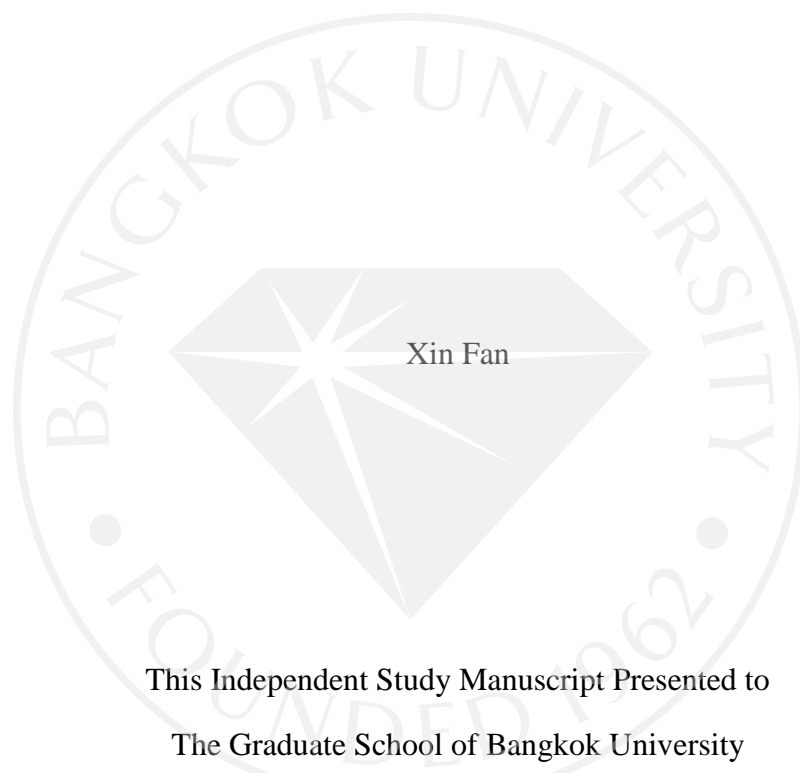


PORTRAYAL OF FOREIGN CULTURES IN CHINESE TV PROGRAM: A CASE
STUDY OF INFORMAL TALKS



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyse the depiction of foreign cultures in Informal Talks as an example of a Chinese television program. In this study, the research focuses on foreign cultural portraits and intercultural communication. Through textual analysis, television production techniques, topic selection directions, presenter questioning and stage design are used to integrate and present foreign cultures in television programs. The object of this study is informal Talks from season 1 to season 4. The study mainly adopts text analysis, which is divided into cultural aspects, data collection, and data analysis. Variables in this study include when to talk, what to say, Pacing and pausing, Art of listening, Intonation, what is conventional/not a language, Degree of indirectness, Cohesion and coherence, Individualism / collectivism, Power distance, Uncertainty avoidance, Masculinity, Long-term, Indulgence/restraint and process textual analysis. According to the content analysis, the researcher identifies answers to the research objectives, including identifying how foreign cultures are portrayed in Chinese television programs, and informal conversations, and determining how the choice of topics for informal conversations can be adapted to foreigners.

Keywords: Chinese TV Program, Foreign Cultures, Informal Talks

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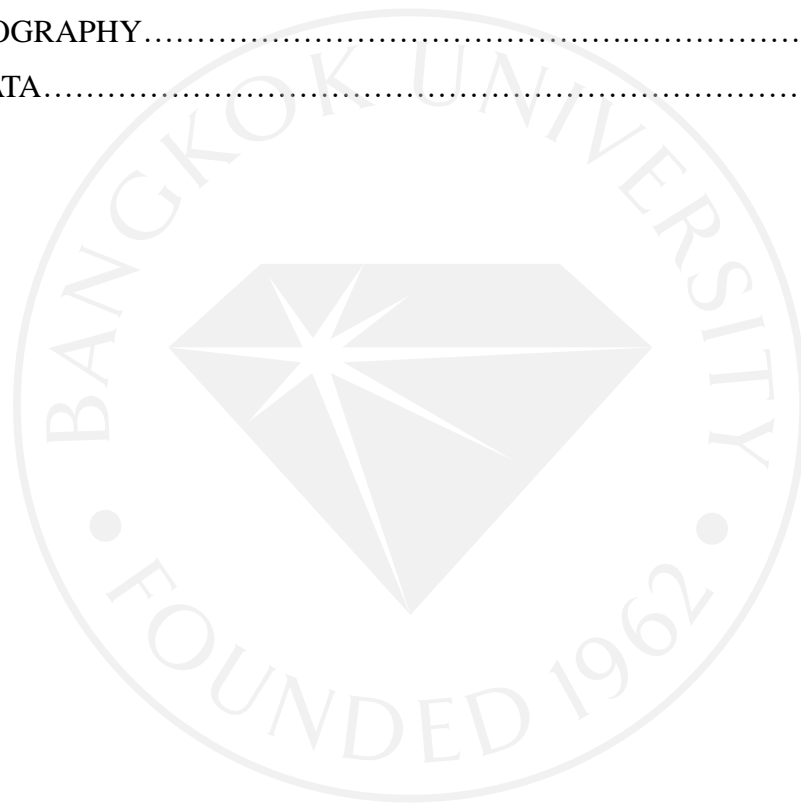
Xin Fan

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the introduction of this study. This part introduces the background of informal talks that is a cross-cultural communication TV program and offering the objective study how foreign culture demonstrate in Chinese TV program and how identify the topic selection in informal talk adapts foreigners and significance of study and term definition.

1.1 Background of Informal Talks

With the progress of The Times and the development of the Internet, globalization is becoming more and more obvious. We can easily understand the social system, cultural concepts, and religious beliefs and so on of other countries. Under globalization, the popularity of the internet has accelerated changes in the TV industry. The widespread use of Tencent TV, iQiYi TV, BiliBili TV and various social media platforms has made the flow of information easier and faster; therefore, the internet and online TV could broaden people's horizons.

As a result of 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). In recent years, there are various TV programs in China; Informal Talk is one of them.

Informal Talk is a global cultural relativity program, which was created by Hubei satellite TV in the first four seasons and jointly created by BiliBili and Hubei satellite TV in the fifth season. The program is composed of male and young representatives from 10 different countries and one-day representative (a random number of female guests in season 6.5) The four presidium members and flying guests discussed social hot topics and customs and cultures of various countries, which was broadcast on Hubei satellite TV at 21:20 every Friday.

“Informal”, as the core of the program, borrows a formal and solemn concept in a diplomatic occasion. In essence, it is an informal humorous attitude and ridicule spirit, talking about various topics loved by ordinary people. Young talents from different countries and civilizations gathered together to actively discuss hot topics of

common concern to young people, seek diversified answers through dialogue, and enhance cultural exchanges between China and the world. All kinds of remarks are humorous and funny, which makes people laugh.

