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Non-verbal Communication in Chinese Entertainment News Program

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the non-verbal communication methods and their effects in Chinese entertainment news programs, focusing on how hosts enhance program appeal and persuasiveness through facial expression management, body movements, spatial distance, and clothing styles. It further examines how these non-verbal elements complement spoken Mandarin communication to improve the overall effectiveness of program delivery and influence audience perception. This study employs a qualitative multiple-case analysis design, integrating literature analysis with in-depth case studies. First, relevant broadcasting and non-verbal communication theories were reviewed to establish a conceptual foundation. Subsequently, representative Chinese entertainment news programs were selected for case studies, analyzing hosts' non-verbal behaviors—including facial expressions, postures, space utilization, and clothing styles—across different communication contexts. The theoretical insights were then integrated with practical observations to develop a systematic non-verbal communication strategy for entertainment news hosting. The results reveal that appropriate non-verbal expressions significantly reduce the psychological distance between hosts and audiences, enhance program affinity, and strengthen emotional engagement. Techniques such as smiling, maintaining eye contact, using expressive gestures, adopting confident standing postures, controlling spatial distance, and selecting suitable clothing styles were found to create a synergistic effect with verbal expression. This synergy shapes program atmosphere, reinforces emotional communication, and enhances persuasiveness, ultimately meeting audience expectations for authenticity and interaction. Non-verbal communication is a critical component of effective hosting in Chinese entertainment news programs. Its integration with verbal expression not only improves audience perception but also increases the persuasive power and appeal of program delivery. The study recommends that systematic training in Mandarin non-verbal communication be incorporated into broadcasting and hosting art education. Training modules should focus on expression management, body language control, and image design, ensuring the organic integration of non-verbal skills with verbal communication to enhance hosts' media literacy and audience engagement.

Keywords: Non-verbal Communication, Entertainment News Programs, Facial Expression Management, Body Language, Audience Perception

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of information technology and the continuous innovation of the media industry, the major of broadcasting and hosting art has become increasingly important in undergraduate education in Chinese universities and has become one of the key disciplines for cultivating media talents. This major belongs to the category of art disciplines, emphasizing both theory and practice, and aims to cultivate professionals with multiple abilities such as Mandarin news broadcasting and program hosting. However, with the rise of diversified communication forms such as radio and television, online live broadcasts, and short videos, especially in the field

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of entertainment news, society has put forward higher requirements on the language expression ability and comprehensive quality of hosts. As a typical form of soft news, entertainment news not only requires hosts to have accurate and clear language expression skills, but also needs to use rich non-verbal means to enhance the entertainment of the program and the emotional participation of the audience.

Although the teaching of broadcasting and hosting art emphasizes practical application, it still faces many challenges in actual teaching. First, students often find it difficult to sort out the information they want to convey in time in language expression courses, resulting in unclear core meaning of speech and difficulty for the audience to accurately understand the main points of the program. This problem not only affects the effectiveness of information transmission, but also weakens the attractiveness of the program and the participation of the audience. Secondly, teachers and industry professionals have found that the host's oral expression and non-verbal factors (such as gestures, expressions, postures, etc.) are often inconsistent. As the "mouthpiece of the Party", announcers and hosts need to spread the policy spirit of the Party and the country through accurate, appropriate and standardized spoken language. However, existing research shows that there is a lack of sufficient attention to the expression effect of the combination of spoken and non-verbal Chinese, and there is a lack of systematic methodological guidance in teaching. A survey of graduates of broadcasting and hosting majors from a university in S City showed that more than half of the respondents believed that the theoretical knowledge learned in college had an important impact on their current work, while less than 10% of the graduates believed that subject knowledge had almost no effect, which shows that a weak theoretical knowledge foundation may seriously affect the development of graduates in media positions.

Thirdly, in teaching practice, students often neglect systematic training in language expression and in-depth understanding of non-verbal communication methods. Research points out that non-verbal communication plays an important role in information transmission and emotional infection (Mehrabian, 1971), and the incoordination between spoken and non-verbal expression will weaken the persuasiveness of program content and reduce audience trust (Burgoon, 1994). For example, although some universities have introduced a practical "language expression" course, students still struggle to convey their ideas concisely in practical applications, and even non-verbal behavior conflicts with spoken content (Zhou & Zhang, 2021). This phenomenon is particularly prominent in the current context of advocating "learning for application" and language standardization, and it is urgent to improve students' comprehensive communication ability through teaching reform and improvement of training methods.

In addition, the advent of the digital and mobile Internet era has made the audience's interaction methods more diverse, and has further aggravated the communication challenges of entertainment news program hosts. The audience is no longer a passive recipient of information, but can express opinions and feedback instantly through channels such as social media and barrage comments. This two-way or even multi-directional interaction mode requires the host to flexibly use language and non-verbal means to attract the audience in the program, and to respond to real-time interactions and emergencies in a timely manner to ensure the smooth flow of the program and maintain the audience's participation. However, in current teaching and research, there is still insufficient discussion on how to effectively integrate language and non-verbal means in a changing communication environment, which makes it difficult for students to cope with the requirements of a complex media environment after graduation.

