A Study of Live-Streaming E-Commerce Discourse from Perspective of Cooperative Principle

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ABSTRACT

Live-streaming E-commerce host discourse is typically marked by colloquialism, interactivity, emotionality, and persuasiveness, but research focusing specifically on hosts' linguistic features remains limited. Taking the live selling discourse of the Douyin beauty host Chen Yuanyuan "Super Cute" as the research object, this paper analyzes its linguistic features and communicative functions within the framework of the Cooperative Principle. Using literature review, case analysis, and discourse analysis, the study examines authentic live-stream data from the perspectives of identity construction, discourse landscape, interaction patterns, and the four maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner. The findings show that Chen Yuanyuan's discourse is colloquial, life-oriented, interactive, and evaluative. Through terms of address, rhetorical questions, step-by-step instructions, comparison, and after-sales guarantees, she strengthens persuasion, trust, and interaction. This study extends the application of the Cooperative Principle in live Selling discourse, enriches the understanding of hosts' linguistic features, and provides a case-based reference for future pragmatic research on live-stream discourse.

Keywords: Cooperative Principle; Live-streaming E-commerce; Discourse Feature; Host Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

In recent years, Live-streaming e-commerce has developed rapidly in China and has become an important form of digital marketing and online consumption. Compared with traditional graphic-based e-commerce, live selling relies more heavily on real-time discourse. Through instant interaction, product demonstration, emotional appeal, and scenario-based recommendation, hosts are able to attract attention, build trust, and encourage purchase within a short period of time. In this sense, live-stream e-commerce is not only a sales activity, but also a discourse-centered communicative process. Especially in beauty live selling, hosts do more than introduce products. They also explain usage, compare effects, respond to audience concerns, and guide purchase decisions through continuous verbal interaction.

Existing studies have shown that live-stream discourse is usually characterized by interactivity, personalization, and strong persuasive force. Huang et al. (2020), through a multimodal discourse analysis of Austin Li's live selling, point out that live selling discourse differs from traditional advertising in its stronger emphasis on interaction, personalization, and trust building. Xiao (2023) further argues that e-commerce hosts often combine direct and indirect speech strategies in order to achieve communicative goals and stimulate purchasing desire. Research on persuasive speech acts in live e-commerce also shows that hosts use informative, directive, expressive, and rapport-building strategies to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors in real time (Wang, 2024). These studies suggest that host discourse has become an important factor in shaping consumers' understanding, trust, and purchase decisions.

At the same time, current research still has some limitations. Many studies focus mainly on marketing models, consumer behavior, and purchase intention, while relatively fewer studies examine the linguistic features of host

discourse itself. Although some domestic scholars have discussed the discourse expression, register, and vocal language features of live-stream hosts (张浩， 2023), and others have explored host discourse from the perspectives of pragmatic strategies and the Cooperative Principle (杨赛雅, 2022), there is still room for further discussion of how specific discourse forms operate in actual live-stream interaction, especially in the discourse of younger beauty hosts on Douyin.

From a pragmatic perspective, the Cooperative Principle provides an important framework for explaining how speakers organize language, convey intended meaning, and achieve communicative purposes. However, live-stream discourse also raises new questions for this theory. Repetition may appear to exceed the Maxim of Quantity, strong evaluation may seem to weaken the Maxim of Quality, and topic expansion may look like a departure from the Maxim of Relation. Yet these expressions do not necessarily damage communication. On the contrary, they often help maintain interaction, strengthen trust, and support purchase conversion. Therefore, the Cooperative Principle offers a useful perspective for explaining why live-streaming e-commerce host discourse can remain persuasive and communicatively effective even when it appears to depart from ordinary conversational expectations.

Based on this, the present study takes the live-streaming e-commerce discourse of the Douyin beauty host Chen Yuanyuan “Super Cute” as its research object. It analyzes its linguistic features and communicative functions within the framework of the Cooperative Principle. By doing so, this paper attempts to explain how host discourse works in beauty live-streaming e-commerce, to enrich the study of hosts’ linguistic features, and to provide a more specific case for pragmatic research on live-stream e-commerce discourse.

Research Significance

The significance of this paper is reflected mainly in two aspects: theory and practice.

At the theoretical level, this paper helps expand the application of the Cooperative Principle in the new media context. The Cooperative Principle was originally used to explain communicative behavior in everyday conversation, but live-streaming e-commerce, as a language activity combining commercial promotion, real-time interaction, emotional expression, and consumption guidance, provides a new object for its application. Compared with everyday conversation, live-streaming e-commerce discourse is more purposeful, rhythmic, and performative. Studying it can enrich the explanatory power of the Cooperative Principle and deepen our understanding of communication in new media discourse.

