СОЦИОЛОГИЯ КУЛЬТУРЫ/SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE VERBAL STYLES IN "CRAZY RICH ASIANS" — FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HIGH AND LOW CONTEXT

Research article

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Abstract

In the era of globalization, cross-cultural communication has become commonplace, yet cultural differences have led to increased conflicts in communication. Guided by the high and low context theory, this thesis takes *Crazy Rich Asians* as an example to analyze the differences in the verbal styles of people from different cultural backgrounds in this film through Literature review method, exemplification method, contrastive analysis method and induction method. Through the analysis of the film, the thesis finds that there are huge differences between traditional Chinese and Chinese American in terms of words, sentences, and discourses. The significance of this thesis is to let readers understand that people with different cultural backgrounds have distinguished verbal styles, and to improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication.

Keywords: Crazy Rich Asian, high and low context, verbal styles, differences.

АНАЛИЗ ВЕРБАЛЬНЫХ СТИЛЕЙ В ФИЛЬМЕ «БЕЗУМНО БОГАТЫЕ АЗИАТЫ» — С ПОЗИЦИИ ВЫСОКОГО И НИЗКОГО КОНТЕКСТА

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В эпоху глобализации межкультурная коммуникация стала повседневностью, однако культурные различия приводят к учащению коммуникативных конфликтов. Руководствуясь теорией высокого и низкого контекста, данное исследование на примере фильма «Безумно богатые азиаты» анализирует различия вербальных стилей представителей разных культур посредством: анализа литературы, метода иллюстраций, контрастивного анализа и индукции. Анализ фильма выявил значительные расхождения между традиционными китайцами и американцами китайского происхождения на уровнях: лексики, синтаксиса и дискурса. Цель работы — продемонстрировать читателям специфику вербальных стилей в разных культурах для повышения адекватности и эффективности коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: Безумно богатые азиаты, высокий и низкий контекст, вербальные стили, различия.

Introduction

This part first introduces the content of the film and related research, and then elaborates on the research questions, methods and significance, and finally gives a general introduction to the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Introduction to the Film

Directed by Jon M. Chu and adapted from Kevin Kwan's novel, *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) follows Chinese American Rachel Chu as she discovers her boyfriend Nick Young's family is Singapore's wealthiest. After overcoming cultural clashes, Rachel ultimately wins his mother's approval. Released globally in 2018, the film earned critical acclaim, particularly in Western media. The Wall Street Journal's Joe Morgenstern praised its universal appeal and success in meeting ambitious storytelling goals.

1.2. Literature Review of the Film

In the studies of the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, the author found that the relevant literature mainly focused on three aspects.

First, the researches on feminism. For example, Wan Xinchi (2020)'s research on this film mainly focused on the breakthrough of Chinese female images. She believed that in this film, the image of Chinese women in Hollywood was no longer a male accessory, but a person with an independent personality [1].

Second, the researches on the stereotypes to Chinese. For example, Ye Han (2021) identified two key stereotypes reinforced by the film: character creation (illustrated by educated women relinquishing careers for family) and oriental element usage (exemplified by wealthy youth entertaining themselves solely with old games) [2]. Complementing this, Shi Jinxia (2019) viewed these Chinese images as American imaginations, born of cultural misinterpretations and crystallizing as a distinct American recognition [3].

Third, the research on the conflict and fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. For example, Meng Qiao and Tan Jing (2021) highlighted the film's Western-centric lens: its Chinese American heroine, defined by American virtues (bravery, confidence, independence), overcomes Chinese konformity, signifying Western superiority [4]. However, Wang Bingbing (2019), however, emphasized the film's role in enriching Chinese culture and fostering overseas Chinese cultural spread and US-China cultural exchange [5].

However, there is no research on the verbal styles of *Crazy Rich Asians* in existing theses. Therefore, this thesis conducts a more systematic and comprehensive study on the verbal styles of *Crazy Rich Asians* on the basis of the high and low context.

1.3. Research Questions, Methods and Significance

This part mainly systematically expounds the research questions, methods and significance, in order to help readers have a general understanding of the thesis.

