-based strategies are a category of strategies that was commonly used by romantic confesseees in confession refusals.

### **Direct Refusal**

This strategy directly shows the unwillingness or inability of the confessee to accept the request by using denying vocabulary or statements such as 不能 ‘*can’t*,’ or 不會 ‘*won’t*.’ For instance, Excerpt 29 would be a typical example of direct refusal in our data.

(29) CONFESSEE; 我:不能接受你的誠意  
*I can’t accept your kind (offer).*

Although previous studies have found that direct strategy use varies in different refusal contexts, it is generally observed that such strategies are not the most preferred ones by speakers of Mandarin Chinese and are often used along with other strategies (Bresnahan, Cai, and Rivers, 1994; Liao and Bresnahan, 1996; Yang, 2008). As a result, the strategy of direct refusal is rarely adopted by the confesseees in the data to reject the confessors’ offer (See Table 11). One thing worth noticing is that among the 4 tokens



found in the data, two of them were used by foreigners from Russia (1 male and 1 female) and two of them were adopted by people from China (1 male and 1 female).

When considering the ratio between foreign and Chinese confesseees (about 1:8) and the numbers of tokens found in the data, we can see that that confesseees from Russian culture tend to favor direct refusal strategy more than confesseees from Chinese culture do. Nonetheless, other than the possibility of this being a result of cultural differences, this could also be a matter of different Mandarin Chinese proficiencies. As foreigners of other native languages were required to speak Mandarin Chinese in the show, their abilities to come up with more elaborate ways to express themselves might be hindered. However, more studies on cross-cultural similarities and differences of refusal strategies used in romantic confessions would have to be conducted before we could gain a deeper understanding on this issue.

### **Reason**

The confesseees use the strategy of reason to provide confessors with excuses, explanations, or reasons for turning down the request. This strategy is the most frequently used strategy in the data. This might be because, by giving a detailed explanation for the refusal, the confesseees would be able to present their counterarguments to the confessors' persuasion and this would further increase the chances of dissuading the confessors from their requests. Also, the strategy would allow



the confesseees to help the confessors better understand the reason why their requests were turned down so that the confessors would not take the rejection too personally nor would they feel too embarrassed about being rejected. In previous refusal studies, it has also been found that speakers, especially ones from East Asian cultures, tend to favor providing reasons for their rejection in order to be polite and mitigate face threats (Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Tong and Walther, 2010; Liao and Bresnahan, 1996; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Yang, 2008). According to Kitzinger and Frith (1999: 304), “to say no without explaining one’s reasons is conversationally very abnormal.” In one scenario, one confessor provided a series of reasons why she would make a good match for the confessee throughout her confession to convince him to be with her and marry her someday. The confessee then responded with an explanation of his beliefs and criteria for choosing a romantic partner (See Excerpt 30).

(30) CONFESSEE; 妳知道嗎?我不是說我想因為適合而跟別人結婚  
..妳知道我想為什麼跟她結婚?  
...因為是愛情,  
而不是因為適合.  
*You know I don't want to marry someone because we are a  
good match. You know why I want to marry her? Because of  
love. Not because we are good for each other.*

In the excerpt, the confessee further provided his reasoning behind his refusal, while still somewhat acknowledging the confessor’s claim that they would make a good match. By doing this, the confessee would spare the confessor’s feelings by indicating that it was not because she was not a good match for him, but because there were other

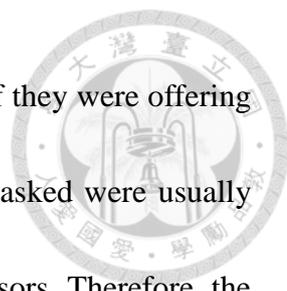


things that he valued more in a partner.

Similar to the case in Excerpt 30, other confesseees, and especially male confesseees, also frequently adopted the strategy of reason to let the confessors down easy in their confession refusals (See Table 11). As discussed before, one of the reasons for this might be that regular male cast members were under more pressure to maintain a good public image when turning down the confesseees' request. Furthermore, since women generally would not be the relationship initiator in Asian society, the number of the reason strategy required to justify male confesseees' decision for rejecting female confessors' the offer might be comparatively higher. As a result, male confessors were found to adopt the strategy of reason more commonly than female confessors did in their refusals.

### **Challenge**

The strategy of challenge is used to express concerns or doubts about the confessor's intention (i.e., whether the confessors are making the confession for the right reasons) or the feasibility of the request (i.e., whether the confessors already think through all the possible obstacles that might appear in the relationship) so that the confessee could gain more explanation from the confessor to confirm his/her decision to reject the request. This strategy was often used in the interrogative form to seek more information from the confessor. Oftentimes, when this strategy was used, the confesseees



already made up his/her mind about rejecting the confessors. Even if they were offering the confessors a chance to explain themselves better, the questions asked were usually tough questions that were unsolvable (at the moment) by the confessors. Therefore, the answers provided by the confessors would, in turn, become further proof to sustain the confessee's refusal. Nevertheless, by using the interrogative form and giving the confessor more chances to explain themselves, the confessee was actually saving the confessors' face and skillfully guiding the confessors towards reaching a conclusion themselves. For instance, in one of the cases, the confessee was aware of the physical distance between him and the confessor. From previous interactions with the confessor, he was aware that neither of them was a big fan of long-distance relationships. Therefore, he was questioning the feasibility of them building a long-distance relationship (See Excerpt 31).

(31) CONFESSEE; 那如果妳對異地戀:

..妳怎麼看?

*Then if it's long-distance relationship, how do you feel about it?*

The confessor then responded by saying that they could travel to one another from time to time. With this answer, the confessee then proceeded to reject the confessor along with other reasons why they would perhaps not make an ideal couple.

From the average number of the challenge strategy used per confession, male confessee's tend to adopt this strategy more frequently than female confessee's (See



Table 11). The reasons for this gender difference might be similar to the ones discussed in the previous strategies. For one, the strategy might be adopted more commonly by male confessors because they tend to be under more pressure to maintain a polite image. Also, in order to spare the female confessors' feelings, more strategies would have to be adopted to make sure that the refusal was properly justified to protect the female confessors' face. Therefore, the strategy of challenge was used frequently by male confessees to lengthen the process of the refusal and lower the harm caused by this non-compliant behavior.

### **Avoidance**

The strategy of avoidance is used when the confessee adopt verbal (i.e., topic switch, joke, hedging, and pause filler) or nonverbal cues (i.e., silence and sigh) to avoid directly refusing the confessors' request. For instance, instead of directly rejecting the confessor, the confessee hinted at the rejection by pausing and switching to a different topic (See Excerpt 32). From the confessee's response, the confessor would be led to conclude that the confessee was turning down the offer.

(32) CONFESSOR; 所以你有決定了嗎？

..要不要跟我走？

...我帶你:四-四處漂流.

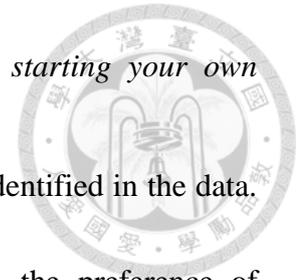
*So, do you have a decision yet? Do you want to come away with me? I'll take you wander around.*

CONFESSEE; ...呃:

...妳是—

...妳也是現在剛剛就是說開始創業對嗎？

*...Umm... You are — You are also just starting your own business right?*



Avoidance was one of the most frequently adopted strategies identified in the data.

Similar to our discussion of the persuasive strategy of hinting, the preference of confessees using the strategy of avoidance in confession refusals may be because speakers tend to favor being less direct in face-threatening situations such as making or rejecting a request. Despite the fact that the level of directness may vary in different situational contexts, indirect strategies such as avoidance or postponement are often adopted by speakers, and especially ones in East Asian cultures, to fulfill politeness purposes (Bresnahan, Cai, and Rivers, 1994; Hsieh, 2010; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987). Hence, the avoidance strategy was found to be much more preferred than the strategy of direct refusal in the data (See Table 11).

## **5.2 Acceptance Strategies Used by Romantic Confessees**

The total tokens of refusal strategies used by the 107 romantic confessees are 102 (See Table 12). On average, each confessee adopts about 4.6 strategies per romantic confession (See Table 13). Out of the 2 categories of strategies in confession acceptance, all confessees tend to favor rationale-based strategies (62.7 %) more than reward-based strategies (37.3 %). When the factor of gender is taken into consideration, no salient difference can be perceived from the data (See Table 14 for further details on the

average numbers of each persuasive strategy type used per confession).

Table 12. Token numbers and percentages of acceptance strategies used by confessees

Categories	All		Male		Female	
	Token	%	Token	%	Token	%
Reward-Based Strategies	38	37.3	23	39.7	15	34.1
Rationale-Based Strategies	64	62.7	35	60.3	29	65.9
Total	102	100	58	100	44	100

Table 13. Average numbers of acceptance strategies used per confession

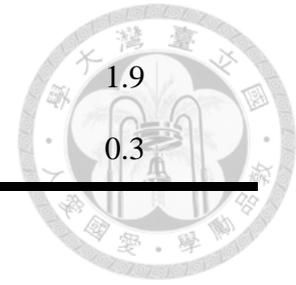
Categories	All	Male	Female
Reward-Based Strategies	1.7	1.9	1.5
Rationale-Based Strategies	2.9	2.9	2.9
Total	4.6	4.8	4.4

Table 14. Average numbers of acceptance strategies used per confession (by types)

Types of Strategies	All	Male	Female
<b>Reward-Based</b>			
Ingratiation	1.36	1.58	1.1
Promise	0.18	0.33	0
Thanks	0.18	0	0.4
<b>Rationale-Based</b>			
Direct Acceptance	0.68	0.67	0.7

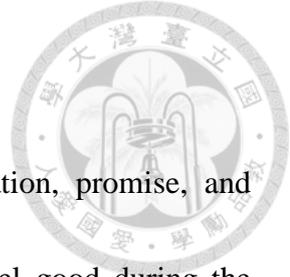
Hinting	1.64	1.42
Challenge	0.59	0.83

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As discussed in Chapter 3, only 2 categories of acceptance strategies – reward-based strategies and rationale-based strategies – were identified in the data to make up the model of acceptance strategies used by romantic confesseees. These strategies were commonly used as verbal encouragement or affirmation to the confessors, and they could be adopted to aid the confessor in formulating a more convincing romantic persuasion. While a fair number of reward-based strategies were used in confession acceptance, even more rationale-based strategies were adopted by the confesseees. This might be because reward-based strategies were mostly used as verbal rewards that encouraged the confessors to continue building up the confessions and that indicated confesseees’ interest to the request, whereas rationale-based strategies were mostly adopted to give the confessors the actual agreement to the request. As a result, rationale-based strategies would be the category with the most token numbers in the data since many uses of these strategies were verbal agreements to the confessors’ offer.

In the sections below, detailed discussions of the 2 categories of acceptance strategies are presented. To be exact, the strategies are: (1) reward-based strategies: ingratiation, promise, and thanks; and (2) rationale-based strategies: direct acceptance, hinting, and challenge.



### 5.2.1 Reward-Based Strategies

The category of reward-based strategies consists of ingratiation, promise, and thanks. These strategies reward the confessor or make him/her feel good during the confession. Confesseees would often use these strategies to encourage the confessors to carry on with their confession/persuasion and further give the confessors confidence to propose the offer of establishing a relationship together in the end. Therefore, as one of the two co-constructors of romantic confession, confesseees would commonly use this category of strategies to facilitate the communicative process.

#### **Ingratiation**

The strategy of ingratiation includes several verbal and nonverbal tactics to make the confessor feel good about himself/herself or the confessee. After the confessors had confessed their feelings towards the confesseees, if the confesseees were also interested in the confessors, they would often give gifts, provide services, and/or pay compliments to make the confessors feel good. For instance, knowing that the confessee loves to sing, the confessor told the confessee that if they were together in the future, he could accompany her with instruments when she sings. She later indirectly complimented the confessor by saying that she likes boys that can play the piano (See Excerpt 33).

(33) CONFESSOR; 我自己唱得不好聽但是我可以給妳伴奏。

*I don't sing well but I can accompany you (with instruments).*

CONFESSEE; ..我喜歡會彈琴的男生 ((微笑))

*I like guys that can play the piano. ((SMILE))*

As demonstrated in the excerpt, the confessee's use of the ingratiation strategy served as a verbal encouragement indicating that she was perhaps happy with the idea of them performing together as a couple. As a result, the confessor might become more confident and continue to confess his feelings to the confessee. The adoption of the ingratiation strategy is thus important in confession acceptance and is one of the most frequently used strategies in the data for it facilitates the communicative process of the romantic confession and further guides the conversation towards a positive direction.