At the practical level, this paper can provide some reference for improving the language used in live selling commerce. As competition in live-streaming e-commerce becomes increasingly intense, host language has become an important factor affecting viewer retention, interaction, and transactions. Appropriate, clear, and engaging discourse can strengthen consumers’ trust and purchase intention, while excessive exaggeration or poorly designed language may weaken user trust. By analyzing Chen Yuanyuan’s discourse and the operation of the Cooperative Principle in it, this paper may provide some useful reference for discourse organization and interaction strategy in beauty live selling.

Furthermore, this study also has significant socio-economic implications. From a societal perspective, live-streaming commerce has become an integral part of everyday consumption, and the language used by streamers increasingly influences how viewers understand products, build trust, and make purchasing decisions. Analyzing this discourse helps reveal how commercial language shapes consumer perceptions and communication behaviors in the digital age.

From an economic perspective, effective host discourse can enhance interaction efficiency, strengthen consumer trust, and promote sales conversions, whereas inappropriate, exaggerated, or misleading language may undermine consumer confidence and reduce the long-term sustainability of live-streaming commerce. Therefore, this study not only provides useful guidance for hosts and merchants but also offers valuable insights for the more regulated and healthy development of the live-streaming e-commerce industry.

This study may also offer practical insights for readers and consumers. By examining how hosts use explanation,

comparison, emotional appeals, and interaction to guide audience responses, the study helps consumers better understand the persuasive mechanisms underlying live-streaming sales discourse. In this sense, this paper is valuable not only for discourse studies but also for raising consumers' awareness of linguistic strategies, thereby helping them make more rational judgments when shopping via live-streaming.

Research Structure

This paper is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 is the introduction. It presents the research background, research significance, and overall structure of the paper. It explains why live selling discourse, especially the discourse of beauty hosts, is worth studying from a pragmatic perspective.

Chapter 2 focuses on the Cooperative Principle. It introduces the basic conception of the Cooperative Principle, explains its four maxims, and reviews previous studies on the Cooperative Principle at home and abroad. This chapter provides the theoretical foundation for the following analysis.

Chapter 3 introduces the development of live selling and then moves to the case of Chen Yuanyuan "Super Cute." It discusses why she is selected as the research object and analyzes the main linguistic features of her live selling discourse, including identity construction, discourse landscape, and interaction patterns. It also reviews previous studies on live selling discourse.

Chapter 4 is the core part of the paper. Based on authentic live-stream transcripts, it analyzes Chen Yuanyuan's discourse under the four maxims of the Cooperative Principle, namely the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Relation, and the Maxim of Manner. This chapter aims to explain how her discourse both follows and strategically adjusts the Cooperative Principle in the live-stream context.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion. It summarizes the main findings of the study, discusses the value and implications of the research, points out the limitations, and offers suggestions for future studies.

Cooperative Principle

Basic Conception

The Cooperative Principle is one of the important theories in pragmatics, and it is also an important basis for explaining conversational implicature and communicative inference. Grice formally proposed the Cooperative Principle in *Logic and Conversation*. He pointed out that in conversation, speakers and hearers usually assume that they are working toward a shared communicative goal, and the speaker's contribution should meet the needs of the conversation at that moment. On this basis, Grice further proposed four maxims: the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation, and the Maxim of Manner (Grice, 1975: 45–46).

The Cooperative Principle is not simply a conversational rule. More importantly, it provides a framework for explaining how communication can go on smoothly. Levinson points out that the Cooperative Principle is closely related to conversational implicature, because hearers usually assume that the speaker is still being cooperative, and so they try to infer meanings beyond the literal meaning (Levinson, 1983). Chinese scholars have also stressed its importance. Wang Lizhen argues that the value of the Cooperative Principle lies in showing how speakers organize language around a shared communicative goal (王丽珍, 2016), while Wang Jianping points out that this principle should be understood through relevance, coherence, and implied meaning rather than as a rigid list of rules (王建平, 2016).

For this paper, the Cooperative Principle is also suitable for the analysis of live-stream discourse. Live-stream selling is, in nature, a goal-oriented communicative activity. During the live stream, the host often uses repetition, rhetorical questions, exaggeration, promises, and emotional appeal, but this does not mean that the discourse is naturally uncooperative. On the contrary, because the host's language is organized around product introduction, interaction maintenance, trust building, and purchase promotion, live-stream discourse can still be effectively

explained within the framework of the Cooperative Principle.