Studies have shown that there is still a significant gap between students majoring in broadcasting and hosting in terms of oral expression and non-verbal application, which is closely related to their cultural literacy, cross-cultural communication skills and lack of practical opportunities (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The current teaching model has not effectively integrated language communication theory with non-verbal communication theory, making it difficult for students to organically combine the two in actual hosting, thus affecting the quality of the program and the audience experience. In summary, in terms of cultivating hosting talents with high-level language and non-verbal communication skills, broadcasting and hosting art education still faces obvious deficiencies and challenges: students cannot clearly and effectively convey core information in language expression courses, lack of systematic teaching methods and practical guidance leads to insufficient ability to integrate oral and non-verbal communication, and the diversification of audience interaction in the digital age further increases the difficulty for hosts to achieve effective communication.

Based on the above background, this study is based on the art education of radio and television broadcasting and hosting, and intends to conduct a systematic investigation on the current status of language and non-verbal communication in China's entertainment news programs, analyze the similarities and differences in the communication methods of entertainment news programs on different platforms and TV stations, and propose a complete guidance plan for the combined training of hosts' spoken and silent languages, so as to enhance the overall communication ability of hosts and the quality of programs, meet the needs of diverse audiences, and promote the all-round development of broadcasting and hosting talents.

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Research Objectives

1. To examine the current status of verbal and non-verbal communication practices in Chinese entertainment news programs.
2. To analyze the similarities and differences in verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used by entertainment news hosts across different platforms and television stations.
3. To develop a comprehensive and applicable guidance framework for integrating verbal and non-verbal communication in Chinese entertainment news programs, to improve host training and enhancing program quality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative multiple-case analysis design supplemented by literature review to comprehensively examine the verbal and non-verbal communication practices of Chinese entertainment news program hosts. The qualitative approach is chosen to capture the nuanced, context-dependent nature of non-verbal cues and their interplay with spoken Mandarin in live broadcasting. The research design integrates three methodological components: (1) literature analysis, (2) case study analysis, and (3) comparative analysis across different platforms and television stations.

Phase 1: Literature Analysis

An extensive review of scholarly works on broadcasting communication, non-verbal communication theory, and media hosting practices was conducted. Key theoretical frameworks included Mehrabian's communication model (1971) for understanding the weight of non-verbal signals, Burgoon's expectancy violations theory (1994) for analyzing audience perception, and relevant Chinese-language studies on hosting and language standardization. This phase established the conceptual foundation for identifying the analytical dimensions applied in later phases.

Phase 2: Case Selection and Data Collection

Typical Chinese entertainment news programs were purposively selected as case samples to ensure diversity in platform type, audience demographic, and production style. Selection criteria included:

- ***Platform Diversity*** – representation from both traditional television stations (CCTV, Hunan TV) and emerging online streaming platforms (Mango TV, Tencent Video).
- ***Popularity and Audience Reach*** – inclusion of programs with consistently high viewer ratings or significant online engagement metrics.
- ***Format Consistency*** – focus on programs with recurring hosts to enable observation of sustained communication patterns.

Primary data were collected from archived video recordings of 20 episodes across five different entertainment news programs broadcast between January and June 2024. Supplementary data were obtained from program scripts, social media interactions (e.g., viewer comments, live barrage feedback), and relevant production notes when available.

Phase 3: Analytical Framework

A content analysis approach was employed, coding verbal and non-verbal elements using a predefined analytical grid derived from the literature review. The framework categorized non-verbal behaviors into four main dimensions:

- ***Facial Expression Management*** – smiles, eye contact, eyebrow movements, and other facial cues.
- ***Body Movements*** – hand gestures, posture shifts, and movement within the set.
- ***Spatial Distance and Camera Interaction*** – physical proximity to co-hosts, guests, and cameras; use of camera angles to enhance engagement.
- ***Clothing and Visual Style*** – attire choices, color schemes, and alignment with program themes.

Each coded instance was analyzed for its functional role in enhancing message clarity, emotional connection, and program appeal. Inter-coder reliability was ensured through a double-coding process by two trained researchers, achieving a Cohen's kappa coefficient above 0.85.

Phase 4: Comparative Analysis

The findings from individual cases were compared across platforms and television stations to identify patterns, divergences, and contextual factors influencing communication strategies. This phase allowed for the examination of how audience engagement modes, platform characteristics, and institutional norms shape the integration of verbal and non-verbal communication.

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Phase 5: Synthesis and Framework Development

Insights from the literature review, case analyses, and cross-platform comparisons were synthesized to propose a comprehensive guidance framework for integrating verbal and non-verbal communication in entertainment news hosting. The framework emphasizes training modules in expression management, body language control, spatial awareness, and visual presentation, aiming to bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and professional practice in broadcasting and hosting art education.

