

## МОВИ НАРОДІВ АЗІЇ, АФРИКИ, АБОРИГЕННИХ НАРОДІВ АМЕРИКИ ТА АВСТРАЛІЇ

---

UDC 811.581'42:316.77

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2710-4656/2023.2.2/14>

**Hu R.**

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University

**Xing Zh.**

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University

### CHINESE ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION DISCOURSE: SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECT

*This paper contains the linguistic, social, and cultural features overview reflected in Chinese media discourse, specifically in television entertainment content. From the perspective of sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis methods, this research aims to reveal amusing discourse's reality and cultural peculiarities of contemporary Chinese society by using sociocultural and linguistic practice. Research is undertaken through discursive and sociocultural analysis. The paper considers the specific national and cultural mechanisms that have an impact on the linguistic informational field of Chinese entertainment media.*

*The objective of this paper is to research a few layers of television discourses in the Chinese interactive space. Basic features of the chosen genre in Chinese linguistic culture had been analyzed carefully through entertainment television programs, especially TV shows with beloved national singers, influencers, artists, and opinion leaders. This type was chosen because of the strong cultural emphasis, allowing the exploration of morphemes, clauses, and sentences in the language used to determine the focus of sociocultural influence on the linguistic features of the media discourse ability of television programs.*

*Research results should be used in order to develop an understanding of the Chinese socio-cultural media communication characteristics and strengthen Chinese linguistics and oriental studies in Ukraine. Discourse analysis is one of the pragmatic methods for studying the sociocultural impact on linguistics, which is focused on understanding the influence of cognitive and sociocultural components on the communication of the author and the reader.*

*The study of two popular music shows («The Treasured Voice 2», «Hidden Singer») discourse reveals internal social processes and mechanisms in the context of television discourse, the findings of which were inspired by the work of Norman Fairclough and Kim Christian Schroder, where media discourse exists within the text and the context of situations as well as under the influence of social and cultural paradigms.*

**Key words:** Media discourse analysis, Entertainment programs, Chinese television, Linguo-sociocultural features, Cultural reflection.

**Relevance of the topic.** The concept of “discourse” is one of the most intensively articulated in literature, journalism, and sociology. It refers to highly diverse mental, cultural and social models. The cultural and societal matters in media discourse can be analyzed through interdisciplinary approaches: sociocultural analysis, linguistic analysis, semiotic and critical analysis of discourse. The analysis of the “text” as a frame and additional approaches to its connotations,

provides with an idea of how the individual’s discourse reveals it within its cultural and social models.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The analysis of media discourse has always been relevant for linguists and for journalists. Media studies started to merge with discourse/language analysis around the 1980th, despite the development of mass communication. Van Dijk noted that speech is the main semiotic pattern in all forms of

communication, “despite their common interest in text, conversation, and communication”, media studies and linguistic analysis do not overlap. In early 2000, van Dijk used his personal example for news content analysis combined with content analysis and discourse-analytic categories or structures to address social issues in media discourse and related socio-cultural and cognitive aspects. In 1995 Norman Fairclough used post-structuralist, social-critical approaches to set an agenda for the study of media and language. In 2004 Wodak and Busch noted that recent approaches to media texts revealed some decentralization of the concept of “text” in relation to other aspects of “discourse”. A comprehensive analysis of media discourse is reflected in the works of such foreign linguists as N. Fairclough, A. Bell, T. van Dijk, R. Wodak, B. Busch, R. Fowler, A. Durant, D. Crystal, M. Talbot, J. Richardson, D. Tannen. The scientific works of linguists among domestic scholars have become an important achievement for media discursive research, for instance, A. Hryhorash, M. Zhovtobryukha, O. Matsko, L. Parkhonyuk, O. Ponomariv, K. Serazhym, O. Serbenska, L. Stavytyska, I. Tyrone and others. Scholars have directed their efforts toward defining the essence of mass media discourse in its functional, pragmatic, cognitive, and speech features. The theoretical and methodological basis of the paper on Chinese television discourse as a part of complex discourse research is comprised of the discourse analysis theorists’ works: N. Fairclough, R. Wodak, van Dijk, who developed the theory of critical discourse analysis; R. Barthes, who developed the semiotic discourse theories; M. Pecheux, who described linguistic analysis approaches as automatic analysis based on the idea, that place, time and socio-cultural context have an inescapable influence on the conditions of discourse production. The research is based on James Paul Gee’s “Discourse” theory.