Basic Principle

Grice divides the Cooperative Principle into four maxims: the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation, and the Maxim of Manner. In brief, the Maxim of Quantity requires an appropriate amount of information; the Maxim of Quality requires truthfulness and sufficient evidence; the Maxim of Relation requires relevance to the topic; and the Maxim of Manner requires clarity, brevity, and order (Grice, 1975). Wang Lizhen also summarizes them as appropriate information, truthful content, relevant expression, and clear form (王丽珍, 2016).

Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity requires the speaker to provide as much information as needed, but not more than necessary (Grice, 1975). This maxim is not only about information amount, but also about how listeners infer hidden meaning when the information is more or less than expected (Levinson, 1983).

In live selling commerce, hosts often repeat selling points and add information about price, gifts, trials, suitable users, usage steps, and after-sales service. On the surface, this may seem to exceed the minimum required amount of information. However, in the live-stream context, such expressions often help reduce hesitation, strengthen memory, and encourage purchase. Wang Fang also points out that repeated emphasis is a common feature of host discourse and can strengthen persuasion (王芳, 2021: 57–58).

Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality requires the speaker to make the discourse as truthful and reliable as possible. The speaker should not say what they believe to be false or what lacks sufficient evidence (Grice, 1975: 46). This maxim is important because it helps maintain basic trust in communication.

At the same time, truthfulness in real communication is not always limited to literal accuracy. Wang Lizhen points out that irony, hyperbole, and metaphor may seem not fully true at the literal level, but listeners can still understand the real intention through context（王丽珍，2016）. In live selling commerce, this maxim is especially important because the host must build trust through experience, product information, effect comparison, and user feedback. Studies by Yang Saiya (2022) and Liu Jia (2024) also show that hosts sometimes strengthen selling effects through strategic expression while still serving the overall communicative purpose.

Maxim of Relation

The Maxim of Relation requires the speaker to remain relevant to the current topic (Grice, 1975: 46). In practice, this means not only avoiding topic deviation, but also keeping the discourse coherent as a whole. The essence of the Cooperative Principle can largely be understood in terms of conversational relevance and coherence.

In live selling commerce, hosts may shift topics, add interaction, answer comments, or create emotional atmosphere, but these expressions usually return to the product and the buying decision in the end. Therefore, what seems like topic shifting is often only a temporary extension that still serves the main line. Wang Fang notes that host discourse remains guided by the product theme even when interaction appears flexible (王芳, 2021: 58).

Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner concerns the way something is expressed. It requires the speaker to avoid obscurity and ambiguity, to be brief, and to speak in an orderly way (Grice, 1975). Therefore, it is mainly about whether the listener can understand the message easily. Wang Lizhen also points out that its core lies in clarity and comprehensibility (王丽珍, 2016: 438).

In live selling discourse, however, clarity does not always mean formal written style. Hosts often use repetition,

imperative sentences, emotional tone, and internet expressions to make discourse more direct and easier to understand in a fast-paced setting. Yang Saiya points out that explanation, instruction, promise, pauses, stress, and internet slang all contribute to effective host discourse in the new media context (杨赛雅, 2022). Therefore, in live selling, the Maxim of Manner should be judged according to communicative effect rather than written-language standards alone.

Based on this, the present paper takes Chen Yuanyuan "Super Cute" as a specific case and examines her live selling discourse from the perspective of the Cooperative Principle. The aim is to further explore the linguistic features and communicative functions of host discourse in live selling.

Previous Studies on Cooperative Principle

Research on the Cooperative Principle abroad began with Grice's discussion of conversational meaning. In *Logic and Conversation*, Grice pointed out that participants in communication usually assume that they follow a common principle. That is, a speaker's contribution should fit the communicative purpose or direction that has already been accepted at that stage of the conversation. On this basis, he proposed four maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The original value of the Cooperative Principle lies not in telling people how they should speak, but in explaining why listeners can understand a speaker's intended meaning beyond the literal words (Grice, 1975).

After Grice, foreign scholars further developed this theory from the perspectives of conversational meaning and inferential mechanisms. Levinson sees the Cooperative Principle as one of the core issues in pragmatics research. He argues that listeners can understand implied meanings because they usually assume that the speaker is still communicating on a cooperative basis, even if the expression seems indirect or incomplete. So the Cooperative Principle should not be seen as a set of rigid rules for conversation. Instead, it is an important framework for explaining how implied meanings are created and understood (Levinson, 1983).

In recent years, foreign research has also reflected on the understanding of the Cooperative Principle itself. Davies points out that many later studies often misunderstood Grice's "cooperation" as everyday friendliness or helpfulness, and this deviation took attention away from Grice's original theoretical concerns (Davies, 2007). She argues that Grice's real focus was not on surface-level cooperative attitudes, but on speaker meaning, listener inference, and the rational basis of communication. In other words, the Cooperative Principle should be understood as a mechanism that explains how discourse meaning is built and understood, not just as a set of behavioral norms. And for this reason, apparent deviations from certain maxims do not necessarily mean communication failure. In many cases, these deviations are still based on the shared rational expectations between speaker and listener.