FINDINGS

Results of Phase 1: Literature Analysis

The first phase of this research aimed to establish a theoretical and conceptual foundation for understanding the interaction between verbal and non-verbal communication in Chinese entertainment news programs. In line with the study's objectives—to examine the current state of these communication modes, identify differences and similarities across platforms, and propose an integrated training framework—the literature review synthesized recent research from broadcasting studies, communication theory, and hosting practice. The findings are organized into four interconnected themes: Language Communication Theory, Non-verbal Communication Theory, Entertainment News Characteristics, and Host Image Management.

1. Language Communication Theory and Professional Verbal Competence

Language remains the fundamental medium of information exchange in news broadcasting, serving as the core vehicle for delivering content and expressing viewpoints. For radio and television hosts in China, Mandarin is not only the official medium of broadcast but also a cultural standard that conveys authority, credibility, and professionalism. Precision in pronunciation, control of intonation, and mastery of rhythm and pauses are consistently cited as critical factors for effective information delivery (Liu & Liu, 2023). The literature underscores that clear and standardized spoken Mandarin enables audiences to accurately comprehend program content and fosters trust in the host's professional competence.

However, evidence also points to a gap between classroom-based language training and live performance fluency. Even after undergoing systematic Mandarin pronunciation courses, many broadcasting students report difficulty adapting their formal training to the dynamic, often unpredictable, conditions of live entertainment news hosting (Liu & Liu, 2023). This problem manifests in overly rigid speech patterns, unnatural transitions, and limited adaptability to real-time interaction, which can diminish program appeal and weaken audience engagement.

The rise of the "infotainment" model has further shifted the linguistic demands placed on hosts. In this format, the ability to blend accuracy with engagement is essential. Entertainment news audiences expect not only factual clarity but also a delivery style that is relaxed, approachable, and infused with humor or cultural references. Research on infotainment communication strategies shows that incorporating colloquial expressions, playful metaphors, and even contemporary internet slang can increase program affinity and memorability without undermining credibility (Brants, 2013; Nabi & Oliver, 2009). Thus, professional verbal competence in this context involves balancing the traditional news values of accuracy and formality with the creative and emotional appeal demanded by entertainment-driven formats.

2. Non-Verbal Communication Theory and Multimodal Expression

In addition to verbal clarity, non-verbal communication has emerged as a defining factor in successful broadcasting, particularly in visually oriented media such as television and online streaming. Non-verbal elements—including facial expressions, gestures, posture, spatial positioning, and visual styling—can carry as much communicative weight as words, if not more. Research rooted in Mehrabian's communication ratio has long suggested that non-verbal cues account for a majority of the emotional meaning audiences perceive, a point reinforced by contemporary studies that highlight their role in building rapport, signaling credibility, and regulating interaction flow (Gironzetti, 2020; Yu, 2024).

The literature identifies three primary functions of non-verbal elements in hosting. First, they convey emotional states—smiling to signal friendliness, a steady gaze to indicate confidence, or a solemn expression to communicate seriousness. Ekman's taxonomy of universal facial expressions—happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise—remains relevant in this context, with skilled hosts adapting these expressions fluidly to match content tone. Second, non-verbal cues reinforce verbal content; for example, a pointing gesture can emphasize a key statistic, while an open-handed gesture can signal openness or sincerity. Third, they regulate relational dynamics through proxemics and kinesics. Hall's (1966) framework of interpersonal distances—intimate, personal, social, and public—has been applied to analyze how hosts use physical positioning to create psychological closeness or maintain professional distance (Gironzetti, 2020).

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Importantly, multiple studies caution against inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal channels. Burgoon's expectancy violations theory suggests that when body language contradicts spoken content—for example, a cheerful tone paired with a closed-off posture—audiences may experience cognitive dissonance, leading to reduced trust and weaker engagement (Burgoon, 2016). In the high-visibility environment of entertainment news, such mismatches can quickly erode a host's credibility and disrupt audience immersion.

3. Communication Characteristics of Entertainment News

The literature confirms that entertainment news occupies a unique position between hard news and pure entertainment, blending factual reporting with a relaxed and engaging presentation style. Content typically centers on celebrity updates, film and television releases, and human-interest stories, appealing to audiences' curiosity and desire for lighthearted consumption (Brants, 2013). While hard news prioritizes timeliness, objectivity, and seriousness, entertainment news emphasizes personality, narrative flair, and interactivity.

Language style in this genre is markedly more colloquial, often incorporating humor, playful banter, and audience-centered references. Such personalization not only enhances viewer enjoyment but also fosters a sense of familiarity and loyalty toward the program. Non-verbal performance is equally vital: exaggerated gestures, animated facial expressions, and dynamic stage movement are common strategies for maintaining energy and audience attention (Yu, 2024). Interactive segments—such as live polls, audience Q&A, or on-stage games—further differentiate entertainment news from its hard news counterpart, creating a participatory atmosphere that aligns with the two-way communication norms of the digital era.