This TV program has a very interesting background. In the future, humans will fly away from the earth and migrate to another galaxy in the universe. There, various splendid civilizations in human history have been well preserved, where people live in harmony, symbiosis and common prosperity. This situation of world harmony benefits from a World Youth Conference - Informal Talks at the beginning of 2015. The meeting was attended by 11 young people from different countries all over the world, which represented their respective civilizations. During the talks, the collision of civilizations and cultures generated sparks, sought common ground while reserving differences, and eliminated misunderstanding and discrimination. Every dialogue and discussion between them will have a far-reaching impact on the future Civilization Ecology of mankind.

Informal Talks may now be viewed online by not just Chinese people but also many foreigners at any time and from anywhere, thanks to the advancement of the internet. The assertion of McLuhan that "the medium is an extension of the person" has prompted a thorough examination of the medium's structure and function. Because "television programs are quite particular in their audience targeting to appeal to audiences with diverse experiences and interests," each television show is positioned uniquely in its own way (Livingstone, 2013). The producer of Informal Talks Yu Qing says when choosing the topics, they give priority to those that concerned the younger generation of Chinese (Wen, 2019). Representatives share the insights of a series of social topics; in particular, Table etiquette, wedding customs, folklore, and other cultural characteristics from their own nations are only a few examples of the banal and deep.

Intercultural communication variety shows assists people in better understanding themselves and the society in which they live, while also respecting cultural differences, fostering cultural sensitivity, and maintaining cultural awareness. Because it is a worldwide medium with a recognized set of cultural components that convey variations across cultures, a television program is a good resource for studying cultural differences (Mishan, 2005). According to the new research, the process is

divided into three parts: a small theater with mostly foreign delegates acting out the plot, a global cultural relativity session with foreign delegates presenting national characteristics around the theme, and a proposal session in which each delegate debates an event or practice based on their own cultural background.

Until the end of the six seasons, there are around 65 foreign young people joined this TV program, and more than 50 million people watched this program. Informal Talks has already become the best TV program in BiliBili. Audiences get more and more understand of foreign culture from this TV program.

1.2 Problem Statement

Informal Talks is a cross-cultural communication television program in which controversial social topics are discussed and the differences between the cultures of their own countries and those of China are presented by representatives of their own personalities. Informal Talks started out as a TV variety show, but due to the relatively low profile of Hubei TV itself, such a format could be a simultaneous TV and online broadcast. Nowadays, the popularity of web series is no less than that of TV series, with more and more young people using mobile phones and computers. The influence of television itself is declining, and young people are turning their attention to the internet. Young people are shifting their focus to the internet. This change can be exploited by change to online variety shows, which can be promoted and talked about on the internet. This will increase the viewership

It allows more Chinese people to learn about the cultures of different countries in a fragmented way. The question arises as to how Informal Talks can be better suited to Chinese policy and cross-cultural communication in terms of content, programming, and other aspects. The main concern of this study is how foreign culture is portrayed in the Informal Talks, a Chinese TV program. It is common in Chinese TV programs that a range of them are concerning the domestic cultural communication regarding government.

Representatives on Informal Talks are from different countries, each with a different cultural background. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels

attached. (Sapir, 1929). Therefore, different ways of thinking, languages, non-verbal processes, and cultural environments will inevitably result in the process of encountering each other will inevitably lead to cultural conflicts.

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objective of this study aims to analyze the portrayal of foreign culture in Informal Talks, as an example of Chinese TV show. The following are offering some objectives of the study:

1.3.1 To identify how foreign culture is portrayed in the Chinese TV program, Informal Talks.

1.3.2 To identify how the topic selection of informal talks adapts to foreigners.

1.4 Scope of Research

In this research, research focuses on foreign cultural portraits and cross-cultural communication. Though out the textual analysis, use TV program production skills, topic direction selection, host questions, stage design, etc. to integrate and display foreign culture in the TV program.

Secondly, this study will be conducted in Bangkok since the epidemic of Covid-19, and the purpose of this study is to clarify how the foreign cultures are portrayed in the Chinese TV show Informal Talks. Season 1 to season 4 will be purposely chosen as the main resources to be utilized in the data collection phase, as topics in these four season has already passed for a while, and the researcher can be able to find enough commends and opinion about these social topics. In addition, this study describes what informal talks are and why it successful in the intercultural communication of China's TV shows. The duration of this study is subject to three phases, proposal, data collection, data analysis.

1.5 Research Signification

1.5.1 Realistic Significance

Television as the medium of communication, through the form of discourse, to create a "field" atmosphere of face to face interpersonal communication inside and

outside the screen, with language signs and non-language signs to convey information through dual channels, integration of mass communication and interpersonal communication of TV program types. In Informal Talks, the producer would like to use foreigners' views to deliver different thinking (under the confidentiality of the program proposal, the details will be not presented in this study). For example, Young talents from different countries and civilizations gather together to actively discuss hot topics that are of common concern to young people, seek diversified solutions through dialogue, and enhance cultural exchanges between China and the world.

Culturally, this study accelerates the speed of the foreign cultural transmission in the Chinese context; what is more, the cross-culture systematically cultivated and strategically embedded in the program will certainly promote the bi-cultural understandings of audiences. What is more, cultural communication amongst different countries will also strengthen the foreign cultural acceptances among Chinese audiences.

This research can help to interpret how the TV program introduces foreign culture and how the topics chosen in the Informal Talks reflect different culture.

1.5.2 Theoretical Significance

Using cross-culture communication and culture dimension related theories; this research is trying to analyze the portrayal of foreign culture in the Chinese TV show, and will take Informal Talks as an example. This can help to understand the culture differences in the Chinese TV program and hope to provide evidence about how to portray different culture in TV program. Moreover, this research is helpful to disseminate diversified culture and fill the gap in related papers.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Before doing more detailed analysis of this research, it is important to give specific definition about the terms or words which would be used in this research.

Cross-cultural communication: Cross-cultural communication refers to the communication between native speakers and non-native speakers, and also refers to the communication between people who are different in language and cultural background (Levine, Park & Kim, 2007). Based on the culture difference, there are eight types of communication problems during the cross-cultural communication,

including 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).

Culture dimension: Culture dimension is a concept which is used to do quantitative research on cultural factors. It was put forward by Geert Hofstede (2011), director of the Netherlands Institute for international cultural cooperation. This concept includes six dimensions, which are power distance index, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance index, long-term orientation, and indulgence.

Textual analysis: Textual analysis refers to the representation of text and the selection of feature items. Textual analysis is a basic problem in text mining and information retrieval, which quantifies the feature words extracted from text to represent text information (Berger et al., 2019).