**The objective of the paper** is to reveal the linguistic, social, and cultural aspects at different levels of Chinese entertainment media discourse; explore the mechanism of influence of discourse on the broadcasting of participants and the way participants influence the formation of discourse; view providing an illustration of cultural patterns in Chinese entertainment discourse.

**The outline of main findings.** According to sociocultural analysis, discourse is an interactive element that illuminates the community-based function of language. Television discourse takes place within the framework of visual and audio consumption, which are regulated and generated by television and media

participants [11, p. 2]. Television discourse is described as a system of linguistic and nonverbal signs as well as a so-called socio-cultural phenomenon. As a result, television discourse is a complex communication signal mechanism that has a significant impact on the audience and simultaneously becomes subject to the opposite influence from the latter [10, p. 81].

Television discourse is considered the reflection of the established semiotic environment [14, p. 42]. This type of discourse is a live, online, or recorded transmission in a telecommunication situation related to interactive discourse. Interactive television is growing in its field of action and is used to refer to various forms of participation of the television audience in the creation of television discourse. Therefore, the development of communication between the communicator and the recipient becomes a modern ability known as media interactivity.

It is notable that social changes are occurring in all aspects of economic, cultural, and political development in China. This makes the method of discourse analysis an efficient strategy to study and understand the rapid stream of social changes. Norman Fairclough (2003) states that “discourse” refers to the “use of language in social practice” and is the “form of social practice” [4, p. 23]. Discourse is considered to be a complex mechanism of the speech communication process, which determines the ways in which society should function according to the initial cultural data. Therefore, discourse changes are compliant with Chinese social and cultural changes in China, and are widely influenced by them. Since media discourse reflects and shapes social culture, media discourse has become a field and a subject of study in Chinese socio-cultural life and a way to capture its unique features.

Entertainment shows of various genres are the leading dimension of contemporary Chinese television discourse. In our study, two entertainment TV shows were selected for analysis: “Treasured Voice 2” and “Hidden Singer”. These shows are quite popular in China, as they easily present cultural patterns in the speakers’ vocabulary and frequently raise important social issues. Shows like this are exactly the kind that combines interviews, everyday conversations, films, and dramas into one discourse.

For instance, one can observe the indication of socio-cultural specifics in the following part of “The Treasured Voice 2” (episode 12). Here, the discussion is held among the judge and contestant of the show:

尚雯婕：振宁的话，自己家孩子我不好意思夸太多，我只能说今天比较直观的这个距离。我感受到了，你的进步还是很大，非常大。

*Shang Wenjie: Talking about Zhenning, I'm embarrassed to praise my child too much. The only thing I can say is that today I can see the distance. I could feel, you've done big progress, really big.*

李振宁：谢谢，老板。

*Li Zhenning: Thank you, boss.*

尚雯婕：好像有点怪异。

*Shang Wenjie: It seems a bit weird.*

评判组：感觉像公司内部考核的感觉。

*Judging panel: It feels like an internal agency assessment.*

From the previous dialogue, one could figure out that the contestant (Li Zhenning) is a member of Ms. Shang's agency (自己家孩子 – *the child of the own house*). This expression is figurative in connotation and may be explained from the cultural point of view, as the Chinese culture implies the head of any group is the “father” of it. Thus, Ms. Shang activates the deep cultural model by calling the singer as if he were her *child*. In addition, the feeling of embarrassment (不好意思夸太多 – I'm embarrassed) during speaking her mind about Li's performance, reflects the Chinese mentality tradition of refusing to brag or accept praise. It is also supported by utterance (这个距离 – this distance, spacing, range) which has a figurative meaning and can be explained in two ways.

The first means *a path* he had done, supported by the next sentence : 进步还是很大，非常大 – You have done big progress, really big). In this case, the words 距离 *the path* and 进步 *progress* are synonyms.

The second meaning of Ms. Shang's discourse creates an expression as if she wanted to give her “child” a hint about *the distance* to a sufficient level for better performance. Such teacher-student relations are also considered iconic in the Chinese cultural model, established by Confucius. Therefore, the two participants of this discourse example appear to be a unit of social structure.