### **Promise**

This strategy is used to make the confessors feel good by promising to do something for them in the future (after accepting the offer) so as to further encouraging the confesseees to carry on with their confessions. This strategy was adopted to show the confessors that the confesseees would also take the initiative and make an effort to contribute to the relationship in the future. For instance, in Excerpt 34, after learning that the confessor would be willing to travel to Hong Kong often to be with him, the confessee also gave the same promise to the confessee.

(34) CONFESSEE; 妳:之後:會經常過來香港嗎?

*Are you going to come to Hong Kong often in the future?*

CONFESSOR; ...如果你願意的話我會.

*If you are willing (to be with me), I will.*

CONFESSEE; ..好那我:也會經常過來北京找妳的.

*Okay, then I will also come to Beijing often to see you.*



In our data, only male confesseees adopted the promise strategy. As discussed in the previous section, the reason for this might be the limited time that the male confesseees had to promote themselves. Since men would not get too much time to introduce themselves and their views on relationships in front of each female guests on the show, male confesseees, and especially ones that were interested in establishing a relationship with the female confessors, would tend to show the confessors their willingness to contribute and commit to the relationship using the strategy of promise. On the other hand, since female confesseees already had quite some time to explain their views on relationships and the kind of partner they would be in a relationship in previous segments of the show, they perhaps did not find it necessary to make extra promises when accepting the confessor's offer. Another reason for this difference in the usage of this strategy might be due to the social expectation for men to be more active in a relationship. As established by previous dating behavior studies, men are often expected to be more responsible for initiating dating and sexual relationships than women (Feng and Yen, 2007; Laner, and Ventrone, 2000). Hence, in the cases when the roles are reversed, the male confesseees would be more likely to also make a proposal of their own and promise to bring something into the relationship in the future.



## Thanks

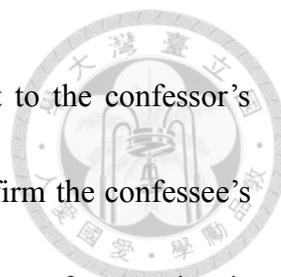
The strategy of thanks would be identified when the confessee shows gratitude or appreciation (often with the expression 謝謝 'thanks') in return for what the confessor has done or offered. In one of the confessions, the confessor knew that the confessee suffered from chronic shoulder pain so he massaged her shoulders. After his massage, the confessee immediately thank him for his service (See Excerpt 35).

(35) CONFESSOR; ((幫 CONFESSEE 按摩))  
((*MASSAGE THE CONFESSEE*))  
CONFESSEE; ...謝謝.  
*Thank you.*

Contrary to the usage of the thanks strategy in confession refusals, this strategy was rarely used in confession acceptance (only two tokens were found). And even when it was used, it was adopted immediately after the confessors had offered a service or given the confessee a gift and as a verbal reward to encourage the confessors to continue with their confession. In other words, the use of this strategy in confession acceptance did not interrupt the flow of the confessors' persuasion, whereas in the context confession refusal, this strategy often marked the beginning of a series of other refusal strategies devised to reject the request.

### 5.2.2 Rationale-Based Strategies

As identified in the data, the rationale-based strategies for acceptance are direct acceptance, hinting, and challenge. Such strategies are devised based on the rationale



behind the acceptance and they often serve as the final agreement to the confessor's offer or means to elicit more information from the confessor to confirm the confessee's decision to accept the request. As discussed before, this category of strategies is frequently adopted in the data because many of them are used to reveal the confessee's decision of acceptance to the confessors' offer.

### **Direct Acceptance**

The confesseees would adopt the strategy of direct acceptance to accept the request in a straightforward manner by using accepting vocabulary or statements such as 會 'Yes' or 我願意 'I am willing.' As seen in the following excerpt, after the confessor asked the confessee whether she would be willing to leave the stage with him, the confessee indicated her willingness in a direct manner.

(36) CONFESSOR; ...你願意跟我走嗎？

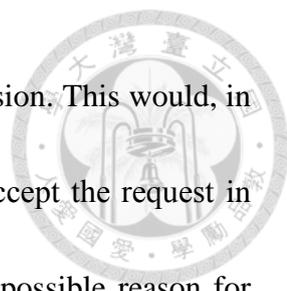
((伸出右手))

*Are you willing to come away with me? ((HOLD OUT RIGHT HAND))*

CONFESSEE; ...我願意.

*...I am (willing).*

In our data, this strategy is found to be commonly used by confesseees in confession acceptance. After evaluating the arguments presented by the confessors and being convinced to take the offer, the confesseees would sometimes directly indicate their willingness to comply. As discussed in Section 4.1.4, due to the verbal reward and the encouragement given by confesseees in successful confessions, confessors tend to be



more confident in using the strategy of direct request in their persuasion. This would, in turn, affect the confessee's response as they would often directly accept the request in the form of a question-answer minimal pair. Furthermore, another possible reason for the frequent usage of this strategy may be the more "preferred" and pleasant nature of acceptance as discussed by previous studies (Heritage, 1984; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999). Since an acceptance is what the confessor is looking for, there is no need to carry out a lengthy or elaborate acceptance since no threat would be imposed on either one of the parties in the context of an acceptance.

### **Hinting**

The hinting strategy is used to present the situational context in a way that the confessor is led to conclude the confessee's acceptance to the request. Instead of directly accepting the offer to be in a relationship, the confessee would verbally and nonverbally hint at their willingness to agree to the confessor's request. For example, one confessee, after putting the coat offered by the confessor around her shoulder, stated that she would not accept anyone else's coat other than one from her own boyfriend to indicate that she now considered the confessor as her boyfriend (See Excerpt 37).

(37) CONFESSEE; ...披外套不是隨便披的,

..我只會披我男朋友給的外套.

*I don't randomly put coats over my shoulders. I only accept my boyfriend's coat over my shoulders.*

In the data, nonverbal hinting tactics include hugging the confessor, taking the hand that was offered by the confessor, or singing a love song to the confessor, etc. were also found to be used by the confesseees in their acceptance.

From the average numbers of the acceptance strategies used per confession, it could be seen that the strategy of hinting was most commonly adopted by romantic confesseees among all the other acceptance strategies. This might be due to the influence of the confessors' strategy choice in their romantic persuasion. In the data, it is observed that when the confessors adopt the hinting strategy to confess their feelings and make the request to be together with the confesseees, the confesseees would also agree to the confessors' request by using the same strategy. For instance, after a confessor sang a love song to indirectly confess his feelings to the confesseee, the confesseee responded by also singing a love song to indicate her willingness to take the confessor's offer. Or as in another case, a confessor held out his hand to ask for the confesseee's hand in a relationship. The confesseee then accepted the request by taking the confessor's hand. As a result, it is understandable that the strategy of hinting is commonly adopted by romantic confesseees in the data because the effect of conversational interaction might lead the speakers to mirror each other in terms of strategy selection.



## Challenge

Challenge is a strategy that the confessee uses to express concerns or doubts about the confessor's intention or the feasibility of the request with a view to gaining more explanation from the confessor to confirm his/her decision to accept the request. This strategy was often used in the interrogative form to seek more information from the confessor. Unlike the challenge strategy in confession refusals that were targeted towards problems that were unsolvable by the confessor at the moment, the confesseees in confession acceptance adopted this strategy to allow a more detailed discussion with the confessor on the feasibility of dating as a couple to take place.

Usually, when the confesseees used the strategy of challenge, they were tempted to comply with the confessors but were still hesitant about agreeing for some reasons; thus, they would further devise this strategy to gain more information and assurance from the confessors or hope to work out with the confessors a solution to the problems that were bothering them. As demonstrated in Excerpt 38, the confessee was worried that the confessor might have a misconception about his personality and was wondering whether the confessor's claim on their compatibility would still be true after he explained himself better.

(38) CONFESSEE; ..妳說妳比較的:

就是沉穩,

..我-

這樣的話妳覺得我們合適嗎?



..就是我-

我其實:

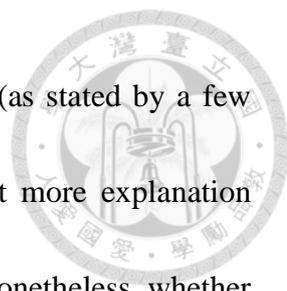
..還:就是跟朋友在一起,

就是-就是比較能鬧的那種.

*You said that you are calmer (in terms of personality). I..if that's the case do you think we are a good match? Because I..I'm actually..When (I'm) with my friends, (I) am the type (of person) that is more vivacious.*

The confessor then responded by telling him that she was also the type of person that would be calm when alone but vivacious when with friends. Her answer was accepted by the confessee and the two later left the stage together as a couple. Therefore, by using the strategy of challenge and providing a chance for the two to further discuss an issue, the confessee was actually co-constructing the confession in a positive manner and helping the confessor to further convince him during the process.

In the data, it is found that male confesseees tend to adopt the strategy of challenge more frequently than female confesseees do (See Table 14). Since male confessors are regular cast members of the show, they met many different women and witnessed or were even involved in many different confessions. This would result in the confessors having a more specific sense of what they wanted in a (potential) partner or in a confession. Therefore, they would be more likely to value both the “rush in the head” (i.e., the emotionally appealing element) when being confessed by a woman as well as the logical reasoning and the feasibility (i.e., the rationally appealing element) behind the request. In other words, while the female confesseees might be more willing to agree

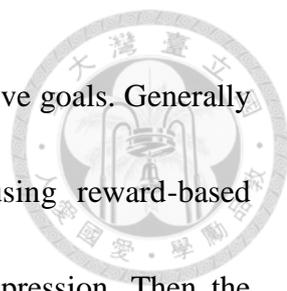


to the request if they were emotionally touched by the confessors (as stated by a few confesseees on the show), the male confesseees often wanted to get more explanation from the confessors in order to make the final decision to comply. Nonetheless, whether this difference has more to do with the format of the show or the gender differences between male and female dating behaviors still awaits the confirmation of future studies.

### **5.3 Discussion**

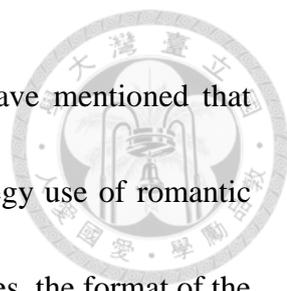
The result and analyses of the refusal and acceptance strategies adopted by the confesseees demonstrated both the important elements of reason and emotion in the context of romantic confession. As mentioned in the previous chapter and earlier discussions, reward-based strategies are commonly devised by the confesseees as a more emotionally appealing approach to reject or accept the confessors' romantic persuasion. On the other hand, rationale-based strategies are of similar importance for they provide the logical reasoning to sustain the confesseees' dissuasion or acceptance. Again, although the strategies in the models are discussed individually in this chapter, they are frequently combined into a series of strategies throughout the romantic confession.

From the analyses of the data, it can be seen that the discourse of romantic confession is a process of co-construction in which the confessors and confesseees plan



and adjust the use of strategies in order to achieve their communicative goals. Generally speaking, the confessors would start off the confessions by using reward-based strategies to make the confesseees feel good and leave a good impression. Then the confesseees would use reward-based strategies or rationale-based strategies to either encourage or dissuade the confessors of their persuasion. This is when the confessors would choose to use rationale-based strategies, punishment-based strategies, or altruism-based strategies to further persuade the confessee to comply. Finally, the confesseees would decide to either accept the request with rationale-based strategies, or reject the offer by using rationale-based, altruism-based, or even punishment-based strategies. Moreover, we have also observed in our data how confesseees would adopt strategies to interrupt or facilitate the confessors' flow of persuasion. This further illustrates the important effect of cooperation and co-construction in the context of romantic confession in which both speakers can take part in verbally and nonverbally manipulating the development of the conversation. (Please see Chapter 6 for more details on the strategy selection and conversational interaction between the confessor and confessee in different stages of a confession).

Once again, we would like to note that although possible explanations behind the patterns of strategy selection are presented in this chapter, it is not the goal of the study to suggest that any of these factors are the only reasons behind the choices of strategy



for the confessors and confesseees in the data. For instance, we have mentioned that subtle gender differences found in the refusal and acceptance strategy use of romantic confesseees may be a result of socio-cultural influences on gender roles, the format of the show, or the effect of co-construction between speakers. The discussions we provided demonstrate the complexity of conversation in general and that there could be more than one factor influencing the pattern of strategy use in romantic confessions. Nonetheless, it would require the exploration of future studies to pinpoint the exact factors that have a determining impact on the strategy selection of romantic confessors and confesseees.