Informal Talk: Informal Talks is a global cultural relativity program. Each episode of the program is held by youth representatives from 11 different countries, 4 presidium hosts and flying guests to discuss topics such as social hot topics and the customs and culture of various countries (Wen, 2019).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

In this literature review, the researcher mainly introduced two theories which will support the research about portraying of foreign culture in Chinese television program. First of all, this literature review introduced theories about cross-culture communication. Cross-culture communication refers to the communication between two different people with different culture background (Levine et al., 2007). During the communication period, both sides speak the same language. One of them is native speakers, and another is non-native speakers. There is a kind of situation that both sides are all non-native speakers.

There are eight types of cultural differences during the culture communication, including 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).

). In informal talks, a Chinese TV program, these eight differences also exist. The Chinese TV program tries to introduce different cultures to the audiences by showing the progress of cross-culture communication. After watching the cross-culture communication, audiences can have their own opinion and impression about a certain culture. Therefore, theory about cross-culture communication can provide theoretical support to the research about how the Chinese TV program portrayal foreign cultures. The second theory is culture dimension. This is a theory conducted by Hofstede (2011). By using this theory, the researcher can make a structured analysis of informal talks.

2.2 Cross-culture Communication

Cross-cultural communication refers to the communication between native speakers and non-native speakers, and also refers to the communication between any people who have differences in language and cultural background (Levine et al., 2007). From the perspective of foreign education or learning, education and communication between different cultures, the concept of “cross-cultural

communication” can be defined as oral communication in the same language (mother tongue or target language) by communicators with different cultural backgrounds in a specific communication situation (Gardner, 1962).

Cross-cultural communication contains four main points. First of all, both sides of communication must come from different cultural backgrounds. The difference of cultural background is a broad concept, which refers not only to the differences between different cultural circles, but also to the differences between subcultures within the same cultural circle. However, based on the major of Chinese as a foreign language, cultural differences mainly refer to the differences between different cultural circles, especially the cultural differences between China and European and American countries. Because from the actual situation of cross-cultural communication, the differences in cultural background lead to communication errors, and the interpersonal communication between China and European and American countries is easy to cause conflicts. The interpersonal communication between China and Asian countries, such as Japan, South Korea and some Southeast Asian countries, although there are cultural differences, it is much smoother. This is because these countries and China belong to the oriental cultural circle and have many similarities in cultural orientation and communication norms.

Second, both sides of communication must communicate in the same language. Both sides can use the same language without relying on translator, and this is the foundation of cross-culture communication. Since both sides of communication come from different cultural backgrounds and use the same language, the language used for communication is the mother tongue for one party and the second language for the other party, and this second language can also be called as the acquired “target language.”

The third point is that the communication between the two sides is real-time oral communication. There are many ways of cross-cultural communication. It can be the communication of linguistic symbols or nonverbal symbols, such as commodities, pictorials, objects, images, performances and other materialized forms of symbols; It can be two-way communication on the spot or one-way communication through the media, such as television, radio, newspapers, advertisements and other means of communication; It can be oral communication or written communication, such as

correspondence, official documents, etc. But based on education communication and culture introduction, real-time oral communication is an irreplaceable way (Gardner, 1962).

The last point is that the communication between the two sides is direct verbal communication (Gardner, 1962). Both side in the communication need to use language to express themselves and try to communicate at the cultural level.

There are eight types of cultural differences during the culture communication (Tannen, 1985). These eight 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). When to talk and what to say are two elements which will directly influence the cross-culture communication. These two elements refers to the content people communicate with each other. The last six elements refer to the communication process, which means how people communicate with each other. There might be misunderstanding during the communication because of the different culture background, but with these six elements as help, people can better understanding the meaning of each other. In this case, cross cultural communication presents double constraints: the need to connect with others and the need not to be imposed, and in some cultural situations, individuals must compromise these needs in order to communicate (Tannen, 1985).

These eight types of cultural differences all exist in informal talks, a Chinese TV program. People of different cultures make cultural exchanges on a certain degree of compromise. Showing cross-culture communication is one of the ways to introduce different culture to people. The audiences can have their own impression about a certain foreign culture from watching informal talks. Therefore, cross-culture communication and the cultural differences during the culture communication can help the researchers make a better analysis for how the Chinese TV program portrays foreign cultures.

Through cross-cultural communication, audiences can better understand the culture of other countries, enriching the knowledge of the nation and promoting intercultural understanding.

2.3 Culture Dimension

Culture 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). Later, he and Bond established the fifth cultural dimension, namely long-term orientation. In his research in 2010, he added the sixth dimension, which is indulgence and restraint.

The first dimension is power distance index (PDI). Power distance index indicates the degree of acceptance of the fact that members with less power in the organization or institution have unequal distribution of power. Cultural members with large power distance regard power as the basic factor of society and emphasize coercive force and indicative power, while cultural members with small power gap believe that the use of power should be legal and pay attention to experts or legitimate power (Hofstede, 2011).

The second dimension is individualism (IDV). It is also called collectivism. Individualism indicates the degree of association between individuals and groups. Individualism culture focuses on individual goals; on the contrary, collectivism culture emphasizes collective goals. In individualism culture, people should take care of themselves and their immediate families, while in collectivism culture; people expect their inner group or collective to take care of them. As the exchange condition of this care, they have absolute loyalty to the inner group. Individualism has no obvious difference between inside and outside the circle, while collectivism has obvious differences between inside and outside the circle (Hofstede, 2011).

The third dimension is masculinity (MAS). Masculinity is a concept versus femininity. It mainly depends on whether a society represents more male qualities such as competitiveness and arbitrariness, or female qualities such as humility and caring for others, as well as the definition of male and female functions. The greater the value of the masculinity dimension index (MDI), the more obvious the masculinity tendency of the society and the more prominent the masculinity; On the

contrary, it shows that the femininity of the society is prominent (Hofstede, 2011).

The fourth dimension is uncertainty avoidance index (UAI). It refers to whether a society avoids and controls uncertainty through formal channels when it is threatened by uncertain events and unconventional environment. The culture with a high degree of avoidance pays more attention to authority, status, qualifications and age, and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater occupational safety, establishing more formal rules, intolerant of extreme views and behaviors, believing in absolute knowledge and expert evaluation. Cultures with low avoidance are more tolerant of abnormal behaviors and opinions, and have few rules and regulations. In philosophy and religion, they allow different opinions to exist at the same time (Hofstede, 2011).