The literature also points to variation across platforms and broadcasters. Traditional television stations, such as CCTV or Hunan TV, often maintain a more structured, professionally restrained style, even in entertainment segments, to align with institutional brand identity. In contrast, online platforms like Mango TV or Tencent Video tend to allow greater informality, visual experimentation, and direct audience engagement through real-time comment feeds. These platform-driven differences suggest that training in entertainment news hosting must account for both cross-platform adaptability and the consistent maintenance of core professional standards.

4. Host Image Management and Professional Standards

Host image management emerges as a central theme bridging verbal and non-verbal performance. A host's image encompasses language style, non-verbal demeanor, attire, grooming, and even online behavior, functioning as an integrated representation of their professional and personal brand. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) self-presentation theory, recent scholarship emphasizes that hosts consciously construct this image to influence audience perceptions, balancing authority with approachability (Hollenbaugh, 2021; Nickerson, 2023). Regulatory frameworks in China underscore the institutional importance of image management. The *Opinions on Further Standardizing the Professional Behavior of Hosts of Radio, Television and Online Audiovisual Art Programs*, issued by the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA, 2020), stipulates that hosts must present a civilized, aesthetically appropriate, and audience-aligned image in all professional contexts. This includes both on-screen performance and off-screen public presence, particularly on social media platforms where audience interaction is immediate and visible.

Empirical research indicates that well-managed image strategies combine verbal precision with non-verbal authenticity. For example, clothing style can be adapted to match program tone—formal attire for serious segments, fashionable or thematic outfits for celebratory or light-hearted topics—while maintaining alignment with cultural and audience expectations (Jiang, 2024). Similarly, the integration of social media presence into a host's professional identity requires consistent messaging, visual coherence, and audience-responsive interaction, reinforcing the host's credibility and relatability across platforms (Yang et al., 2022).

5. Synthesis and Relevance to Research Objectives

Synthesizing the literature reveals three key conclusions directly related to the research objectives. First, the current status of verbal and non-verbal communication in Chinese entertainment news reflects a hybrid model in which traditional broadcasting standards coexist with the flexible, personality-driven style of infotainment. While the value of both skill sets is widely acknowledged, the persistent gap between training and application—particularly in integrating verbal and non-verbal elements—remains a challenge.

Second, differences and similarities across platforms are shaped by institutional culture, audience demographics, and technological affordances. Television broadcasters generally adhere to more formalized standards, while online platforms embrace informality and interactivity. Nonetheless, the core principles of verbal clarity, non-verbal alignment, and professional image management are common across all platforms. Third, the literature underscores the need for a guidance framework that systematically integrates verbal and non-verbal training. Such a framework should address both the technical aspects of language delivery and the strategic deployment of non-verbal cues, tailored to the genre-specific demands of entertainment news. It should also

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incorporate image management principles that extend beyond the studio to digital platforms, ensuring hosts can maintain credibility, audience engagement, and brand alignment across contexts.

In sum, Phase 1 establishes that the effectiveness of entertainment news hosting lies in the *synergistic orchestration* of verbal and non-verbal communication, contextualized by platform norms and guided by professional standards. This conceptual foundation informs the design of the subsequent empirical phases, which will examine how these theoretical insights manifest in practice and how they can be translated into targeted training strategies.

Results of Phase 2: Case Selection and Data Collection

The second phase of this study operationalized the theoretical insights gained from Phase 1 by selecting and compiling a representative set of Chinese entertainment news programs for empirical analysis. Guided by the research objectives—particularly the examination of current verbal and non-verbal communication practices and their variation across platforms—case selection was conducted using a purposive sampling strategy to ensure diversity in broadcasting medium, target audience, and production style.

Platform Diversity was the first criterion applied in the selection process. To capture contrasts between established and emerging media formats, the sample included programs from both traditional television broadcasters—such as China Central Television (CCTV) and Hunan Television—and newer online streaming platforms such as Mango TV and Tencent Video. This distinction was crucial for addressing the second research objective, which seeks to identify similarities and differences in communication styles across platforms. Recent research on Chinese media convergence highlights that while traditional broadcasters often prioritize formal professionalism, online platforms tend to emphasize informality, audience interactivity, and visual experimentation (Zhang & Ma, 2020; Zhao & Keane, 2021). By including both categories, the dataset enabled cross-platform comparisons within a single genre.

The second criterion, **popularity and audience reach**, ensured that the selected programs were both widely consumed and culturally relevant. Programs with consistently high audience ratings, verified through CSM Media Research for television and platform-provided analytics for online streaming, were prioritized. On the online side, viewer engagement was assessed through visible interaction metrics such as comment volume, "likes," and shares. These indicators, as suggested by Li and Chen (2022), provide valuable proxies for audience involvement and are increasingly recognized in media studies as complements to traditional ratings data.