In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the detailed results and thorough analyses on the persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies adopted by confessors and confesseees have provided us with a micro level view on how interlocutors verbally and nonverbally achieve communicative purposes in romantic confessions. In the next chapter, the discourse structure of romantic confession is discussed on a macro level to reveal the overall structure in this specific type of discourse.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF ROMANTIC CONFESSION



In this chapter, the discourse structure of romantic confession is presented and discussed. Through analyzing the generic discourse structure of romantic confession, we intend to probe into the macro-level discourse disposition of romantic confession as well as further examine the interaction and co-construction between the confessor and confessee during a romantic confession.

Based on the data collected in the current study, discourse structure of a romantic confession can generally be divided into four stages: (1) setting the scene; (2) making impressions & confessing feelings; (3) discussion & negotiation; and (4) coming to a decision. As reviewed in previous sections of the paper, the complete structure of narrative as proposed by Labov (1972) follows a linear pattern and consists of the stages abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. It is worth noticing that in the case of our study, the interactive and co-constructed characteristics of the conversational romantic confession have led to a comparatively more complex and non-linear structure. This non-linear nature structure proposed in our study captures the constantly changing and co-constructing verbal and nonverbal behaviors between confessors and confesseees, and provides a better picture of the conversational nature of the romantic confession discourse.

Generally speaking, it is observed in the data that the interactive and

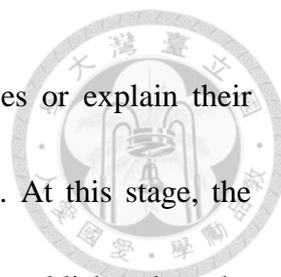


co-constructed nature during the communicative process of a confession has resulted in the shifting of roles between speakers in different stages. Out of the four stages in the confession, the first two stages (i.e., setting the scene; and making impressions & confessing feelings) are more confessor-dominant. That is, the confessor is the main speaker that leads the topic of discussion at these stages. At the third stage, discussion & negotiation, both the confessor and the confessee share a similar amount of dominance over the discussion topics. As for the last stage, coming to a decision, the confessee is more dominant and has more power in leading the conversation.

In the following sections, further discussions on the four stages of romantic confession are provided. Specifically, the effects of speaker interaction and co-construction in each stage are illustrated with the support of confession examples from our data. Interlocutors' communicative strategy preferences in different stages are also discussed with a view to combining the micro and macro aspects of our study.

## **6.1 Setting the Scene**

At the very beginning of the romantic confession, confessors would usually initiate greeting as a way to start the confessions. Some would then use a brief moment to express their excitement and nervousness of what they were about to do (i.e., confess their feelings to the confesseees and ask the confesseees to be in a relationship with them),



while others recounted their earlier interactions with the confesseees or explain their intention and reasons why they had decided to make a confession. At this stage, the interlocutors are basically having a warm-up conversation to establish what the conversation is about, provide a brief background to the following topics of discussion, or set the tone/scene for the confession (See Confession 1: Turn 1 – 6).

### Confession 1: Turn 1 – 6<sup>10</sup>

- 1 CONFESSOR; 女嘉賓妳好.=  
*Hello, female guest.*
- 2 CONFESSEE; =你好.=  
*Hello.*
- 3 CONFESSOR; =我叫李博涵.  
..剛才我在:10-11 號這個位置一直瘋狂地舉手. ((微笑))  
*My name is Li Bo-han. I was raising my hand like crazy at the spot of number 10-11. ((SMILE))*
- 4 CONFESSEE; ((大笑))  
*((LAUGH))*
- 5 CONFESSOR; 但是:  
妳:妳關注的:點都在這邊. ((手指另一個方向))  
可能這邊:  
..這邊的顏質比較高. ((大笑))=  
*But..The place you were paying attention to was right here. ((POINT AT A DIFFERENT DIRECTION)) Probably because (the people on) this side are better looking. ((LAUGH))*
- 6 CONFESSEE; =不是:不是.  
因為我:  
..剛才往這邊看,  
就是..沒有習慣往那邊轉. ((微笑))  
*No no. I was looking at this side because I am not used to turning to that side. ((SMILE))*

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the numbers of turns marked here are for the purpose of easier references in our discussion. These numbers do not represent the basic unit of analysis that we use to calculate the token numbers of communicative strategies (See Chapter 3 for more information on the basic unit of analysis in our study).



As seen in the first part of Confession 1, the interlocutors begin their conversation by greeting each other (Turn 1 & 2). The confessor then refers to what happened earlier in the show and jokingly expresses that perhaps the reason the confessee did not seem to pay attention to him is because he is not good looking enough compared to the other male cast members (Turn 3 & 5). The confessee then explains the real reason for not paying attention to the confessor's side earlier (Turn 6).

As demonstrated in this example, it can be seen that confessors are more dominant in leading the topic of the conversation at this stage. Usually, for the confessee at this stage, the utterances made are often limited to minimal responses (i.e., paralinguistic features such as 嗯 'mm' and 喔 'oh') and nonverbal gestures such as nodding or smiling/laughing that are used as continuers to signal understanding and/or show that they are listening; in addition, the confesseees would also provide responding utterances to the adjacency pairs (i.e., call/beckon and response, greeting and greeting, and question and answer) initiated by the confessors. At this point of the confession, the uses of communicative strategies are comparatively less and the effects of co-construction and interaction are not as critical as the later stages since this stage is often just a warm-up stage that set the tone for later stages in the confession.

After setting the scene by greeting the confesseees and indicating their intention for making the confession, the confessors would then move on to making a good

impression and further confessing their feelings for the confesseees in the second stage.



## 6.2 Making Impressions & Confessing Feelings

At this stage of the confession, the confessors aim to make good impressions and confess loving feelings to the confesseees. With such goals in mind, it is understandable that reward-based strategies and rationale-based strategies are the most frequently used categories for confessors in our data to build up their persuasion. Since this stage is normally a critical time for the confessors to actively persuade the confesseees to become romantically involved, the confessors are still the more dominant topic initiators. Nevertheless, confesseees still play an important role at this stage for their responses and interactions with the confessors may determine the direction of the confession.

### Confession 1: Turn 6 – 20

6 CONFESSOR; 我之前的:愛情宣言是:

想找到一個真實的女孩.

然後在妳剛才:

前面的環節中感覺,

...妳:符合我的:

..標準.

但是我總是感覺妳的心動男生肯定不是我,

當然:最不心動男生肯定也不是我, ((微笑))

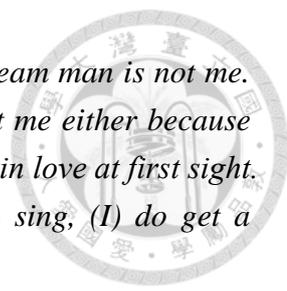
因為已經知道答案了.

...我並不相信一見鍾情,

但是:當我轉過身來聽妳唱歌的時候,

..確實有一種心動的感覺.

*My love declaration before was (that I) want to find a girl that's real. And in your earlier segments (I) feel that you meet*



*my standard. But I kept feeling like your dream man is not me. But of course your least dreamy man is not me either because we already knew the answer. I don't believe in love at first sight. But when I turn around and listen to you sing, (I) do get a feeling (that you make my) heartbeat.*

- 7 CONFESSEE; ((微笑)) ((點頭))  
 ((SMILE)) ((NOD))
- 8 CONFESSOR; 所以說我想出來爭取一下。  
 首先性格來說，  
 ...我覺得：  
 任何人:都沒有資格來給妳建議，  
 ...妳只要做妳自己就好。  
 ...妳只要開開心心的，  
 認為這是妳：  
 ...想做的事情就 ok。  
*So I want to come forward and fight for (you). First, in terms of personality, I think no one is qualified to give you advice. You just have to be you. You just have to be happy and think that this is what you want to do then it's okay.*
- 9 CONFESSEE; ((點頭))  
 ((NOD))
- 10 CONFESSOR; ...妳是一個嬌小的女生。  
*You are a petite girl.*
- 11 CONFESSEE; ((點頭))  
 ((NOD))
- 12 CONFESSOR; ..我有一個辦法。  
*I have a way.*
- 13 CONFESSEE; ((微笑)) 什麼辦法?  
 ((SMILE)) *What way?*
- 14 CONFESSOR; 我有一個辦法能夠讓妳的身高，  
 永遠超越我。  
 ((走近女嘉賓)) ((抱起女嘉賓)) ((微笑))  
*I have a way to make your height always surpass mine.*  
 ((WALK CLOSER TO THE FEMALE CONFESSEE)) ((HOLD THE FEMALE CONFESSEE UP)) ((SMILE))
- 15 CONFESSEE; ((大笑)) ((臉紅)) ((掩面))  
 ((SMILE)) ((FACE TURN RED)) ((COVER FACE))
- 16 CONFESSOR; ((把女嘉賓放下))

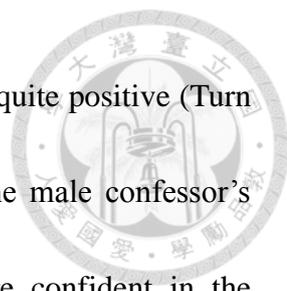


((PUT THE FEMALE CONFESSEE DOWN))

- 17 CONFESSEE; <大笑> 好.>  
<LAUGH> Okay.>
- 18 CONFESSOR; 可能我不是最好的那個人,  
..但是在妳:  
..的生活中我願意做,  
...最好的自己.  
*Maybe I'm not the best one. But in your life, I am willing to  
be my best self.*
- 19 CONFESSEE; ((點頭)) ((微笑))  
((NOD)) ((SMILE))
- 20 CONFESSOR; <大笑> 妳願意跟我走嗎?>  
((微笑)) ((伸出左手))  
<LAUGH> Will you come away with me?>  
((SMILE)) ((HOLD OUT LEFT HAND))

In the second part of Confession 1, we can see that the confessor tend to use reward-based strategies, and especially ingratiation (Turn 6 & 14) and promise (Turn 18), to impress and appeal to the confessee. As mentioned before, a good persuasion usually consists of both emotionally and rationally appealing components. The confessor in this example also uses rationale-based strategies to present his rational arguments to convince the confessee to take his offer (Turn 6, 8 & 20).

As for the confessee, her responses and reactions have been polite, supportive, and positive throughout the process. She nods and smiles regularly to show that she is listening and even asks questions to prompt the confessor to continue saying or doing what he has in mind (Turn 14). Furthermore, instead of being shocked or offended by the confessor's sudden move of holding her up, the confessee keeps laughing and even covers her face perhaps out of shyness (Turn 15). And after the confessor puts her down



and further persuades her to accept him, her general reaction is still quite positive (Turn 17 & 19). Her positive responses have indicated her interest in the male confessor's proposal and have perhaps encouraged the confessor to be more confident in the confession. This may be the reason why the confessor would feel safe enough to use the less preferred strategy of direct request to ask the confessee to be in a relationship with him (Turn 20).

As a result, we can see that the second stage is also crucial for romantic confesseees because it is a time for them to carefully evaluate the arguments presented by the confessors and leave hints of rejection or acceptance that allow an easier reveal of decision for both parties at the end of the confession. In our data, if a confessee was uninterested in establishing a relationship with the confessor, the confessee would tend to be less active in showing signs of cooperation or co-construction in the confession. They would usually continue to limit themselves to minimal responses and nonverbal gestures to show that they are listening as in the previous stage, and they would generally not be willing to ask follow-up questions or reveal too much information about themselves if not asked. On the other hand, if a confessee is interested in the confessor's offer, they tend to take more initiative to co-construct the confession and interact with the confessor. Sometimes, the confessee would even adopt reward-based strategies at this stage as a verbal reward to encourage the confessor to carry on with

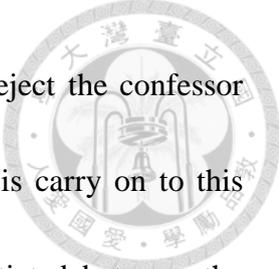


his/her persuasion.

Depending on the level of progress made at this stage of the confession, there were times that a decision have already been made and the confessee would jump straight to the fourth stage to reveal the decision without moving to the third stage. For instance, if a confessee was certain that the confessor was not his/her type, after the confessor confessed his/her feelings and proposed to be in a relationship, the confessee would reveal his/her decision without even leaving room for further discussion or negotiation. Alternatively, if a confessee was already tempted to agree to the confessor's offer after his/her confession and proposal, the confessee might directly accept to be in a relationship with the confessor (See 6.5 for further discussions). Nonetheless, in many confessions, after the confessor has done confessing his/her feelings at this stage, the confession would then move on to the next stage in which the two parties continue to discuss the feasibility of becoming a couple.