1.3.1. Research Questions

Introducing *Crazy Rich Asians* and the theoretical frameworks of high/low context cultures and verbal styles, this study examines Chinese language pragmatics in varied settings. Through comparative analysis of lexical, syntactic, discursive patterns, and socio-pragmatic elements (e.g., shame culture, turn management), it reveals fundamental differences between traditional Chinese and Chinese American communication, highlighting culture-driven disparities in verbal styles.

1.3.2. Research Methods

This thesis uses the four methods of literature-reference, antitheses, exemplification, summarizes the inductive method, and first enumerate the phenomena of cultural shock in this film. After this, the author analyzes the characteristics of the verbal styles of people with different cultural backgrounds, and then analyzes them in groups. Finally, the author summarizes the differences in the verbal styles of each group separately.

1.3.3. Research Significance

This thesis aims to demonstrate systematically divergent verbal styles across cultural contexts. Through socio-cultural and ideological dimensions, it analyzes the origins of such variation, ultimately advocating mutual respect for discursive conventions in intercultural encounters to enhance communicative efficacy and appropriateness.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter one introduces *Crazy Rich Asians*, outlines the research questions, background, methodology, and significance based on literature review. Chapter two reviews Hall's high/low context theory and summarizes verbal style frameworks. Chapter three analyzes pragmatic divergences (linguistic and social) between traditional Chinese and Chinese American communication in lexical, syntactic, and discursive dimensions. Chapter four investigates the roots of these differences. Chapter five concludes with key findings, scholarly contributions, and research limitations.

The Theoretical Framework of the Research

This part mainly introduces the theories used in the thesis. First, it introduces the content of high and low context, and then systematically explains the meaning of verbal styles. At least, this part lists several aspects of verbal styles from the perspective of high and low context.

2.1. A Comprehensive Survey of High- and Low-Context Culture

In the first chapter, the high and low context has been generally introduced, and readers would have a preliminary understanding of it. Therefore, the main content of this part is to introduce the theory more systematically and comprehensively, in order to make readers have a more thorough understanding of this theory.

2.1.1. The Concept of Context

The context refers to the situation and state that a person is in when speaking. Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin noted in their dissertation that Context is "a frame that surrounds the event and provides resources for its appropriate interpretation" [6].

Hu Zhuanglin anticipates diversification in contextual studies [7]. Current literature, however, predominantly categorizes context into three dimensions: physical, social, and cultural.

Physical context denotes tangible settings (e.g., time, location, ambient conditions), influencing communicative behavior. For instance, a student employs euphemistic expressions in classrooms versus direct language at home.

Social context encompasses group-specific interaction frameworks where meanings are socially negotiated. Power dynamics shape verbal styles — deferential language toward teachers contrasts with casual speech among peers.

Cultural context involves value systems governing communication norms. Low-context cultures (e.g., U.S.) prioritize direct claims followed by justification; high-context cultures (e.g., China) favor precedent reasoning before stating positions.

2.1.2. On the High-Context Culture

High-context cultures prioritize indirect communication, where contextual cues carry significant informational weight as non-verbal channels supplement verbal content. Consequently, societies like China and Japan emphasize nuanced expression. Lu Meng observes that such cultures value implied meanings over explicit statements, with speakers adept at discerning discrepancies between surface utterances and genuine intent [8].

2.1.3. On the Low-Context Culture

Hu Chao contends that low-context cultures prioritize individualism, manifesting ideologically in humanistic traditions, pragmatically through free competition, and ethically via valuing personal autonomy [9]. Consequently, communication emphasizes directness and precision, treating language instrumentally to achieve transactional outcomes. Speakers thus prioritize explicit verbal messaging over contextual reliance.

2.1.4. The Differences Between High- and Low- Context Cultures

After comparing numerous literature, the author found that the differences between high-context culture and low-context culture are mainly reflected in four aspects.

Firstly, individuals in low-context cultures primarily depend on explicit verbal communication for message transmission, as information sharing is paramount in such contexts, leading to a greater focus on spoken expression. Secondly, this reliance on verbal explicitness in low-context cultures can lead those in high-context cultures to perceive them as less credible. Thirdly, people from high-context cultures commonly utilize non-verbal behaviors and environmental context to convey meaning. Fourthly, during communication, individuals in high-context cultures often speak concisely, relying on the shared context to enable the listener to understand the speaker's intent.

2.2. A Brief Account of the Verbal Styles

This part mainly introduces the contents and types of verbal styles. In addition, the author will list several aspects of verbal styles from the perspective of high and low context.