The third criterion, **format consistency**, targeted programs with recurring hosts to allow for longitudinal observation of communication styles. By focusing on recurring hosts, it was possible to monitor the evolution of their verbal and non-verbal expression over multiple episodes, identify stylistic consistencies, and detect situational variations in delivery. This aligns with prior studies which argue that host familiarity and sustained style contribute significantly to audience loyalty in entertainment news formats (Yu, 2024).

Applying these criteria, the final dataset comprised 20 episodes across five entertainment news programs broadcast between January and June 2024. This period was selected to capture regular programming cycles while avoiding distortion from major one-off events (such as award ceremonies or national holidays) that could skew communication patterns toward atypical styles.

Primary data consisted of archived high-definition video recordings of the selected episodes, sourced directly from broadcaster archives and official streaming platform repositories. These recordings provided a reliable audiovisual record for detailed content analysis of verbal delivery, non-verbal expression, and host-audience interaction.

Supplementary data were collected to enrich the primary material and capture the broader communicative context. These included official program scripts, where available, which allowed comparison between planned and improvised content; audience-generated comments from social media and platform-specific "barrage" (danmu) feedback; and production notes obtained through informal contacts with industry practitioners. Such triangulation is consistent with best practices in media ethnography, as it enables analysis not only of what was broadcast but also of the interactional environment surrounding it (Morris & Waisbord, 2022).

The resulting dataset provided a balanced representation of entertainment news production in China's contemporary media ecosystem. Traditional television examples displayed more structured verbal delivery, moderated body language, and formal attire, aligning with institutional expectations for professional authority. In contrast, online streaming cases exhibited greater flexibility in language style—frequently incorporating colloquialisms, humor, and trending internet slang—and employed a wider range of non-verbal cues, including more expansive gestures, dynamic movement across the set, and deliberate engagement with live audience feedback. These observable contrasts support the premise, established in Phase 1, that platform-specific norms shape the integration of verbal and non-verbal communication.

This phase also revealed areas of convergence between platforms. Regardless of medium, high-performing hosts consistently demonstrated synchrony between verbal and non-verbal elements—such as aligning facial expressions with tonal shifts or using gestures to punctuate key points—and effectively managed their on-screen

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image to reflect both program branding and audience expectations. These commonalities provide preliminary evidence for the development of a cross-platform guidance framework for integrated host training, addressing the third research objective.

In sum, the methodological rigor of Phase 2 ensured that the selected case material was both representative of current entertainment news practice and sufficiently varied to illuminate differences in communication style across platforms. The richness of the dataset—derived from the combination of audiovisual, textual, and audience-interaction data—provides a robust empirical foundation for the detailed content analysis in subsequent phases.

Results of Phase 3: Analytical Framework

The third phase of the study applied a content analysis approach to systematically investigate the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used by entertainment news hosts in the selected programs. Drawing on the theoretical insights from Phase 1, an analytical grid was employed to code and categorize non-verbal behaviors into four main dimensions: facial expression management, body movements, spatial distance and camera interaction, and clothing and visual style. Each coded instance was analyzed for its role in enhancing message clarity, fostering emotional connection, and increasing program appeal. Inter-coder reliability was ensured through a double-coding process by two trained researchers, achieving a Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.85, indicating a high level of agreement (McHugh, 2012).

From the standpoint of broadcasting and hosting art education, the analysis confirmed that improving overall communication ability requires not only strengthening Mandarin spoken language training but also cultivating targeted non-verbal communication skills. Hosts who successfully synchronized verbal delivery with expressive non-verbal cues consistently achieved greater audience engagement—a finding consistent with research on multimodal communication in media performance (Bucy & Newhagen, 2020; Gironzetti, 2020).

Facial Expression Management emerged as a critical factor influencing both audience perception and emotional engagement. Effective hosts aligned their facial expressions with the emotional tone of the segment—smiling warmly or showing playful surprise during lighthearted segments, and adopting solemn or empathetic expressions when covering sensitive stories. This alignment enhanced credibility and strengthened emotional resonance, supporting earlier findings that congruence between verbal and facial cues increases trust and message persuasiveness (Wehling et al., 2021). Conversely, mismatches between spoken tone and expression risked undermining audience confidence.

Body Movements and Posture served as essential tools for emphasis and audience connection. Analysis revealed frequent use of gestures to visually reinforce key points—open palms to convey sincerity, clenched fists to emphasize determination, and thumbs-up gestures to signal approval. These findings align with experimental studies demonstrating that synchronized gestures and speech improve recall and perceived speaker competence (Hostetter, 2018). Postural choices also shaped the audience's impression: upright stances projected professionalism, while leaning forward conveyed attentiveness. Eye contact with the camera created a simulated direct connection with viewers, a strategy found to enhance perceptions of intimacy and authenticity in mediated communication (Schempp & Oliver, 2020).

