

The Influences of *Forrest Gump*'s Characters on His Language Characteristics in Film *Forrest Gump*

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Abstract

Forrest Gump is one of the most classical English movies. In this movie, Gump has mental retardation and his IQ is just 75. For this reason, he has been bullied and sneered at by the people around him since he was a little boy. However, Gump's mother is strong-minded and she encourages Gump to be self-made. At the same time, his schoolmate Jenny helps him to live without the mock. Because of his mother's education and Jenny's help, Gump forms a special character and outlook on life. As one's language is based on his living environment and his characters and the latter is more important, in movie *Forrest Gump*, Gump's language characteristics are corresponded with his characters. They have special features.

Key words: *Forrest Gump*; Characters; Language; Characteristic

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INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a series of complicated actions. To learn a language, the learner has to learn speaking, writing, reading and listening skills. As there are lots of ways to learn a language better, one of the most common and important one is watching movies. By watching movies, the learner can practice his listening skill and also learn about the foreign culture which can give him

convenient access to the language. Therefore, improving English learners' gust of English movies can improve their listening skills on the one hand and help them know better of the culture of the language speaking country on the other hand.

Then here comes one of the most classical English movies *Forrest Gump*. This movie is classical not only because of its plot, but also of the actor's lines in it. It is wildly admitted that "One man's language characteristics are influenced by his characters", that is to say, the way how he chooses his words, sentences and speaking styles is decided by his characters. Moreover, one's character is also decided by something else such as his innateness and acquired environment. This movie sets its background in the latter half of the 20th century in the US and it is very distinctive in the use of language especially in Gump's lines. As a matter of fact, it is Gump's characters that are distinctive, which makes his language characteristics special. Gump's characters are different from others' in some aspects because of his intelligence and life experience. Generally speaking, Gump's intelligence and life experience decide his characters and his characters decide his language characteristics.

To analyze how Gump's characters influence his language characteristics, to understand the culture at that very period and to enhance English learners' ability to appreciate English movies, there are enough reasons to do the research on the movie lines and the relations between the characters of the leading role and the use of language in the movie.

This paper tries to make analysis of the formation of Gump's characters, the main characters of Gump and the influence of his characters on his language characteristics.

1. THE SITUATION OF FORREST GUMP

At the very beginning of the film *Forrest Gump* (directed by Robert Zemeckis in 1994) a piece of white feather was falling from the sky. It went up and down and finally lay

at the foot of *Forrest Gump* (played by Tom Hanks) and he picked it up and put it in his book. Actually, this piece of feather just reflects Gump's life experience. Born with a body which is not strong enough and a mind which is not intelligent enough, Gump's life is like a piece of feather. His life is not gorgeous and does not weight too much as the feather, but it can be said that Gump keeps his life to be white, pure and holy.

1.1 *Forrest Gump*'s Physical Condition

When Gump took his first "magic shoes" which was said by his mother would take him anywhere, he began to walk in the way like other normal people. His doctor said "his legs are strong, as strong as I've ever seen. But his back's as crooked as a politician." His mother didn't know Gump was blessed with strong legs and a very gift to run fast. In order to treat his crooked spine, they gave him that "magic shoes". Actually the leg braces bound Gump's running ability, but this did foreshadowing for the following plot.

