

# Field struggle and cultural construction in Talk Show Convention

Yaxin Chai\*

Wuhan Textile University, Wuhan 430073, China

**Abstract:** "Talk Show Conference" as a media platform, the content of the expression and China's contemporary reality and young people's life close. The program meets the cognitive logic and emotional needs of the young generation with a kind of emotional power full of intellectual style, builds a new feeling structure, and uses deconstructive expression to achieve positive energy empowerment. The program also forms a micro media field, and the maintenance of the "offensive" characteristics of talk shows the structural and combative qualities of the media field. However, the discourse expression of the program is difficult to break through the restriction of capital interests and has the free character of artistic creation. The arrival of satire is relaxation and reconciliation, and the final result of discourse resistance is partial sharing of the right of speech.

**Key words:** Talk Show Convention; Field; Offense; Youth culture.

## 1. Introduction

Talk Show Conference is a competitive talk show co-produced by Tencent Video and Shanghai Xiaoguo Culture Media Co., LTD. It premiered on Tencent Video on August 11, 2017, and has been aired for three seasons. With the young people born after 1990 as the main audience, the program adopts the form of "ordinary people VS stars". With the display and interpretation of the spirit of the talk show and the constantly updated way of stage performance, it has attracted wide attention from the audience, entertainment and cultural circles. In 2020, the third season of the show received an average of more than 110 million views per episode, the number of micro blog readers of the topic of "talk show conference" reached 5.45 billion, and the number of hot search topics of actors and actresses on the micro blog exceeded 800 million, which has become a cultural phenomenon attracting attention in recent years.

Nowadays, there are an endless stream of talk shows, which are especially popular among young audiences. What makes talk shows so popular among contemporary young audiences? Gu Zheng and Zhang Yiyi mentioned in their article "The Two Trends and Comparative Analysis of Network Variety Shows of Talk Shows" -- A Case Study of (Crazy Talk) and (Making Fun of the Conference) that compared with reality shows, such shows are smaller in size, easier to operate, more topic oriented and more suitable for fragmented communication. Therefore, they are popular among both young people and network program producers. In Liu Mengyuan's Analysis of the Operation mode of Network aggregation of Talk shows in the New Media Era -- taking Tencent's Talk Show

Conference as an Example, the content characteristics and operation strategy of the program are analyzed, which are reflected in the following aspects: arousing audience resonance with hot topics, triggering fan effect by celebrities, unique discourse mode and emphasizing user experience. In addition, few scholars have studied the language text style of Talk Show Conference. The program mainly uses humorous and banter language, which makes the audience laugh and think at the same time. Chen Pais, a comedian in mainland China, believes that "the core of comedy is tragedy". The stand-up actors in Talk Show bring many laughs to the audience by means of mockery or self-mockery. As the predecessor of the show, the show was created by the original cast of the show and hosted by former CCTV host Zhang Shaogang. It

brought together many talk-show masters and stars, such as Li Nian, Chi Zi, Wang Jianguo and ROCK. The purpose of teasing is not to make people laugh. It should be a kind of high-level reminder of goodwill. How to strike a balance between humorous and elegant teasing and unlimited sarcasm, so as not to fall into the trap of "making fun of the mouth" and ensuring that the content of teasing is enough to stimulate the public's participation and discussion of the topic? "Fun Conference" has successful attempts in these aspects. Along with the popularity of the program, it seems that the media practitioners can see the potential of talk shows and lay a solid foundation for the success of "Talk Show Conference". Lin Lei's "Banter, Nostalgia: The Cultural Strategy of Popular Variety Entertainment Programs" tries to grasp the cultural temperament of popular variety shows from the perspective of brief history combing, and

\* Corresponding author: 934010224@qq.com

holds that the "audience-oriented" characteristics of network variety programs are increasingly obvious, and "the audience's aesthetics and preferences are related to the influence and cultivation of media content on the one hand, but more often, it represents a kind of 'sensory structure' of The

Times. And will in turn actively affect the media content." Today's network variety is more like the product of The Times, representing the culture of the young generation, a grasp of the cultural spirit.

The existing scholars' research focuses more on the marketing methods of network integrated marketing and the reasons for the popularity of talk shows, but there is no profound analysis of the field structure and language style of network integrated talk shows. In this paper, the text interpretation method combined with the analysis of social context is used to explain that the power center in the field of the show is weakened by the standup performers' performance of the sense of authority of the conflict, thus creating the unique style of the show. Behind the conflict is not opposition, but the release of tension and pressure while the continuous satire, the deep expression is the reconciliation of young people to life.