Spatial Distance and Camera Interaction were employed to adjust the level of intimacy with audiences. In more formal segments, hosts adhered to "public distance" norms, remaining behind a desk or in a fixed position—echoing traditional broadcast conventions. In contrast, entertainment news frequently featured movement toward the camera, dynamic repositioning within the set, and physical interaction with co-hosts or guests. Such approaches correspond with Hall's (1966) proxemics theory and have been shown to reduce perceived psychological distance, creating a more inclusive and participatory atmosphere (Liu & Zhang, 2019). Online platform productions often integrated camera movements with live comment interactions, reinforcing immediacy and engagement.

Clothing and Visual Style functioned as a form of visual communication and image branding. Traditional television hosts typically wore neutral or subdued attire to project authority and neutrality, while entertainment-focused and online programs favored brighter, trend-driven designs that aligned with thematic content or seasonal events. This aligns with research showing that attire significantly shapes audience perceptions of credibility, relatability, and program tone (Workman & Freeburg, 2020). For example, red garments with festive motifs were common during Spring Festival broadcasts, while more subdued attire was chosen for solemn commemorations, subtly reinforcing thematic consistency.

Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of coordinated multimodal delivery in entertainment news hosting. Across all four coded dimensions, high-performing hosts demonstrated intentional alignment between verbal language and non-verbal behavior, maintaining thematic coherence while adapting to genre and platform norms. These results reinforce the need, identified in the third research objective, for a holistic host training model that integrates technical language mastery with structured non-verbal communication modules. Such a model should incorporate simulation-based exercises, video-recorded performance reviews, and targeted

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coaching to help students internalize skills in expression control, gesture and posture alignment, spatial strategy, and clothing/image management.

By embedding these competencies into broadcasting and hosting curricula, institutions can prepare graduates to meet the demands of a convergent media environment, where the ability to merge verbal precision with non-verbal expressiveness is increasingly essential for sustaining audience attention and program success.

Results of Phase 4: Comparative Analysis

The fourth phase of the study compared the verbal and non-verbal communication practices of entertainment news hosts across the five selected programs, representing both traditional television broadcasters (CCTV, Hunan TV) and online streaming platforms (Mango TV, Tencent Video). This comparative analysis was aimed at addressing the second research objective—identifying similarities and differences in communication strategies across platforms—and at exploring how institutional culture, technological affordances, and audience engagement models shape performance.

1. Verbal Communication Patterns Across Platforms

The analysis revealed distinct patterns in verbal delivery between traditional television and online streaming contexts. Hosts on television programs maintained a more formal, measured delivery style, characterized by precise pronunciation, moderate pacing, and limited use of colloquial expressions. This aligns with the institutional emphasis on professionalism, credibility, and alignment with national language standards (Liu & Liu, 2023). In contrast, online platform hosts employed a conversational style marked by colloquial phrasing, humor, and frequent incorporation of internet slang. This informality served to increase relatability and audience immersion, particularly among younger viewers, and is consistent with findings that platform-specific cultures encourage adaptive linguistic styles to match audience expectations (Zhao & Keane, 2021).

2. Non-verbal Communication Variations

Non-verbal communication also varied significantly across media types. Traditional television hosts tended to employ controlled, restrained gestures and stable posture, maintaining a dignified presence aligned with formal news broadcasting norms. Facial expressions were generally subtle, with emphasis placed on composure and authority. In contrast, online streaming hosts used a wider range of gestures, more pronounced facial expressions, and dynamic movement within the studio space. Camera interaction was also more direct and frequent in online settings, with hosts making deliberate eye contact to simulate interpersonal connection, particularly during audience comment responses. This aligns with prior research indicating that visual dynamism and expressive body language are more prevalent in interactive, digitally mediated formats (Yu, 2024; Gironzetti, 2020).

3. Spatial and Set Design Influences

Platform differences were further reflected in spatial arrangements and set design. Television programs generally adhered to fixed-anchor positioning, often behind a desk or in a designated studio area, reinforcing the "public distance" associated with formal news delivery (Hall, 1966). Conversely, online platform productions favored open studio layouts, allowing hosts to move freely, interact with co-hosts, and approach cameras or guests. This mobility helped create a sense of intimacy and spontaneity, enhancing audience engagement. Such spatial flexibility has been shown to reduce perceived psychological distance, fostering a more participatory atmosphere (Liu & Zhang, 2019).

4. Clothing and Visual Presentation

While both television and online hosts demonstrated attention to clothing and image management, differences in style were apparent. Television hosts adhered to conservative attire, favoring neutral tones and formal cuts to project authority and neutrality. Online hosts, on the other hand, embraced trend-conscious fashion, brighter color palettes, and seasonal or thematic elements, particularly during holiday programming. This divergence reflects the differing brand identities of the platforms and supports previous findings that attire is used strategically to align with program tone and audience expectations (Workman & Freeburg, 2020).