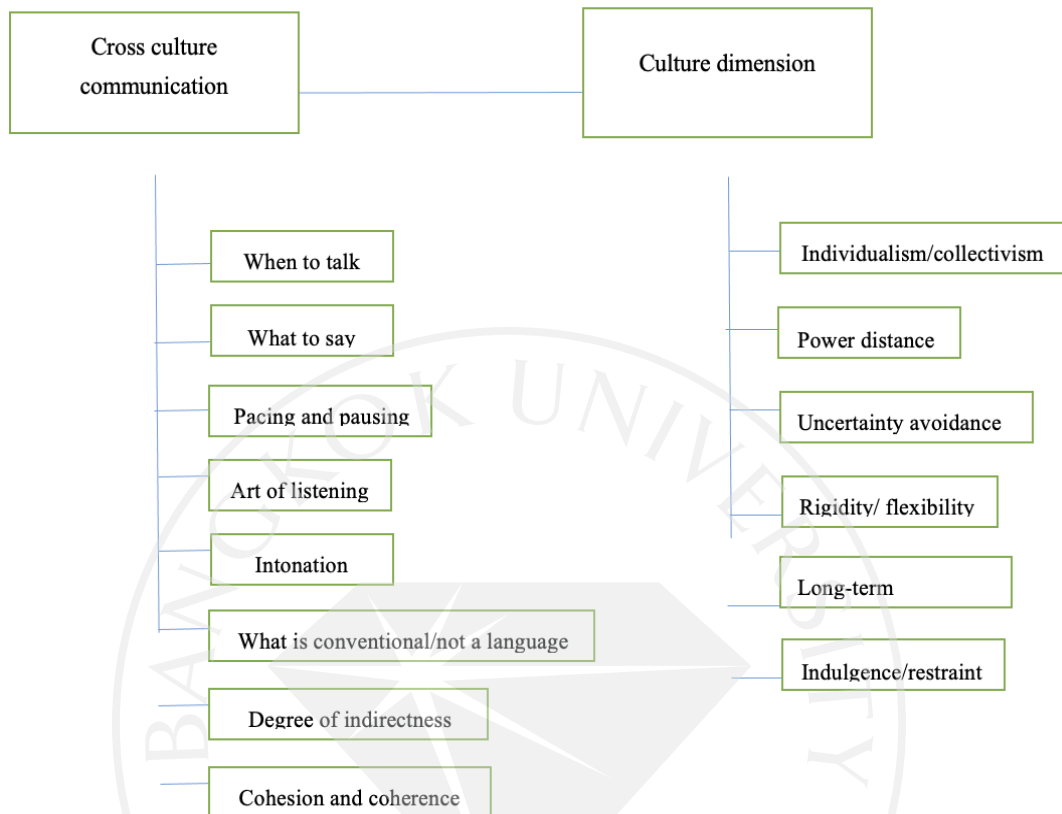
The fifth dimension refers to long-term orientation (LTO). It refers to the degree to which members of a culture can accept delaying the satisfaction of their material, emotional and social needs. This dimension shows to what extent a moral life is worth pursuing without any religion to prove its rationality. The long-term orientation index has a strong relationship with the economic growth of various countries. In the late 20th century, East Asia's economy developed rapidly. Scholars believe that long-term orientation is one of the main reasons for promoting development (Hofstede, 2011).

In 1983, Hofstede and Bond conducted an extended study on work-related values of employees of multinational companies in 53 countries and regions and concluded the last dimension, which is indulgence. This concept is related to restraint. It refers to the allowable degree of a society to people's basic needs and desire to enjoy life and pleasure. The greater the value of self-indulgence, the less binding the society as a whole has on itself. The greater the society's tolerances for self-indulgence, the less people restrict themselves. This is the newly added dimension (Hofstede, 2011). These six dimensions can help the researcher analyze the behavior of guests from different cultural backgrounds in informal talks TV programs.

2.4 Conceptual Framework and Conclusion

In this part, the researcher mainly introduced theories and concepts which related to the research questions. First of all, the researcher introduced cross-culture communication. The concept of “cross-cultural communication” can be defined as oral communication in the same language (mother tongue or target language) by communicators with different cultural backgrounds in a specific communication situation (Gardner, 1962). As informal talks is a Chinese TV program which used cross-cultural communication to introduce different cultures to the audiences, cross-cultural communication can help the researcher have a better understanding about the research questions. Second, culture dimension was introduced. Culture dimension is a concept adopted by Hofstede (2011), which has six dimensions, including Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism / Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Long / Short Term Orientation, and Indulgence / Restraint (Hofstede, 2011). These six dimensions can help the researcher analyze the behavior of guests from different cultural backgrounds in informal talks TV programs. Therefore, the researcher built up the concept framework of this research (please see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



Based on the literature review, the research found that there is a gap on how the Chinese TV program portrays foreign cultures, and the researcher believed that this is an important part in culture communication. However, this two main theories and concepts can provide research background and theories support to the research about how the Chinese TV program portrays foreign cultures. In the next few chapters, the researcher will introduce the research method, the findings, and research conclusions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the methodology of this study. This part introduces how textual analysis is the appropriate research method in this study and discussed specific research design and research procedure, including sample selection, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative research is important in social science researches which needs the researchers to collect and analyze words or texts that collected from speech or writing (Tavallaei & Talib, 2010). Through this research method, researchers can get a better understanding about certain questions or events in real life. This research mainly focuses on how the foreign culture is expressed in Chinese TV show, focusing specifically on the informal talks program. Therefore, textual analysis is the appropriate research method in this research.

Text involves two subjects, including text producer and text consumer (Berger et al., 2019). Text producer refers to the main body that generates text. They deliver what producers want to express and may also potentially contain some characteristics of producers. Text consumer refers to the main body of reading text. When text consumers read this text, the text has an impact on their' cognitive activities (Berger et al., 2019). Text analysis refers to transforming the text to be analyzed from an unstructured original text into structured information that can be recognized and processed by the computer that is, scientifically abstracting the text and establishing its mathematical model to describe and replace the text. Therefore, the computer can recognize the text through the calculation and operation of this model (Cuirini & Franzese, 2019).

This research mainly focuses on how the foreign culture is expressed or described in the Chinese TV shows, aiming particularly to analyze the informal talks program. According to Carley (1994). "language is a window on culture" Therefore, analyzing text can describe how the culture influences people. By using textual analysis in this research, the researcher can have a deeper understanding on how the

Chinese TV show described foreign culture and what they are trying to transmit to the audiences. Textual analysis can also help the researcher better interpretation about the content in the Chinese TV show. Moreover, textual analysis obvious characteristics (Cuirini & Franzese, 2019). These characteristics which are showed in textual analysis can provide adequate evidence for the researcher to explain the TV show content, and can also help the researcher find out some cultural characteristics which are hiding in the behaviors (Cuirini & Franzese, 2019). If there are more question during the research, other information should come from literature review.