2.2.1. The Concept and Types of the Verbal Style

Halliday developed the concept of verbal style, which encompasses grammar, syntax, word choice, and punctuation. He categorized verbal styles into two types based on distinct attitudes arising from communicative identities, statuses, and relationships: one shaped primarily by social identities, and the other rooted in social attitudes.

2.2.2. The Different Characteristics of Verbal Style Between High-and Low-Context

Scholarly consensus indicates the second verbal style category proves more applicable to high-low context analysis. Consequently, this section details four key distinctions in verbal communication between these contexts:

I. Indirect (High-Context) vs. Direct (Low-Context) Expression.

High-context cultures favor nuanced expression. Communicators often convey thoughts implicitly, prioritizing conversational harmony and seldom stating opposing views outright to avoid discomfort, instead using nonverbal cues or silence. Conversely, low-context cultures emphasize verbal directness, explicitly stating intentions and valuing individual autonomy over group influence [10].

II. Succinct (High-Context) vs. Exacting (Low-Context) Communication.

In high-context societies (e.g., China, Japan), verbal brevity prevails as non-verbal channels carry significant meaning; thus, speech complements rather than dominates the message. Low-context cultures (e.g., the United States), however, require precise verbal articulation since words convey the primary information, necessitating exact word choice for clarity.

III. Contextual (High-Context) vs. Personal (Low-Context) Focus.

High-context communication heavily depends on relational status. Verbal style shifts accordingly: authoritative language asserts dominance with subordinates, while deference governs speech towards superiors. In contrast, low-context cultures like the U.S. prioritize individual expression and egalitarian exchange, emphasizing personal goal achievement over relational sensitivity [11]. The adage "Don't quarrel with your bread and butter" underscores this individualistic ethos, where self-realization supersedes collective alignment.

IV. Affective (High-Context) vs. Instrumental (Low-Context) Orientation.

Affective communication is process-oriented, fostering speaker-listener interdependence. High-context speakers carefully consider delivery and listener reception, while listeners interpret meaning through both verbal and nonverbal signals. Instrumental communication is goal-directed. Low-context speakers operate independently, aiming to convey messages persuasively. Listeners directly challenge opposing views, yet speakers persist in advocating their position.

2.3. Previous Studies of the Verbal Styles from the Perspective of High and Low Context

The anthropological concept of "context" originated with Malinowski in 1923. This thesis employs Edward T. Hall's framework of high- and low-context communication, proposed by the American cultural anthropologist. Hall asserted that all human interaction is contextually influenced. In his 1976 work Beyond Culture, he introduced the high/low cultural context dichotomy, classifying communicative environments accordingly [12]. This paradigm not only offered novel research perspectives, but significantly expanded analytical frameworks.

The study's focus — verbal styles — stems from Halliday's scholarship. He classified these styles into two types according to divergent communicative stances shaped by identity, status, and relational dynamics: one primarily shaped by societal roles, the other governed by social attitudes.

Analysis reveals a stronger correlation between high/low-context communication and the second verbal style category. Consequently, based on extant literature, key findings are synthesized as follows:

Peng Lifang (2017) examined Chinese and American communicative values and their divergent verbal expressions within high/low-context frameworks through three lenses: individual-to-collective relations, interpersonal dynamics, and attitudes toward verbal information [13]. Yang Ruiyan (2011) identified tripartite distinctions: Americans prioritize explicit verbal content, favoring direct, self-enhancing expressions and talk-oriented styles; Chinese emphasize contextual meaning, preferring indirect, self-effacing communication and silence-oriented patterns. Her research further traces these differences to sociohistorical, religious-philosophical, and cognitive roots [14]. Xu Li (2017) has a more detailed division in this regard. According to the theory of high and low context, she classifies the collected corpus as follows: direct and indirect, implicit and explicit, complex and concise, collectivism tendencies and individualistic tendencies, as well as self-humility and self-praise [15].

Synthesizing these studies, the author observes that existing frameworks for verbal styles under high/low-context theory lack systematic integration. This research therefore establishes a comprehensive taxonomy to systematically delineate verbal style characteristics within this theoretical paradigm.

