

Building Cross-Cultural Communication Competencies for Broadcasters and Presenters in the Global Context: A Perspective on the Evolution of Professional Capabilities Through Civilizational Exchange and Mutual Learning

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ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of deepening globalization and the era's imperative for civilizational exchange and mutual learning, broadcasting and hosting—as core vehicles for cross-cultural communication—face a transformative shift in their professional competency systems. This transition moves from "single-language communication" toward "multicultural communication." This paper adopts the theoretical perspective of civilizational exchange and mutual learning, drawing on global communication practices to analyze existing challenges in cross-cultural broadcasting—including cultural cognitive biases, inadequate contextual adaptation, and ineffective symbolic transformation. It then constructs a cross-cultural communication competency model tailored to contemporary demands across four dimensions: cultural literacy, contextual mastery, symbolic innovation, and technological application. This framework provides theoretical guidance and practical pathways for reforming broadcasting education and enhancing practitioners' capabilities.

KEYWORDS

Globalization; Broadcasting and hosting; Cross-cultural communication; Exchange and mutual learning among civilizations; Capacity building

1 Introduction

The opening of new sea routes shattered the previous state of relative isolation and fragmentation across the globe. Today, the information age has similarly forged "new routes" for cross-cultural communication. The tide of globalization has broken down geographical and cultural boundaries, transforming exchanges between civilizations from "chance encounters" into "routine interactions." Cultural globalization represents both China's export of content products to the outside world and a "two-way journey" of repositioning itself within the global context while participating in the co-creation of world culture ^[1]. According to the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity report, global cross-cultural communication traffic in 2023 increased more than fivefold compared to 2010, with audiovisual communication accounting for 68% of the total. As the "personified vehicle" of audiovisual communication, the cross-cultural communication capabilities of broadcasters According to the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity report, global cross-cultural communication traffic and hosts directly determine the effectiveness of information transmission and the depth of civilizational dialogue.

Traditional broadcasting and hosting education and practice have long focused on single dimensions such as "linguistic standardization" and "vocal expressiveness," often resulting in "cultural discounting" in cross-cultural contexts. As civilizational exchanges and mutual learning become a global consensus, the professional capabilities of broadcasters and hosts must transcend the limitations of "local communication" and shift toward a new dimension of "cross-cultural adaptation."

2 The core contradictions in cross-cultural communication for broadcasters and presenters in the globalization context

2.1 The contradiction between the "monolithic nature" of cultural perception and the "diverse nature" of the audience

Currently, the cultural awareness of most broadcasting professionals remains centered on local culture, lacking systematic understanding of the value systems, thought patterns, and aesthetic preferences of different civilizations. This results in a mismatch between the content being disseminated and audience needs. For instance, in agricultural programs targeting Southeast Asian audiences, hosts perpetuate the local narrative of "large-scale mechanization" while overlooking the reality of "smallholder farming" in the region, significantly diminishing the impact of the content. Similarly, when conveying environmental concepts to the Middle East, failure to consider the influence of local religious culture on perceptions of nature has resulted in content that struggles to resonate.

The essence of this contradiction lies in the disregard for “cultural diversity.” Some practitioners directly apply domestic cultural logic to cross-cultural communication, overlooking the distinctiveness of different civilizations. For instance, Western cultures emphasize “individual heroism,” while Eastern cultures prioritize ‘collectivism’; African cultures value “oral traditions,” whereas Western cultures favor “visual presentation.” When communication content fails to align with the cultural logic of the audience, even precise linguistic expression can lead to the communication dilemma where “information is received but fails to resonate.”

2.2 The contradiction between the “static nature” of contextual control and the “dynamic nature” of communication scenarios

The context of cross-cultural communication is characterized by “dynamic” features, encompassing linguistic contexts (such as lexical ambiguity and grammatical differences), nonverbal contexts (such as body language, spatial distance, and time perception), as well as cultural contexts (such as festival customs and historical background). However, in current broadcasting practices, contextual control often exhibits a tendency toward “staticization”: First, reliance on pre-set scripts leads to a lack of immediate responsiveness to on-site cultural cues. For instance, during a live broadcast of an international forum, when a guest raised the sensitive topic of “colonial history,” the host—unaware of the relevant cultural background—failed to promptly steer the conversation, resulting in a deadlock. Second, it overlooks cross-cultural differences in nonverbal contexts. For instance, while nodding signifies “agreement” in most cultures, it conveys “disagreement” in countries like Bulgaria and Greece. A host once misinterpreted nodding during an interaction with a Greek guest, leading to communication misunderstandings.