5. Points of Convergence

Despite these differences, several commonalities emerged. Across both television and online formats, high-performing hosts demonstrated strong verbal–non-verbal alignment, with gestures, facial expressions, and tone consistently supporting spoken content. Both types of platforms also relied on image management strategies that extended beyond on-screen performance to include social media engagement, suggesting that cross-platform personal branding is now an essential component of professional hosting (Yang et al., 2022).

6. Implications for Integrated Training

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The comparative analysis underscores that while platform-specific norms influence hosting style, certain communication principles are universally applicable. These include the need for verbal clarity, the strategic use of non-verbal cues to reinforce message content, and the maintenance of a coherent personal and program brand. For broadcasting and hosting art education, this suggests that training programs should prepare students to adapt their communication strategies to varying platform cultures while retaining a consistent professional standard. Scenario-based exercises could be designed to simulate both formal and informal presentation contexts, enabling students to develop the flexibility needed in a convergent media environment (Morris & Waisbord, 2022).

In sum, Phase 4's comparative findings reveal a dual dynamic: platform-specific adaptation in style and delivery coexists with universal best practices in communication and image management. This reinforces the need for an integrated, cross-platform training framework as outlined in the study's third research objective.

Results of Phase 5: Synthesis and Framework Development

The fifth and final phase of the study synthesized the theoretical insights from Phase 1, the empirical findings from Phases 2–4, and the comparative platform analysis to develop a systematic guidance framework for integrating verbal and non-verbal communication in Chinese entertainment news hosting. This phase directly addressed the third research objective—designing a training model that enhances the host's overall communication ability and program effectiveness across media platforms.

1. Core Insights from the Synthesis

The synthesis process revealed that successful entertainment news hosting depends on a synergistic orchestration of verbal precision and non-verbal expressiveness, adapted to the specific demands of the platform and audience. Across all analyzed programs, the highest-performing hosts demonstrated: Verbal–non-verbal congruence: consistent alignment between spoken content, tone, and physical expression, reinforcing message clarity and emotional resonance (Wehling et al., 2021). Platform adaptability: the ability to shift between more formal, authoritative delivery for traditional television and more relaxed, interactive styles for online platforms (Zhao & Keane, 2021). Strategic image management: deliberate use of clothing, grooming, and social media presence to enhance personal branding and maintain audience trust (Hollenbaugh, 2021; Yang et al., 2022). These findings confirmed that while specific styles differ by medium, there is a common set of professional communication competencies that underpin hosting effectiveness in entertainment news.

2. The Four-Pillar Framework for Integrated Training

Drawing on the analytical grid used in Phase 3, the study's proposed guidance framework is structured around four interdependent pillars, each combining verbal and non-verbal skill development: Facial Expression Management – Training modules to teach hosts how to adjust expressions to match segment tone, from lighthearted amusement to solemn empathy, supported by performance feedback sessions using recorded broadcasts (Ekman, 2020). Body Movements and Posture – Exercises to integrate purposeful gestures and confident posture into speech delivery, ensuring that physical cues reinforce key verbal points without distracting from them (Hostetter, 2018). Spatial Distance and Camera Interaction – Simulated studio scenarios to practice using movement, set positioning, and camera engagement to manage perceived intimacy with audiences, applying Hall's (1966) proxemics principles in both formal and informal formats (Liu & Zhang, 2019). Clothing and Visual Style – Guidance on attire selection to align with program themes, platform culture, and target demographics, with practical workshops on visual branding and cross-platform image consistency (Workman & Freeburg, 2020).

3. Educational Implementation Strategies

The framework proposes a hybrid instructional approach, integrating classroom-based theory with practical, scenario-driven exercises. For example, role-play simulations can recreate both traditional studio and online streaming environments, requiring students to adapt delivery styles in real time. Recorded performance analysis—combined with peer and instructor feedback—enables hosts-in-training to refine synchrony between verbal and non-verbal channels. This approach reflects best practices in media performance education, where iterative practice and reflection are central to skill mastery (Morris & Waisbord, 2022).

4. Anticipated Professional Benefits

Implementing this framework in broadcasting and hosting curricula is expected to: Improve hosts' ability to deliver content with greater emotional authenticity and audience engagement. Increase cross-platform adaptability, enhancing employability in China's converged media landscape. Strengthen personal branding skills, enabling hosts to maintain consistent professional images on screen and in digital spaces.

5. Broader Implications for the Industry

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The proposed framework has implications beyond higher education. Professional broadcasters and streaming networks can incorporate its components into in-service training to standardize quality across hosts, ensuring a consistent level of verbal and non-verbal integration. This is particularly relevant as Chinese entertainment news increasingly blends traditional broadcasting norms with interactive, audience-driven formats—a trend that demands hosts capable of balancing entertainment value with journalistic credibility (Brants, 2013; Yu, 2024).

