Research Article

Exploring Cultural Representation: A Case Study of Foreign Cultures in the Chinese Television Program “Informal Talks”
การสำรวจภาพตัวแทนทางวัฒนธรรม: กรณีศึกษาวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศในรายการโทรทัศน์จีน “Informal Talks”

Xin Fan[1]

Rosechongporn Komolsevin[2]

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Abstract

This research aims to discover the representation of foreign cultures in “Informal Talks” a Chinese TV program, focusing on foreign culture portrayal and cross-cultural communication through the qualitative method of textual analysis. This study examines TV program production, Topic selection, and representatives' actions to present foreign cultures. The analysis objectives from seasons 1 to 4 of “Informal Talks” are divided into cultural aspects, data collection, and analysis. Cross-cultural communication theory and the cultural dimension were used to examine the content. Results from the content analysis revealed how foreign cultures are portrayed in informal talks, and how topic selection caters to foreign guests in “Informal Talks” which indicates that “Informal Talks” use humor and relatable discussions to enhance understanding of foreign cultures, cultural sensitivity, and to

[1] School of Communication Arts, Bangkok University

E-mail: xin.f@bu.ac.th

[2] School of Communication Arts, Bangkok University

E-mail: rosechongporn.k@bu.ac.th

promote cross-cultural communication in Chinese TV programs. This research is significant for providing insights into foreign cultures shown in Chinese TV programs, contributing to cross-cultural understanding, and promoting national communication in the context of globalization.

Keywords: *Cross-Cultural Communication, Cultural Dimension, Foreign Culture, Informal Talks, Chinese TV program*

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ เพื่อวิเคราะห์การแสดงออกทางวัฒนธรรมของวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศที่พบได้ในรายการโทรทัศน์จีน "Informal Talks" โดยเน้นการศึกษาการแสดงออกของวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศและการสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรม ผ่านการวิเคราะห์ข้อความซึ่งเป็นการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ การศึกษานี้ตรวจสอบการผลิตรายการโทรทัศน์ การเลือกประเด็นในการพูดคุย และการแสดงออกของแขกรับเชิญในรายการ เพื่อนำเสนอวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศ โดยเลือกวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาจากฤดูกาลที่ 1 ถึง 4 ของรายการ "Informal Talks" ที่จำแนกเป็นด้านวัฒนธรรม การเก็บข้อมูล และการวิเคราะห์ ผลลัพธ์จากการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาตามวัตถุประสงค์ในการวิจัย โดยได้พบวิธีที่วัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศนั้นถูกแสดงออกในรายการ รวมถึงหัวข้อที่ถูกเลือกใช้ในรายการในการพูดคุยกับแขกรับเชิญชาวต่างชาติ ซึ่งมีการใช้อารมณ์ขันและการพูดคุยที่มีความเกี่ยวข้องกับแขกรับเชิญ เพื่อเพิ่มความเข้าใจในความแตกต่างระหว่างวัฒนธรรม ความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรม และการนำเสนอการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในรายการโทรทัศน์จีน การวิจัยนี้มีความสำคัญในการให้ความเข้าใจในวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศที่ถูกแสดงออกในรายการโทรทัศน์จีน เพื่อช่วยให้เกิดความเข้าใจระหว่างวัฒนธรรมที่แตกต่างกัน และส่งเสริมการสื่อสารที่แสดงออกถึงวัฒนธรรมของแต่ละชาติในบริบทของความเป็นนานาชาติได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

คำสำคัญ: *การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม มิติทางวัฒนธรรม วัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศ การพูดคุยอย่างไม่เป็นทางการ รายการโทรทัศน์จีน*

Introduction

According to globalization, many scholars have been increasingly interested in developing analytic frameworks to investigate cultural differences in everyday life as well as in the media in recent years (Feng, 2012). A television program such as “Informal Talks” enhances cross-cultural

communication by presenting diverse cultural viewpoints, fostering dialogue, and reducing cultural barriers as mentioned by Eydam (2020) that the trend of nationally broadcast programs without local participants is on the rise. The cross-cultural exchange existed in Hubei Satellite TV's "Informal Talks", throughout the first four seasons, as well as the fifth season which they collaborated with BiliBili TV. The program features male and young representatives from 10 different countries, along with occasional female guests in season 6.5. The four presidium members and flying guests engage in discussions on hot social topics and the customs and cultures of various countries. It First aired on Hubei Satellite TV every Friday at 21:20 in 2015 and has an informal and humorous approach.