With the leg braces, Gump could not bend his legs easily. At the same time, the leg braces also make his walk strange and his walking and running speed slow. That's the reason why most students did not like to sit with him on the first day when he took the school bus. Luckily enough, Jenny asked whether Gump would like to sit with her. Jenny was also curious at his leg braces but her curiosity was kind. She chatted with Gump and thought Gump was different. There were others naughty boys who were also curious at Gump. They expressed their curiosity by riding on bikes, chasing Gump and throwing stones at this different boy. At this time, Jenny told Gump, "Run, Forrest, run" From then on, Gump ran like the wind blows. That was the first time for Gump to begin his running journey and exploit his running gift. Until high school, some boys still ran after him on bikes changed to chase him by car. However, Gump still stuck at his running. At this time, he ran to the football competition field and surpassed all the players. It was running that sends him to the college and became an excellent player of the football team. In Gump's later life, he kept running. Running became Gump's growth process and it becomes an imago for all the human beings. It is not only an ability to move, but bears the weight of rich and generous connotation. It can practice people's body and mind and also can be a way to reach some goals and show emotions. All in all, it can be found that a running man always has some kind of explosive force and strong emotion. Running also proves the breakthrough of Gump from a mobility-impaired child with leg braces to grow to a man with superhuman-like running ability. The old saying should be believed that "when God closed a door for you, he would leave you another window."

1.2 *Forrest Gump*'s Mental Condition

When Gump took the school bus on his first day to school, Jenny asked him "are you stupid?" He answered "mum said, stupid is as stupid does."

Gump's mother told Gump, "Don't let anybody tell you that they are better than you. If God intended everybody to be the same, he'd have given us all braces on our legs." Mum wanted to let Gump know that he was not different from others but he surely was. The principal of the Greenbow County Central School pointed the difference. Gump's I.Q was just 75 which was below the normal and didn't reach the standard to go to public school.

However, the data from the I.Q test was just the standard on surface. It can be judged from the movie that Gump could manage his life by himself, but only had some deviation when trying to understand people's words. In other words, Gump's thinking was like a straight line. He thought about things in a straightforward way and did not beat around the bush. He just carried out the order or command he was told to.

In other words, Gump's mental condition is not very bad. His I.Q just decided that he was different in behavior. However, his thought was purer and easier and this made him successful in his future life.

2. THE INFLUENCES OF GUMP'S MOTHER AND JENNY ON THE FORMATION OF GUMP'S CHARACTER

2.1 The Influence of Gump's Mother

Wang, Yan and Wang have argued the point that compared with the influence of father, mother has obvious predominance in influencing the kids. As soon as the baby was born, mother stays together with him morning and night. Not only does the kid depend on his mother to a large extent physiologically, but he also imitates his mother's behaviors. This point can be proved from the movie *Forrest Gump*. Gump's growth process being different from other children from single-parent family owes much to his mother's education and influence. The author's point will be proved in the thesis from the following three aspects.

2.1.1 Education on Death

In order to send Gump to the public school, Mrs. Gump had sex with the principal of Greenbow County Central School. When the principal asked her where was Mr. Gump, she answered he was on vacation. Gump asked her later what did vacation mean and where did his father go. Mrs. Gump told him that vacation meant he went to somewhere and would not come back anymore.

At that time, Gump was still young. Mrs. Gump did not want to tell him something about death bluntly, so she used vacation to replace death and took Gump far away from the horror and pain of death.

When Gump grew up and Mrs. Gump got cancer and was faced with death, she told Gump "death is just a part of life and it is something we are all destined to do". Gump started to know the meaning of death from then on.

It was after his mother's death that he began to face his life and then later face Jenny's death bravely. It was his mother that remained the image of wonderful world in his heart when he was young and that told him the cruelty of life and the inescapability of death in his adult life.

2.1.2 Influence on Love

From the beginning to the end of this movie, there was not the appearance of Gump's father. However, it can be figured out that Gump's mother has been loyal to her husband spiritually. Throughout her life, she was busy in managing her house which was passed from her grandpa's grandpa's grandpa and raising her child. She was a traditional woman who was not married anymore after her husband's death and remained a widow. Although the movie does not describe her loyalty and love to her husband directly, her faith to family can be felt according to her pay to her family and kid.

Mrs. Gump's concentration to her love and family also influenced Gump's views on love and family. His pure love to his only lover can be felt from his first meet with the angelical Jenny on the school bus, his first fight with the bad guys who flirted Jenny when she was singing in the nightclub, his pushing over of Jenny's father's old house and his words to Jenny before her tomb that "if there is anything you need, I will not be far away".