Beyond theoretical explanations, foreign scholars have also applied the Cooperative Principle to specific discourse analysis. Some studies have looked at film dialogue to see how the four maxims work in characters' speech. For example, Sari and Afriana analyzed the dialogue in the film About Time using the Cooperative Principle, and they found that the Quantity Maxim and the Relation Maxim appeared most often in the conversations. So this shows that the Cooperative Principle can be used not only as a theoretical tool but also as a practical method for analyzing how discourse is organized and how people interact (Sari & Afriana, 2020).

At the same time, the Cooperative Principle has also been applied to educational interaction contexts. Liu Lulu (2017) discussed the role of the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle in classroom question-and-answer activities. He argues that using these principles properly can help improve teacher-student interaction and make classroom teaching more effective. Although this kind of research is more applied in nature, it also shows that foreign scholars have started to move the Cooperative Principle from abstract theory into real-life institutional discourse and communication settings.

Overall, foreign research on the Cooperative Principle has followed two main paths. One focuses on explaining the relationship between the Cooperative Principle and conversational meaning, inferential processes, and speaker intention. The other focuses on applying the theory to specific discourse types such as film dialogue and classroom interaction. So from these studies, we can see that the Cooperative Principle is not just a general rule for conversation. Instead, it is an important theoretical framework for explaining how discourse remains

understandable and communicatively effective. But compared with traditional conversation, film and TV discourse, and classroom interaction, research on live-streaming e-commerce discourse—especially the speech of young beauty hosts on Douyin—is still relatively limited. And this leaves room for further discussion in this paper.

Introduction to Live-stream E-commerce

Development of Live-stream E-commerce

In recent years, live selling has grown rapidly in China and has become an important part of online retail and digital consumption. Compared with traditional graphic-based e-commerce, live selling allows sellers to introduce products, show how they work, answer questions, and guide purchase decisions in real time. Live-stream selling is therefore not only a commercial activity, but also a highly interactive communicative process. The beauty sector, in particular, has become one of the most active and competitive areas in live selling. This is because beauty products are highly visual, easy to demonstrate, and closely connected to consumers' daily experience.

As the live-stream market has expanded, the host's language has become more and more important. In beauty live streams, the host is not only expected to give product information. She also needs to organize her explanation, create interaction, build trust, and encourage purchase within a very short time. For this reason, the language used in live selling often shows clear features such as colloquialism, emotional appeal, audience orientation, and strong persuasive power. Existing studies have also shown that live-stream discourse usually combines product explanation, interaction, and consumption guidance, so it is very different from traditional advertising language or ordinary daily conversation.

Against this background, Chen Yuanyuan “Super Cute” is a representative case. She is a Douyin beauty host who became popular after 2023. In the highly competitive beauty sector, she quickly became one of the most visible beauty creators on the platform, and her follower count on Douyin has now exceeded 16 million. Industry reports also show that she was one of the fastest-growing beauty accounts on Douyin in 2023, with an annual increase of about 3.15 million followers. Her rapid rise is closely related to her highly recognizable personal style, her tutorial-oriented selling approach, and her ability to combine beauty instruction with humorous, life-based performance. She does not simply introduce products. Instead, she often teaches viewers step by step, puts products into familiar daily situations, and creates a strong sense of interaction through vivid and friendly language. These features have helped her attract a large number of young viewers and gain strong audience recognition. As a beauty host on Douyin, Chen Yuanyuan mainly focuses on products such as base makeup, highlighting, contouring, brushes, primers, and setting products. Her discourse is suitable for pragmatic analysis because it combines product recommendation, makeup tutorial, usage instruction, emotional engagement, and shopping guidance. On the one hand, she explains product effects, skin-type suitability, usage methods, and makeup results. On the other hand, she frequently uses intimate forms of address, repeated emphasis, before-and-after comparisons, and after-sales guarantees to shorten the distance between herself and the audience and to strengthen trust. So this combination of explanation, interaction, and persuasion makes her a representative case for the study of live-stream discourse.

The corpus used in this chapter comes from fifteen authentic live-stream sessions conducted between 2024 and December 2025. These materials include product introduction, makeup instruction, audience interaction, promotional explanation, and after-sales expressions. The time span and the variety of topics make it possible to observe Chen Yuanyuan's discourse features in a relatively complete and continuous way. So compared with short-term or single-session materials, this corpus can better reflect the stability of her language style and the recurring patterns in her live selling discourse. On this basis, the following sections will analyze the linguistic features of her discourse from three aspects: identity construction, discourse landscape, and interaction patterns.