3.2 Sample Selection

Choosing a certain group of sample is an important step in qualitative research, as doing research on the whole population is very difficult and is almost impossible (Robinson, 2014). Therefore, when doing qualitative research, researchers need to choose a group of sample based on certain principles, and by analyzing these samples, the researchers can get explain on certain questions and can try to use the explanation to the whole population. There are mainly three aspects when choosing samples for the research, including sample size, sample strategy, and sample selection range (Robinson, 2014).

The sample strategy of this study is judgments sample. Judgment sample refers to choosing the most effective sample in the research, which can provide enough evidence and analyzing results to the researchers (Robinson, 2014). However, there might be some samples which show different opinions or explanations, and the researchers should pay attention to these samples (Marshall, 1996). The samples size differs from different researches, and the purpose of choosing sample is to give adequate evidence and explanation of a certain phenomenon or research questions (Robinson, 2014).

As this research mainly focuses on how the Chinese TV show express foreign culture and how the Chinese TV show choose topics which meet the needs of foreigners, this research chooses season one to season four of the Chinese TV show, informal talks. Season 1 to season 4 will be purposely chosen as the main resources to be utilized in the data collection phase, as topics in these four seasons have already passed for a while, and the researcher can be able to find enough commends and

opinions about these social topics. By taking these four seasons of informal talks as samples, the researcher can have deeper understanding about how this TV show describe foreign cultures and what kind of topics this show used to provide culture communication situation to the foreigners. Moreover, these samples can also provide enough text to analysis because they contain guests from more than twenty countries and have enough topics to analysis.

3.3 Research Instrument

The textual analysis is a convenient research method which can help the researcher analysis the TV content (Ifversen, 2003). This research method is characterized by flexibility and accuracy. In this research, the textual analysis was used to analysis TV content, which refers to the content of informal talks, from season one to season four. According to the literature review, these TV content can be divided into two main groups:

- 1) Cross culture communication;
- 2) Culture dimension.

Table 3.1: The coding results using textual analysis, based on informal talks, from season one to season four

1 st Order Codes	2 nd 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	
- Passionate	Intonation	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): The coding results using textual analysis, based on informal talks, from season one to season four

1 st Order Codes	2 nd Order Concept	Aggregated Themes
- Laughter - Expression - Body language	What is conventional/not a language	Cross-culture Communication
- Face to face conversation	Degree of indirectness	
- Topic discussion	Cohesion and coherence	
- Corporate	Individualism/collectivism	Culture 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	

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

TV show content is one kind of the object of textual analysis (Ifversen, 2003). Based on the sample selection, this research chooses season one to season four of a Chinese TV show, informal talks, as the research sample. Therefore, the data collection would be also based on these four seasons of the Chinese TV show. The data mainly comes from the content of the first four seasons of informal talks, including the topics of the TV show, the main ideas from different guests from different countries in the TV show, and the communication of different foreigners on the TV show. If there are more questions during the textual analysis, the content of more seasons of informal talks would be included.

3.5 Data Analysis

Based on the two objectives of the study, identifying how foreign culture is portrayed in the Chinese TV program, informal talks, and figure out how the topic selection of informal talks adapts to foreigners, textual analysis was used to analysis the content of the Chinese TV program. As a result, there are 8473 codes and twenty 1st Order Codes.



CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher introduced the findings of this research. These findings were drawn from the analysis of content of informal talks from season one to season four. The researcher analyzed the content of these four seasons of informal talks, including the themes of each season, the dialogue content of guests, the facial expressions of the guests, and the tone of their voice, in order to draw conclusions and figure out answer for the research objectives, including identify how foreign culture is portrayed in the Chinese TV program, informal talks, and identify how the topic selection of informal talks was adapting to foreigners.

4.1 Summary of the Portrayal of Foreign Cultures

Informal talks invited guests from several countries, and used topic conversation to show the Chinese audience the differences between different cultures. According to the textual analysis, the researchers found that there are two main parts about the portrayal of foreign cultures, including cross-culture communication, and culture dimension. For cross-culture communication, the researcher analyzed what the guests said, when they started talking, elements which do not belong to language, and so on, and the researcher could find that informal talks tried to portray a more real, more objective and closer to life about foreign cultures.

For culture dimension, according to the analysis, informal talks used topic chosen to reflect different culture dimensions in different cultures. However, this may also reduce the veracity of the data, considering that all the guests are living in a completely new country and their opinions might be unique of their own.

4.2 Cross-culture Communication

Cross-culture communication refers to the communication between native speakers and non-native speakers. Through the research of cross-cultural communication, the researcher can find out how the foreign cultures were portrayed in the informal talks. There are eight concepts in the research of cross-culture communication, which include when to talk, what to say, pacing and pausing, art of

listening, intonation, what is conventional / not a language, degree of indirectness, and cohesion and coherence. In this part, the findings about these eight contents will be discussed in detail.

4.2.1 When to talk

In cross-cultural communication, when to talk refers to when people start to talk or what makes them willing to talk (Tannen, 1985). Cross-culture communication means that people have to do real-time oral communication, and therefore, when to talk is important types of culture differences during the culture communication.

According to the textual analysis of informal talk's season one to season four, there are mainly two kinds of types about when to talk. The first type is to express different opinion, and the second type is to ask for opinion.

First of all, about expressing different opinion, people start to talk or have the willing to talk when they have different opinions. These different opinions can show the difference of their own culture. In informal talks season one, when the guests from different countries discussed the relations between the two sexes and what kind of gifts that males will give to females, Biyang Gong from Argentina said:

“I told you guys, this is what I would do, I would just ask my female friends or girlfriends what do you want for your birthday or anniversary, I would buy any gifts they want, and I would also change the gifts if they don't like”.

But Zuo You from America and Xiaolong Mu from Egypt have different opinion. Zuo You said that “but the problem is that you wouldn't buy something useless” and then he was interrupted by Xiaolong Mu from Egypt. The opinion of Xiaolong Mu is as below:

“If you have to ask them, that means you don't know them at all, you don't know what they want. You shouldn't ask them; what you should do is to guess what they want. You can give them gifts they like because you know them, and you know what they want.”

The guests will talk when they have opinion about the topic or when they have different opinion from others. They grow up in different culture, and therefore, they have different opinion about the same thing. In informal talks, guests from different countries can talk to each other and share their different opinions. This is a part of their cross-culture communication.

The second type is asking for opinion. As the guests in informal talks all come from different countries, so they know that each of them might have very different opinion on the same thing, and when they are curious about the culture of another guests, they will talk and ask others' opinions. For example, also in season one of informal talks, one of the topics is the habit of lying. Xiaolong Mu from Egypt ask Yoyo, who is from Japan, "Is Japan a lying country?" Yoyo said that "No, I don't think Japan is a lying country. It's just that the Japanese expression is more unique and euphemistic". During the cross-culture communication, asking opinion can help people know more about another culture in a quick way.