The love from Gump to Jenny was pure, firm and clinging. He would do his best to protect the person he loved and take his lover as the core. This kind of pure love also came from example of his mother. His mother taught him to be loyal and single-minded to the people he love by her own action.

2.1.3 Education on Life

From the very beginning, Mrs. Gump told her dear son that he was nothing different from others. This may be the biggest influence on Gump. Fortunately, Gump believed his mother. Later in his life, he did everything he was goanna do attentively and never did things with any accounts due to his I.Q. He concentrated on what he was told to, for example, he ran on the football competition field as fast as he could, he finished the tasks he was told to in the army quickly and excellently and he ran quickly and persistently on the battlefield in the Vietnam War to rescue his comrades in arms. He also did well in his hobby such as playing ping-pong and he kept his promise that he would buy a shrimp ship to shrimp for his friend Bubba

Everything Gump did was to prove that he was the same as other. However, what he did was so perfect and successful, which really proved that he was totally different from others. This faith of life came from his mother's education but also from his own understanding that life is to live differently with the same destiny.

The research of mother's influence on kids gives the conclusion that if mother gives the kids enough trust and understanding and thinks about issues with respects from kids' perspective, the kids will form the nice characters of

being modest, respecting others and understanding others.

All in all, Gump's mother plays an important role in the formation of his characters.

2.2 The Influence of Jenny

As the second leading role, Jenny appeared through Gump's life. It can be said that if Gump's mother taught him how to face the cruelty of life directly and solve the problems bravely, Jenny was the one who taught Gump to stay away from problems and troubles.

As one of the most important behaviors in the movie, running was also related closely with Jenny. When Gump was still a kid with leg braces, who was chased by other naughty children, it was Jenny's shouting that make him try his best to run forward. "Run, Forrest. Run." Jenny shouted. Following Jenny's words, Gump ran quickly and got rid of the bound of leg braces as well as the chase of the bad boys. At the second time, it was also Jenny's shouting that make him run to the football competition field, to the college and to his new life. Therefore, it can be said that Jenny brought Gump's life a breakthrough. The change of Gump's affection to Jenny from friendship to love may also happen in this breakthrough.

The third time when Jenny told Gump to run was before he went to the battlefield in Vietnam War. She said "Just if you are ever in trouble, do not try to be brave. You just run. Just run away." With Jenny's request, Gump went to Vietnam. In the last attack, he remembered Jenny's words and just ran. He ran through the smoke and fire to rescue his comrades in arms and to protect himself.

The last running was not related with Jenny directly. After her sudden appearance and disappearance, Gump started his running journey with the shoes Jenny bought him. Gump said his running was for no particular reason. But when he ran from the end of the road to the end of the town, from the whole Greenbow County to the great state of Alabama, from the ocean to another ocean and in the end he remembered what his mother had once said "you got to put the past behind you before you can move on". He stopped and came to understand the meaning of his running journey, which is to put his past behind him and then move on. The more than two-year-running journey also proved that his love for Jenny was thick and heavy. Running was the way to let his affection out and put down the confusion Jenny brought to him when she went away suddenly. This time, Jenny taught him to be persistent and to manage his affection.

Through this movie, Jenny kept Gump at arm's length. She could feel Gump's love and also felt the same for him, but she just tried to be independent because of what she experienced in her family during her childhood. She tried to change her life but it was hard for her. She met a lot of difficulties and troubles. So she didn't want Gump to be like her. She knew Gump's difference from others and hoped that he could avoid troubles and difficulties. That's why Jenny asked Gump to run every time he was

in trouble. She tried to let Gump know how to protect himself and stay away from troubles through running.