### **6.3 Discussion & Negotiation**

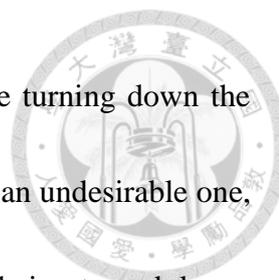
The third stage is the stage when the confessor and the confessee are equally important initiators of topics for discussion and negotiation in romantic confessions. At this point, the confessor has confessed what he/she originally planned to tell the confessee, yet the confessee is still hesitant about giving a clear answer (either because



he/she is unsure or because he/she does not want to be rude and reject the confessor without giving him/her a chance to explain). Thus, the confession is carry on to this stage so that issues can be further discussed, explained, and negotiated between the confessor and the confessee. To some degree, this stage is similar to the stage of evaluation in Labov's (1972) narrative structure for the confessors and confessee move on to elaborate more on the proposition of relationship establishment at this stage. What is different is the fact that instead of giving out a personal view or evaluation of the situation, the confessor and the confessee verbally or nonverbally interact with each other in the hope of reaching a joint understanding and agreement on the issue at hand.

There are two main reasons why this stage is important in a romantic confession. First, this stage offers the confessor a chance to further persuade or convince the confessee. Based on the hints given by the confessee in the previous stage, the confessor would be able to further devise strategies to help the confessee to either change his/her mind (if he/she is inclined to say no) or confirms his/her decision (if he/she is inclined to say yes).

Second, this stage allows the confessee to dissuade the confessor or provide a necessary discussion process that would help the confessor feel better about the rejection. For the purpose of preventing the confessor from feeling embarrassed or unappreciated, sometimes the confessee would be vague about their decisions or



propose questions and concerns for the confessor to respond before turning down the request in the end. Even if the final decision from the confessee was an undesirable one, this process would usually help the confessor feel a lot better about being turned down. Many confessors in the show later indicated that because they were given the chance to do everything they could and say everything they wanted to say, they felt fine about the rejection and was ready to leave the stage with no regrets. This finding is also consistent with that of Gass and Houck's research (1999) on the nature of refusal being lengthy and elaborate. The long process of refusals is found to be necessary for face-saving purposes in such dispreferred situations.

Since this stage is marked by statements that allow further discussion and negotiation, it can be expected that rationale-based strategies would be some of the most commonly used strategies adopted by confessors and confesseees at this stage. The confesseees would use strategies such as challenge, avoidance, or reason to invite the confessor to provide more explanation, and the confessors would respond with strategies such as logic, commonalities, self-promotion, hinting, determination, etc. Oftentimes, this stage is also a stage when the important effect of co-construction between the speakers can be observed the most. Interlocutors tend to engage in a more "heated" discussion in which both interlocutors actively adopt strategies to attempt to achieve his/her own goal (i.e., persuade, dissuade, or gain information) at this stage

instead of giving out minimal responses or taking a more passive role in the conversation .



Now, let us return to the example of Confession 1, after the confessor asks the confessee to leave the stage with him as a couple in Turn 20, the confessee then responds by telling the male confessor that he is not the “dream man” she picked in earlier segments (Turn 21). Although this at first can be seen as the female confessee skipping stage three and directly rejecting the confessor, her facial expression (i.e., continuously smiling) and the fact that she does not continue to end the conversation by attempting to say goodbye to the confessor as confesseees normally would do in stage four may suggest otherwise<sup>11</sup>. Instead of rejecting the confessor, she is actually presenting this fact as the strategy of challenge to see if the confessor can further provide her with information so that she can make up her mind about rejecting or accepting.

#### **Confession 1: Turn 21 – 24**

21 CONFESSEE; ((微笑))

我現在想告訴你,

..我剛剛選的男嘉賓不是你. ((微笑))

((SMILE)) *I want to tell you now that you are not the male guest I picked earlier.* ((微笑))

22 CONFESSOR; ((收回手))

但是我覺得,

..生活當中百分之九十九的人都不是幸運的.

---

<sup>11</sup> It is revealed in the later part of the confession that the confessee may be saying this because she wants to change her previous choice of “dream man” to the confessor. That is perhaps why she would first say what she said in Turn 21 so that it would be easier for her to lead the conversation into that direction.



那麼,  
..我既然想做那百分之一的話,  
這百分之一就一定要我自己去爭取.  
...所以說我並不在乎妳的心動男生是我還是不是我.  
真的不重要. ((微笑))

((WITHDRAW LEFT HAND)) *But I think, 99 % of the people in life are not lucky. Then, if I want to be that 1 %, I would have to fight for that 1 % myself. So I really don't care whether your "dream man" is me or not. It's irrelevant.*

23 CONFESSEE; ((微笑)) ((點頭))

嗯:

..我現在有一點動搖, ((微笑)) ((歪頭))

...怎麼辦?

((SMILE)) ((NOD))

*Mmm..I am a bit wavering right now. ((SMILE)) ((TILT HEAD TO THE SIDE)) What (should I) do?*

24 CONFESSOR; ((微笑)) ((點頭))

((伸出左手))

((SMILE)) ((NOD))

((HOLD OUT LEFT HAND))

The confessor then responds with the strategies of logic and determination to further persuade the confessee (Turn 22). After that, the confessee is slightly more convinced but implies that she is still unsure of what to do (Turn 23). The confessor then adopts the strategy of hinting as another attempt to convince the confessee to take his offer. As can be seen in this example, the confessors and the confessee would tend to adopt rationale-based strategies (i.e., logic, determination, hinting, and challenge) at this stage to talk about whether they should be romantically involved. After certain issues have received a fair amount of discussion and negotiation, the confession would move on to the fourth stage, in which a decision about whether the two will be involved

in a romantic relationship will be reached.



## 6.4 Coming to a Decision

At the final stage, the confessee would finally reveal a more certain position regarding the issue at hand by stating directly or presenting the situational context in a way that is clear enough for one to determine what his/her decision is. If the confessee decides to accept the request, he/she would use rationale-based strategies more often to present his/her decision to the confessor. On the other hand, if the confessee were rejecting the confessor's offer, he/she would often use both reward-based and rationale-based strategies to make the confessor feel better about being rejected. As in the case of Confession 1, the confessee decides to reveal her decision with the strategy of hinting. She asks the host of the show to give her the iPad<sup>12</sup> again and she changes her choice of "dream man" to the number of the confessor as her answer to the confessor's request (Turn 25 & 27).

### Confession 1: Turn 25 – 28

25 CONFESSEE; ... 等一下. ((微笑))

.. 怡姊,

能把剛才的那個 i-iPad 給我一下嗎?

((和主持人拿 iPad))

*Hold on. ((LAUGH)) Sister Yi, can you give me that i-iPad from earlier? ((GET IPAD FROM THE HOST))*

---

<sup>12</sup> Every female guest is asked to choose a "dream man," the male cast members that they like or are attracted to, on an iPad in the fourth mini-segment 'Choose Dream Man and the Least Dreamy Man' of the show.

- 
- 26 HOST; 所以:  
...難道妳是要:  
*So, are you going to...*
- 27 CONFESSEE; ...我的回答就是,  
((在 iPad 上將心動男生號碼改成男嘉賓的 11 號)) ((微笑))  
*...My answer is ((SWITCH THE NUMBER OF DREAM MAN TO THE MALE CONFESSOR'S NUMBER 11 ON THE IPAD) ((SMILE)))*
- 28 CONFESSOR; ((微笑))  
11 號.  
((牽女嘉賓的手))  
*((SMILE)) Number 11. ((HOLD THE FEMALE CONFESSEE'S HAND))*

What sets this stage apart from the previous stage is often the shifting of roles between the confessor and the confessee. At this stage, the confessor or the situation itself would normally reach a point that no further arguments can be made to change the situation or the confessee's decision. In other words, the confessee would become the more dominant speaker in the conversation and reveal his/her decision to the confessor's offer whereas the confessor would only utter minimal responses or use gestures to show that he/she is listening. Finally, the confession would end with a closing conversation in which the two say goodbye to each other and/or walk each other off the stage. In short, the decision on the romantic persuasion is made and concluding remarks are given to end the conversation at this stage.



## 6.5 Discussion

In analyzing the discourse structure of romantic confession, four stages are generally identified. Although Confession 1 seem like a confession with a simple and linear structure, it should be noted that only a relatively small number of cases were like this in our data and this example was presented only because it allows an easier and more straightforward discussion of the characteristics in each stages. In most romantic confessions, the structure is more complicated and non-linear in nature. As found in the romantic confessions in our data, stages are often skipped and interlocutors frequently go back and forth between stages before a decision is made (See Figure 2).

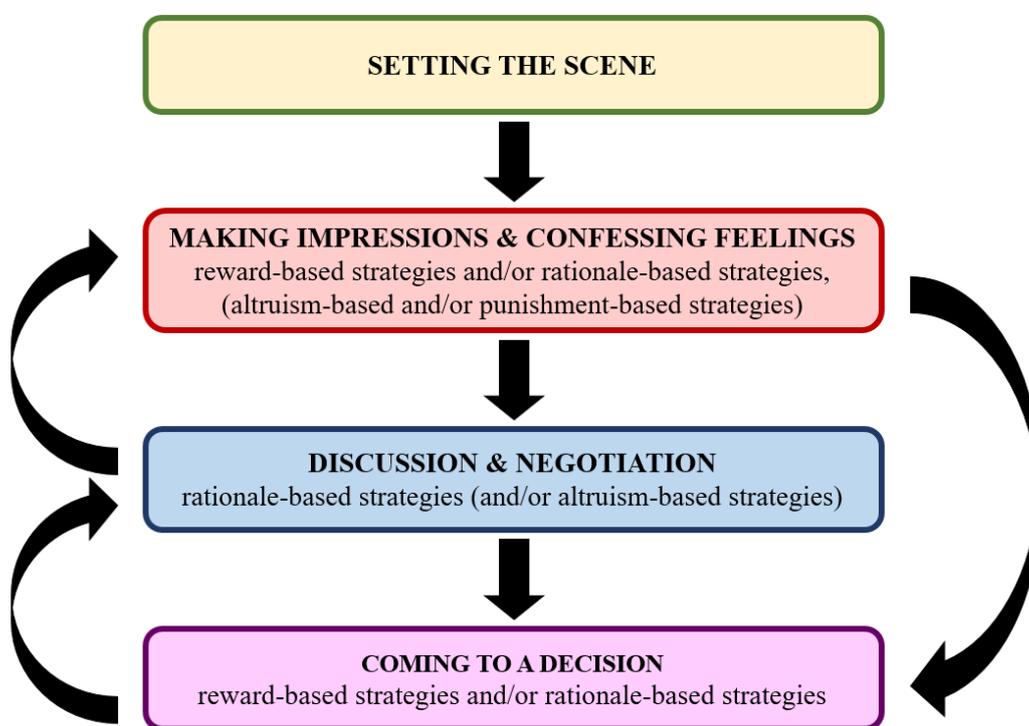


Figure 2. Discourse structure of romantic confession (macro + micro aspects)

The stylistic differences and sometimes the different dynamics between the speakers can lead to the omission of certain stages. In the data, all stages except stage

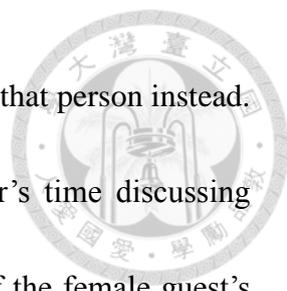
two have been found to be skipped by the speakers. This is understandable as the key points and main goals of the romantic confession are mostly presented by the confessor at the second stage.



Stage three, on the other hand, is found to be the most commonly skipped stage in the data. Oftentimes, the confessee already has a preference towards agreeing to or rejecting the confessor after the confessor has tried to confess his/her feelings and made a good impression. If the confessee felt that he/she had heard enough from the confessor for him/her to make a decision and didn't have any other questions for the confessee, he/she would skip the third stage and directly move on to the fourth stage.

In successful confessions, this often happened when the female confessee was already planning to confess to the confessor had he not confessed to her first, or this would also happen when the male confessee wanted to confess but didn't because he originally thought the female guest didn't like him and later was pleasantly surprised that the woman confessed to him. In these scenarios, the confessee would be thrilled upon receiving the confession and would not hesitate about accepting the offer proposed by the confessor as soon as possible.