In summary, Phase 5 consolidates the study's findings into a practical, research-informed training model. By embedding this Four-Pillar Framework into education and industry practice, Chinese entertainment news hosts can be better equipped to navigate diverse media environments, sustain audience attention, and enhance the communicative impact of their programs.

CONCLUSION

In addressing the **first objective**, the study mapped the existing practices of Chinese entertainment news hosts across traditional television and emerging online platforms. The findings revealed both commonalities—such as the reliance on clear Putonghua articulation—and disparities, particularly in the degree of non-verbal expressiveness and adaptability to different media formats. This baseline analysis underscored the importance of integrated communication skills in meeting audience expectations in a converging media environment.

For the **second objective**, the research employed content analysis to examine how facial expressions, gestures, posture, spatial dynamics, and visual styling function alongside spoken delivery. Results demonstrated that verbal–non-verbal congruence not only strengthens message clarity and emotional resonance but also shapes audience perceptions of professionalism and relatability. The comparative analysis between platforms further revealed that traditional television tends toward formality and controlled expression, whereas online streaming environments encourage a more relaxed, interactive style.

In fulfilling the **third objective**, the study synthesized empirical insights into a Four-Pillar Guidance Framework—comprising Facial Expression Management, Body Movements and Posture, Spatial Distance and Camera Interaction, and Clothing and Visual Style. This framework offers targeted training strategies for both educational institutions and industry practitioners. Its implementation has the potential to bridge the current gap between academic instruction and the practical demands of the entertainment news industry, enabling hosts to achieve greater adaptability, audience engagement, and professional branding.

Overall, this research advances the theoretical discourse on the integration of verbal and non-verbal communication in broadcasting and hosting art, while also offering a pragmatic pathway for talent development in the omnimedia era. For academia, it enriches the literature by situating non-verbal communication within the specific context of Chinese entertainment news hosting, thereby expanding the scope of communication studies in media performance. For practice, it provides a structured, evidence-based model that can inform curriculum design, in-service training, and professional standards. As the media landscape continues to evolve toward interactive, cross-platform formats, the dual cultivation of spoken and silent language will be essential for producing hosts who can excel in both traditional and digital domains. This study's findings and proposed framework therefore hold enduring relevance for the future of broadcasting and hosting education and industry practice in China.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have implications on three interrelated levels: theoretical development, pedagogical reform, and industry application.

1. **Theoretical Implications**
   This research contributes to the broader field of communication and media performance studies by situating non-verbal communication within the specific context of Chinese entertainment news hosting. By integrating Goffman's (1959) self-presentation theory with Hall's (1966) proxemics framework and contemporary broadcasting research, the study extends existing models of media communication to encompass the dynamic interplay of verbal and silent language in an entertainment news setting. The evidence-based Four-Pillar Guidance Framework offers a conceptual bridge between linguistic delivery and non-verbal semiotics, enriching the scholarly understanding of how these modes jointly influence audience engagement, message credibility, and host branding. This contextualized approach provides a foundation for future studies that wish to examine cross-cultural or cross-platform variations in host performance.
2. **Pedagogical Implications**

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For higher education institutions offering broadcasting and hosting art programs, the results highlight the need to move beyond isolated training in Putonghua articulation toward an integrated curriculum that balances spoken delivery with targeted non-verbal skills. The proposed framework can serve as a blueprint for revising course modules to include hands-on training in facial expression control, body posture, spatial positioning, and visual styling. Such integration can help bridge the current gap between classroom learning and industry expectations, enabling graduates to demonstrate professional versatility in both traditional television and emerging digital media formats. Additionally, the incorporation of simulation-based learning, video feedback sessions, and cross-platform performance analysis will cultivate reflective practitioners capable of adapting their style to varying program genres and audience demographics.

3. **Industry Implications**

For media organizations, the findings underscore the strategic value of systematic non-verbal communication training as part of in-service professional development. In the competitive entertainment news market, where audience retention depends heavily on the host's ability to project credibility, warmth, and distinctiveness, refining non-verbal delivery is as critical as verbal fluency. The Four-Pillar Guidance Framework offers a practical tool for talent managers and producers to evaluate and enhance host performance. By adopting these strategies, broadcasters can improve program quality, strengthen audience loyalty, and maintain brand consistency across on-air and social media channels. Furthermore, as hosts increasingly function as cross-platform brand ambassadors, their image management and non-verbal adaptability will directly influence both the public perception of the media outlet and the commercial viability of its content.

In summary, the study's implications point toward a future in which integrated communication competence—the seamless combination of spoken language mastery and intentional non-verbal performance—becomes the defining criterion for success in Chinese entertainment news hosting. This dual emphasis is not only academically significant but also practically urgent in an era where media convergence demands that hosts excel in multiple communicative dimensions simultaneously.

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