3. GUMP'S CHARACTERS

There's no doubt that Gump had achieved great success no matter on the football competition field, on the battlefield in the Vietnam War, on his hobby of Ping-Pong or on his career of shrimping. His success related greatly with his characters. This thesis will give some examples on his three marked characters.

3.1 Gump's Character of Being Frank

Gump played football very well and entered the all-American team. When President Kennedy met with the all-American team players, Gump was also invited to the party. He was very thirsty and drank a lot of juice. When the president asked him "How do you feel (to be an all-American)", Gump was eager to go to the bathroom. He thought the president was asking about his feeling at that moment, so he answered truly about his feeling that he got to pee.

When Gump arrived in Vietnam and met Lieutenant Dan with Bubba for the first time, Lieutenant Dan joked with them for they answered his question with the same words. He asked "You twins?" However, Gump did not realize this question was a joke and he answered frankly "No, we are not relations, sir"

Gump was wounded in his buttocks by the bullet in the Vietnam War. After war, he was awarded medals by President Johnson. When the president asked him where his wound was, he answered it was on his buttocks. Then the president joked with his American humor and said "that must be a sight, I'd like to see that." Gump still thought about these words in his way of thinking and took off his trousers to show his wound to the president.

All the examples proved laterally that Gump was blessed with the character of being frank and honest.

3.2 Gump's Character of Being Pure

From the beginning of the movie, a piece of white feather was falling slowly from the sky beside Gump's feet. This beautiful scene set tone to the whole movie. It can be found that Gump-the leading actor in this film is just like a piece of white feather. He is pure and white. His purity even seems to be silly.

This movie uses flashback to tell the story. At the beginning, Gump sat beside the bus stop and waited for his bus. A black woman came and sat beside him. Gump wanted to chat with her. He told the woman his name, asked her whether she wanted to have some chocolates, talked about her shoes and then began to tell his own story. However, when he was speaking and asking questions, the woman did not pay any attention to him. She just sat still and looked at her book. Gump did not realize that people always watch out for strangers and do not talk with strangers very much. So he continued his

talking all by himself. Gump was just like a piece of white feather which had never been polluted by the complexity of society and the ungainliness of humanity. He just carried on his action which he believed to be right.

Gump's purity can also be found in his relationship with Jenny. In the nightclub, Gump saw Jenny held a guitar and sang a ballad. Everybody knew that Jenny was naked except him. Instead, he even thought that Jenny had eventually realized her dream. In Gump's inner world, there was no shadow of the society. He just lived in the pure world of his own.

3.2 Gump's Character of Being Optimistic

Gump is a person whose inner world has not been polluted. Every day is a new beginning for him. He was persistent and optimistic no matter when he was bullied by other boys, when he was in the war or when he got nothing in shrimping.

After being wounded in the war, he was sent to the hospital in Vietnam. Unlike other patients, Gump wasn't affected so much by the negative influence of the war. He said "The only good thing about being wounded in the buttocks is the ice cream. They gave me all the ice cream I could eat." When other patients felt depressed because of the war, of their being away from families or of their pain, only Gump could still find the happiness just because of the ice creams.

Moreover, when Gump kept his promise for his friend Bubba that he would buy a shrimp ship and began his career of shrimping, he met a lot of difficulties at the beginning. Every time he launched out for shrimping, he could find few shrimps and what he got out of the water were rubbishes. However, Gump did not feel discouraged and he still launched out with Lieutenant Dan even in the rainstorm. Luckily enough, their ship was the only one that survived in the rainstorm and their career of shrimping became easy. They got lots of shrimps every time they launched out and in the last they opened their shrimping company Bubba Gump and became cent millionaire.

Gump's character of being optimistic makes him relaxed when meet difficulties and troubles and gives him happiness despite the cruelty of life.

4 . G U M P ' S L A N G U A G E CHARACTERISTICS AND THE INFLUENCES OF HIS CHARACTERS ON THEM

4.1 The Influences of Gump's Characters on His Vocabularies

4.1.1 The Influence of Gump's Characters on His Use of Superlative Degree of His Vocabularies

It can be found from the lines in the movie that Gump used superlative degree in many occasions. In some of the occasions, he used it rightly while in some of them, he used it wrongly.