Linguistic Features

Identity Construction

Identity construction is one of the most obvious pragmatic features in Chen Yuanyuan’s live selling discourse.

She does not appear as a neutral and objective "product introducer." Instead, through continuous speech, she builds the image of a host who understands makeup, knows how to teach, can be trusted, and stays close to the audience.

First, she builds closeness through stable address terms. In many live streams, the term "princesses" appears repeatedly. For example, in the live stream on July 16, 2025, when introducing 3CE blush, she said: *"This color can also be used with confidence by princesses with yellow undertones"* (2025-07-16). In the live stream on April 7, 2025, she also said: *"Princesses with square or round faces must give this a try"* (2025-04-07). Here, "princesses" is more than a simple address term. It carries emotional meaning and creates a sense of group identity. It weakens the direct buyer-seller relationship and turns a selling scene into a more personal and friendly communicative scene.

Second, she builds an experienced and professional identity through the self-reference "Sister Yuan." For example, in the live stream on July 16, 2024, she said: "*Sister Yuan has used the top five brightening products on Douyin. I'm telling the truth"* (2024-07-16). This expression presents her as someone with practical experience and therefore with the right to evaluate products. Wang Fang (2021) points out that experienced hosts often build stable personal labels through individualized discourse styles, and this helps strengthen their influence on consumption.

Third, she constructs a reliable identity through guarantee expressions. In the live stream on July 16, 2025, she said: "*Keep it if it suits you, return it if it doesn't. If you're satisfied, keep it; if not, there's a 7-day no-reason return with shipping insurance*" (2025-07-16). Such expressions are not merely about after-sales service. They also show that the host is willing to reduce the audience's purchase risk. This helps her appear more considerate and trustworthy.

In short, Chen Yuanyuan's identity construction is built through address terms, self-reference, experience-based support, and guarantee expressions. Through these resources, she shapes herself into a beauty host who is both professional and approachable. More importantly, this identity construction affects the way her later discourse is received. Because the host first presents herself as close, experienced, and trustworthy, her evaluations, suggestions, and instructions are more likely to be understood by viewers as cooperative guidance rather than simple sales pressure. Previous studies on live-stream discourse also indicate that the use of address forms and identity positioning can help streamers build closer relationships with audiences (郑渝，2021).

Interaction Patterns

Another obvious feature of Chen Yuanyuan's live discourse is its clear interaction pattern. Live selling commerce is not a one-way process of giving information. Instead, it is a dynamic process that keeps simulating questions and answers, responding to the audience, and creating a sense of participation. Wang Ying (2021) points out that the core moves in live selling discourse include naming the product, introducing the product for sale, offering purchase incentives, and answering audience questions. Chen Yuanyuan's discourse strongly reflects this feature.

First, she often uses self-addressed questions and rhetorical questions to simulate interaction. For example, in the live stream on July 16, 2025, she said: *"Why did I choose this 3CE blush?"* (2025-07-16). In the live stream on October 13, 2025, she also asked: *"This cushion foundation might not be considered cheap, so why are so many princesses still willing to order it?"* (2025-10-13). These sentences seem like self-questioning and self-answering, but in fact they predict possible audience questions and answer them in advance. In this way, the host increases the sense of dialogue and involvement.

Second, she frequently uses tag questions such as "right," "see," and "isn't it" to guide the audience's understanding. For example, in the live stream on April 30, 2025, she said: *"Isn't there a very obvious hollow here in the tear trough, right?"* (2025-04-30). These expressions pull the audience into the host's observation process and encourage them to follow the judgment path already set by the host.

Third, imperative sentences and action instructions are an important part of her interaction pattern. In the live stream on April 30, 2025, she used a series of action instructions, such as: *"Apply a circle around the mouth*

area, pat vertically in place. Now use this pink 02 to plump up the hollow areas" (2025-04-30). In the live stream on August 3, 2025, she also said: *"The lighter color is for contouring, the darker color is for shaping, use it to deepen local areas"* (2025-08-03). Wu Binji (2022) points out that live selling discourse often uses many imperative sentences because they are action-oriented and help emotional progression and purchase stimulation. In Chen Yuanyuan's discourse, imperative sentences are used not only for sales guidance, but also for teaching-style interaction.

Overall, Chen Yuanyuan's interaction pattern is built through questions, confirmation, and action instructions. Instead of relying only on actual audience replies, she creates a strong sense of interaction through discourse design. This helps her maintain rhythm, involve viewers, and gradually guide them toward recognition and purchase. In this sense, interaction in her live streams is not only a discourse feature, but also an important pragmatic resource. Although such expressions may sometimes appear repetitive or emotionally intensified, they still serve the shared communicative goal of explanation, involvement, and persuasion.