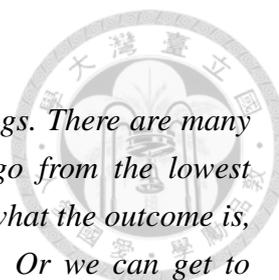
As for unsuccessful confessions, going from stage two directly to stage four would happen if the confessee didn't feel any connection or see a future after evaluating the confessor's confession, or it could also happen if the female confessee liked someone



else and was preparing to stick to her earlier decision and confess to that person instead. In these cases, the confessee would not want to waste each other's time discussing further the challenges and possibilities to become a couple. Also, if the female guest's plan was to confess to another male cast member, it would perhaps be a good idea to politely but directly reject other suitors so that she could leave a good impression in her target of interest's eyes. For instance, in Confession 2, after the confessor confesses his feelings and asks the confessee to consider accepting him at the second stage (Turn 7), the confessee immediately moves on to the fourth stage and reveals her decision by telling him that she came here for somebody else (Turn 8). And when the confessor is trying to further persuade the confessee by bringing the confession back to stage two or three (Turn 9), the confessee immediately stops him with a handshake to finalize the rejection (Turn 10).

### **Confession 2: Turn 7 – 11**

7 CONFESSOR; 然後:我也是:經歷一些:  
很多的事情。  
..有:很多挫折,  
有很多讓我從低谷到沉澱。  
嗯:  
..所以:  
不管:結果怎麼樣,  
那:我希望:  
妳可以:  
考慮我一下,  
或者是說我們:  
可以:私下去:接觸



這是我想說的話。

*And I also experienced some, a lot of things. There are many frustrations, many (things) that let me go from the lowest point to being calm. Mmm...so..no matter what the outcome is, I hope you can consider (accepting) me. Or we can get to know each other in private. This is what I wanted to say.*

8 CONFESSEE; ((點頭))

..可是我來了這裡,  
我-我是為了他而來.

((NOD))

*But I came here, I am here for him.*

9 CONFESSOR; 對阿:我知道我知道.

但是:

嗯:

*Yes, I know I know. But...Umm..*

10 CONFESSEE; ((伸手和男嘉賓握手))

((SHAKE THE MALE CONFESSOR'S HAND))

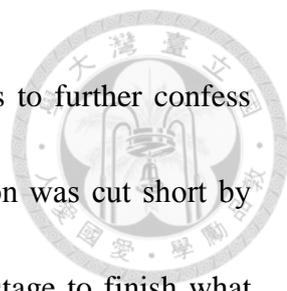
11 CONFESSOR; ..好.

我走了.

*Okay..I'm leaving.*

Although the confessor in Confession 2 failed in bringing the confession back to previous stages to further persuade the confessee, there were times, and especially in unsuccessful confessions, when the confessors and confessee went back and forth between the second, third, and fourth stage and thus showing a more non-linear structural pattern.

After setting the scene in the first stage, confessing and impressing in the second stage, the confessee might start proposing challenges and doubts regarding the confessor's proposal in the third stage. Sometimes, instead of having a discussion and negotiation with the confessee, the confessor might go back to the second stage and



continue to impress the confessee by using reward-based strategies to further confess his/her feelings. This might happen when the confessor's confession was cut short by the confessee, and thus he/she wanted to go back to the previous stage to finish what he/she originally planned to say or do for the confessee. This might also happen when the confessor was aware of the confessee's intention of rejection and when he/she was unable to engage in a convincing and rational discussion with the confessee. Consequently, the confessor decided to take the emotional approach and tried to tug on the heartstring of the confessee by going back to the second stage and using reward-based, rationale-based, altruism-based, and even punishment-based strategies to further persuade the confessor to overlook the doubts or challenges that were mentioned earlier and agree to the request.

There were also instances where the confessee had led the confession to stage four in which he/she was starting to reveal a more certain decision regarding the proposal of being romantically involved with the confessor, and the confessee then brought the confession back to stage three and adopt rationale-based and altruism-based strategies to further convince the confessee to change his/her mind. As can be seen in these cases of going back and forth between stages, this phenomenon usually happens when the confessor was not ready to give up and wanted to adopt more drastic measures to further convince the confessee. While the confessee was ready to give a decision to end the



confession, the confessor was attempting to bring the confession back to earlier stages so that the confessee would have to redirect the flow back to later stages in order for him/her to reject the confessor (See Confession 3: Turn 19 – 30).

### Confession 3: Turn 19 – 30

19 CONFESSOR; [...]

我:特別:想能-讓-

參與到你未來的生活.

還有希望—

希望你做我宇宙的中心. ((微笑))

你願意嗎? ((微笑)) ((伸出右手))

[...] *I especially hope to participate in your life in the future.*

*And (I) hope that you will be the center of my universe.*

((SMILE)) *Will you be willing (to do that)?* ((SMILE))

((HOLD OUT RIGHT HAND))

20 CONFESSEE; ...妳是個非常好的女孩.

*You are a very nice girl.*

21 CONFESSOR; 這句話是在拒絕嗎? ((微笑))

*Does this mean (you're) rejecting (me)?* ((SMILE))

22 CONFESSEE; ((大笑))

((LAUGH))

23 CONFESSOR; 我是覺得:

可能:在台上表現得沒有那麼好,

但是:生活中:我是很真實的.

而且:

我願意去—

真的去了解你.

*I feel like, maybe I didn't show (myself) that well on stage, but in everyday life, I am very down to earth. And, I am willing to really get to know you.*

24 CONFESSEE; 對:妳是=

*Yes, you are.*

25 CONFESSOR; =我願意在之後看到一個生活中的你.

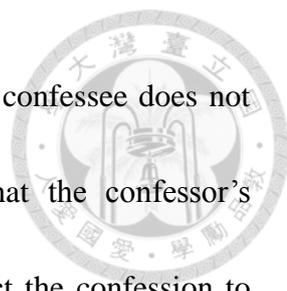
..想去了解.

*I am willing to see (what) you (are like) in everyday life. (I)*



- want to get to know (you).
- 26 CONFESSEE; 呃:其實=  
*Umm..In fact..*
- 27 CONFESSOR; =你一定會跟我有共鳴的. ((微笑))  
*You most certainly will be able to relate to me. ((SMILE))*
- 28 CONFESSEE; 其實就像:  
剛才:13 號王子瑜說的一句話.  
..不知道妳:  
記得嗎?  
*In fact, just like what Number 13 Wang Zu-yu said earlier. (I don't know if you still remember (what he said)?)*
- 29 CONFESSOR; 太像的兩個人不要在一起. ((微笑))  
*People that are too alike (should) not be together. ((SMILE))*
- 30 CONFESSEE; 對.  
同性:相:斥,  
異性相吸.  
所以:  
當兩個東西太相同以後,  
在一起,  
..它反而不能起到互補的作用.  
[...]  
*Yes, likes repel, opposites attract. So, when two things are too similar, when together, they are actually not able to complement each other. [...]*

After the confessor is done confessing her feelings and proposing to form a relationship with the confessee (Turn 19) in the second stage, the confessee immediately responds to the confessor's request with the strategy of compliment (Turn 20). Although this may not necessarily mean that the confessor is skipping stage three and directly moving on to stage four to reveal his decision of rejection, his later response in Turn 22 may suggest otherwise. Upon hearing the confessee's compliment, the confessor in this confession is sensitive and observant enough to take the hint and cut the possible



rejection short by calling the confessee out on it. The fact that the confessee does not provide an argument but respond with a laugh may suggest that the confessor's assumption is right and the confessee is in fact attempting to direct the confession to stage four to reveal his decision of rejection (Turn 22). Instead of letting the confessor continue with his refusal, the confessor brings the confession back to stage three and starts discussing with the confessor how she would make a good match for the confessee by using strategies of self-promotion, promise, and commonalities (Turn 23, 25, & 27). The confessee then presents his view to dissuade the confessor by adopting the strategy of reason (Turn 30). After that, the confessor perhaps feels like she is unable to convince the confessor with rational arguments in the third stage, so she goes back to the second stage and adopts the strategy of ingratiating, guilt, determination, and hinting to emotionally appeal to the confessor (See Confession 3: Turn 33 – 34). It is worth noticing that punishment-based strategies and altruism-based strategies are often found to be used when a previous stage has been returned (See Figure 2). For instance, in Turn 33, it can be seen that confessor adopts the strategy of guilt to make the confessee feel bad about rejecting her.

### **Confession 3: Turn 33**

33 CONFESSOR; ((微笑))

可能:我不是太擅於,  
就是:公眾去表白這樣. ((眼眶泛淚))  
..但是我喜歡一個人的時候,



我會有那-那種勇氣,  
..去告訴他.  
...我遇到讓我覺得:  
感情有重量=  
=而且讓我心動,  
嗯:或者說讓我能—  
覺得能接納住的男生並不多.  
(SMILE))

*Maybe, I am not that good at publicly confessing (my feelings).  
(TEARS WELL UP)) But when I like someone, I will have that  
courage to tell him. Meeting someone that makes me feel a  
stronger emotion and makes my heartbeat, or maybe I should  
say that meeting a boy that makes me want to accept is rare.*

Although returning to previous stages and using strategies that may trigger stronger but less pleasant emotions (i.e., punishment-based strategies and altruism-based strategies) are rarely effective in changing the confessee's mind, the confessor would be able to gain some type of satisfaction through the process. As discussed before, having a longer period of time and more chances to explain oneself would allow the confessor to feel like they already tried their best and were given the chance to present all of their arguments. Therefore, even if the result were still an undesirable one, it would be easier for the confessor to accept. As a result, going back and forth between stages is still a necessary process during a confession, and especially an unsuccessful one, for it would help the confessor leave no regret and the damage to his/her face would be lessened even if he/she was still rejected in the end. As for the confessee, he/she would be able to remain a nice, polite, and friendly image for being cooperative and patient with helping the confessee feel better through this process and mitigate the hurt caused by his/her

non-compliant behavior.



To sum up, the discourse structure of romantic confession can provide us with a view on the macro-level discourse disposition of romantic confession as well as the interaction and co-construction between the confessor and confessee during different stages of a romantic confession. Generally speaking, the discourse structure of a romantic confession can be divided into four stages: (1) setting the scene; (2) making impressions & confessing feelings; (3) discussion & negotiation; and (4) coming to a decision. The speaking roles of the confessors and confesseees will shift from stages to stages. In addition, it is also observed in the data that confessors and confesseees would have certain preferences for adopting different types of strategies in different stages of the confession. In many cases, all of the four stages would be identified in romantic confession discourse. Nonetheless, individual stylistic differences and the different dynamics between speakers would also result in the omission of stage(s) as well as the return to previous stages in the discourse of romantic confession. Consequently, we can see from the discourse structure of romantic confession how the conversational and interactional nature in such context would lead to a more complicated and non-linear structural pattern.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION



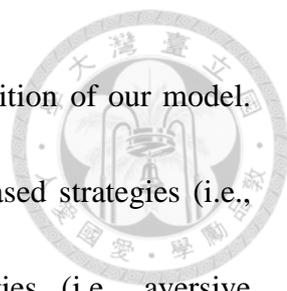
This chapter sets out to summarize the major findings, the contributions, and the implications in the current study as well as present possible directions for future research.

### 7.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study investigates the specific communicative strategies (i.e., persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies) of romantic confessors and confesseees on a micro level through developing models as well as presents a general analysis of the discourse structure of romantic confession on a macro level to establish romantic discourse as an important field of study in linguistics research. As one of the first comprehensive and in-depth studies on the discourse of romantic confession and with a huge amount of data collected from the reality TV dating show *Perfect Dating*, this study enriches the field of romantic discourse and helps shed some lights on the importance on the interplay between language, love, and romantic relationship. A summary of major findings is presented in the following in response to our research questions:

#### **1. What are the persuasive strategies used by confessors in romantic confessions?**

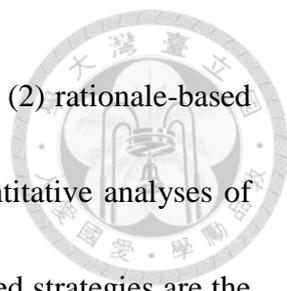
The persuasive strategies used by confessors in romantic confessions are thoroughly



investigated through our analyses of the data as well as the proposition of our model. Specifically, the strategies identified in our data are: (1) reward-based strategies (i.e., ingratiation, promise, and debt); (2) punishment-based strategies (i.e., aversive stimulation, guilt, and warning); (3) altruism-based strategies (i.e., counsel, favor, and altruism); and (4) rationale-based strategies (i.e., direct request, logic, commonalities, self-promotion, hinting, and determination). From the quantitative analysis in our study, it can be seen that reward-based strategies and rationale-based strategies are the most preferred categories used by confessors in the data.