The producer of "Informal Talks", Yu Qing, says the priority is given to topics that resonate with the younger generation of Chinese when selecting content (Wen, 2019). In terms of popularity, "Informal Talks" scored at least 9 out of 10 for each season on China's review aggregator site, Douban (Wen, 2019). In conclusion, "Informal Talks" encourages dialogue among young talents from diverse backgrounds and facilitates cultural exchange and collective understanding.

McLuhan's "The medium is an extension of the person" reflects how television programs tailor content to diverse audiences, functioning as personalized extensions that mirror and shape the narratives of the viewers they serve (Livingstone, 2013). As a cross-cultural communication TV program, Informal Talks not only delivered happiness to audiences but also aimed to promote the portrayal of foreign cultures to Chinese audiences, facilitating globalization development and understanding diverse cultures easily.

Fostering cross-cultural exchange, respecting cultural differences, cultivating cultural sensitivity, and maintaining cultural awareness, intercultural communication variety shows assist people in better understanding themselves and the society in which they live. Due to A TV program serves as an excellent resource for studying cultural differences, as it is a global medium that incorporates recognizable cultural elements, effectively conveying variations across cultures (Mishan, 2005).

Rather than simply sharing the same world with varying labels attached, different societies inhabit distinct worlds, each with its own unique identity (Sapir, 1929). The program explores different foreign cultural aspects by having representatives share a range of social topics from their respective nations. These topics include table etiquette, wedding customs, folklore, and other cultural

characteristics. These examples represent just a few facets of the program's exploration of diverse cultures.

"Informal Talks" is a cross-cultural communication TV program that explores controversial social issues while highlighting the cultural differences between countries of foreign guests and China. the core of the research is on enhancing "Informal Talks" in alignment with Chinese policies and cross-cultural communication across content, programming, and other elements. With representatives from different countries bringing diverse cultural views to Informal Talks, the portrayal of foreign cultures in Chinese TV programs is an overarching focus. The program underscores the distinct societies shaped by different cultures, highlighting the unavoidable cultural conflicts resulting from varying thinking, languages, non-verbal, and cultural contexts encountered during cross-cultural interactions.

This study explores television's role in facilitating face-to-face communication through conversation, analyzing the use of language and non-verbal cues for information delivery. Informal Talks aims to incorporate foreign opinions to stimulate diverse viewpoints among the young generation from various countries, fostering cultural exchanges and enhancing cross-cultural understanding. By integrating foreign cultures, the program accelerates cultural dissemination in China, strengthens cross-cultural understanding, and promotes acceptance of foreign cultures among Chinese audiences. The paper researches how the TV program presents foreign cultures and diverse cultural perspectives within Informal Talks. Additionally, employing theories of cross-cultural communication and cultural dimensions, the study examines the portrayal of foreign cultures in Chinese TV programs, providing insights into effective cultural views and contributing to the dissemination of diverse cultures while filling gaps in existing literature.

Research Objective

This research aims to explore the representation of foreign cultures in the Chinese TV program, "Informal Talks". The following are offering some objectives of the study:

1) To explore how foreign culture is presented in Chinese TV programs through Informal talks.

2) To explore how the selection of topics through "Informal Talks" caters to foreign representatives.

Literature Review

Initially, this literature review presents theories on cross-cultural communication, which pertains to interactions between individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds. (Levine, Park, & Kim, 2007). In the communication process, both parties use the same language. One may be a native speaker, while the other is a non-native speaker. Alternatively, there are instances where both parties involved are non-native speakers.

In cross-cultural communication theory, there are eight distinct types of cultural differences to consider. These include the timing of conversations, content selection, speech pace and pauses, active listening skills, intonation patterns, linguistic conventions, levels of directness, as well as cohesion and coherence in communication (Tannen, 1983). In the Chinese TV program "Informal Talks", eight cultural differences are included. The objective is to introduce audiences to various cultures through cross-cultural communication demonstrations. By observing these interactions, viewers can develop their own perspectives on different cultures. Therefore, cross-cultural communication theory provides essential theoretical support for analyzing how exploring foreign Cultural Representation through Informal Talks. Additionally, this is a theory conducted by Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory that allows for a structured analysis of this program.