## 2. The humorous expression of text language

### 2.1 Sarcasm and banter

Talk Show Convention mostly uses the form of stand-up talk show to compete on the same stage, integrates the characteristics of American talk show, adopts a relatively free form of talk show narration, and the narrative language is mostly sarcastic and self-deprecating. Different from simply trying to make fun, Talk Show Convention selects topics related to social hot spots for discussion around issues of public concern, and expresses inner thoughts on the real society in the form of mocking and joking language. However, its strong sense of reality often makes the audience reflect on themselves and pay attention to social issues in the midst of laughter, which is why some of the jokes and jokes in the show are not only widely spread on the Internet, but also often lead to wider discussions, especially stand-up comedian Yang Li's performance which caused a strong backlash from online public opinion. As contemporary cultural sociologist Jeffrey Alexander pointed out, "The world is dominated by subjective and internal emotions." The hot social topics discussed in the show resonate strongly with young audiences. Yu Qian, a veteran comedian invited to the show, commented, "Art comes from life, but it is higher than life." This very common line embodies what has been the unconscious standard of contemporary Chinese literature and art: an absolute reverence for realism. In the comedy creation of these young people, their material comes from the real sense of "reality" -- bumps and bruises with life, which is also the most common line when young audiences express their love with bullet screen: "Anyone who has lived understands this phrase." The two generations use different ways of speech to express the same idea of creation, that is, art

expresses real life, which is why the most widely spread "memes" and "jokes" in Talk Show often have a deep sense of reality pain. And these young actors use sarcasm to announce their loss of their willingness to please and their ability to think for themselves.

## 3. The scale of "offense."

### 3.1 "Offensive" definition

We think verbal aggression is a kind of speech ACTS is refers to the speaker speech from the literal meaning or communicative intention or two aspects of the hearer's character at the same time, reputation, views and interests implemented a threat and attack objectively cause upset the hearer or harm the hearer psychological so that each other at a disadvantage in communication. From the point of communicative intentions, words offend can be intentional or unintentional, sometimes the speaker can be consciously in verbal attack or damage on the other side, conducting "impolite" or verbal offence; Sometimes is "speaker unintentionally, the listener" speaker intention is not to break each other but by the hearer interpreted as an insult. But intentionally or not, the speaker speech itself exists some potential risk, not polite factors or some lead to break each other's conditions so as to constitute a kind of words to offend. Therefore, the essential feature of verbal offense is affront. The implementation of verbal offense will objectively threaten the face of the other party, which is a kind of conflict speech act. In a word, verbal offense is a common linguistic phenomenon in daily conversational communication. Deepening the understanding of offense can help us find ways to reduce and avoid verbal offense. Therefore, it is of great theoretical significance and practical need to have a clear understanding of verbal offense and conduct in-depth research on its formation mechanism.

### 3.2 Program Boundaries

In Talk Show, the grasp of the weight of the relationship between social satire and the expression of "positive energy" has become an important point to consider the comedy wisdom of program producers and actors, which can arouse public opinion at least, or attract the attention and suggestions of official mainstream media. If Yang Li's stand-up jokes triggered gender conflict only within the scope of netizens' discussion, the "suspension" incident caused by the sports section of the fifth episode of the show, which was also co-produced by Tencent Video and Xiaoguo Culture, shows the significance of the political capital behind comedy programs. The show came to light after soccer player Fan Zhiyi made fun of the Chinese men's basketball team's loss to Poland in the 2019 World Cup, and the two sides "told each other short stories" on stage, prompting Xinhua News Agency to comment, "After laughing at yourself, don't forget to reflect on yourself." "We encourage athletes to get more in touch with society and participate in social activities, and be tolerant of verbal mistakes. But only if the players have the right values, manners and moral integrity. There should be no pecking order between Chinese basketball and Chinese

football."Later,the show stopped broadcasting the second half of the sports show, which can be regarded as recognition and obedience to the mainstream public opinion setting tone.

The tone of the final stage was dominated by variety show singing and dancing, and even absorbed the stage entertainment form of traditional crosstalk, diluted the sense of offense and provocation of language shows, and showed a strong entertainment color. It also let us see the power interaction and operation of the media field.The competition, adjustment and balance of capital forces of all parties.