Previous Studies on Live-Stream E-commerce

With the rapid development of digital platforms and online consumption, foreign studies on live selling discourse have gradually moved beyond traditional advertising analysis. Researchers have begun to pay more attention to interaction, persuasion, and multimodal communication in real-time selling contexts. Compared with traditional product promotion, live selling discourse is more immediate and more audience-oriented, and it depends more on the host's verbal performance. So foreign scholars often discuss live-stream discourse not simply as a form of sales language, but as a complex communicative activity that involves language, visual resources, platform functions, and audience response.

Among the representative studies, Huang et al. analyze the live selling discourse of Austin Li from a multimodal perspective. They point out that live selling discourse differs from traditional advertising because it has stronger interactivity and personalization, and it also has a stronger trust-building function. Their study shows that persuasive force in live selling is not produced by language alone. Instead, it is jointly realized through verbal discourse, visual demonstration, platform affordances, and the host's self-presentation (Huang et al., 2020). So this suggests that live-stream discourse is highly dynamic and context-dependent, and that the host's language should be understood together with the broader communicative environment.

Xiao Daohua (2023) further discusses the speech strategies used by Chinese e-commerce hosts. He argues that hosts often combine direct and indirect discourse strategies in order to achieve their communicative goals, stimulate viewers' purchasing desire, and strengthen persuasive effect. So in this sense, live-stream discourse is not merely informative. It is also highly strategic. The host's language needs to balance product explanation, emotional appeal, and audience guidance in a very limited time, and this makes it different from both everyday conversation and conventional advertising language.

Recent studies have also paid attention to persuasive speech acts in live-stream selling. Sumarlam et al. point out that online sellers often use informative, directive, expressive, and rapport-building strategies in live e-commerce, and these strategies play an important role in influencing consumer response and maintaining interaction (Sumarlam et al., 2024). Similarly, Wang Shui emphasizes that the speech acts used in live e-commerce marketing are closely related to communicative purpose and sales effect, and that discourse organization itself is already part of the host's selling strategy (Wang Shui, 2024).

Overall, foreign studies on live selling discourse mainly highlight three points. First, live selling discourse is more interactive and personalized than traditional advertising discourse. Second, its persuasive effect depends not only on verbal language, but also on multimodal resources and platform-based interaction. Third, hosts' discourse is highly strategic, because it needs to organize information, create trust, and guide consumption at the same time. But although these studies provide useful insights into live selling discourse, they pay more attention to persuasion, multimodality, and speech strategy in general. So relatively less attention has been given to the detailed linguistic features of hosts' discourse itself, especially from the perspective of pragmatics.

In general, both foreign and domestic studies show that live selling discourse is a highly interactive, persuasive,

and context-dependent discourse type. Foreign studies pay more attention to multimodality, speech strategy, and persuasive mechanisms, while domestic studies more actively examine host language from the perspectives of pragmatic strategy, discourse expression, register, and consumer influence. These studies provide a useful basis for understanding the role of host discourse in live-stream commerce.

But existing studies still leave room for further research. Although scholars have noticed that host discourse plays an important role in trust building, interaction maintenance, and purchase conversion, relatively fewer studies focus specifically on the linguistic features of host discourse itself. In particular, research on younger beauty hosts on Douyin remains limited, and the operation of specific linguistic forms under pragmatic principles still needs more

Case Analysis of Chen Yuanyuan's Live Selling Discourse by Cooperative Principle

Analysis of the Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality requires the speaker to make the discourse truthful and reliable. In other words, the speaker should not say what they believe to be false, and they should not make claims without sufficient evidence (Grice, 1975: 46). In live selling commerce, this maxim is closely related to whether the host can build trust. In beauty live selling especially, descriptions of product effects often contain strong subjective evaluation. If such evaluations are not supported, the audience may easily see them as exaggerated promotion. For this reason, hosts usually need to support their judgments through usage experience, personal testing, and visual demonstration (王芳，2021).

Example 1：

I've tried all the top five highlighters on Douyin. To be honest, it's not that they are bad, but some of them do not sit well on the skin, and some oxidize too quickly. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream,July 16, 2024)

Word Count: 51 Words

Example 2：

Normally, I would already say a base is excellent if it lasts for eight hours, but this one can last for ten hours—ten full hours. I tested it myself. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream-May, 2024)

Word Count: 47 Words

These examples show that Chen Yuanyuan's discourse under the Maxim of Quality is mainly characterized by adherence, although strategic reinforcement also appears. In the first example, she does not directly claim that her own product is the best or that competing products are bad. Instead, she first says that she has tried all the top five highlighters and then comments on the problems she noticed. This means that her evaluation is based on personal experience rather than unsupported praise or criticism. The main linguistic feature here is experience endorsement, and its pragmatic function is to strengthen her credibility and professionalism.