4.2.2 What to say

According to the analysis of the content of informal talks, what to say mainly includes two parts: the reality in the guests' own countries, and their feelings of China. First of all, the guests would talk about the reality in their own countries based on different topics. In season two of informal talks, one of the topics is wine culture in different countries. About this topic, Hanyi Jin, who comes from South Korea, shared wine culture in South Korea.

"The most familiar Korean liquor is soju, but we also have another kind of liquor, Makgeolli, also known as rice wine. This kind of wine was originally brewed by everyone in the countryside. It is also a kind of beauty wine, and women drink more. Drinking this wine requires shaking because of the sediment. When opening, it needs to be opened and poured, and it will be delicious with Sprite".

Sharing different kinds of culture is an important way to introduce culture to Chinese audiences, and the reality or the custom in different countries can show a small part of the culture. Therefore, based on a lot of description about the reality in the guests' own countries, informal talks can show audiences different cultures in a relatively authentic way.

Second, the guests would also talk about their feelings in China about some topics. Taking wearing open crotch pants as an example, this is a kind of pants which kids under age of three or four would wear, which would have exposed their crotch so they can pee easily. Xiaolong Mu, who comes from Egypt, shared his feelings about this topic.

“I feel very confused about that, I don’t even know what’s that, and I have to ask my friends and Google it. But the problem is, how parents teach their children, that, you know, when they can pee, and, emmm, when they shouldn’t pee, I mean, how can this be trained? Can someone explain this to me?”

By sharing their own feeling in China, they can get more understanding about Chinese culture, and during the content about what to say, Chinese audiences can know more about foreign cultures, so the foreign guests can also have deeper understanding about Chinese culture. By doing so, the target of cross-culture communication has achieved.

4.2.3 Pacing and pausing

Pacing and pausing in cross-culture communication refers to the start of talking and the stop of talking during the communication. The analysis of the content shows that there is one code about pacing and pausing, which is the exciting culture shock.

One of the topics is things about different toilet behaviors in different countries. The guest who comes from Myanmar said that “We used to chant Buddhist scriptures while going to the toilet, do you guys know why?” Other guests were so confused and don’t know the answer. But they were all very curious about the reason. This is a kind of pausing in the communication due to the culture shock.

When they are talking about squat toilet in China, the guests from different countries were so excited that they couldn’t wait to share their own opinions. Biyang Gong from Argentina said, “Oh my god I cannot believe it, I cannot image that there is a toilet like that.” Zuo You from America said, “It is very inconvenient for me, as my legs are so long, I cannot fully squat, so I have to balance against a wall with one of my hands.” Xiaolong Mu from Egypt said, “My goodness, I don’t know what’s that when I first came here.” They almost started talking at the same time. This kind of talking can reflect their culture shock in China. When people are communicating across cultures, culture shock is very normal. This phenomenon is common in informal talks, because the audiences can know things about foreign countries, which will bring them culture shock, and they would also see the guests experience culture shock through their talking.

4.2.4 Art of listening

The art of listening is an important part in cross-culture communication, as people always have different opinions about something and they all want to share their opinions. The art of listening here refers to listening to others, don't rush to talk, and try to understand others. The content about the art of listening refers to stop talking when others start to talk. In informal talks, when the guests introduced the unique food in their own countries, Bobo Hua from Iran introduced "kalle pache", which is the goat's head, and it is a kind of very famous food in Iran. Bobo Hua said:

"OK, ladies and gentlemen, let me warmly introduce famous persian food 'kalle pache', which is the goat's head and the eyes."

Some of the guests said "oh I like that", "this is delicious", and there are also some guests said "ill", "unacceptable". But they all listened to Bobo Hua's introduction and respect his culture and eating habits. In informal talks, the guests showed the positive side of the art of listening, they would listen to others even they did not agree with them. This shows tolerance for different cultures in cross-culture communication.

4.2.5 Intonation

Intonation is a part of communication, as people can get the feelings about others from the intonation when they are talking. During the discussion in informal talks, a guest from India shared his opinion about the TV program informal talks, he said:

"You know I am studying medicine right? It sounds that I am smart, but actually I am not, I know nothing besides medicine, and I don't even know where Canada is. I think it is in Europe before I went there. So I think it is really a good thing for me to come here, because I know you guys, and you guys can really tell me a lot of things, hahahahaha, I am happy, hahaha, and I mean, I really learned a lot of things. I love hearing you talk."

When he was talking, his intonation is very passionate. Most of the guests in informal talks had passion intonation. They are interested about different cultures and they are also willing to introduce their own culture to others. This kind of passion intonation can help other guests know the willingness about sharing and listening, and therefore, the cross-culture communication goes better.

4.2.6 What is conventional/not a language

There are a lot of elements during the cross-culture communication, such as laughter, expression, and body language. From all these elements, people can know the attitude, mood, and general opinion of the others, i.e. they are for this thing or against this thing. When talking about the men's attitudes towards women, Xiaoqiang Tang from Turkey said:

“Well, now I want to see things from a woman's point of view. You know there is a kind of man, so annoying so annoying (big hands wave), hate them hate them hate them (also big hands wave). I really hate them. And their purpose is showing that they are better than women or they are better than their girlfriends (a look of disgust). That really makes you annoying. I don't like being called macho, hahahaha, you know, call me macho is really a macho thing, hahahaha.”

The guests would have laughter, expressions, and body languages frequently. These elements can help them express their own feelings, and because they all use Chinese to express their own opinion, using expressions and body languages can help them express themselves more clearly. For example, laughter and nodding means support or accept about something, and a look of disgust or cover their face means that they don't agree with something or they think that something is unacceptable. Although there are different cultures, but audiences and guests can still understand others' attitudes through non-language elements.

4.2.7 Degree of indirectness

The degree of indirectness in cross-culture communication refers to the communicative distance. People can communicate through the Internet, such as e-mail, video chat, phone call, or face to face conversation. In informal talks, the guests all had face to face conversation, which is more directive and more efficient. Yixin Ruan from France said:

“I want to say thank you to other guests. Joining informal talks is a happy experience, and I learned a lot of things. I learned so many knowledge from other guests. I admire them, because they all overcome many difficulties and gradually become a better version of themselves. Besides that, I can also learn about the thinking of young Chinese people, their concerns and expectations through this program. I hope I can continue to participate in the later shows, and I hope the fifth

season will come soon.”

Face to face conversation can prove a closer space for the guests. This can help the guests be familiar with each other more quickly, introduce more things about their own culture, and also express their really opinion about different habits in different cultures. Moreover, this is also a good way for the guests to have a deeper understand about China.