What deserves greater emphasis is that technology empowers not only platform resources but also expressive resources ^[2]. New media technologies have further intensified the “dynamic nature” of context—features like “real-time comments” and “bullet screen interactions” on short video platforms transform audiences from passive recipients into active participants. The instant feedback from cross-cultural audiences demands that hosts rapidly adjust their contextual strategies within short timeframes. Persisting with static, “linear communication” thinking will inevitably lead to communication breakdowns.

2.3 The contradiction between the “superficialization” of symbolic transformation and the “deepening” of cultural implications

Cross-cultural communication often involves the “cross-cultural transformation of symbols,” encompassing both linguistic and non-linguistic symbols. The current practice of symbol conversion in broadcasting and hosting often remains at the level of “superficial translation,” failing to convey cultural connotations. For instance, directly translating “龙” as “dragon” overlooks the cultural difference where “龙” symbolizes “auspiciousness” in Chinese, while ‘dragon’ represents “evil” in English, leading to a misinterpretation of cultural imagery; When introducing China's Spring Festival, merely listing superficial customs like “hanging Spring Festival couplets and eating dumplings” fails to convey the deeper cultural significance of “family reunion” and “bidding farewell to the old and welcoming the new,” making it difficult for overseas audiences to grasp the festival's spiritual value.

The “superficialization” of symbolic transformation is also reflected in the homogenization of communication formats. This homogenization has become an inevitable growing pain that television media must endure after a considerable period of incubation ^[3]. Most cross-cultural programs still rely on the traditional “host-guest interview” format, failing to innovate formats that align with audience media consumption habits. For instance, in cross-cultural communication targeting Generation Z, new formats like “virtual anchors” and “interactive livestreams” are not utilized, making it difficult for content to reach the intended audience. In communications targeting Africa, the lack of adoption of locally relevant formats like “oral storytelling” results in content lacking emotional resonance.

3 Building cross-cultural communication competencies for broadcasters and presenters in the context of civilizational exchange and mutual learning

3.1 Cultural literacy: from “local awareness” to “cross-cultural empathy”

Cultural literacy serves as the foundation for cross-cultural communication, requiring a shift beyond “local-centered” thinking to establish a “multicultural cognitive framework.” This framework encompasses three specific dimensions:

(1) Cultural Knowledge Base: Before engaging in broadcasting and hosting work, systematically study the historical contexts, value systems, and cultural taboos of diverse civilizations. This includes understanding practices like Ramadan in Islamic culture, the influence of the caste system in Indian culture, and the significance of carnivals in Latin American

culture. Through specialized regional cultural studies and cross-cultural communication practices, build a “cultural knowledge map” to prevent communication errors stemming from knowledge gaps.

(2) Cultural Awareness: Recognize differences in thinking across civilizations. For instance, when interviewing Western scholars, you may address guests by their first names and employ a direct questioning style. When interviewing Japanese guests, however, pay attention to honorific usage and prioritize “polite expressions.” Avoid directly refuting their views to align with their cultural emphasis on “harmony.”

(3) Cross-Cultural Empathy: Adopting an audience-centric perspective to understand their cultural sentiments and needs. For instance, when reporting on famine in Africa, avoid adopting a “sympathetic narrative” and instead focus on “local communities’ self-reliance efforts,” respecting their cultural sense of dignity. When sharing China’s “poverty alleviation” experience, integrate the “poverty reduction needs” of other developing nations, highlight the authentic lives of ordinary people, and distill “practical pathways for reference” rather than merely listing statistics or showcasing achievements.

3.2 Contextual control: from “static preset” to “dynamic adaptation”

The ability to control context must adapt to the “dynamic” nature of cross-cultural communication, achieving an organic integration of “preset and adjustment.” Specifically, this includes:

(1) Pre-Communication Context Anticipation: Before dissemination, conduct “audience profiling analysis” and “cultural risk assessment” to anticipate potential contextual conflicts. For instance, when addressing “historically contentious” topics, understand differing historical narratives across nations to avoid “single-perspective” framing. During holiday communications, clarify audience customs—such as linking the “family reunion” essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival to the “family gathering” theme of Thanksgiving for Western audiences to bridge cultural divides.

(2) In-the-moment contextual adjustments: Broadcasters and hosts must enhance their “real-time feedback processing capabilities,” adapting communication strategies based on on-site cues such as audience expressions, live chat comments, and guest reactions. For instance, during a live broadcast of an international cultural exhibition, if overseas viewers show keen interest in “Peking Opera face painting,” the host may, time permitting, spontaneously add an explanation of its symbolic meanings. Should a guest broach a “sensitive topic,” the host can skillfully redirect the conversation through “topic steering” to prevent the context from spiraling out of control.