The second example works in a similar way. The claim that the product can last for ten hours is a strong one. Without support, it could easily be taken as exaggerated promotion. However, by adding "I tested it myself," the host provides a clear source of evidence.

Analysis of the Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity requires the speaker to provide the amount of information needed for the current communication, neither too little nor too much (Grice, 1975: 45). In live selling commerce, however, this maxim is more complex than in everyday conversation. The audience usually wants to understand price, gifts, trial policy, usage methods, and after-sales service in a very short time. As a result, hosts often use supplementation, repetition, and information stacking to strengthen memory and reduce hesitation (王芳, 2021).

Example 1：

There are ten brushes in total. Five are made of animal hair. There are two large face brushes and eight eye brushes. Big ones and small ones are all included. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream-April 7, 2025)

Word Count: 31 Words

Example 2：

Dry skin should use three to four drops, while oily skin should use one to two. Warm it up in your palms first to activate it, and then press it onto the face. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream-December 7, 2024)

Word Count: 31 Words

These examples suggest that Chen Yuanyuan's discourse under the Maxim of Quantity shows both adherence and strategic deviation. The first two examples mainly reflect adherence. In the first one, the host does not simply say that the brush set is complete. Instead, she explains the number, material, and main categories of brushes. This information directly helps the audience understand what is included in the set, so it is neither too little nor too much. Its linguistic feature is itemized explanation, and its function is to improve completeness and clarity.

The second example also reflects adherence to the maxim. The host not only explains how to use the product, but also gives different amounts for dry skin and oily skin, together with an application method. This information is directly related to actual use, so it is necessary and useful. Its main feature is audience-based supplementation, and its pragmatic function is to increase relevance and practicality.

Overall, Chen Yuanyuan's use of the Maxim of Quantity shows a balance between helping the audience understand and helping the audience remember. Necessary information supports product understanding, while information stacking and repetition support memory and quick decision-making. This is a typical strategic use of the Maxim of Quantity in the live-stream setting. In other words, expressions that seem to provide more information than strictly necessary should not be treated as mere overstatement. In the context of live selling, they function instead as a way to reduce hesitation, highlight value, and improve persuasive efficiency.

Analysis of the Maxim of Relation

The Maxim of Relation requires the speaker's expression to remain relevant to the current topic (Grice, 1975: 46). In live selling commerce, this means that the host's discourse should keep returning to the core question of why the product is worth buying. Even when the host introduces life scenarios, user pain points, or complementary products, these parts should still serve product value and purchase guidance in the end (王芳, 2021: 58).

Example 1：

Why do I choose this 3CE blush? Because it is not picky about skin type or skin tone, and even girls with yellow-toned skin can use it with confidence. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream, July 16- 2025)

Word Count: 44 words

Example 2：

If you are in a hurry and don't have time to do your makeup, or you are about to go out to meet your friends, then just use this tone-up cream. It is very convenient. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream, July 16-2025)

Word Count: 39 words

These examples show that Chen Yuanyuan's discourse under the Maxim of Relation is mainly characterized by adherence. In the first example, the host raises a rhetorical question and then immediately gives the reason for

choosing the product. Both the question and the answer remain close to the product's selling point. Its main feature is a rhetorical question introducing the selling point, and its pragmatic function is to make the explanation more logical and easier to follow.

The second example may look like a move from the product to daily life, but the life situations of "being in a hurry" and "meeting friends" are actually used to explain the product's convenience and time-saving function. So this example still reflects adherence to the maxim. Its feature is scenario-based explanation, and its function is to increase the audience's sense of identification and connect the product with everyday life.

Analysis of the Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner requires the speaker's expression to avoid obscurity and ambiguity, to be concise, and to be orderly (Grice, 1975: 46). In live selling commerce, this means that the host should not only convey information, but also make it easy for the audience to understand, remember, and learn. In the live-stream context, the Maxim of Manner is mainly reflected in clear steps, direct actions, accessible explanation, and organized structure (杨赛雅, 2022).

Example 1：

Take the white highlighter, apply it to the triangle area of the forehead, the brow bone, and a little on the tip of the nose. Then fold the dry puff in half and pat it in place. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream-August, 2024)

Word Count: 35 words

Example 2：

The first brush is the highlight brush, the second is the multifunctional detail eyeshadow brush, the third is the small flame brush, and the fourth is the large flame brush. (Chen Yuanyuan Live Stream-July 16, 2025)

Word Count: 31 words

These examples show that Chen Yuanyuan's discourse under the Maxim of Manner is mainly characterized by adherence. In the first example, the host clearly explains what to use, where to apply it, what tool to use, and how to operate. The information is given in a clear order, and there is no obvious ambiguity. Its main feature is step-by-step instruction, and its function is to reduce the difficulty of understanding and improve operability.