4.2.8 Cohesion and coherence

The last type in cross-culture communication is cohesion and coherence. Coherent communication can help people have better understanding about others. In informal talks, topic discussion was used in order to ensure the cohesion and coherence during the communication. The guests can discuss a certain topic and share the custom of their own countries and express their opinions in two or three hours. For example, in season three, there are 38 different topics which the guests can discuss, such as the capitals of different countries, different ways to celebrate the new year, representative children's song, different moving customs, minorities of different countries, school uniforms of different countries, ID card in different countries and so on. Since when the guests came to join informal talks, the TV program, most of them don't know each other, topic discussion can offer the guests a theme which they can start to share unique custom and start to become familiar with each other.

4.3 Culture Dimension

Culture dimension is a concept which can be used to research on different culture factors. In this research, there are six culture dimensions (Hofstede, 2011), including power distance, individualism or collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term, and indulgence or restraint. According to the textual analysis, the researcher can figure how the informal talks portrayed different cultures, and most of the culture dimensions can be reflected from the topics which were chose in informal talks.

4.3.1 Individualism/collectivism

Individualism or collectivism refers to the degree of association between individuals and groups. Individualism indicates that people should take care of their own or their family. But collectivism indicates that people can hope that others in the

same group or in the same community, and they are loyal to their community and their group (Hofstede, 2011). Different culture has different degree of individualism and collectivism. In informal talks, this can be analyzed through the discussion and the guests' opinion about this TV program. For example, Yixin Ruan from France said:

“I really missed all other guests, I know how hard they are when they come to a new country, and I know they all work hard. We always help each other, talking about our own countries or some stuff we met in China.”

Mico from Italy cried and said:

“I miss you all guys, I haven't seen you for a very long time, and I might have to leave after season four, but we will meet again, I am sure about that, because I remember Zuo You and I and Xiong Mu, we went out for travel, we chatted at night. We are so close.”

In informal talks, most of the guests showed out cooperation. They are more inclined to collectivism. As they will help each other and become very good friends, and try to figure out problem together. However, this might not represent the degree of individualism or collectivism in their countries. As they all came to a new country and they did not communicate with their fellow citizen. In informal talks, they only represent their own countries and talk to people from other countries. Therefore, the authenticity of this data may be insufficient.

4.3.2 Power distance

Power distance refers to the degree of acceptance of the fact that members with less power in the organization or institution have unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, 2011). In informal talks, there are some topics which can reflect power distance in different countries. When talking about school rules, Xiaoqiang Tang from Turkey said:

“We have to shave to go to school, that was horrible. That's true. Before we went into school, after singing the national anthem, teachers would stand there and touch your face to see is there still stubble. If you have stubble, congratulations, they would give you a razor without shaving foam and ask you to shave. It really hurts.”

Xiaolong Mu from Egypt said:

“In Egypt, chewing gum is not allowed in schools. School thinks it's

feminine for boys to eat gum, while girls eat it as inelegant. Also, making up is forbidden.”

When talking about work overtime, Bobo Hua from Iran said:

“You know when people have to work overtime, they would like to go to the toilet, because they can relax themselves in there, like watch their mobile phones, and they know they have to stay in the company, so why not go to the toilet and have some fun. Although this is a bad habit.”

In informal talks, power distance was more reflected in school and work. Schools in different countries might have different rules which emphasize coercive force and indicative power. At work, people start to think that the use of power should be controlled, but indicative power still exist.

4.3.3 Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance refers to whether a society avoids and controls uncertainty through formal channels when it is threatened by uncertain events and unconventional environment (Hofstede, 2011). High uncertainty avoidance means official rules are necessary, while low uncertainty avoidance means that unusual behaviour and opinion are acceptable.

When talking about what one should always be very proud, Xiaolong Mu from Egypt said:

“I believe one should be best in his / her daily life. You should always show your best to your family, and your husband. But when dealing with outsiders, you should be as ordinary as most people, and be very proud is not a good thing. Just like, you know, in Egypt, the most beautiful clothes are always the pajamas.”

However, Yuanhao Tian from Britain had an opposite opinion, he said:

“Not to be proud is very idealistic. It's not realistic at all. We live in a society and we all care about others' opinions, and that's way we have to be proud to show that we are good people. We have to show this. I believe it is very necessary to be proud of yourself and show this to everyone.”

The guests showed great difference in this topic, they all agree that people show work hard, keep learning, and care about health. However, when facing specific behavior, people from different countries have very different views. For example, according to the analysis, Egypt is a country with high uncertainty avoidance, and

relatively, Britain is a country with low uncertainty avoidance. By choosing specific topic, informal talks can show this difference between different cultures to the Chinese audience.

4.3.4 Masculinity

Masculinity refers to whether a society represents more male qualities such as competitiveness and arbitrariness, or female qualities such as humility and caring for others, as well as the definition of male and female functions.

When talking about how to prove a man is a man, Mico from Italy said that,

“In my country, we don’t have to join the army to prove I am a man. I think this is too much. You are what you are, and 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.”

But Biyang Gong from Argentina said:

“If you want to be a man, or your hobby is like a man, you must go to the army, that’s the best choice to be a man.”

Shijie Luo from America said:

“I don’t think you have to become a man, that’s your own choice, you can be anyone. Army is another thing; it’s just a personal choice.”

According to the analysis, the researcher found that in informal talks, Argentina showed more masculinity, and Italy showed less masculinity. Also, by talking about the relation between males and females, or the topic about gender, it is possible to show the degree of masculinity in different culture.

4.3.5 Long-term orientation

Long-term orientation means the degree to which members of a culture can accept delaying the satisfaction of their material, emotional and social needs. In this culture dimension, emotional delayed gratification levels in different countries are highlighted.

For example, when talking about shopping and credit, Bobo Hua from Iran said:

“I think happiness comes from the inside out, and it cannot be influenced by crazy shopping, I mean, the happiness created by crazy shopping is fake. Well, but, emmmmm, I know that, but, emmmmm, I will still do crazy shopping.”

However, Duoduo Qian from Nigeria said:

“It's not like this, we need to treat every day as the last day, because you don't know what will happen in the next second, you have to face your desires truthfully.”

Through the opinion about money and consumption, long-term orientation can be seen from different cultures. For example, the long-term orientation in Iran and long-term orientation (Nigeria) is almost the same, although Bobo Hua from Iran believe that high emotional delayed gratification level is better.

4.3.6 Indulgence / restraint

Indulgence and restraint refers to the allowable degree of a society to people's basic needs and desire to enjoy life and pleasure. The greater the value of self-indulgence, the less binding the society as a whole has on itself. The greater the society's tolerance for self-indulgence, the less people restrict themselves (Hofstede, 2011).