Cross-cultural communication theory

Cross-cultural communication encompasses interactions between individuals with varying language and cultural backgrounds, including both native and non-native speakers. Cross-cultural communication contains 4 main points. 1) Both sides of communication must come from different cultural backgrounds. 2) Both sides of communication must communicate in the same language. 3) The communication between the two sides is real-time oral communication. 4) The communication between the two sides is direct verbal communication (Gardner, 1962). There are eight types of cultural differences during cultural communication (Tannen, 1985). These 8 types of cultural differences include when to talk, what to say, pacing and pausing, the art of listening, intonation, what is conventional and what is not in a language, degree of indirectness, and cohesion and coherence

(Tannen, 1985). By showcasing cross-cultural communication, the program enhances understanding between cultures and promotes intercultural appreciation among audiences.

Huang (2024) discovered in a study on the Sense8 TV program that social identities are expressed through verbal communication which establishes bonds and expressed social identities. Moreover, language served as a vital tool for connection, allowing characters to articulate their experiences. In this study, it is interesting to examine whether foreign guests speaking in Chinese about their different cultures would provide us the answer to how the Chinese TV show expresses foreign culture and how the Chinese TV show chooses topics that meet the needs of foreigners.

Cultural Dimension

Cultural dimension is a concept adopted by Hofstede (2011), director of the Netherlands Institute of International Cultural Cooperation, and his colleagues in the quantitative study of cultural factors. In 1980, based on the investigation of the work value of 117000 IBM employees in 66 countries, Hofstede (2011) developed four cultural dimensions based on Western culture, namely individualism and collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, rigidity, and flexibility (Hofstede & Bond, 1984) which includes 6 dimensions, 1) Power Distance, 2) Uncertainty Avoidance, 3) Individualism/Collectivism, 4) Masculinity/Femininity, 5) Long/Short Term Orientation, and 6) Indulgence/Restraint (Hofstede, 2011). In analyzing the behavior of guests from cultural backgrounds in Informal talks, researchers can utilize these six dimensions as research tools.

Conceptual Framework and Conclusion

There are two main concepts for the conceptual framework. First, cross-cultural communication is defined as oral communication between people of different cultural backgrounds in the same language (Gardner, 1962). This concept is relevant to the Chinese TV program “Informal Talks” which uses cross-cultural communication to introduce different cultures through conversations with foreign guests using the Chinese language. Second, Hofstede's six cultural dimensions—Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Long/Short Term Orientation, and Indulgence/Restraint (Hofstede, 2011) are used to analyze the behavior of guests from

different cultural backgrounds. These concepts form the framework of the research. (Please see the Figure 1)

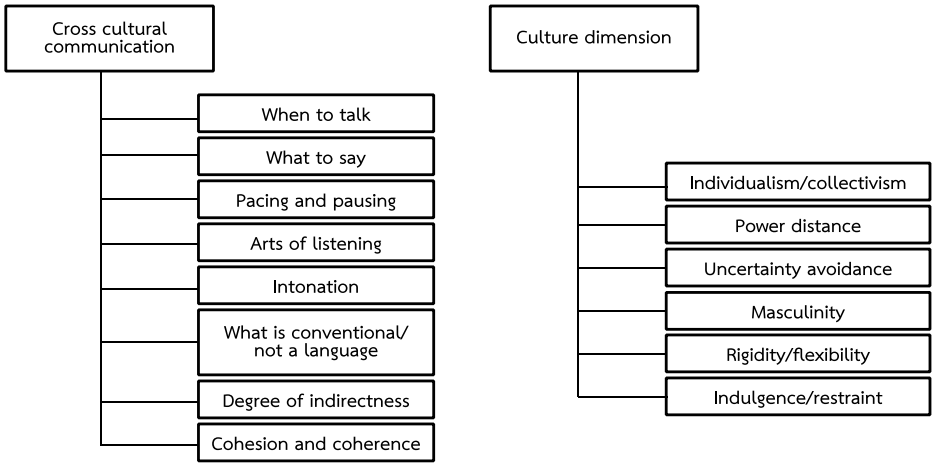


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

The literature review revealed a gap in understanding how Informal talks represent foreign cultures to Chinese audiences, an important aspect of cultural communication. This study primarily centers on the exploration of foreign cultures in Chinese TV shows, with a specific focus on analyzing the program “Informal Talks”, and Carley (1994) mentioned that “language is a window on culture”.