## **2. What are the refusal and acceptance strategies used by confesseees in romantic confessions?**

The refusal and acceptance strategies used by confesseees in romantic confessions are also found by carefully studying our data and further proposing models. To be more exact, in our model of refusal strategies used by romantic confesseees, strategies such as: (1) reward-based strategies (i.e., condition for future acceptance, alternative, thanks, compliment, and empathy); (2) punishment-based strategies (i.e., threat and criticism); (3) altruism-based strategies (i.e., help-seeking, let requester off the hook, and statement of regret); and (4) rationale-based strategies (i.e., direct refusal, reason, challenge, and avoidance) are established according to our data. As for the acceptance strategies used by confesseees in romantic confessions, we identify two categories of strategies: (1)



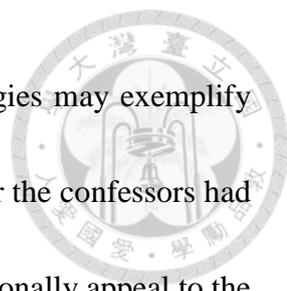
reward-based strategies (i.e., ingratiation, promise, and thanks); and (2) rationale-based strategies (i.e., direct acceptance, hinting, and challenge). The quantitative analyses of our study also reveals that reward-based strategies and rationale-based strategies are the categories most favored by confessees in the data to reject as well as to accept.

### **3. What is the structure of the discourse of romantic confession?**

After studying the data and observing the verbal and nonverbal interactions between the confessors and confessees, we develop the discourse structure of romantic confession. Specifically, four different stages are established in the structure we propose: (1) setting the scene; (2) making impressions & confessing feelings; (3) discussion & negotiation; and (4) coming to a decision. We also contend that the discourse structure of romantic confession is a complex and non-linear one.

### **4. What do the strategy selection and the discourse structure of romantic confession reveal about the interaction and co-construction between romantic confessor and confessee?**

From our analyses of the strategy selection and the discourse structure of romantic confession, it can be seen that conversational interaction and co-construction may be important factors influencing confessors' and confessees' communicative behaviors. In our data, it is found in multiple cases that certain strategic choices could be results of interaction and co-construction. For instance, the preferences of confessors and



confesseees using reward-based strategies and rationale-based strategies may exemplify the influence of conversational interaction and co-construction. After the confessors had adopted reward-based strategies (ingratiating, promise, etc.) to emotionally appeal to the confesseees, the confesseees would also adopt reward-based strategies (compliment, thanks, etc.) to make the confessors feel good before rejecting or accepting the confessors' proposal. In addition, when the confesseees' expresses doubts and concerns about rejecting or accepting the confessors' request by using rationale-based strategies (challenge, reason, etc.), the confessors may also respond with rationale-based strategies (logic, self-promotion, determination, etc.). Other than the influence on strategy selection, the interactional and co-constructed nature of romantic confessions can also be observed in the discourse structure we proposed. Instead of having a one-directional and linear structure, the discourse structure of romantic confession is more complex and non-linear in nature. That is, the interlocutors have the freedom to skip or go back and forth between the stages during the process of romantic confession to manipulate the persuasion, dissuasion, and acceptance. These characteristics indicate that both the confessor and the confessee may have control over the direction and the outcome of the confession through the strategic planning and use of communicative measures. As a result, the results and analyses of our study have shown that conversational interaction and co-construction may be key factors influencing the discourse of romantic

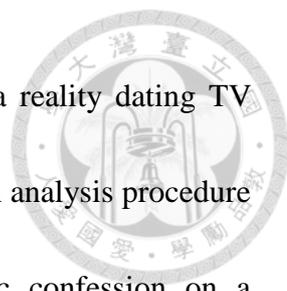
confession.



## **7.2 Contributions and Implications of the Study**

In the previous section, we outlined the major findings and responded to the research questions we proposed in our study. Next, based on the significant findings we already established, we will further discuss the contributions and the implications of the present study.

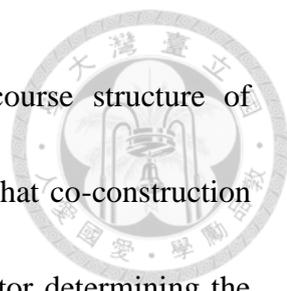
First, we study romantic confession as a process of romantic persuasion and develop models to demonstrate how romantic confessors and confessees adopt persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies to achieve communicative purposes. The models in our study, which group the communicative strategies into the categories of reward-based strategies, punishment-based strategies, altruism-based strategies, and rationale-based strategies, have allowed a more systematic comparisons between the strategy selections of romantic confessors and confessees to be made. Through the quantitative results and qualitative analyses in the data, it is found that the preferences of interlocutors' using reward-based and rationale-based strategies may exemplify the fact that a good romantic persuasion should consist of both rationally and emotionally appealing elements. In addition, it should be noted that the present study is one of the first researches to propose models for persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies



based on real-time conversation data of romantic confessions on a reality dating TV show. Adopting the inductive method and following the conversation analysis procedure (Seedhouse, 2004) as a guideline, our study examines romantic confession on a discourse and conversation level and develops models that comprehensively represent the strategies used by the confessors and confesseees in our data.

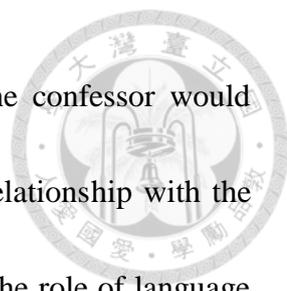
Second, the present research is one of the first studies to establish the discourse structure for romantic confession. Based on the data collected in the current study, we develop a four-stage discourse structure for romantic confession. Our findings have shown that throughout the course of the romantic confession, the roles of the interlocutors shift from stages to stages. It is also found that despite having a general direction of conversation development, interlocutors will often intentionally skip certain stages or go back and forth between stages due to various reasons (stylistic preference, face-mitigation, co-construction, etc.). With the proposal of a comparatively more complex and non-linear structure, we provide a general picture of the conversational process in romantic confession context as well as demonstrate the conversational and interactive nature in romantic confession discourse.

Third, the research is also one of the pioneering studies to examine the effects of conversational interaction and co-construction between confessors and confesseees in the context of romantic confessions. From the analyses and discussions of the



communicative strategies identified in our models and the discourse structure of romantic confession proposed in our study, it is found in our data that co-construction between the confessors and the confesseees can be an important factor determining the types of strategies that would be used in different stages of romantic confessions.

From the perspective of confession and romantic relationship initiation, this finding may have important implications on the ways to persuade, reject, or accept in a romantic confession for both the confessors and the confesseees. To begin with, our analyses on the effect of co-construction and strategy use may suggest the importance to pay attention and be flexible in devising strategies according to the statements made by the interlocutor. In other words, adopting appropriate persuasive strategies at the right time can lead to the success or the failure of the confession in romantic persuasions. As for the confesseees, if the strategies used to reject the confessors are not carefully chosen, they might risk hurting the confessors and feeling bad afterward themselves for making the situation uncomfortable for the two parties. In everyday life (and not on TV), this might be important because hurting the other person's face might cause the confesseee to lose a dear friend or sometimes even bring danger to himself or herself if the confessors are provoked to become violent because of the frustration and humiliation they experience along with the rejection. On the other hand, if the confesseee is also interested in the confessor, by playing hard to get or not using the right strategies to encourage the

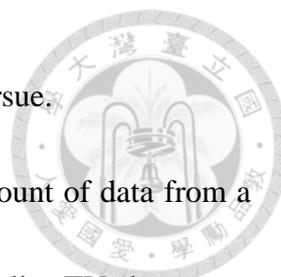


confessor to continue the confession, it might be possible that the confessor would misinterpret the situation and end up giving up on establishing a relationship with the confessor. Thus, our study may provide us with further insights on the role of language in relationship initiation and the ways to increase the chances for attaining confession goals.

Lastly, the results and analyses of our study has identified subtle gender differences and the effects of TV show format and public image on the strategy selection of confessors and confesseees. However, it should be noted that the goal of our study is not to establish any of these factors as critical influences governing the strategy use of interlocutors in romantic confessions. Instead, through the analyses of possible sociocultural factors behind interlocutors' choices of strategy, we attempt to highlight the fact that romantic confession as well as conversation in general is an intricate process that may be influenced by various elements. More studies would have to be conducted before we can gain further understanding of the specific factors behind the strategy selection process of interlocutors.

### **7.3 Suggestions for Future Research**

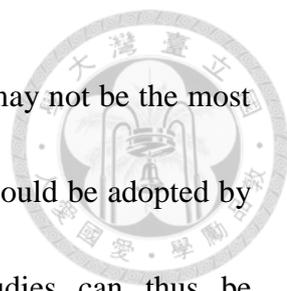
As discussed in the previous section, our study has provided fruitful findings for the field of romantic discourse as well as persuasion, refusal, and acceptance studies.



Nevertheless, there are still some directions for future research to pursue.

Our study is one of the first studies to include such a large amount of data from a reality TV dating show to study romantic confessions. Although reality TV show may be a representation of the society and can provide us with a view of the way people verbally and nonverbally interaction (Hall, 1982), data from real-life and everyday interaction of potential couples is still required before a fuller picture on romantic confessions can be revealed. Future research can invite and recruit potential relationship partners as participants and acquire realistic recordings of their confession process as data for further romantic confession discourse studies. Furthermore, since the research goal of our study is to establish a general picture of romantic confession discourse, we processed only the confession segment of the show (and did not pay as much attention to their interaction in previous segments). It should be noted that in romantic relationship initiation, previous interactions are also crucial in influencing the decision and the means in making a romantic confession (Bredow, Cate, and Huston, 2008). Researchers in the future can perhaps further interview and observe (potential) partners on their earlier interactions to examine their effects on relationship initiation and establishment.

The current study develops models of persuasive, refusal, and acceptance strategies used in the process of romantic persuasion with data collected in the study. Although the



models in our study are complete representations of our data, they may not be the most exhaustive representations of all the communicative strategies that could be adopted by confessors and confessees in romantic confessions. Future studies can thus be conducted to confirm or refine the three models in our study. In addition, the present study has provided thorough analyses on each of the strategies proposed in our models. Nevertheless, we have also noticed that many of these strategies often co-occur or appear in certain sequences. For instance, in terms of co-occurrence, the confessees often use a combination of thanks, reason, and statement of regret in a speaking turn to indicate their rejection. As for the sequencing of strategies, examples can be seen from how the persuasive strategy of debt frequently follows the strategy of ingratiation. Due to the aim and the scope of the current study, we were only able to present some observations of such usages. Studies in the future can investigate in details the phenomena of co-occurrence and sequencing of communicative strategies and further determine their roles in the context of romantic persuasion.

The results and analyses of our study cover several possible linguistic and sociocultural factors (gender differences, stylistic differences, TV show format, public image, etc.) behind interlocutors' choices of strategy and communicative behaviors. These discussions demonstrate that romantic confession and conversation in general are a complex process that may be influenced by various components. Nevertheless, the



degree of influence these factors have on people's communicative behaviors in romantic confession still awaits the investigation of future studies. Another thing worth noticing is that we have also observed a tendency of "mirroring" in the interlocutors' strategy use. That is, the confessors and confesseees are seen to "mirror" each other in the categories of strategies they use in the confession. For instance, when confessors adopt reward-based persuasive strategies such as ingratiation and/or promise, the confesseees would often respond with reward-based strategies like thanks and/or compliment. The same can also be seen when confessors use punishment-based strategies like aversive stimulation and/or threat in the confession; confesseees would usually respond to such strategies with punishment-based refusal strategies such as criticism and/or threat as well. In addition, confessors and confesseees are found to be more inclined to using rationale-based strategies when the person they are talking to are also using strategies from this category. Future research can further explore our observations of the "mirroring" phenomenon as well as the determining factors and effectiveness of this strategy selection pattern in romantic persuasion.

Finally, the present research is one of the pioneering studies that contribute to the field of romantic discourse analysis by studying romantic confession, a type of conversation that is important at the initial stage of a romantic relationship. Nonetheless, more studies are required to examine the different types of conversations between

romantic couples (phone calls between lovers, wedding proposals, breakup conversations, etc.) before we can uncover more secrets between language, love, and romantic relationship.