The next episode of the “Hidden Singer” (episode 11) reflects the dialogue between different generations in China:

林俊杰：我我跟你讲，今天光坐在这里我就非常紧张了。因为在座的很多的天王天后们，其实，很多的歌曲，我我自己都能记得，在成长的过程当中，我曾经模仿过他们唱歌。

*JJ Lin (41 y.o.): Let me tell you, I'm very nervous just sitting here today. Because here are emperors and empresses of music. I can remember many of the songs that I have sung, and I used to imitate them growing up.*

许茹芸：能够跟这么多优秀的歌手大家一起同台，真的很开心。尤其还有我老公的偶像哦。

*Hsu Ru-yun (47 y.o.): It's great to be on stage with so many great singers. Especially with my husband's idols.*

主持人：谁？

*Host: Who is it?*

许茹芸：谭校长，真的真的。

*Hsu Ru-yun: President Tam, yes, it's him.*

谭咏麟：但是我也可以告诉你，你先生是很有品位。

*Alan Tam (71 y.o.): I can also tell you that your husband has great taste.*

许茹芸：谢谢。我会告诉他。

*Hsu Ru-yun: Thank you. I'll tell him.*

齐秦：有一件事你还是要提一下，我母亲也非常有品位。当然是校长了。我母亲从小就听他的歌，长大的。

*Wakin Chau (61 y.o.): One thing that should be mentioned is that my mother also has great taste. Of course, it's about President. My mother grew up listening to his songs.*

谭咏麟：可以告诉我，到底到底我是几代的人。

*Alan Tam: Can you tell me exactly how many generations have grown up listening to my songs?*

张靓颖：我是最有资格说，我是听着他们的歌长大的。

*Jane Zhang (37 y.o.): I'm the most qualified to say that I also grew up listening to his songs.*

In this part, a famous singer, JJ Lin, expresses his reverence for his peers (坐在这里我就非常紧张了 – I'm very *nervous* just sitting here). He also transfers his experience given by older experts in studio (很多的歌曲，在成长的过程当中，我曾经模仿过他们唱歌 – Many of the songs that I have sung, and I used to imitate them growing up) in a way that brings up China's cultural model, meaning that the older generations transfer their experience and so they are highly esteemed. This attitude trickles down through the ages and is caused by a traditional cult of ancestors [9, p. 143].

Moreover, JJ's discourse is composed of the understandable comparison of experienced professionals with the (天王天后们 – *emperors and empresses*). In the past this might have been seen as blasphemy: no one could compare a man, even if experienced, with an emperor. However, nowadays discourse demonstrates a transformation in public perception, as the audience is quite supportive and acceptive of such comparisons.

In addition, such discourse has set the ground for the following discussions in the context of a similar cultural model. Hsu Ru-yun who is 47 years old, rises and expresses her admiration for the talents and

experience of her fellow singers on stage (这么多优秀的歌手大家一起同台 – to be on stage with so many *great* singers), pointing exactly at who should be receiving the most attention. Since Chinese culture implies that the eldest person is always the first and the most important [9, p. 141], all the attention is given to 71 years old Alan Tam (谭校长 – President Tam), honoring his experience and age.

By virtue of the fact that Alan Tam is the oldest member of the experts, almost everyone has listened to his songs, for instance, 37 years old Jane Zhang (我是听着他们的歌长大的 – I also grew up listening to his songs). Looking at her facial expression and enthusiasm, it is immediately clear that Alan Tam is indeed a cultural and folk idol.

The second oldest discussant, Wakin Chau, who is also a major figure in the history of the Chinese music industry, also has a point worth mentioning (我母亲从小就听他的歌, 长大的 – My mother grew up listening to his songs). On the one hand, it supports the cultural model, saying the man is experienced and has been singing for a long time, even a 60-year-old participant's mother listened to him. While at the same time, this saying has a humorous tone. In response to a joke from an equal opponent, Alan Tam responds cheerfully and also in jest (到底到底我是几代的人 – Anyway, *how many generations* are there). This discourse reveals a few generations' cultural models. Both the show and its audience are multi-generational. Thus, the social culture of the audience resonates with the participants in the show and they act in a context where cultural patterns emerge.

### Conclusions and prospects for further research.

The following examples are samples of a linguistic and cultural reflection of some significant Chinese cultural aspects. Peculiarities of cultural model

mentality were revealed and reflected in chosen discourses.

In apolitical shows with short dialogues can be observed the discourse within the studio walls and the influence of the viewer on the other side of the screen. The Chinese paradigm and social model are so powerful that their influence on the form and meaning of discourse cannot be denied. Through given examples of television discourses, it is evident that the social position and status of the individual, his thoughts and feelings in the context of the situation open him as a member of a particular Chinese society. It is possible to understand the role of the person in society from the discourse as well as status and experience.

This all manifests under the pressures of culture and social mechanisms. Thus several conclusions can be drawn: television discourse to the extent of its interactivity has acquired the property of self-creation; the recipient of the discourse through interactivity or social mechanisms influences the meaning of television discourse; communicators of Chinese television shows use the personal discourse in the public sphere to attract high ratings; Chinese television programs, as well as participants, are found within cultural patterns and this manifests in the discourse form and meaning.