Therefore, textual analysis can reveal how culture shapes people’s behaviors. By employing textual analysis in this study, researchers gain deeper insights into how Informal talks explore foreign cultures' representation and the information that convey to audiences. Textual analysis also can help in better understanding and interpreting the content of Chinese TV shows. Moreover, textual analysis has obvious characteristics (Cuirini & Franzese, 2019). textual analysis highlights characteristics that help researchers explain TV show content and uncover hidden cultural traits in behaviors (Cuirini & Franzese, 2019). Selecting a specific sample group is crucial in qualitative research, as studying the entire population is highly challenging and nearly impossible (Robinson, 2014). In qualitative research,

selecting a sample group based on specific principles is essential. Analyzing these samples helps researchers explain questions and generalize findings to the entire population. Sample selection focuses on size, strategy, and range (Robinson, 2014).

Research Instrument

The content of TV shows is one of the objects of text analysis (Ifversen, 2003). Characterized by flexibility and accuracy, this research method addresses textual analysis to analyze program contents, from seasons 1-4 of "Informal Talks". According to the literature review, this content can be separated into two main groups:

1) Cross-culture communication

2) Cultural dimension

The 1st order codes refer to the most basic level of data categorization directly from the TV program, while the 2nd order codes refer to the deeper interpretation of the data as shown in the following table.

Table 1 According to informal talks season 1-4, The results of coding through textual analysis

1st Order codes	2nd Order concept	Aggregated themes
- Express different opinion - Asked for opinion	When to talk	Cross-culture communication
- The reality in own country - Feelings in China	What to say	
- Excited culture shock	Pacing and pausing	
- Stop talking when others start to talk	Art of listening	

Table 1 According to Informal talks season 1-4, The results of coding through textual analysis (continue)

1st Order codes	2nd Order concept	Aggregated themes
- Passionate	Intonation	
- Laughter - Expression - Body language	What is conventional/not a language	
- Face to face conversation	Degree of indirectness	
- Topic discussion	Cohesion and coherence	
- Corporate	Individualism/collectivism	Cultural dimension
- School rules - Work overtime	Power distance	
- Different from others	Uncertainty avoidance	
- Join the army - Feminization of men	Masculinity	
- Over spending	Long-term	
- Addicted	Indulgence/restraint	

Data collection

This research centers on how the Chinese TV show "Informal Talks" expresses foreign culture and selects topics to cater to the needs of foreigners. The total number of episodes between season 1 – season 4 are 145. All the episodes were selected for the analysis. These seasons, having passed for some time, offer a wealth of comments and opinions on various social topics. By analyzing these seasons, the researcher aims to gain insight into how the show portrays foreign cultures and facilitates

cross-cultural communication with foreign audiences. With representatives from over twenty countries and a diverse range of topics, these seasons provide ample material for analysis.

Finding

Based on the two objectives of the study, textual analysis was used to analyze the content of the Chinese TV program. The study identified two main aspects of portraying foreign cultures: cross-cultural communication and cultural dimension. The analysis could be separated into what the guests said when they started talking, and elements that do not belong to language and the researcher could find that Informal talks tried to portray a more real, more objective, and closer to real life about foreign cultures. In terms of cultural dimension, the program selected topics reflecting diverse cultural dimensions, although this approach may introduce biases due to guests' unique perspectives as individuals living in a new country. By the end of six seasons, around 65 foreign young people from twenty countries participated in this TV program, and it has gained over 50 million views.

Cross-cultural communication

When to talk

The first type is to present different views, and the next type is to inquire for opinions.

In season one of "Informal Talks" guests from Argentina, the US, and Egypt discussed "the exchange of gifts between genders". Biyang Gong from Argentina advocated for "directly asking female friends or girlfriends about their gift preferences", while Zuo You from America disagreed, "suggesting that gifts should not be meaningless". Xiaolong Mu from Egypt intervened, "asserting that asking indicates a lack of understanding and that gifts should be chosen based on familiarity with the recipient's preferences". These differing viewpoints reflect the guests' diverse cultural backgrounds.