(3) Nonverbal Context Adaptation: Pay attention to cross-cultural differences in body language, personal space, and vocal tone. For example, avoid excessive eye contact when communicating with Arab guests; incorporate more gestures when interacting with Latin American guests; and tone down vocal enthusiasm when communicating in Northern Europe.

3.3 Symbolic innovation: from “surface translation” to “deep transformation”

The core of symbolic innovation lies in achieving “cross-cultural transmission of cultural connotations,” which requires moving beyond “literal translation” thinking and engaging in “symbolic reconstruction.” Specific approaches include:

(1) Translating linguistic symbols: Employing a “free translation + cultural annotation” approach to convey deeper meanings. For instance, translating ‘小康社会’ as “a moderately prosperous society” and adding the explanation “referring to a state where people’s living standards reach ‘freedom from want and secure employment,’ representing a development goal with Chinese characteristics” avoids misunderstandings caused by literal translations. In the film *Ne Zha*, translating “急急如律令” as “quickly quickly biubiubiu” adds humor while highlighting the incantation’s distinctive rhythm, enabling international audiences to grasp its intent.

(2) Localization of Communication Formats: Innovate program formats based on audience media consumption habits. For example, in Africa, leverage its “oral tradition” to produce “story-based radio programs,” disseminating knowledge through a format combining “host narration with local actor voiceovers.” In Europe and America, utilize “short-video platforms” to create “bite-sized” cultural science content, such as “Understanding Chinese Tea Ceremony in 1 Minute,” tailored to their “fast-paced” information consumption habits. In Southeast Asia, adopt a “live-streaming commerce + cultural dissemination” format, using “sales of local specialty products” to introduce cultural topics and enhance engagement.

3.4 Technology application: from “tool usage” to “intelligent empowerment”

New media technologies provide tools for cross-cultural communication that reduce costs and increase efficiency. Broadcasters and hosts must master the ability to leverage technological empowerment, specifically including:

(1) Application of Intelligent Translation Technology: While proficiently utilizing AI translation tools, pay attention to “human proofreading” to avoid cultural misunderstandings caused by technical errors. For instance, in multinational live streams, AI can generate multilingual subtitles, but “culturally sensitive terms” must be proofread beforehand to ensure

accurate conversion of symbols.

(2) **Data-Driven Audience Analysis:** Utilizing big data tools such as social media analytics and audience behavior monitoring to accurately gauge cultural demands and communication preferences. For instance, by analyzing overseas viewers' "viewing duration" and "interaction keywords" for Chinese cultural programs, we discovered heightened interest in "traditional Chinese medicine wellness" and "traditional handicrafts." This enabled us to proactively prepare and adjust the focus of our communication content.

(3) **Immersive Technology Applications:** Utilizing VR, AR, and other technologies to create "cross-cultural immersive experiences" that enhance audiences' cultural awareness. For example, VR technology allows overseas viewers to "step into" the Forbidden City in China, where hosts explain the "cultural symbolism of palace architecture" within the virtual setting. AR technology enables viewers to scan images of "Spring Festival red envelopes" and instantly see hosts explaining the "historical origins of red envelopes," boosting the appeal and interactivity of the content. When recording virtual avatars, hosts must strengthen their sense of conviction and object-oriented expression to immerse viewers more deeply in the virtual environment.

4 Practical pathways for enhancing cross-cultural communication competence in broadcasting and hosting

4.1 Professional education reform: establishing a "cross-cultural orientation" curriculum system

Looking to the future is both a developmental philosophy and a dynamic concept. China's higher education in broadcasting must integrate closely with the evolving media landscape and technological advancements of our era. Its theoretical frameworks, curriculum systems, and training models require timely adaptation and adjustment to maintain vitality and relevance^[4]. Currently, broadcasting and hosting programs at universities need to move beyond traditional "domestic-oriented" curricula and establish interdisciplinary course systems integrating "cultural literacy + practical skills + technical application." For instance, Tianjin Normal University admits international students into its Broadcasting and Hosting Arts program, where they study alongside domestic students in specialized courses. This provides students from diverse countries and regions with opportunities to learn broadcasting with distinct Chinese characteristics, fostering cultural exchange and international collaboration in the field. Additionally, institutions like Communication University of China and Henan University have expanded students' international perspectives and enhanced cross-cultural communication skills through Sino-foreign cooperative education programs.

(1) **Add cross-cultural core courses:** Offer courses such as "Theories of Cross-Cultural Communication," "Introduction to Global Civilizations," and "Ethics in International Communication" to systematically impart cross-cultural knowledge. Introduce practical courses like "Cross-Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication" and "Skills for Navigating International Contexts" to enhance students' contextual adaptation abilities.