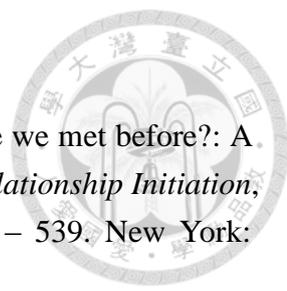


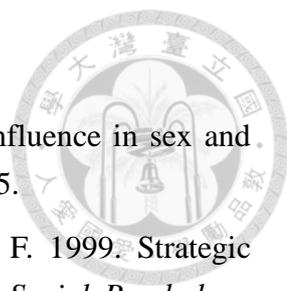
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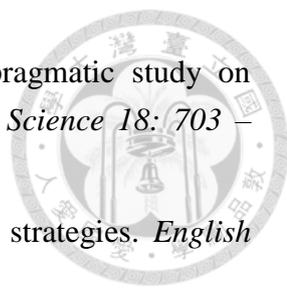
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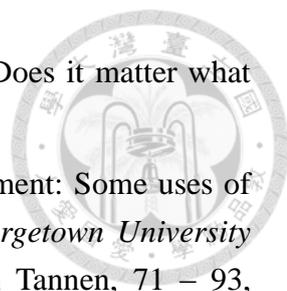
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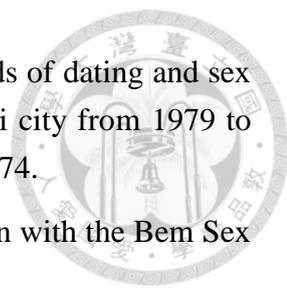
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## APPENDICES



### Appendix A: Format and mini-segments of *非常完美 Perfect Dating*

#### Mini-segment 1: 才藝表演 '*Talent Performance*'

The female guest comes to the stage and gets to decide whether she wants to perform a talent or not. Most women will choose to dance or sing. The woman's face is usually covered with a mask at this point and all the male cast members are sitting with their backs to the stage. If the male cast members are interested in seeing what is happening on the stage, they can press a button in front of them to turn their chairs around to face the stage where the female guest is performing.

#### Mini-segment 2: 愛情宣言 '*Love Declaration*'

After the talent performance, the remaining male regular guest members that have not voluntarily turned their chairs around will be turned around automatically. Then the woman will start briefly introducing herself (i.e., name, age, occupation, and the city of residence), and declaring some of her beliefs in love and what she is looking for in a partner. For instance, “愛不只是一種感覺，也包含了平常的生活 '*Love is not just a feeling, it includes your everyday life.*'” or “你可以不勇敢，但是不可以沒有責任感 '*You don't have to be brave, but you have to be responsible.*'” are some of the things said by the women in the show. As for girls that choose not to have a talent performance, she will begin with this segment instead of the previous segments. In other words, the male regular cast members will decide to turn around their chairs based on what they hear in the female guest's self-introduction and love declaration. After all the chairs have been turned around, the host of the show will take off the mask from the woman's face and reveal her looks.

#### Mini-segment 3: 遊戲互動 '*Interaction through Games*'

In this segment, the woman will use a game or a simple activity that she prepared before the show to interact with several male cast members. Some women would ask the male cast members to come on the stage and compete in a game, while others, and especially ones that come on the show already knowing who they may confess to, will use this chance to further interact with the men they like.

#### Mini-segment 4: 選擇心動與不心動男生 '*Choose Dream Man and the Least Dreamy Man*'

After interacting with the male cast members in the previous segment, the woman will be asked by the host to select her “dream man” and “the least dreamy man” on a tablet. That is, she will pick a man that she likes the most and the man she likes the least out of the 15 male cast members currently present on the show. The information will

only be revealed to the host and the audience watching on TV, male cast members will not receive this information. After the woman has made her choice, the host will usually ask a few questions about why she likes a specific man the least for entertainment purposes on the show.



#### **Mini-segment 5: 影片訊息 ‘Video Information’**

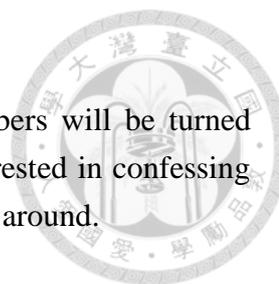
A video premade by the production team of the show will be played in this segment. The content of this video is usually an introduction to the female guest’s daily life, personality, attitudes toward work, relationships with family and friends, passions in life, ideals in love, requirements for a future partner, etc. This video is to help the male cast members (and of course the audience) get to know the female guest better.

#### **Mini-segment 6: 文字訊息 ‘Text Information’**

After the video is played, text information about the female guest will be shown on the screen. These texts are further introductions of the female guest or extensions of the topics covered in the video. Some of the texts shown in the show are “每天都要記錄喜怒哀樂 ‘Must record happiness, anger, sadness, and joy every day’” or “曾搭11部車去西藏 ‘Once took 11 cars to Tibet.’” Usually, these texts are short and brief so that more clarification is needed to allow interaction between the men and the woman. After reading the texts, the male cast members will then raise their hands to ask questions regarding the text information about the female guest. If the men have any questions about the information shown in the video, they can ask the woman about it in this segment as well. The woman will provide answers to the questions the men raised and sometimes even engage in further discussion with these men on certain issues.

#### **Mini-segment 7: 私密問答 ‘Private Q & A’**

The previous segment has allowed the male cast members to ask questions and talk to the female guest. In this segment, the female guest will be given a chance to pick two men to ask further questions. Oftentimes, the man that the woman wants to confess to will be one of the two men that are selected in this segment. The female guest would sometimes ask about the men’s opinions about her (e.g., “你覺得我怎樣? ‘What do you think about me?’”) or hinted at her affection towards one of the man through the questions she raised (e.g., “你喜歡我嗎? ‘Do you like me?’”). At the end of this segment, the host will ask the woman whether she wants to change the choice of her dream man. Most of the times, the woman would stick to her earlier decision. Nonetheless, there were also times that after a series of interactions with the male cast members, the woman decided to change her mind and pick another man as her dream man.



**Mini-segment 8: 為愛轉身 ‘Turn around for Love’**

In this segment, all the chairs of the regular male cast members will be turned around with their back to the stage again. For the men that are interested in confessing to the female guest, they can press the button in front of them to turn around.

**Mini-segment 9: 告白時間 ‘Confession Time’**

If one or more men have turned around in the previous segment, they will be asked to come to the stage one by one to make a confession to the woman. If one of the men’s confessions are successful, the man and the woman will leave the stage together as a couple. If their confessions are unsuccessful, the woman can still choose to make a confession to her dream man or leave the stage without making a confession. On the other hand, if no man turned around in the previous segment, the woman will continue to make a confession to her dream man in this segment.



## Appendix B: Persuasive strategies used by romantic confessors

**Reward-Based Strategies:** Strategies that reward the confessee or make him/her feel good so that he/she would agree to do what is asked.

### 1. Ingratiation

Definition: Provides goods, services, or compliments to make the confessee feel good before asking him/her to do what the confessor wants.

Example 1: 妳說妳怕冷,

...先:

給妳一個:暖暖包. ((送 CONFESSEE 一個暖暖包))

*You said you are afraid of the cold. (So,) I'll give you a disposable heat pad first. ((GIVE A DISPOSABLE HEAT PAD TO THE CONFESSEE))*

Example 2: 你笑起來的樣子真的很迷人.

*You are really charming when you smile.*

### 2. Promise

Definition: Promises to do something for the confessee in the future if he/she agrees to do what is asked.

Example: 我:

..願意為妳去付出.

*I am willing to give for you.*

### 3. Debt

Definition: Reminds the confessee of the things the confessor had done for him/her previously, and then asks him/her to do something in return.

Example: The confessor gave confessee a gift. The confessor then ask the confessee to give himself to her in return.

CONFESSOR; 那:

我把它送給你了,

..你也得送一様東西給我.

*Since...I gave it to you, you have to give me something too.*

CONFESSEE; 你想要什麼?

*What do you want?*

CONFESSOR; ..我要這個. ((手指向 CONFESSEE))

*I want this. ((POINT AT THE CONFESSEE))*

**Punishment-Based Strategies:** Strategies that punish the confessee or make him/her feel bad so that he/she would agree to do what is asked.



### 1. Aversive Stimulation

Definition: Makes things unpleasant for the confessee until he/she complies.

Example: The confessor told the confessee in an almost threatening manner that she only gave him two options. The first one was for him to willingly leave the stage with her as a couple. The second option was for her to forcefully carry him off the stage with her. When the confessee was still in shock and not sure of what to answer, the confessor asked him whether he chose the second one and immediately attempted to carry the confessee over her shoulder.

CONFESSOR; 那你是選擇第二個嗎？

((作勢扛 CONFESSEE))

是這樣子嗎？

*So you're picking the second one?*

((ATTEMPTING TO CARRY THE CONFESSEE OVER HER SHOULDER ))

*Is that it?*

### 2. Guilt

Definition: Makes the confessee feel bad or guilty by crying/sobbing or hinting at how unkind or immoral it would be if he/she did not comply.

Example: The confessor brought along a lot of photos in the past to share her stories with the confessee and asked the confessee to create stories in the future with her as her boyfriend. Or else, she would have no choice but to go back/ stay in the past.

CONFESSEE; 真的不好意思,

..不好意思.

*I'm really sorry. Sorry.*

CONFESSOR; 你是想讓我自己,

..再:回到過去嗎？

*Are you trying to let me go back to the past by myself?*

### 3. Warning

Definition: Points out the negative outcome the confessee will experience if he/she refuses to do as requested.

Example: 如果說你喜歡的女生:

..在別的城市,

...但是又因為距離的問題,

然後你放棄了。  
你覺得你會後悔嗎？

*If the girl that you like is in another city, but once again because of the problem of the distance and you give up, do you think you will regret?*



**Altruism-Based Strategies:** Strategies that persuade the confessee by considering his/her viewpoint or indicating that the confessor is in need for him/her to do what is asked. Usually, this requires one person to give in to some extent for the benefit of another person.

### 1. Counsel

Definition: Implies that the confessor is willing to consider the standpoint of the confessee and perhaps provides additional assistance in helping the confessee make the decision to comply.

Example: 我想問一下:

為什麼不能接受我的原因嗎？

*I want to ask (for) the reason why (you) cannot accept me?*

### 2. Favor

Definition: Asks the confessee to do something as a special favor because it is the wish of the confessor.

Example: The confessor brought a “memory box” filled with notes of her memories from past relationships. The confessor then asked the confessee to help her get rid of those “memories” in the box as a way to indicate that she would be able to make room for new memories of their relationship if only he would help her and agree to be with her.

CONFESSOR; ..我希望今天:

..你能幫我一起,

..把這段過去倒掉:

好嗎？

*I hope today, you can help me, get rid of this past, okay?*

### 3. Altruism

Definition: Suggests that the confessee should agree to do what is asked because the confessor needs help.

Example: 我:有困難,

..或者是,

..我有問題的時候,

..我可以:找你.

...就是說:

我可以覺得,

..你可以教導我扶持我.

*(When) I have difficulties, or (when) I have problems, I can come to you.*

*That is, I can feel that you can guide me and support me.*



**Rationale-Based Strategies:** Strategies that are devised based on the rationale behind the request.

### 1. Direct Request

Definition: States the request directly and sets forth the confessor's position in a straightforward manner.

Example: 所以你會願意把我帶走嗎?

*So are you willing to take me (away with you)?*

### 2. Logic

Definition: Provides logical reasoning or evidence to show that it is a good idea for the confessee to do as requested.

Example: The confessee expressed his doubts about whether he and the confessor would make a good match because he believed their personalities were quite different. In his opinion, the confessor was more cheerful and bubbly, and the confessee himself was more calm and laidback. The confessor then answered by saying that being complementary to each other might be better than being similar in a relationship.

其實兩個人在一起太嗨也不好,

..就是需要一個人:

=悶一點,

然後一個人開朗一點.

*Actually, when two people are together (in a relationship), it is not the best to be too "high." (You) need one person to be more laidback, and the other to be more upbeat.*

### 3. Commonalities

Definition: Refers to shared values or commonalities to suggest that the confessee should agree to do what is asked because the confessor shares common goals, interests, or beliefs with the confessee.

Example: 我知道你的夢想是:



..站在很大的舞台上唱歌,  
但是只唱給你喜歡的女生聽.  
我也有一個夢想,  
...就是:  
站在很大的舞台上唱歌,  
..只唱給你聽.

*I know your dream is to stand on a big stage and sing but only to the girl that you like. I also have a dream. That is, to stand on a big stage and sing only to you.*

#### 4. Self-Promotion

Definition: Highlights personal achievements or desirable characteristics of the confessor as further references that help the confessee make the decision to comply.

Example: 妳剛剛說妳喜歡幽默風趣然後:  
不要太油嘴滑舌的男生嘛:  
我是.