The Differences of the Verbal Styles in Crazy Rich Asians

This chapter initiates the core analytical section, employing high- and low-context frameworks to examine verbal styles in *Crazy Rich Asians*. Selected film excerpts undergo comparative analysis through a four-dimensional approach, structured thematically for reader comprehension.

3.1. The Choices of Words

Verbal choices in communication are fundamentally shaped by cultural context. Individuals from high-context cultures predominantly employ indirect expression, whereas those from low-context cultures favor direct communication strategies.

This distinction is evidenced in *Crazy Rich Asians* through the protagonist Nick Young's family. As Singaporean Chinese deeply rooted in Confucian traditions, their verbal patterns closely align with traditional Chinese indirectness despite geographical displacement.

Conversely, protagonist Rachel Chu's American upbringing instills low-context communication norms. Her Western education cultivates a preference for explicit self-expression, mirroring typical American directness.

Example 1:

Rachel Chu: *You know what? You can order your own.*

Nike Young: *Mmm. I'm okay with the coffee. Thanks.*

Rachel Chu: *Yeah, well, you always say that, and then you always end up eating all my dessert.*

Nike Young: *I don't know what you're talking about. Because I have, like, a tiny bit.*

This dialogue occurs during a dinner at a public venue. For individuals in high-context cultures, such exchanges pose no interpretive challenge in private settings like homes. However, when transpiring publicly, high-context communicators typically favor indirect expression.

As a product of the low-context U.S. culture, protagonist Rachel Chu employs direct communication regardless of setting. In this scene, Rachel bluntly confronts Nick Young about his behavior in public, disregarding his social dignity. Her approach fails to safeguard Nick's mian zi (face) — a culturally significant concept. Conversely, Nick's dialogue demonstrates active face-protection. His use of "a tinny bit" reveals an attempt to restore public dignity through indirect self-expression, contrasting Rachel's confrontational style.

Example 2:

Nike Young: *Thanks, mom. But Rachel and I will be staying together.*

Eleanor Sung-Young: *I see. Well, I'm having a house re-done, and it's not ready for guests. If Rachel comes, I think she might be more comfortable staying somewhere else.*

Prior to Rachel Chu and Nick Young's departure for Singapore, Eleanor Sung-Young's dialogue conveys veiled disapproval toward Rachel through ostensibly positive advice. Rather than genuine concern about renovation disturbances, this indirect communication strategy prevents conversational conflict while signaling dissatisfaction to Nick—exemplifying high-context cultural norms.

Such indirect expression typifies high-context cultures where speakers avoid direct confrontation by embedding criticism within contextual cues, demanding listener discernment of pragmatic meaning. The film recurrently employs this pattern, notably when Goh Peik Lin's father critiques his daughter's academic outcomes through comparative framing rather than explicit disapproval.

Example 3:

Goh Wye Mun: *Let me get this straight. You both went to the same school, yet someone came back with a degree that's useful. And the other one came back as Asian Ellen.*

In the film, the scene where this sentence appears is very interesting, but Goh Peik Lin's father, Goh Wye Mun, indirectly expresses his disappointment with his daughter through this funny way. However, because Rachel came to the house as a guest, Goh Peik Lin's father expressed his opinions in this indirect way, so that it would not make the scene become embarrassing, and could protect Goh Peik Lin's "mian zi".

Example 4:

Eleanor Sung-Young: *Pursuing one's passion. How American. Well, your mother's very open-minded, not like here.*

Superficially, the sentence's first segment appears complimentary toward Rachel's mother. However, the qualifying phrase "not like here" introduces critical subtext. This phrasing implicitly conveys Eleanor Sung-Young's disapproval of the mother's parenting approach — expressed indirectly rather than overtly.

The film predominantly showcases indirect communication patterns characteristic of traditional Chinese culture. Characters like Eleanor Sung-Young and Nick's grandmother, having developed within high-context cultural frameworks, consistently employ nuanced expression. This manifests in pivotal scenes, such as the grandmother's critique of Eleanor's dumplings. Through non-verbal cues — disapproving tone and gaze — viewers discern her disdain without explicit verbalization.

While low-context communicators occasionally utilize indirect strategies (e.g., prefacing critiques with "I don't want to offend you, but..."), such disclaimers function merely as politeness conventions. The substantive message remains direct, affirming that explicitness prevails as the dominant communicative mode in low-context cultures.