(2) **Strengthen Practical Training Components:** Collaborate with international media and cultural institutions to establish a "Cross-Cultural Communication Practice Base," organizing students to participate in practical projects such as "Transnational Live Broadcasts" and "International Cultural Festival Coverage." Launch a "Cross-Cultural Communication Simulation Competition" featuring contest segments like "Communication Responses in Diverse Cultural Contexts" and "Symbolic Transformation and Innovation," using competition to enhance learning.

(3) **Introduce cross-cultural teaching resources:** Hire overseas media professionals and cross-cultural communication scholars as adjunct instructors to conduct "international communication case studies"; organize local faculty to participate in "cross-cultural communication training" to enhance their cross-cultural teaching capabilities.

4.2 Industry practice innovation: establishing a "multi-stakeholder collaborative" communication mechanism

Media organizations must move beyond the isolated communication model and establish a collaborative mechanism involving hosts, cultural experts, and technical teams:

(1) **Establish a cross-cultural communication team:** Each cross-cultural communication project is staffed with a "project lead + cultural consultant + translation specialist + data analyst." The cultural consultant ensures "cultural accuracy," the translation specialist handles "symbol conversion and proofreading," and the data analyst monitors "audience feedback." The project lead serves as the core, integrating all resources to maximize communication effectiveness.

(2) **Launch "Localized Partnerships":** Collaborate with overseas local media outlets and KOLs to co-create and disseminate content. For instance, China Media Group partnered with African local television stations to produce the program "China and Africa," co-hosted by Chinese and African presenters who interpret topics through dual cultural perspectives, enhancing content localization. Additionally, collaborate with overseas cultural KOLs by inviting them to

participate in program recordings, leveraging their “local influence” to broaden the reach of content.

(3) Establish a “Communication Effectiveness Evaluation System”: Assess cross-cultural communication outcomes based on three dimensions: “Cultural Adaptability,” “Audience Resonance,” and “Consensus Achievement.” Effective communication: It is not merely about assessing whether information is conveyed completely or whether language is precise and clear, but rather about determining whether it is understood and accepted within a specific context—even actively reproduced by the audience—becoming a resource for them to express their own cultural sentiments and cognitive positions^[1]. By analyzing sentiment feedback through “social media interaction data” and evaluating the accuracy of cultural representations via “expert review,” a closed-loop system of “dissemination-evaluation-optimization” is established.

4.3 Professional self-improvement: cultivating the mindset and capacity for lifelong learning

Broadcasters and anchors must cultivate “cross-cultural communication skills” as a core competency and establish a lifelong learning mechanism:

(1) Regular Cultural Studies: Continuously update cultural knowledge through initiatives such as the “International Culture Forum,” “Overseas Cultural Study Tours,” and “Cross-Cultural Reading Programs.” Monitor the “International Communication Case Library” to learn exemplary communication strategies and symbol conversion techniques.

(2) Practical Experience Accumulation: Actively participate in the “Cross-Cultural Communication Project” to gain hands-on experience and learn from lessons; establish a “Cross-Cultural Communication Log” to document “cultural conflict points,” “solutions,” and “feedback outcomes” from each communication instance, thereby building a personal growth portfolio.

(3) Cross-disciplinary Knowledge Integration: Acquire interdisciplinary knowledge spanning fields such as “International Relations,” “Psychology,” and “New Media Technology.” For instance, leverage psychological insights to understand audiences’ “cultural cognitive psychology,” and master technological tools like “intelligent translation” and “data analysis” to enhance comprehensive communication capabilities.

5 Conclusion

In the era of globalization and cross-cultural exchange, the cross-cultural communication skills of broadcasters and hosts are no longer merely “additional skills,” but have become “core professional competencies.” This paper analyzes the core contradictions in contemporary cross-cultural communication, constructs a four-dimensional competency framework encompassing “cultural literacy, contextual mastery, symbolic innovation, and technological application,” and proposes a practical pathway involving “educational reform, industry collaboration, and self-improvement.” It aims to propel the broadcasting and hosting profession toward a transformative shift from being “local communicators” to becoming “civilizational dialoguers” in the modern era.

In the future, as globalization deepens and technology evolves, cross-cultural communication scenarios will become increasingly complex, and the demands on broadcasting and hosting capabilities will continue to rise. This necessitates sustained exploration by both academia and the industry to refine competency frameworks, enabling broadcasting and hosting to truly serve as “bridges for civilizational exchange and bonds for cultural mutual learning,” thereby contributing communicative strength to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

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