The second example improves order by means of numbered explanation. The sequence "the first," "the second," "the third," and "the fourth" gives the audience a clear structure and is especially useful for beginners. Its feature is numbered explanation, and its function is to make the tool introduction more organized and easier to remember.

Overall, Chen Yuanyuan's use of the Maxim of Manner shows the feature of being colloquial but not chaotic, and life-based but still clear. Through step-by-step instruction, numbered explanation, accessible comparison, and explanatory restatement, she makes her discourse easier for viewers to understand, remember, and follow. From this perspective, live-stream discourse does not have to imitate formal written language in order to be cooperative. What matters is whether the expression remains understandable and functional in the actual context of communication.

CONCLUSION

This study takes Grice's Cooperative Principle as its theoretical framework and uses authentic live-stream transcripts of the Douyin beauty host Chen Yuanyuan "Super Cute" as its research material. The paper first discusses the background and significance of live-streaming e-commerce discourse, then explains the Cooperative Principle and its four maxims, and finally analyzes Chen Yuanyuan's discourse from two angles: pragmatic features and case analysis. The study shows that live-selling discourse is not just about introducing

products, but it also works as a complex form of discourse that combines information delivery, emotional appeal, interaction, and consumer guidance.

From a pragmatic perspective, Chen Yuanyuan's live selling discourse has a clear personal style and platform-specific features. In terms of identity construction, she uses address terms like “princesses” and “Sister Yuan”, along with self-references and expressions of personal experience, to create an image of a host who is both friendly and professional. In terms of discourse style, her language is colloquial, everyday, and context-based. She often uses everyday expressions, contrastive effects, action descriptions, and emotional reinforcement to make the information easier to understand and more engaging. In terms of interaction, she frequently uses rhetorical questions, confirmatory statements, imperative sentences, and reassuring expressions to increase viewers' sense of participation and connection. These features together help her attract attention, keep viewers engaged, build trust, and encourage purchases within a short time.

From the perspective of the Cooperative Principle, Chen Yuanyuan's speech follows the four maxims but also makes strategic adjustments for the live-streaming context. Regarding the Maxim of Quality, she often builds credibility through personal experience, hands-on testing, and visual comparisons, and she also uses moderate emotional reinforcement to increase appeal. Regarding the Maxim of Quantity, she provides key product information but also uses repetition and information stacking to strengthen memory and reduce hesitation. Regarding the Maxim of Relation, she brings in real-life scenarios, user pain points, and complementary recommendations, but these elements always come back to product explanation and purchase guidance. Regarding the Maxim of Manner, she mainly uses step-by-step instructions, numbered explanations, easy comparisons, and explanatory restatements to make her message clear. So this shows that in live-streaming e-commerce, the Cooperative Principle still has strong explanatory power, but it works in a more flexible and strategic way than in everyday conversation.

This study also offers several insights at the social, economic, and audience levels. At the social level, it shows how live-streaming discourse has become an important form of public commercial communication in the digital age, shaping the relationship between language, trust, and consumption. At the economic level, the study suggests that good discourse strategies can support product promotion, user retention, and conversion rates, but poor strategies may hurt consumer trust in the host and affect the long-term sustainability of the business. For readers and consumers, this study helps them become more aware of persuasive language in live-stream shopping, so they can better understand how hosts use language to influence attention, trust, and purchase decisions.

At the same time, this study has some limitations. First, it focuses mainly on one Douyin beauty host, so the findings reflect only this specific case and may not fully represent other platforms or other types of hosts. Second, although the corpus comes from real live-stream content, the sample size is still small and cannot cover all aspects of the host's discourse. Third, this study mainly uses qualitative analysis. Future research could combine a larger corpus with quantitative methods to draw more complete conclusions.

Overall, this paper argues that Chen Yuanyuan's live-selling discourse does not simply follow or violate the Cooperative Principle. Instead, she uses the four maxims flexibly and strategically in the live-streaming e-commerce context. Her language features—such as experience-based endorsement, information reinforcement, scenario-based introduction, step-by-step explanation, and emotional evaluation—may seem to deviate from the strict requirements of certain maxims on the surface, but they always serve the main goals of trust-building, interaction maintenance, and consumption conversion. It is hoped that this study can provide a useful case for research on live selling discourse and offer some reference for further applying the Cooperative Principle in the new media.

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