When talking about addiction, Biyang Gong from Argentina said:

“Someone become addicted to something because they believe this can bring them better life, just like gambling, like, you know you will lose money, right? But it is possible that you will become very rich, and that money, you couldn't earn it through your whole life. But sometimes you have to do that, anyway you have to try.”

But Xiaobei from Australia said that, “No, acknowledging the existence of an opportunity and relying on it are two different situations. You need this opportunity but you cannot rely on that.”

From the analysis of the content in informal talks, the researcher found that Australia, America, and Japan all belongs to low indulgence, and Argentina and Nigeria have high indulgence. However, this result might not be accurate enough as the reflection of the culture might be influenced by the guests' own opinions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the findings of the research based on the analysis of TV content which refers to the content of informal talks, from season one to season four. There are mainly three parts in this chapter, including the summary of findings of the analysis, the discussions of the findings, and the recommendation or further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This research mainly focused on two questions, how the Chinese TV show express foreign culture and how the Chinese TV show choose topics which meet the needs of foreigners. After analyzing the TV content from season one to season four of informal talks, the researcher drew out two aggregate themes of the research questions, including cross-culture communication, and culture dimension.

First of all, related to cross-culture communication, the Chinese TV show expressed foreign culture in a polite, objective, and comprehensive way. The participants expressed their opinion when they have different view on something, and they also asked for other participants' opinions. During the communication, the participants mainly discussed the reality in their own country and their feelings about China. There were different topics in each season and the participants communicated to each other based on the topics. The TV show reflects culture shock which the participants were experienced and showed the excitement the participants felt when they experienced the culture shock. Besides, the TV show expressed foreign culture in a polite way. During the discussion, the participants would stop talking when others start to talk. They communicated with passionate as the audiences can see laughter, expression, and body language in the TV show during the communication. Moreover, the mainly way that the Chinese TV show used to express foreign culture is face to face conversation with topic discussion.

Second, according to the analysis of culture dimension, the researcher found that the Chinese TV show, informal talks, expressed a lot of culture differences based on different culture dimensions. For individualism and collectivism, informal talks

mainly discussed the degree of corporate in different countries. For the power distance, two main topics were discussed in the TV show, including school rules, and work overtime. By talking these two topics, informal talks can show high degree of power distance and low degree of power distance in different culture. When discussing the uncertainty avoidance, informal talks provided a place which the participants can communicate their different from others based on the culture which they were influenced. Moreover, for the masculinity, informal talks focused on joining the army, and feminization of men. By discussing the different attitude which participants have for these two topics, informal talks can express a relative fair situation of masculinity in different culture. Last but not least, informal talks focused on over spending when talking about long-term or short-term, and discussed addicted when trying to figure out the different tend of indulgence and restraint in different foreign culture. When choosing topics, informal talks based on different culture dimensions and tried to express a relative fair and true situation of foreign culture to the audiences. In this TV show, different culture has different culture value system and also has different expression.

5.2 Discussions

The discussion in this research mainly comes from two different parts. The first part is the findings based on the past research and the findings were drawn out from the literature review. The second part of the discussions refers to the findings based on the research, which means the analysis of the TV content comes from informal talks, season one to season four.

5.2.1 Findings based on past research

There are mainly two parts of the findings based on the past research. The first part is cross-culture communication, and the second part is culture dimensions.

First of all, the cross-culture communication mainly reflects the attitude, and the situation during communication between two or more different cultures. As during the communication, at least one side must speak a foreign language, many sudden situations might happen, and the quality of the communication can reflect how successful the communication is. Second, for the culture dimension, there are six different culture dimensions, individualism and collectivism, power distance,

uncertainty avoidance, rigidity and flexibility, long-term orientation, and indulgence and restraint. Through these six dimensions, it is possible to describe a foreign culture in a relative completely way. Therefore, it is also possible to understand a foreign culture by evaluating these six dimensions.

5.2.2 Findings based on the research

This research tried to answer two questions, how the Chinese TV show express foreign culture and how the Chinese TV show choose topics which meet the needs of foreigners.

First of all, about how the Chinese TV show express foreign culture, based on the research, the researchers found that informal talks expressed foreign culture in a relative objective perspective. During the discussion in informal talks, the cross-culture communication among the participants is polite and successful. They would talk about the differences between each other and compare their own countries with China. They would share the culture shock excited and experience with each other and express the difference of culture. Therefore, informal talks can express the foreign culture in a true way by showing the experience of foreigner themselves.

Second, about how the Chinese TV shows choose topics which meet the needs of foreigners, according to the research, informal talks mainly chose the topics by the six culture dimensions. In different culture, different culture dimensions have different expression. Therefore, choosing these different expressions as topics can not only express the difference of cultures, but also give a better communication background for the foreign participants to talk about their own culture and own countries.

5.3 The limitation of The Research

Although in this research, the researcher used two different research methods, including literature review and qualitative research, there are still some disadvantages in this research.

First of all, the universality of this research might not be enough. As informal talks are only one of the Chinese TV shows which related to the introduction of foreign culture, other Chinese TV shows might have other ways to express foreign culture. Besides, this research only included the first four seasons of informal talks;

the last seasons of informal talks also have some changes on how to express the foreign culture. Therefore, the universality of this research might not be enough.

Second, this research is still in its preliminary stages. By analyzing the content of the Chinese TV shows, the researcher can have deeper understand of how the Chinese TV shows express foreign cultures. But this is just a preliminary study, and deeper research can be done related to this research topic.

5.4 Recommendation for Further Research

There are two parts of the recommendation for further research, including the recommendation of the compensation of this research, and the possible direction for further research which might be possible to make contribution to this research question.

First of all, the universality of this research might not be enough. In this research, the analysis sample comes from a TV show called informal talks, and the contents are all coming from season one to season four of informal talks. Although informal talks have many audiences and is very representative, it cannot represent all the TV shows in China which describe the foreign cultures. Therefore, it is possible that the research does not have enough universality. For the compensation of this research, it is possible to do research on more Chinese TV shows which related to the introduction of foreign cultures. There are many formals which are used in Chinese TV show which can introduce foreign cultures to the audiences, and by researching more Chinese TV shows, the researchers can get more representative and more stable research results.

Besides this, there is some possible direction for the further research which could make contribution to the research question. As in this research, the researcher examined two questions, how the Chinese TV show express foreign culture and how the Chinese TV show choose topics which meet the needs of foreigners, the future researches can try to research what influence does Chinese TV show made on expressing foreign culture, or how do the audiences think about the topics of Chinese TV show which meet the needs of foreigners. These future research directions can help the researchers have better understand on the relationship between Chinese TV show and the expression of foreign culture.

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