In "Informal Talks" guests from diverse backgrounds often seek each other's opinions. For example, in season one, Xiaolong Mu from Egypt asked Yoyo from Japan "Is Japan a lying country?" Yoyo clarified "No, I don't believe Japan is a lying country. Japanese is unique and euphemistic." This exchange highlights how asking for opinions facilitates foreign cultural understanding.

What to say

"What to Say" mainly includes two parts: the reality in the guests' own countries, and their feelings about China. initially, guests would talk about the reality in their own countries based on different topics. In season two of "Informal Talks" the topic of alcohol in various countries was discussed. Hanyi Jin from South Korea shared insights into Korean wine culture, highlighting the popularity of soju and Makgeolli, also known as rice wine. She described that "Makgeolli, traditionally brewed in the countryside, is enjoyed by women and requires shaking before drinking." Sharing cultural practices like this is important for representing cultures to Chinese audiences, as it offers an understanding of the realities and customs of different countries. Through such discussions, "Informal Talks" provides audiences with authentic insights into diverse cultures. Secondly, representatives share their impressions of China on certain topics. For example, Xiaolong Mu from Egypt expressed confusion about "the practice of children wearing 'open crotch pants'". This exchange fosters mutual understanding between guests and Chinese audiences, facilitating cross-cultural communication.

Pacing and pausing

"Pacing and pausing" refers to the time of starting and stopping conversations. An analysis of the content reveals a code related to pacing and pausing known as "exciting culture shock". For example, when discussing 'different toilet behaviors' across countries, a guest from Myanmar mentioned "chanting Buddhist scriptures while using the toilet, sparking curiosity among other guests. This moment of pausing reflects culture shock. Similarly, when discussing squat toilets in China, guests from various countries expressed excitement and shared their experiences simultaneously, showing their culture shock. Such instances are common in "Informal Talks", where audiences experience guests experiencing culture shock while learning about foreign countries, contributing to cross-cultural communication.

Art of listening

Listening attentively is important as people often have differing opinions they want to share. In "Informal Talks", guests demonstrate this by respectfully listening to each other's introductions of unique foods from their countries, even if they don't personally agree with them. This highlights tolerance for diverse cultures and perspectives. for instance, Bobo Hua, from Iran, introduced a famous

Persian dish called "Kalle pache" which consists of a goat's head, including the eyes. While some guests expressed interest and said it sounded delicious, others were put off by the idea of eating a goat's head and eyes. Despite the differing reactions, all the guests listened respectfully to Bobo Hua's cultural explanation and respected his eating habits.

Intonation

Guests often present their feelings through intonation. For example, a guest from India passionately expressed thanks for the cultural exchange facilitated in informal talks. His enthusiastic intonation reflected his genuine interest in learning from others and sharing his own culture. This passionate intonation is common among guests in "Informal Talks", indicating they enjoy engaging in a talk by both sharing and listening. This enthusiastic approach enhances the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

What is conventional/not a language

Various elements such as laughter, facial expressions, and body language play significant roles in conveying attitudes, moods, and opinions. For instance, when discussing men's attitudes towards women, Xiaoqiang Tang from Turkey expressed his frustration humorously, using body language and facial expressions to emphasize his views. Guests in "Informal Talks" frequently use non-verbal signs to show their feelings more effectively, despite using a common language like Chinese. Laughter and nodding often signify agreement or approval, while expressions of disgust or covering one's face indicate disagreement. Despite cultural differences, both audiences and guests can interpret these non-verbal elements to understand the attitudes and opinions of foreign guests accurately.

Degree of indirectness

In cross-cultural communication, the degree of indirectness relates to the distance between communicators, and the way of communication, including email, video call, phone calls, or face-to-face conversation. In "Informal Talks", guests have face-to-face conversations, which are most efficient and closed. For example, Yixin Ruan from France expressed appreciation towards fellow guests during an episode, highlighting the enriching experience of participating in the program and learning from others. Face-to-face talk allows guests to quickly familiarize each other, share their culture, and

express opinions on different cultures. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for guests to deepen their understanding of China.

Cohesion and coherence

In “Informal Talks”, topic discussions are utilized to maintain cohesion and coherence during conversations. Guests participate in discussing specific topics, sharing customs from their respective countries, and expressing their opinions. In season three, there are 38 diverse topics available for discussion among the guests. These topics range from identifying the capitals of different countries to discussing various ways of celebrating the New Year, as well as exploring representative children's songs, etc. Generally, guests don't know each other, so topic discussions could provide a starting point, and then guests will share customs and cultures by common theme.