*You said earlier that you like guys that are humorous and funny but not too much of a glib and smooth talker. I am (such guys that you like).*

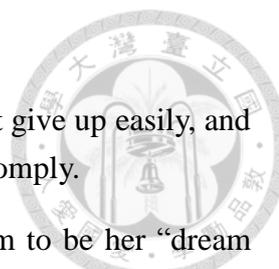
#### 5. Hinting

Definition: Presents the situational context in a way that the confessee is led to conclude the desired action or response to the request.

Example: The confessor knew that the confessee loved winter and snow but was unable to experience “real” winter due to the fact that he lived in Thailand. She then asked the confessee to imagine sharing a warm blanket with her in winter. After stating that she believed watching snow, sharing a blanket, and spending the winter with someone she loved was the best feeling in the world, she then asked the confessee to go watch snow with her as a way of suggesting to form a relationship with the confessee.

我是:從小就是看著雪長大的:  
..然後:我知道你喜歡雪喜歡冬天喜歡冰,  
=所以說:  
..願不願意跟我一起去看雪? ((微笑))

*I grew up watching snow. And I know you like snow, winter, and ice. So, will you go watch snow with me? ((SMILE))*



## 6. Determination

Definition: Suggests that the confessor is determined and will not give up easily, and thus implies that the confessee should be the one to give in and comply.

Example: After the confessee revealed that she did not pick him to be her “dream man,” he continued to persuade her by telling her that he would fight for what he wanted and would not be held back by her earlier decision.

但是我覺得，

..生活當中百分之九十九的人都不是幸運的。

那麼，

..我既然想做那百分之一的話，

這百分之一就一定要我自己去爭取。

...所以說我並不在乎妳的心動男生是我還是不是我。

真的不重要. ((微笑))

*But I think, 99 % of the people in life are not lucky. Then, if I want to be that 1 %, I would have to fight for that 1 % myself. So I really don't care whether your “dream man” is me or not. It's irrelevant. ((SMILE))*



## Appendix C: Refusal strategies used by romantic confessees

**Reward-Based Strategies:** Strategies that reward the confessor and make him/her feel better about himself/herself or his/her request.

### 1. Condition for Future Acceptance

Definition: Sets conditions for acceptance of the confessor's request in the future.

Example: 如果妳:真的有一天了解我,

...如果妳還回來,

..如果我能理清思緒,

我就跟妳走.

...行嗎?

*If you really understand me (as a person) someday, if you still come back (to the show), and if I can have a clear state of mind, I will go with you. Okay?*

### 2. Alternative

Definition: Proposes a different option instead of the one suggested by the confessor's request, often indicates that the alternative is a better choice.

Example: 我可能比你還要更希望你可以在:

這個舞台上然後找到更適合你的人.

然後:

因為你真的是一個很棒很棒的人,

..我相信你在這裡你可以找到更適合的人.

*I probably hope even more than you do that you can find someone even better for you on this stage. And because you are such a wonderful person, I believe that you can find someone even better for you here.*

### 3. Thanks

Definition: Shows gratitude or appreciation in return for what the confessor has done or offered.

Example:

CONFESSOR; 我希望你能多了解我.

然後希望你,

...能:跟我走.

*I hope that you can understand more about me. And I hope that you can leave with me.*

CONFESSEE; 就是非常非常:



真的很謝謝。

..很謝謝妳過來這邊。

*I am really really really thankful. (I'm) very thankful that you come here.*

#### 4. Compliment

Definition: Pays direct or indirect compliments to make the confessor feel good before turning down the request.

Example: 你來的時候從你的外表,  
我就:感覺到了我對你:  
...有興趣

*When you first come (to the show) and from your appearance, I can feel that I am interested in you.*

#### 5. Empathy

Definition: Acknowledges the difficult situation the confessor is in or has gone through to make the confessor feel better about himself/herself or look good before turning down the request.

Example: The confessor, a jewelry designer, designed and manufactured a piece of jewelry for the confessee as a gift. The confessee, also a jewelry designer, understood how much work she must have gone through to produce this gift and acknowledged her effort.

CONFESSEE; 因為:就是有在做這一塊,

..所以我知道妳做:設計,

然後:包括做這些東西,

其實:都是:

要花非常多的時間跟心力在做這件事情.

包括可能妳晚上會:畫草稿

=畫圖,

非常的辛苦,

=非常累,

..我非常能體會妳這一點.

*Because, (I) am also working in this field so I know that you do these designs, including these things, all take very much time and effort. Also, you might have to sketch and draw (designs) at night. (It is) very much hard work and very tiring. I can really understand and relate to you.*



**Punishment-Based Strategies:** Strategies that punish the confessor and make him/her feel bad about himself/herself or his/her request.

### 1. Threat

Definition: Points out the negative consequences that either one or both parties would face if the request is accepted.

Example: ..就是我覺得我們真的在私底下去＝

就是真的一

或在一起的話或怎麼樣我覺得應該挺無聊的

*I think if we really privately really — are together or what, I think it would be pretty boring.*

### 2. Criticism

Definition: Expresses negative feelings or opinions about the confessor or request.

Example: 但是說實話,

..我很:不喜歡

一個女孩子:

..就是:

就是:留微信這樣子:

去搭訕甚至還沒有見過面.

*But to be honest, I really don't like girls that exchange WeChat<sup>13</sup> accounts and pick up (people) without even meeting (them).*

**Altruism-Based Strategies:** Strategies that dissuade the confessor by considering his/her viewpoint or indicating that the confessee is in need for the confessor to drop the request. Usually, this requires one person to give in to some extent for the benefit of another person.

### 1. Help-Seeking

Definition: Seeks to gain help or empathy from the confessor in the hope that the confessor will drop the request himself/herself.

Example: The confessor told the confessee that he wanted to be brave for once and confessed his feelings for her in the hope that she would agree to be in a relationship with him. The confessee responded by indicating that she hoped he would give her his blessings to be brave and confess to the man that she liked. The confessor later dropped the request himself and gave her his blessings.

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<sup>13</sup> An instant messaging application.

CONFESSEE; ..我希望你也可以祝福我就是讓我—  
讓我這次也對自己勇敢一次。

*I hope you could also give me your blessings to let me be brave  
to myself for once this time.*



## 2. Let Requester off the Hook

Definition: Frees the confessor from the obligation/situation of the request.

Example:

CONFESSOR; 你願意跟我走嗎？ ((伸出左手))

*Are you willing to come away with me? ((HOLD OUT LEFT  
HAND))*

CONFESSEE; ((幫 CONFESSOR 把手收回去))

*((HELP THE CONFESSOR PUT THE HAND DOWN))*

## 3. Statement of Regret

Definition: Apologizes or expresses regrets for not being able to accept the request, and hints that the confessee seeks forgiveness for turning down the request.

Example:

CONFESSEE; 像你這樣的女孩子不應該被拒絕,  
...是我不對。

[...]

*A girl like you shouldn't be rejected.*

*It's my fault. [...]*

CONFESSOR; ...沒有關係

*It's fine.*

**Rationale-Based Strategies:** Strategies that are devised based on the rationale behind the refusal.

### 1. Direct Refusal

Definition: Refuses the request directly by using denying vocabulary or statements that show unwillingness or inability.

Example:

CONFESSOR; 那:

*..我把它送給你了,*

*...你也得送一樣東西給我.*

*Then, I gave it to you. You have to give me something too.*

CONFESSEE; ...你想要什麼？



*What do you want?*

CONFESSOR; ..我要這個. ((手指向 CONFESSEE))

*I want this. ((POINTING AT THE CONFESSEE))*

CONFESSEE; ...哪個?

...我啊?

..這個:這個,

...這個不能給.

*Which one? Me? This.. this..this I can't give (to you).*

## 2. Reason

Definition: Provides excuses, explanations, or reasons for turning down the request.

Example: 因為同行的關係:

..我會覺得,

可能會想要找一個:

比較不一樣的.

*Because (we) have the same occupation, I will feel that maybe I want to find someone (that has a) different (occupation).*

## 3. Challenge

Definition: Expresses concerns or doubts about the confessor's intention or the feasibility of the request with a view to gaining more explanation from the confessor to confirm his/her decision to reject the request.

Example: The confessee was unsure about whether the confessor had thought things through before being on the show and asking for his hand.

CONFESSEE; 妳什麼時候開始關注我的?

*When did you start to notice me?*

CONFESSOR; 嗯:一個多月前吧.

*Mmm..maybe about a month ago.*

CONFESSEE; 一個多月前:

..妳就決定來找我了?

*A month ago, and you already decided to (come and) find me?*

#### 4. Avoidance

Definition: Attempts to avoid the request by using verbal (i.e., topic switch, joke, hedging, and pause filler) or nonverbal cues (i.e., silence and sigh).

Example: The confessor knows that the confessee's dream is to travel around the world and look at different Christmas trees with his future girlfriend.

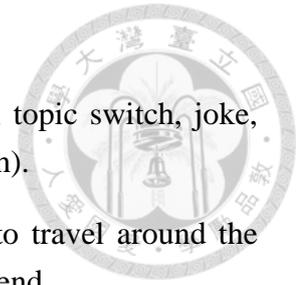
CONFESSOR; 你:有要跟我:

..一起看聖誕樹嗎?

*Are you going to go see Christmas trees with me?*

CONFESSEE; ...我不知道.

*I don't know.*





## Appendix D: Acceptance strategies used by romantic confesseees

**Reward-Based Strategies:** Strategies that reward the confessor or make him/her feel good.

### 1. Ingratiation

Definition: Provides goods, services, or compliments to make the confessor feel good before accepting the request.

Example 1:

CONFESSOR; ((跳舞示愛))

((伸出右手))

((DANCE TO SHOW AFFECTION))

((HOLD OUT RIGHT HAND))

CONFESSEE; ..等一下.

...那個:

..有沒有—有沒有水啊?

((和工作人員拿水和面紙))

((遞水給 CONFESSOR))

((拿面紙幫 CONFESSOR 擦汗))

*Hold on. Umm..Is there — Is there water? ((GET BOTTLED WATER AND TISSUE PAPER FROM THE STAFF)) ((GIVE THE CONFESSOR THE BOTTLE WATER)) ((HELP THE CONFESSOR WIPE AWAY HIS SWEAT WITH THE TISSUE PAPER))*

Example 2: ...其實我覺得妳挺好的.

..我真的挺喜歡妳的性格.

*I think you are quite a good (person). I really like your personality.*

### 2. Promise

Definition: Promises to do something for the confessor in the future after accepting to do what is asked.

Example 1: The confessor was a host and was often admired by people and suitors when she worked on a stage. This time, instead of being the one that was put on the pedestal by others, she made a confession to the confessee by asking him to stand on a stage and putting him on the pedestal of her heart.

CONFESSEE; 剛才呢:

..妳讓我:站在上面,

..是為了給到我一種:



...高高在上的感覺.

我希望:

..以後我來給妳一種高高在上的感覺.

*Earlier, you letting me stand on the top (of the stage) is to give me a feeling of being put on the pedestal. I hope that, in the future, I can give you the feeling of being put on the pedestal.*

### 3. Thanks

Definition: Shows gratitude or appreciation in return for what the confessor has done or offered.

Example: The confessor drew a sketch of the confessee and showed it to her while confessing his feelings for the confessee.

CONFESSEE; ..謝謝你, ((微笑))

...謝謝你的:作品. ((微笑))

*Thank you. ((SMILE)) Thank you for your work. ((SMILE))*

**Rationale-Based Strategies:** Strategies that are devised based on the rationale behind the acceptance.

#### 1. Direct Acceptance

Definition: Accepts the request directly by using accepting vocabulary or statements that show willingness or approval.

Example:

CONFESSOR; ..我會是妳的另一半嗎?

*Will I be your other half?*

CONFESSEE; ..會.

*Yes.*

#### 2. Hinting

Definition: Presents the situational context in a way that the confessor is led to conclude that his/her request is accepted by the confessee.

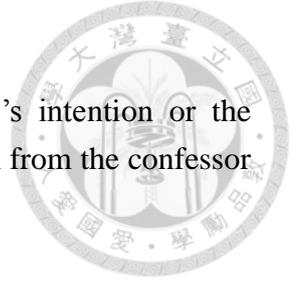
Example:

CONFESSOR; ..跟我走嗎?

*(Will you) come away with me?*

CONFESSEE; ((擁抱 CONFESSOR))

*((HUG THE CONFESSOR))*



### 3. Challenge

Definition: Expresses concerns or doubts about the confessor's intention or the feasibility of the request with a view to gaining more explanation from the confessor to confirm his/her decision to accept the request.

Example: ..所以距離的問題,

難道:真的不是問題嗎?

*So the problem of distance is really not a problem?*