## **4. Capital struggle field**

### **4.1 Field theory**

As one of the more widely used concepts in contemporary sociological research,especially in the analysis of literature field, art field, media field and political field, "field" provides us with an effective perspective that not only focuses on structural forces but also examines diachronic changes.In Bourdieu's view, the concept of field "derives its true meaning from relationships.It is only in the system of relations that these concepts acquire their meaning, "and thus," the field can be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations that exist between various positions."Bourdieu's emphasis on the "relations" of the field makes his analysis focus on the relationship between the occupier, the actor and the system,as well as the interaction of the various fields.The field is full of actors' struggles for legal power, dominant value, space resources, capital power and other monopolistic power, which not only follows the laws and rules of the field, but also must show the characteristics of differentiation.As we will see, the maintenance and deviation of principles are clearly presented in the entertainment program "Talk Show Convention", which has the creativity of the actors as well as the binding of commercial interests.This is closely related to the principle of autonomy, another characteristic of the field. Each different field in the micro sense of the social structure is not directly under the decisive influence of external forces, but has its own relatively independent logic and necessity of objective relationship space.Those external forces with powerful social space resources, such as those from politics or economy, must also be reconfigured to exert on actors through the autonomous characteristics of a particular field.

### **4.2 The power of economic capital**

Even though stand-up artists are poking fun at advertisers, they are also incorporating ads into their stand-up shows in ways that are sometimes surprisingly humorous.Advertising has also become an important part of the stand-up show of entertainers. From the host to the performer, advertising content is often inserted seamlessly, and the advertisement is delivered with dramatic expression techniques and humorous language style, which can make people laugh and successfully increase the brand exposure.For example, in the first

episode, Li Nian and Chi Zi introduced the reason why the Talk Show was named by Nian Ci 'an. The main reason was that the title fee had not been spent on the show, and they did not want to return the remaining 20,000 yuan, so they started a new show.This kind of teasing can be seen almost everywhere in the program, which not only avoids the audience's aversion but also increases the saturation of the program, enriching the comedy effect and realizing the double harvest of the program effect and advertisers' interests.The power relationship between economic capital, cultural capital and actors in the program field is always in a state of flow transformation. Economic capital needs to abide by the independent logic of the program (advertisers must acquiesce in being teased and express the cultural quality of the brand in this way), and its power can only be realized by the latter.Talk Show Convention has also invited respected old artists to come to the show as the lead laugh, as an old artist to come to the show must accept such a basic principle of the field, allow to be teased, be joked, must be able to lay down their dignity.These people who have considerable status capital in the entertainment industry can only maximize the realization of their cultural capital, further increase their capital possession in the field of capital circulation, and finally transform it into economic capital by integrating into the field, accepting being teased and "fighting" according to the rules of the show itself.

## **5. Cultural construction and empowerment of positive energy**

### **5.1 Youth Culture**

Understanding the internal cultural logic of the program may be closer to the social reality than studying the program production technology and marketing strategy. Most of the performers and audiences of Talk Show Convention have received good university education, have certain social experience and introspection spirit,and have widely absorbed the nutrients of knowledge in the era of globalization and the information environment. So that the comedy culture reflected in this program has a considerable intellectual quality, but also increasingly separated from the traditional Chinese folk comedy form represented by cross talk, inject fresh blood for the contemporary Chinese comedy art.Talk Show Convention captures and creates the cultural spirit of contemporary Chinese youth. For contemporary culture, it will be a cultural temperament that cannot be ignored.The text practice of Talk Show Conference reflects a new sense structure, which is characterized by deconstructive expression to achieve positive energy empowerment.We can see a lot of self-deprecation, self-disclosure of shortcomings, self-uncovering of scars and self-reporting of pain. Although the text creation has a variety of themes and contents, its deconstructive expression is consistent, which means to express true emotions and self with a playful attitude, intentional rudeness and self-diminution,so as to achieve the resolution of the mainstream motivational discourse system and jokes for the soul. It satisfies the cognitive

logic and emotional needs of the young generation with a kind of emotional power full of intellectual style, and its communication effect also proves the feasibility of its comedy culture production practice and the effectiveness of its strategy.