The first time Gump met Jenny and she invited him to sit beside her, Gump described Jenny's voice "I do remember the first time I heard the sweetest voice in the wide world." After seeing Jenny, he said "I had never seen anything so beautiful in my life." Then Gump and Jenny became close friends. He described Jenny as his "most special friend". After several years, Jenny gave up her idea of being independent momentarily and went to Gump to spend a wonderful time with him. Gump described that moment as "the happiest time in my life". In the Vietnam War, Gump lost his friend Bubba. He said "Bubba was my best good friend".

In the first three scenes, Gump used superlative degree rightly to describe the beauty of Jenny and the happy time he spent with her. While in the fourth scene, Gump tried to describe how precious of he and Bubba's friendship was, so he put best and good together. But the use of the superlative degree was wrong. From the four above-mentioned scenes, it can be found that Gump was frank. He tried to use superlative degree to express his deep feeling urgently. It was his character of being frank that give him this kind of expression.

4.1.2 Influence of Gump's Characters on His Understanding and Use of Functional Words

When Bubba was dying in the war, he asked Gump "Why do this happen, Forrest?" and Gump answered "You got shot".

Actually, in Bubba's words, the words "this" meant the war and the attack. Why does the war happen? Bubba was recollecting the war. He asked "why" instead "how". Gump cross questions and crooked answers and answered "you got shot". The mistakes happened because he misunderstood the functional word "this". For Bubba, "this" meant the whole things happened on the battlefield in the war, while for Gump he could only see and know the reality that Bubba was wounded in his stomach and was dying. In Gump's mind, there was no deeper meaning. The misunderstanding of the pronoun "this" and the wrong answer he gave to Bubba's question originated from his pure and white inner world. Because of purity, he could not understand why the war would happen. The movie reflects the evil of war and American government from the lateral part according to Bubba and Lieutenant Dan's tragic destiny.

In our life experience, a person only has a father and a mother. Therefore, people always use definite articles to modify "mother" and "father" and do not use indefinite articles. However, when Jenny introduced little Forrest to Gump and said "I named him after his daddy", Gump answered "He got a daddy named Forrest, too?" Forrest used a father here instead the father as if little Gump had a lot of fathers. But he didn't do this on purpose to hurt Jenny with extra meaning. He just couldn't understand Jenny's euphemism. At last, Jenny had to tell him "You are his daddy". Gump used words wrongly just because of

his misunderstanding of adults' world and his character of being pure.

On the whole, the quantity of Gump's vocabulary is small. He would like to choose simple words and his understanding of some vocabularies was wrong. But it can be said that the reality of his vocabularies has something related with his intelligence and also with his characters. His characters make it hard for him to understand the complex vocabularies and sentences. He can only understand them from his own point of view and give response to them.

4.2 The Influences of Gump's Characters on His Use of Rhetoric

As one of the most common expressing techniques, rhetoric is used widely in the movie *Forrest Gump*. Rhetoric in this movie appears frequently in Gump's lines, which makes the movie literary and humorous. This kind of use is to correspond with Gump's intelligence and characters. This thesis will analyze the influence of Gump's characters on his use of rhetoric from simile, irony and euphemism.

4.2.1 Simile

The most famous simile in the movie is "Life is like a box of chocolate, you never know what you are going to get". This sentence was said by Gump's mother but it was first retailed by Gump at the beginning of the movie. Gump took out a box of chocolate and asked the woman beside him to have one at the very beginning. Because of this box of chocolate, he recalled his mother's words. Gump's I.Q. was just 75. His mother always tried to make some profound theory easy for Gump to understand. So she linked life and a box of chocolate together. Gump liked chocolate and he could understand this simile.