3.2. The Choices of Sentences

The film delineates contrasting verbal patterns: traditional Chinese characters employ concise utterances, relying substantially on non-verbal channels for meaning transmission where words constitute merely partial messaging. Conversely, Rachel Chu consistently utilizes elaborated syntax with lexical precision to convey nuanced affective states, frequently resulting in discursive expansiveness.

Example 5:

Eleanor Sung-Young's friends: *Amanda knows everyone, and she has never heard of her, Rachel Chu. Maybe she is from the Taiwan plastics Chu family. If you want, I have a private investigator. Very discreet.*

Eleanor Sung-Young: *I think we should return to the word of God.*

Eleanor Sung-Young's words in this dialogue are very succinct, but everyone needs to analyze this sentence in context. Although Eleanor Sung-Young only said one sentence, her expression was serious and her tone was gloomy. Therefore, Eleanor Sung-Young's friends immediately stopped discussing this topic. It can be seen that the meaning of this short sentence is not as "short" as the words in it.

This kind of sentences that are succinctly literal but deeply meaningful appears many times in the film.

Example 6:

Eleanor Sung-Young's friend: *It's so nice having Nike back home. But he seems different.*

Eleanor Sung-Young: *When children are away from home too long, they forget who they are.*

Despite its brevity, the exchange between Eleanor Sung-Young and her friend carries significant contextual meaning. Essential background informs this dialogue: Eleanor's disapproval of Rachel Chu, and their hushed tones indicating displeasure regarding Nick's behavioral shifts. Eleanor attributes these changes to Rachel's influence, perceiving Nick's Americanized conduct as incompatible with traditional Chinese values — hence her profound dismay.

The friend's succinct response proves strategically nuanced: initial congratulations about Nick's return precede subtle criticism of Rachel, demonstrating solidarity with Eleanor's position. This interaction exemplifies how high-context

communicators employ economical language densely layered with contextual meaning. Such expressions derive depth from situational and relational factors, contrasting sharply with the explicit exactness characteristic of low-context speakers like Rachel Chu.

Example 7:

Rachel Chu: *I thought I was here to meet you family, go to your best friends wedding, eat some good food. Instead, I feel like I'm a villain in a soap opera who's plotting to steal your family fortune.*

Nike Young: *What happened?*

Rachel Chu: *I mean, I met Amanda she told me that everybody here thinks that I am the evil person that prevented you from moving back to Singapore last year, when I didn't even know you were supposed to come home.*

…

Rachel Chu: *You know what? I don't even care about those stupid girls with their stupid little designer handbags and sunglasses. Furthermore, I don't care about that. I don't care that your ex-girlfriend told me all this crap. It's that you didn't tell me any of it.*

This example demonstrates Rachel's discursive elaboration through extended yet semantically precise utterances, where each proposition articulates affective states with exactitude. Such linguistic behavior typifies low-context Chinese communicators who prioritize lexical accuracy — even at the expense of brevity — to ensure unambiguous meaning transmission.

Fundamentally, traditional Chinese communication favors semantic economy through concise expressions requiring contextual inference, whereas Chinese-Americans employ elaborated syntax for explicit emotional articulation.

3.3. The Use of the Discourse

People living in different context cultures would like to choose different structures of the discourse. This part introduces the use of the discourse from two aspects as follows.

3.3.1. To Be Contextual vs Personal

Chapter two establishes that traditional Chinese communicators deliberately assess social status and relational dynamics when engaging in conversation, modulating their linguistic approach accordingly. Conversely, Chinese-Americans — socialized from early development with principles of individual autonomy and fundamental equality — accord primacy to personal values and subjective experience when communicating.

Example 8:

Kerry Chu: *Oh, you're going to have a wonderful time. You've always wanted to go to Asia. And who knows, if all goes well in Singapore, you might just come back with a souvenir.*

Rachel Chu: *Oh, mom, stop! Nike and I haven't even talked about that. I mean, his parents can't like me, right?*

From this conversation, Rachel and her mom Kerry are like friends. As a daughter, Rachel did not use modest words in her conversation with her mother. And Rachel's mother, Kerry, did not have a top-down preaching sense, although she was an elder. The conversation between the two is based on equality, and both are independent individuals, so their dialogue will be more casual. But Chinese who live in the high-context culture choose different ways of their conversations depending on whom the other is.