### 5.2 Positive energy empowerment

Although "Talk Show Convention" in the creation of entertainment, but entertainment is not good. It builds a comedic spirit, which can be illustrated by Li's line in the opening scene of Season 2, "Are you happy? We always bump up against life, our dignity is broken... We may not always be happy, but we must be pursuing it. Everyone has a way of finding happiness, seeing a show, reconciling with life with humor." "Can be brave enough to joke about all pain" and "comedy has changed the way I look at pain." (Rock) "Take the bad things in life and make them fun." (Wang Jianguo) "No matter how distorted or insulted we are, as people's comedy artists, we will bring joy to everyone." (Luo Yonghao) The depth of words is reconciliation, reconciliation with life.

## 6. Summary

The focus on reality, the pursuit of wisdom and the conscious exploration of art form make the comedy culture embodied in Talk Show Convention have the characteristics of great vitality. We can regard it as the subjective creation of the actors, and more importantly, it should be regarded as the embodiment of a kind of emerging cultural spirit among contemporary Chinese youth groups. Whether it is the "scale of offense" as previously analyzed, or the expression and maintenance of positive energy values, it is both content and strategy. Irony arrives at relaxation and reconciliation, and the final result of discourse resistance is partial sharing of the right of speech. As a talk show that has entered the field of public expression, it needs our further observation and reflection.

## References

1. Tan Ya-Yue, Jiang Wen. Interactive Communication and Predicament Breakthrough of network variety shows of Comedy Talk Show from the post-modern perspective: A case study of the series of Talk Show Conference [J]. *Audio-visual*, 2022 (3) : 26-28, DOI: 10.19395 / j.carol carroll nki.1674-246 - x. 2022.03.008.
2. Shen Lei. Subversion and Innovation of Talk Show from the perspective of Postmodernism --A Case Study of Talk Show Conference Season 4 [J]. *Western Radio and Television*, 2021, 42(24):90-93.
3. Gao Ting, Wang Yong. On the Success Factors of Language Phenomenon Variety Shows -- A Case Study of Talk Show Conference [J]. *News BBS*, 2021, 35 (5) : 51-53. DOI: 10.19425 / j.carol carroll nki/g2.2021.05.019 cn15-1019.
4. Wan Qianqian. "Entertainment-style Reflection" : Discourse practice and Meaning Construction of stand-up comedy Show -- A Case study of the variety show Talk Show Conference [J]. *Audio-visual*, 2021 (10) : 24-26. DOI: 10.19395 / j.carol carroll nki. 1674-246 - x. 2021.10.010.
5. Li Y M, Bai Y. Consumption and revelry: Discourse paradigms of network talk show hosts [J]. *Friends of the editor*, 2018 (11) : 56-61. The DOI: 10.13786 / j.carol carroll nki/g2.2018.11.011 cn14-1066.
6. Poking fun at the conference of the red chamber YueLin. See network show ridicule culture [J]. *Journal of youth press*, 2018 (21) : 74-75. The DOI: 10.15997 / j.carol carroll nki QNJZ.2018.21.041.
7. Gu Zheng, ZHANG Yiyi. Two Trends and Comparative Analysis of Network Variety Shows of Talk Show: A Case Study of "Talk of Wonderful Things" and "Teasing Conference" [J]. *Media*, 2018(10):41-44.
8. Meng Chong, Wang Yining. Network Public Relations in the Media context: A Case study of Talk show "Teasing Conference" [J]. *Published a wide Angle*, 2018 (7) : 72-74. The DOI: 10.16491 / j.carol carroll nki/g2.2018.07.023 cn45-1216.
9. Zhao Mengyuan. Analysis on the operation mode of network integration of Talk shows in the new Media era: A case study of Tencent Talk Show Conference [J]. *Media*, 2018(13):36-38.
10. Li Juan. Empowerment of Positive Energy under Deconstructive Expression: A Cultural Critical Analysis of Talk Show Conference [J]. *Zhejiang journal*, 2021 (4) : 183-192. The DOI: 10.16235/ j.carol carroll nki. 33-1005 / c. 2021.04.020.
11. Xiao-feng liao. Variety elements in the network television variety show [J]. *Journal of youth press*, 2018 (14) : 83-84. The DOI: 10.15997 / j.carol carroll nki QNJZ. 2018.14.053.
12. Tao Tao Tu Na. Deconstruction and Revelry of the Third Season of Talk Show [J]. *News Research Guide*, 2021, 12(13):177-179.
13. Zhu Jinyi. "De-labeling" Expression of Youth Subculture -- A Case Study of Talk Show Conference [J]. *Audio-visual*, 2021 (4) : 43-44, DOI: 10.19395 / j.carol carroll nki. 1674-246- x. 2021.04.018.