When Gump and Jenny became good friends, he used the simile "Jenny and me was like peas and carrots" to describe their friendship. He still expressed his feeling by food.

The two examples of simile above are evidence of influence of Gump's simple and pure character on his language characteristic. He used simple vehicles to describe his feeling because his life was simple itself. Like what he said when he was on his running journey "when I got tired, I sleep".

4.2.2 Irony

Most of the ironies in this movie happened through Gump, but Gump himself may not realize these ironies. The ironies in the movie have two effects, that is, to hit the government and the society and to foil Gump's characters of being pure and optimistic.

When Gump talked about Jenny's family, he said something about Jenny's father that "He was a very loving man. He was always kissing and touching her and her sisters." Actually, kissing and touching here means sexual assaults, but Gump didn't understand and even said Jenny's father was a loving man. The movie use irony here

to hit Jenny's father's sexual assaults to kids and criticize the darkness and nausea of the society. However, Gump was ignorant and he couldn't understand the ugliness of humanity. That's why he described Jenny's father as "a loving man".

In the Vietnam War, the army Gump stayed in was looking for the Victor Charlie which was short for Charlie. In Gump's understanding they were in the war because "We are always looking for this guy named Charlie". He didn't know Charlie was the shortened form for Victor Charlie. The irony here gave audience a sense of humor. On the one hand, Gump's intelligence and his pure character could not understand the evil of war and the complex political factor behind war. That's why he thought the war happened because of the guy named Charlie. On the other hand, the irony happened here was also the result of his character of being optimistic. In this way, war seems not to be horrible to the audiences.

4.2.3 Euphemism

The euphemisms this essay talks about mainly mean traditional euphemisms which have close relationship with taboos. When people talk about birth, death, funeral, sex, evacuating, etc. directly, that means they are using taboos. Language taboos means the words and expressions which are forbidden to use in the polite world.

In the movie *Forrest Gump*, Gump might not know too much about euphemism, but because of his mother's education and his characters to be frank and pure, he used lots of euphemisms to modify his words.

4.2.3.1 Euphemism on Death

When Gump talked about Jenny's mother who passed away when Jenny was five, he didn't use the word die. Instead, he used the beautiful phrase "go to heaven" according to his own understanding of death. Heaven is a symbol of beauty and happiness. The use of the phrase is the reflection of Gump's pure mind and optimistic character.

4.2.3.2 Euphemism on Cursing Words

Westerners use lots of words to express their angers and dissatisfactions such as shit, hell, damn, fuck etc. Most of these words are made up of four letters, so they are always called four-letter words. Cursing is usually used in two ways in the real life. The one is to curse or insult a concrete object. The other is to express the speaker's own intense affection. Movie originates from life and ranks high than life. As the sublimation of life, there are lots of cursing words in the movie *Forrest Gump* to express the intense feelings in the plots. But the euphemisms on cursing words this essay talking about is from Gump's lines. Because of Gump's education, even when he retailed others' cursing word, he used euphemism.

When Gump came back from the Vietnam and was awarded with medals, he was pulled to an assembly of anti-war. In that meeting, he met a man who is giving a little talk to a lot of people. When Gump was describing

the man who liked to use the word "fuck", he said "he liked to say the 'F' word a lot." Gump didn't retail the word "fuck". Instead, he used euphemism here. This was decided by his pure characters. Throughout the movie, Gump didn't use a single cursing word. Dirty words seem to be unacceptable for him. That's why he used euphemism on cursing words.

4.2.3.3 Euphemisms on Sex

No matter in the east or west, sex seems to be an embarrassing word to speak out. Therefore, there are lots of euphemisms on sex. In the following scene, there are several euphemisms used to express the same topic.

(When Gump was in Jenny's dormitory after being wet in the rain)

Jenny: Have you ever been with a girl?

Gump: I sit next to them in my home economics class all the time... Oh, I'm sorry.