Example 9:

To the maids:

Astrid Leong-Teo: *You know what to do. Quickly.*

To her husband:

Astrid Leong-Teo: *Come on, it won't be all bad. Nike and his new girlfriend will be there. You'll like her.*

This analysis reveals protagonist Astrid Young's strategic code-switching based on relational dynamics. When addressing domestic staff, she employs authoritative directives — linguistic patterns typically reserved for hierarchical subordinates. Conversely, dialogues with her husband utilize informal registers characterized by syntactical completeness.

This exemplifies the fundamental divergence: Chinese-Americans predominantly adopt personal verbal styles, whereas traditional Chinese favor contextually modulated expression. Such divergent conventions risk cross-cultural misinterpretation, evidenced by Rachel Chu's initial encounter with Eleanor Sung-Young. Rachel's direct "Nice to meet you!" — intended as friendly — registered as discourteous within high-context parameters where elder introductions necessitate honorifics like "The honor is all mine". This cultural dissonance demonstrates how unaligned communication frameworks impede intercultural understanding.

3.3.2. To Be Affective vs Instrumental

Traditional Chinese communication features a dyadic interdependence between speaker and listener, where mutual responsiveness shapes the exchange. Speakers actively modulate content and delivery based on listener feedback, while listeners reciprocate through contextually appropriate responses. Conversely, Chinese-Americans operating in low-context frameworks predominantly employ instrumental verbal styles focused on transactional efficiency. Here, communication prioritizes semantic content transmission over relational dynamics, centering on the speaker's informational objectives.

Given the abstract nature of these distinctions, their cinematic representation remains limited within the analyzed film corpus.

Example 10:

Rachel Chu: *I mean, I know Michael didn't have to deal with catty, fish-killing sociopaths. How did you two get through all this?*

Astrid Leong-Teo: *Well, I didn't have it quite as bad, but it wasn't pretty.*

Rachel Chu: *Well, at least tell me it gets better.*

Astrid Leong-Teo: *Of course it does.*

Rachel Chu: *Are you okay?*

Astrid Leong-Teo: *Yeah.*
(Silence)
Astrid Leong-Teo: *Actually… No.*
Rachel Chu: *You could talk to me.*

This exchange reveals Astrid's implicit conveyance of personal distress, which Rachel initially failed to decode. When directly questioned, Astrid's affirmative response followed by a pregnant pause created divergent interpretations: Rachel accepted the surface meaning, while Astrid — awaiting contextual feedback -- contemplated explicit disclosure. Only upon Astrid's eventual direct articulation did Rachel respond appropriately.

This illustrates fundamental communicative expectations: high-context cultures require listeners to interpret meaning through situational cues, whereas low-context cultures prioritize message fidelity. Consequently, in low-context frameworks, speakers bear primary responsibility for unambiguous expression, positioning listeners as passive recipients rather than active meaning-constructors.

The Reasons for the Different Verbal Styles in Crazy Rich Asians

This part mainly introduces the reasons based on *Crazy Rich Asians*, and analyzes them from four aspects, such as modes of thoughts, discourse patterns, turn-taking in communication and purposes of communication.

4.1. The Different Modes of Thoughts

Cognitive paradigms fundamentally shape national thought processes, worldview formation, and value systems [16], establishing thought pattern divergence as critical to intercultural dynamics. Traditional Chinese cognition exhibits spiral thinking — a holistic approach characterized by cyclical reasoning from periphery to core — whereas Chinese-American cognition demonstrates linear thinking centered on sequential logic [17].

This cognitive distinction manifests communicatively: Traditional Chinese discourse typically progresses inductively, contextualizing core topics through background narratives that establish mutual understanding before presenting primary objectives. Speakers often imply central meanings through contextual cues rather than explicit articulation, requiring listeners to infer significance. By contrast, Chinese-American communication adopts deductive structuring, prioritizing central propositions followed by supporting elaboration.

Crazy Rich Asians illustrates this dichotomy: Eleanor Sung-Young's spiral thinking manifests through layered opposition to Rachel Chu — first probing Rachel's background, then criticizing her cultural orientation, ultimately commissioning investigative research — all without explicit rejection. This indirect strategy aimed to make Nick perceive incompatibilities organically. Conversely, Chinese-Americans' linear cognition produces exacting expression, directly foregrounding primary concerns before systematic development. Consequently, traditional Chinese communication favors contextual succinctness, while Chinese-American discourse emphasizes propositional precision.