Table 2 Cross-cultural communication analysis results

Cross-cultural communication	**Data analysis**
When to talk	Presenting different views: Guests from Argentina, the US, and Egypt debated on the exchange of gifts between genders. Biyang Gong advocated for direct inquiries, while Zuo You suggested meaningful gifts. Xiaolong Mu disagreed, emphasizing the importance of familiarity with the recipient's preferences. Inquiring for opinions: Xiaolong Mu asked Yoyo from Japan if Japan is a lying country, demonstrating a curiosity about foreign cultures.
What to say	Sharing reality in guests’ countries: Hanyi Jin from South Korea discussed Korean wine culture, highlighting soju and Makgeolli. Expressing feelings about China: Xiaolong Mu from Egypt expressed confusion about children wearing “open crotch pants”, fostering mutual understanding between guests and Chinese audiences.

Table 2 Cross-cultural communication analysis results (continue)

Cross-cultural communication	**Data analysis**
Pacing and pasuing	Guests experienced “culture shock” when discussing topics, such as different toilet behaviors and squat toilets in China. Pauses reflected moments of cultural surprise and excitement.
Art of listening	Guests respectfully listened to each other's introductions of special foods, even if they didn't personally agree. For example, Bobo Hua introduced “Kalle pache”, a Persian dish consisting of a goat’s head and eyes.
Intonation	A guest from India passionately expressed thanks for the cultural exchange in informal talks, reflecting a genuine interest in cross-cultural learning.
Conventional/not a language	Guests often used laughter, facial expressions, and body language to convey attitudes and opinions. Xiaoqiang Tang from Turkey used humor and facial expressions to emphasize his frustration with the topic of men's attitudes toward women.
Degree of indirectness	In “Informal Talks”, face-to-face conversations allowed guests to quickly familiarize each other, share their customs, and express opinions on different cultures. For example, Yixin Ruan from France expressed appreciation towards fellow guests during an episode.
Cohesion and coherence	Topic discussions in “Informal Talks” maintained cohesion and coherence, with 38 diverse topics available for discussion among guests, ranging from identifying the capitals of different countries to discussing various ways of celebrating the New Year. Guests share customs and cultures based on common themes.

In “Informal Talks”, guests share views and seek opinions, promoting mutual understanding. They discuss their cultures and feelings about China, using pauses for cultural shock moments. Attentive listening and passionate intonation enhance communication. Non-verbal elements convey attitudes effectively. Face-to-face conversations deepen cultural understanding, while topic discussions maintain cohesion, enabling guests to share customs and opinions, Promoting Chinese audiences can understand foreign cultures efficiently and also facilitate cross-cultural Communication.

Cultural dimension

Cultural dimension is a framework used to study various aspects of different cultures. It consists of six dimensions (Hofstede, 2011), such as including power distance, individualism or collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term, and indulgence or restraint. Through textual analysis, researchers can observe how informal talks explain different cultures, with many topics reflecting these cultural dimensions.

Table 3 Cultural dimension analysis

Cultural dimension	Data analysis
Individualism/collectivism	Mico (Italy): “We are so close...we went out for travel, we chatted at night”. Yixin Ruan (France): “We always help each other, talking about our own countries”. This exhibits a collectivistic tendency among the guests.
Power distance	Xiaoqiang Tang (Turkey) on school rules: “Teachers would stand there and touch your face to see if stubble is there still”. Bobo Hua (Iran) on working overtime: “They can relax in there, like watch their mobile phones”. This reflects attitudes towards power distribution.
Uncertainty avoidance	Xiaolong Mu (Egypt): “You should be as ordinary as most people, and being very proud is not a good thing”. Yuanhao Tian (Britain): “We have to be proud to show that we are good people. We have to show this”.This shows differences in uncertainty avoidance.