Jenny: It's O.K. It's alright.

Forrest: I'm dizzy.

Jenny: I bet that never happened in home etc.

In the conversation above, "been with a girl" and "that happened" both have the meaning "have sex with". Jenny used euphemisms on sex to adapt Gump's mental characteristic. She didn't ask Gump directly that whether he has had sex with other girl and this is a process for Gump to accept. For Jenny, Gump was like a kid. Jenny's use of euphemisms on sex set off Gump's characters of being pure laterally.

4.3 The Influences of Gump's Characters on the Use of the Cooperative Principle in His Oral Language

According to Blakemore's point, language is the communication tool of mind and affection while conversation aims at the interlocutor. So, when do research on Gump's language characteristics, his language characteristics should be put into the conversation, because conversation is the common possession for both speaker and interlocutor.

The American philosopher and researcher on pragmatic Grice put forward the Cooperative Principle in 1967:

Our talk exchanges are to some degree cooperative efforts, and each participant recognizes in them a common purpose or set of purposes. In other words, we seem to follow some principles when we talk, and we call the principle The Cooperative Principle, or CP in short.

To specify the CP further Grice introduced four categories of maxims as follows: Quantity Maxim, Quality Maxim, Relation Maxim and Manner Maxim.

In the movie *Forrest Gump*, there are some disobedience and also some strict obedience of CP in Gump's lines. It is Gump's characters that lead to these disobedience and obedience.

4.4.1 Disobedience of Quantity Maxim

Quantity Maxim requires speakers in conversations make their contribution as is required and do not make their

contribution more informative than is required (Grice 36).

When Gump was waiting for his bus at the bus stop, there was a conversation between him and a black woman.

Gump: "Hello. My name's Forrest, *Forrest Gump*."

Woman: (Glance at him with no words)

Gump: "Do you want a chocolate?"

Woman: (Shake her head slightly with no words)

Gump: "I could eat about a million and a half of these. My mama always said, life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get. (Point at her shoes) Those must be comfortable shoes. I bet you could walk all day in shoes like that and not feel a thing. I wish I had shoes like that."

Woman: "My feet hurt."

In the conversation Gump gave two questions to the woman totally. The first one is when Gump said "My name's Forrest, *Forrest Gump*". According to the quantity maxim, the woman was supposed to answer "My name is ..." But she didn't.

The second question Gump asked was "Do you want chocolate?" The woman should say "yes" or "no". But she just shook her head without being noticed and did not say anything.

From the process of the conversation, the black woman disobeyed the quantity maxim. However, Gump wasn't influenced by her and continued his talking. The following conversation was the fruit of Gump's kind and pure characters. If it wasn't him, the speaker may stop his or her talking. This is the reciprocity of his characters and his language characteristics.

4.4.2 Disobedience of Relation Maxim

Relation maxim requires people to be related in the context of conversation.

When Gump went to the army and met Bubba for the first time, Bubba introduced himself passionately.

Bubba: "You ever were on a real shrimp boat?"

Gump: "No."

Bubba: "But I've been on a real big boat. I'm talking about a shrimp catching boat. I've been working on shrimp boats all my life. I started out on my uncle's boat when I was about maybe 9. I was just looking into buying my own boat and got drafted. My given name is Benjamin Buford Blue. People call me Bubba, just like one of them old red neck boys. Can you believe that?"

Gump: "My name's *Forrest Gump*. People call me *Forrest Gump*."

In the conversation, Bubba asked Gump "can you believe that (my name is just like one of the old red neck boys)?" But Gump did not react in time to Bubba's information. He did not answer Bubba's question directly. Instead, he introduced himself to Bubba even though he was not asked to. At the same time, as Bubba's given name was very long, so he used the sentence as "My name is ... People call me..." Gump imitated Bubba's way to introduce and said "My name is *Forrest Gump*. People call

me *Forrest Gump*." This answer was given because Gump wanted to be polite when introducing himself to Bubba. In self-introduction, name is the most important part. Since Gump wasn't able to grasp so much information Bubba had given, he left out the information which he thought was unimportant and disobeyed the relation maxim to introduce his name directly in an honest and frank way. Moreover, he imitated Bubba's way of introducing himself because he thought that may be a polite way. The way in which Gump introduced himself reflects his characters of being frank and honest.