4.2. The Different Discourse Patterns

Chen Jianping's framework classifies discourse patterns as follows: deductive structures present core statements initially followed by supporting elaboration, whereas inductive patterns progressively develop arguments culminating in a concluding thesis [18]. Traditional Chinese communication predominantly employs inductive organization, synthesizing experiential evidence toward personalized assertions [19]. Conversely, Chinese-Americans — influenced by low-context cultural norms — favor deductive frameworks that foreground primary claims before evident justification.

This distinction manifests in *Crazy Rich Asians* when Rachel Chu processes conflict with Eleanor Sung-Young: Her dialogue initiates with specific criticisms of Eleanor's behavior, progresses to questioning Nick's maternal reverence, culminates in the generalization "Chinese sons think their moms fart Chanel No. 5," and subsequently expands to contemplate millennia of filial piety traditions. This sequenced reasoning demonstrates Chinese-Americans' systematic adherence to logical progression — methodically deriving contextual understanding from central propositions.

In a word, traditional Chinese expression gravitates toward contextually embedded indirectness, while Chinese-American communication prioritizes propositional directness through structured deduction.

4.3. The Different Turn-taking in Communication

Turn-taking constitutes a discursive organizational pattern wherein conversational participants alternate speaking roles. This process encompasses contribution formulation, response generation, and speaker transition, facilitated by linguistic and non-linguistic cues [20]. Crucially, turn-taking conventions diverge significantly between high-context and low-context cultures.

In Chinese communication, a bowling-like style prevails: participants observe polite pauses, awaiting appropriate moments to speak. Conversely, Americans exhibit a ping-pong style, demanding immediate responses to sustain dialogue continuity [21].

Traditional Chinese interactions involve deliberate pacing. Upon topic initiation, listeners pause to interpret both verbal content and the speaker's non-verbal cues. Subsequent responses are timed to acknowledge the speaker's emotional state, while speakers adjust their discourse based on listener feedback. This results in a measured conversational rhythm.

This pattern is exemplified in *Crazy Rich Asians* through Astrid Leong-Teo's dialogue with Rachel Chu. As a traditional Chinese, Astrid prioritizes emotional considerations — evident in her deliberative silence when contemplating whether to disclose her husband's infidelity. The exchange proceeds with marked slowness and quietude.

Chinese-American communication favors a faster tempo. Listeners are expected to promptly contribute opinions after topic initiation. Speakers then advance the dialogue based on received feedback, creating a rapid, ping-pong-like exchange where sustained momentum is essential.

The argument between Rachel Chu and Nick Young illustrates this dynamic. After Rachel voices grievances, Nick offers comfort and explains his concealed background. Rachel swiftly responds with her perspective. Noting her eased mood, Nick proposes an evening outing, which Rachel accepts — creating an intensely paced interaction.

Consequently, traditional Chinese communication aligns with an affective style, whereas Chinese-American interaction leans toward an instrumental approach.

4.4. The Different Purposes of Communication

High-context and low-context cultures exhibit fundamental differences in communication objectives. Individuals from high-context cultures typically prioritize cultivating durable social bonds through interaction, whereas those from low-context cultures view communication primarily as a tool for resolving practical issues. This divergence in purpose between traditional Chinese and Chinese-American communication essentially reflects the contrast between collectivism and individualism.

Traditional Chinese culture places collective interests above individual concerns. Within this collectivist framework, interpersonal relationships are deeply interconnected. Consequently, the primary aim of communication for traditional Chinese is relationship-building, as stable social ties are deemed essential for successful outcomes. Furthermore, Confucian-influenced norms emphasize hierarchical distinctions, mandating that interactions adhere strictly to participants' respective social roles and statuses to maintain propriety [22]. This necessitates adaptable verbal styles corresponding to the interlocutor's position.

Conversely, Chinese-Americans predominantly engage in communication to fulfill individual needs. Individualist values prioritize personal goal attainment, with communication serving to overcome obstacles in this process. Thus, when initiating dialogue, Chinese-Americans focus directly on problem-solving, often employing a direct communication style. This explicitness may lead traditional Chinese to perceive their approach as abrupt or disrespectful, potentially undermining perceived credibility.