Table 3 Cultural dimension analysis (continue)

Cultural dimension	Data analysis
Masculinity	Mico (Italy): “You don't have to do something to prove that you are someone. If you have to do that, then means you are not confident”. Biyang Gong (Argentina): “If you want to be a man, or your hobby is like a man, you must go to the army”. This contrasts masculine vs. feminine cultural values.
Long-term orientation	Bobo Hua (Iran): “Happiness created by crazy shopping is fake”. Duoduo Qian (Nigeria): “We need to treat every day as the last day...face your desires truthfully”. This illustrates differences in long-term orientation.
Indulgence/restraint	Biyang Gong (Argentina) on gambling: “You will lose money, right? But it is possible that you will become very rich...you have to try”. Xiaobei (Australia): “Acknowledging the existence of an opportunity and relying on it are two different situations”. This shows differences in indulgence and restraint.

The result reveals that the program effectively utilizes various television production techniques and topic selections to present foreign cultures, fostering intercultural dialogue among diverse participants. By analyzing the interactions and discussions that occurred within the show, the study identified key variables such as pacing, intonation, and the art of listening, which are essential components of effective cross-cultural communication. These elements align with Levine et al. (2007), which outlines the challenges faced in cross-cultural interactions, including differences in communication styles and cultural contexts. Moreover, the findings suggest that "Informal Talks" not only serve as a platform for cultural exchange but also enhance cultural sensitivity and awareness among its audience, reflecting Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. This theory underscores the importance of understanding individualism versus collectivism and power distance in shaping

communication practices, which is evident in how the program adapts its content to resonate with both local and international viewers. Overall, the findings highlight the critical role that media plays in bridging cultural gaps and facilitating understanding in an increasingly globalized world.

Overall, the show presented differences across these cultural dimensions through guests' discussions on specific topics. However, the conclusions may be influenced by the guests' personal opinions and thus subject to preferences.

Conclusion

This research analyzed how the Chinese TV show "Informal Talks" expresses foreign cultures and selects topics catering to foreign participants' needs across seasons 1-4. Two main themes showed:

1) Cross-cultural communication: This study analyzed the Chinese TV show "Informal Talks", and highlights its approach to cross-cultural communication and cultural dimensions. The show expressed foreign cultures politely, objectively, and comprehensively, with participants sharing their opinions, discussing realities in their own countries, and reflecting on their experiences in China. Topics varied each season, often revealing culture shock and the participants' reactions to it. The discussions were respectful and lively, showcasing laughter, expressions, and body language. Face-to-face, topic-based discussions were the primary mode of communication.

2) Cultural dimensions: The study conveyed various aspects such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity. It discussed corporate cooperation, school rules, overtime work, military service, and gender roles. The show also tackled long-term versus short-term orientation, indulgence, and restraint by discussing topics like overspending and addiction. By selecting diverse topics based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, "Informal Talks" aimed to present a fair and accurate representation of foreign cultures, highlighting their unique cultural value systems and expressions to Chinese audiences.

"Informal Talks" highlighted cross-cultural communication aspects and differences across key cultural dimensions through polite, comprehensive participant interactions on carefully selected topics.

The Chinese TV program "Informal Talks" significantly enhances cross-cultural awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity by bringing together young representatives from different countries to engage in open dialogue about social issues and cultural practices. This allows participants to share their unique experiences, fostering mutual understanding and respect among diverse cultures. By addressing relatable topics such as wedding customs and social norms, the program demystifies foreign cultures and encourages viewers to connect with different perspectives. Additionally, "Informal Talks" promotes cultural sensitivity through its emphasis on effective communication techniques, including the art of listening and pacing, which are crucial for successful intercultural exchanges. Ultimately, the show serves as a cultural bridge, enriching the audience's understanding of global diversity and promoting harmony in an interconnected world.

Suggestion

The universality of this research might be limited, as “Informal Talks” is only one of many Chinese TV shows related to the introduction of foreign culture, and other shows might have different approaches. Additionally, this research only included the first four seasons of “Informal Talks”, while the later seasons have introduced changes in how they express foreign culture. Therefore, the findings of this research may not comprehensively represent the broader landscape of Chinese TV shows. Furthermore, this research is still in its preliminary stages. By analyzing the content of “Informal Talks”, the researcher gains a deeper understanding of how this particular show expresses foreign cultures. However, further research is needed to build on these initial findings. Future studies should expand the analysis to include a wider range of Chinese TV shows that represent foreign cultures. Additionally, investigating the influence of Chinese TV shows on shaping perceptions of foreign cultures and examining audience perspectives on the topics presented in these shows could provide valuable insights. These research avenues aim to enhance the understanding of how Chinese TV programs portray and influence perceptions of foreign cultures.

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