4.4.3 Obedience of Quality Maxim

Quality Maxim requires that people should try to make the information in their conversation true. There should not be false information. And people should not say something that they do not know very much or lack evidence.

When Gump got shot on his buttocks and was sent to the hospital. The one that was sent to the same hospital with him was Lieutenant Dan. But Lieutenant Dan was not as optimistic as Gump. He lost his legs and felt at sea. He hated that he wasn't dead in the battlefield and hated Gump for saving him. One night, he pulled Gump from his bed and shouted to him with anger to express his emotion.

Lieutenant Dan: "Now...you listen to me. We all have a destiny. Nothing just happens. It's all part of a plan! I should have died out there with my men, but now... I'm nothing but a god damn cripple, a legless freak! Look. Look! Look at me! You see that? Do you know what it's like not to be able to use your legs?"

Gump: "Y-Y -Yes, sir, I do."

In this conversation, Lieutenant Dan asked Gump "Do you know what it is like not to be able to use your legs?" He didn't know that Gump had once worn the leg braces and could not use his legs freely. Actually, Lieutenant Dan's question was not really asking Gump whether he know this misery. He was just releasing his anger. But Gump didn't realize this. He thought Lieutenant Dan was asking him questions.

According to his life experience and his characters of being frank and honest, he answered the question instead of avoiding it. His answer added fuel to Lieutenant Dan's anger and made him angrier.

4.4.4 Obedience of Manner Maxim

Manner Maxim requires people to be brief and orderly and avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity.

In the Movie *Forrest Gump*, we can see that many people were disobedient to the Manner Maxim to create sense of humor, while Gump obey it because of his understanding and pure character.

When the first two Negroes were admitted to the college in Alabama, students were gathering to give their protest. Gump didn't know what happened and asked one of his schoolmates.

Gump: "Earl, what's going on?"

Earl: "Coons are trying to get into school."

Gump: "Coons? When raccoons tried getting on our back porch, Mama just chased them off with a broom."

In this conversation, the word coons his schoolmate used here meant Negroes. But Gump didn't know this use and misunderstood coons for raccoons. Earl disobeyed the Manner Maxim here while Gump obeyed it. This obedience happened according to Gump's naivety and irony the racial discrimination.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author introduces the characters and language characteristics and the relations between them of the leading role—Forrest Gump in the movie *Forrest Gump*.

In this movie, Gump lived in an age of turbulence. He witnessed the extinction of racial discrimination, the Vietnam War and the Watergate Scandal etc. He also experienced the insults and mockery in his life. Fortunately, despite the ugliness of society and humanity, he kept his characters and outlook to be pure and optimistic. Gump's characters are unique and so are his language characteristics in this movie. This paper analyzes Gump's physical and mental situation first and then the influences of two important women on him and gets the conclusion that his characters of being frank, pure and optimistic have close relation with his own conditions and the influences of his mother and Jenny. At last, the thesis tries to hackle Gump's language characteristics according to his characters and gives the conclusion that his characters decide his language characteristics and his language characteristics reflect his characters in turn.

This thesis tries to research on the influences of man's characters on his language characteristics in a movie and enhance English learners' understanding of English

cultures and improve their gust of English movies as well. Though more and more researches have already done on the related theme, it is still a nice try for the researcher as an English learner. Therefore, in order to understand the relation between man's characters and language characteristics further and improve English learners' better gust of movies, which is beneficial in English learning, more researches on various movie roles need to be carried out.

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