These distinct orientations consequently shape differing verbal styles: traditional Chinese communication tends toward contextual sensitivity, while Chinese-American interaction favors a personal, direct approach.

Conclusion

This concluding section delineates the thesis's core contributions through three key dimensions: synthesizing the principal arguments and findings, elucidating the study's scholarly significance, and addressing the research limitations alongside proposed future directions.

5.1. Suggestions on the Intercultural Communication

5.1.1. To Be Sensitive and Tolerant to the Intercultural Differences

Intercultural communication often leads to overlooked cultural disparities, potentially causing misunderstandings that undermine cross-cultural engagement. Cultivating sensitivity and tolerance toward such differences is therefore imperative.

Firstly, sustained awareness of intercultural distinctions is essential. As these typically manifest through culture shock — defined as the disorientation experienced when encountering unfamiliar cultural environments due to migration, travel, or social transitions — individuals must proactively recognize its inevitability.

For instance, when traditional Chinese interact with Chinese-Americans, initial ethnic kinship often gives way to cultural dissonance upon discovering divergent value systems. Acknowledging culture shock's objective existence enables psychological preparedness for constructive dialogue [23].

Secondly, tolerance serves as a critical complement to sensitivity. Confronting cultural disparities requires individuals to transcend comfort zones and expand social networks. Proactively connecting with bicultural individuals who possess overseas experience provides valuable perspective, broadening horizons and facilitating intercultural competence. Through such practices, individuals cultivate receptiveness to cultural diversity, ultimately enhancing cross-cultural effectiveness.

5.1.2. To Be Adaptive and Flexible in the Intercultural Communication

Building upon cultural sensitivity and tolerance, developing adaptability and flexibility becomes crucial in intercultural communication.

Navigating cultural differences requires individuals to develop adaptive capabilities and dynamically adjust communication strategies across diverse contexts. Crucially, achieving such flexibility necessitates overcoming ethnocentrism — a significant barrier that often precipitates communication failures through avoidable misunderstandings.

Ethnocentrism denotes the tendency to evaluate other cultures exclusively through the lens of one's own cultural norms. This concept, originating in William Graham Sumner's Folkways, emphasizes ingroup cultural distinctiveness to foster national identity while demarcating intergroup boundaries [24]. Such perspective risks obscuring intercultural distinctions, leading to the application of one's cultural standards when interpreting outgroup behaviors. Consequently, this may result in misattributions of cultural meanings and entrenched cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Systematically dismantling ethnocentrism is therefore fundamental. Only through its mitigation can individuals relinquish cultural prejudices, thereby cultivating authentic intercultural adaptability and strategic flexibility.

5.1.3. To Do as the Romans Do When in Rome

Individuals residing in culturally unfamiliar environments must actively modify behaviors according to local norms — a practice encapsulated by the maxim "Do as the Romans do," formally termed intercultural adaptation.

This process entails accepting, acquiring, and integrating new cultural patterns while preserving one's original cultural framework [25]. The theory underscores the necessity for individuals to systematically observe and assimilate behavioral conventions within novel cultural contexts.

All in all, successful intercultural communication requires progressive adaptation to host cultures through lifestyle adjustments, sustained by the retention of foundational cultural identity.

5.2. The Significance of the Research

After reading this thesis, the readers will further realize that due to the influence of high-and low-context cultures, the verbal styles of traditional Chinese and American Chinese are totally different.

In addition, this thesis lets readers learn that people must learn to understand and respect the other party's discourse rules in intercultural communication, do in Rome as Rome does. And also, everyone should communicate in accordance with the other party's discourse rules, abandon ethnocentrism and dare to face the culture shock, only in this way can people improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication.

5.3. The Limitations and Further Improvement of the Research

This study confronts methodological constraints stemming from the scarcity of scholarship analyzing verbal styles through high/low-context paradigms. Derivative theoretical foundations further compromise analytical depth, while the film-specific intercultural methodology exhibits narrow scope. To address these limitations, future research should prioritize empirical case studies that systematize contextual verbal patterns. Concurrent integration of ethnographic perspectives would strengthen examinations of cinematic dynamics, collectively enabling methodological refinement capable of transforming isolated observations into universally applicable communication frameworks.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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