The further perspective of the discourse in media, as a research objective, is a really decent study that can be held in the future: researching discourse combinations and how they affect each other. There are plenty of factors describing the media discourse from the sociocultural perspective, that still haven't been clarified. The prospective study comprises a complete analysis of Chinese media discourse as a part of Chinese cultural and social identity.

### Bibliography:

1. Олександра Романюк, Телевізійний дискурс як інтерактивний спосіб мовленнєвої взаємодії; Науковий вісник Ужгородського університету. Серія: Філологія, 2018. Р. 86–87.
2. Confucius: The Analects / trans. by D. C. Lau, 2000
3. Feng D. National voice: A discourse analysis of China Central Television's News Simulcast. *Discourse & Communication*, 7(3), 2013. P. 255–273.
4. Fairclough N. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Psychology Press, 2003. P. 21–39.
5. Fairclough N. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993. 259 p.
6. Fairclough N. *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold, 1995.
7. Gee J. P. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014. P. 40–44, 82.
8. Morizumi F. Managing Distances: Discourse Strategies of a TV Talk Show Host. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*, 8, 1997. P. 63–75.
9. Lakos W. Practice Theory, Ancestor Worship, and Ritual: An Alternative Approach to a Cross-cultural Understanding of Chinese Culture. University of Tasmania, 2009. P. 133–165.
10. Schroder K. C. *Media Discourse Analysis: Researching Cultural Meanings from Inception to Reception*. Textual cultures, 2007. P. 77–99.



11. Werner V. TV Discourse, Grammaticality, and Language Awareness. Bamberg, 2020. P. 1–3.
12. 李媛, 章吟. 论式话语分析: 理论与方法. 浙江, 2018. P. 42–48.
13. 田海龙. 话语研究的语言学范式: 从批评话语分析到批评话语研究. 天津: 山东外语教学, 2016. P. 3–9.
14. 文嫣, 韩笑. 中国电视真人秀节目价值链的演变研究. 经济经纬, 6, 2012. P. 72–76.

### **Ху Ж., Сін Чж. КИТАЙСЬКИЙ РОЗВАЖАЛЬНИЙ ТЕЛЕДИСКУРС: СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНИЙ АСПЕКТ**

*Ця стаття містить огляд лінгвістичних, соціальних і культурних особливостей, відображених у китайському медійному дискурсі, зокрема в телевізійному розважальному контенті. З точки зору соціолінгвістики та методів критичного дискурс-аналізу, це дослідження має на меті розкрити реальність розважального дискурсу та культурні особливості сучасного китайського суспільства, спираючись на соціокультурну та лінгвістичну практику. Дослідження здійснено за допомогою дискурсивного та соціокультурного аналізу. У статті розглядаються специфічні національно-культурні механізми, які впливають на мовно-інформаційне поле китайських розважальних медіа.*

*Метою статті є дослідження кількох шарів телевізійних дискурсів у китайському інтерактивному просторі. Основні риси обраного жанру в китайській лінгвокультурі були ретельно проаналізовані на прикладі розважальних телевізійних програм, зокрема телешоу з улюбленими національними співаками, авторитетами, художниками та лідерами громадської думки. Цей жанр було обрано через його сильний культурний акцент, що дозволило дослідити морфему, словосполучення та речення в мові, яка використовується для визначення фокусу соціокультурного впливу на лінгвістичні особливості медіа-дискурсивної спроможності телевізійних програм.*

*Результати дослідження можуть бути використані для поглиблення розуміння особливостей китайської соціокультурної медіакомунікації та розвитку китайського мовознавства і сходовознавства в Україні. Дискурс-аналіз є одним із прагматичних методів вивчення соціокультурного впливу на лінгвістику, який орієнтований на розуміння впливу когнітивних і соціокультурних компонентів на комунікацію автора і читача.*

*Дослідження дискурсу двох популярних музичних шоу (“The Treasured Voice 2”, “Hidden Singer”) розкриває внутрішні соціальні процеси та механізми в контексті телевізійного дискурсу, на вивчення якого надихнули роботи Нормана Ферклафа та Кім Крістіана Шредера, де медіадискурс існує в межах тексту та контексту ситуацій, а також під впливом соціальних та культурних парадигм.*

**Ключові слова:** *аналіз медіадискурсу, розважальні програми, китайське телебачення, лінгвосоціокультурні особливості, культурна рефлексія.*