# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
**Digital Repository**

2015

# Ready to say bad things about him in front of his face?: a symbolic interactionist study of private talks in public places

Fangheyue Ma
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd

Part of the Social Psychology Commons, and the Sociology Commons

**Ready to say bad things about him in front of his face?: A symbolic interactionist**

**study of private talks in public places**


by

**Fangheyue Ma**


A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Sociology

Program of Study Committee:
David Schweingruber, Major Professor
Abdi Kusow
Andy Hochstetler


Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2015

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my best friend Hongming. I will probably never be able to thank you on the Academy Awards when I win the Best Actress, but I promise that you'll be in every single one of my dedication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

From the lens of symbolic interaction and impression management framework, people tend to manage their impressions in the front stage settings, and their performances are guided by the conventional moral rules within that setting. My study explores the role of impression management framework in multi-language settings. In a front stage setting, Chinese speakers are able to use language to set up a barrier, and this barrier enables them to include the Chinese speakers into the conversation and exclude the rest of the audiences. Thus, impression management, especially verbal impression management is conducted in an unconventional and different way.

This study provides the inappropriate, sometimes offensive topics Chinese speakers talked about in front of American audiences, Chinese speakers' thoughts on speaking a foreign language in front of American audiences and American students' perceptions of feeling offended by the Chinese conversations or not. It is applicable to many other social psychology areas because Chinese is not the only "secret code" one can use to include and exclude certain people while conducting a conversation. This study also explores a more complicated setting situation that includes cross-culture and multi-language components. Thus, the mono-language setting from the majority of previous impression management studies are extended and much fully learned.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this research, I am using the lens of symbolic interactionism to explore Chinese people talking in Chinese in front of Americans, and these Americans' perceptions of this foreign language speaking. Being a foreigner in America who uses another language always makes me feel "privileged" when having conversations with friends in public spaces. When taking the bus with Americans, especially when the bus is crowded and people are standing close to each other, or it is extremely empty and everyone on the bus seems to pay attention to those who are talking, I can still have casual and private conversations with my friend without getting embarrassed and worrying about my talks being overheard. Thinking of my personal life experience and Goffman's concept of impression management, I began to consider the role of impression management when a foreign language is taken into consideration, which usually complicates the front stage situation. Talking about private topics in public space by using another language brings in cultural differences to the framework of impression management. In this case, people's verbal impression management is conducted differently. So the research question I'm asking is about the role Goffman's impression management theory plays when people's front stage performances includes an unfamiliar language. In my case, Chinese.

In this study, I use a symbolic interactionist approach to analyze private talks in public places. Observation and semi-structured interviews were carried out to provide triangulation for

this research. The findings show that impression management, especially verbal impression management, is conducted differently when a foreign language and a different culture is involved. Thus, private talks can be conducted freely in a public place. The main research question I want to answer in this research is the role of impression management in multi-language and cross culture settings. In order to answer this major question, many minor research questions have to be answered as well. I would also want to explore the inappropriate topics of the Chinese conversations in front of American audiences; how do American students feel about those conversations and how do Chinese students manage their impressions differently.

The method I used in this study were field research and interviews. Covert observation was conducted in order to understand how people actually speak or react without my intervention. Those "private talks" wouldn't be private if I were to begin questioning the people in the conversation. Semi-structured interviews were made in a triangulation with the field research findings. Conducting a covert observation didn't allow me to take part in Chinese people's private conversations, so adding interviews provide me with more details about the meanings of people's conversations. For example, how do people make sure that their setting is "clean" and other people in the setting cannot be offended by their words? In what scenario do they use Chinese and in what scenario do they use English? Those questions cannot be answered by covert observation only. To determine the effect, I have also conducted interviews with Americans in order to measure the audiences' reaction to Chinese people speaking Chinese in front of them.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My study is embedded in Goffman's impression management framework. I will be reviewing the main concepts in impression management framework that I will be using in this study. This includes setting, front stage/backstage performances, moral right and impression management theory itself.

The impression management framework has been applied to analyze different kinds of interactive behavior among human beings ever since Goffman published *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* in 1959. Impression management refers to the actions individual do in order to manage or manipulate other people's perceptions to the individual's action. The front stage settings are formal, public and audiences-oriented. Stebbins' (1972) "expressions of self esteem" can be translated in our present context of "impression management" as attempts to convey the image of a highly estimable person (Albas and Albas 2013). For example, when a college professor is teaching in a classroom, the performance of teaching, answering questions and interacting with students are regarded as front stage performances; at the same time, the geographical setting—classroom, is considered as a front stage setting. Performers' front stage performances need to follow social norms and obey moral rules in the setting. But when the college professor stays at his home alone, his home becomes his backstage setting. In the backstage setting, the performances tend to be freer because there are no audiences' perceptions

that needed to be manipulated. In many cases, one performer's front stage performance and backstage performance can be totally different and even contradict each other.

Setting

A setting is the place where all the conversations and interactions take place. In Goffman's theoretical framework, "setting" is a geographical term and it has a tendency to stay put. But as we can infer from the recent studies, the definition of "setting" has been extended. "Setting" is no longer limited to earthly places, but also extend to the temporal, moral and virtual places. Gordon examined parents' responses about child raising on a Reality TV show to identify forms and functions of parental accounting strategies on reality TV, and especially the role of emotion, while also advancing the understanding of how identity work is accomplished through narrative response (Gordon, 2011). In this case, "Reality TV show" became the virtual setting for the TV audiences. The extended definition of setting can be used in my research as well. From a higher and more integrated perspective, the setting in my research is "the English speaking environment where Chinese is a minority language". Although I have simplified the setting into several physical places, this new way of studying virtual settings provides me with a different perspective for my future study.

In Goffman's book *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on Social Organization of Gatherings*, h Symbolic interactionists don't believe in fixed meanings. They believe that meanings are attached by performers to meet their purposive goals and those meanings don't necessarily have to be the same. In the process of managing one's impressions in a performance, how and why certain meanings are attached can be learned by the researchers. Using impression management framework to study people's different performances is an important part of the

symbolic interactionism studies. No matter the focus is on setting or performance, the majority of the empirical studies found about the success of impression management. e discussed the unfocused interaction settings, which correspond to "multi-purpose settings" I did my observations in. Unfocused interaction settings refer to public interactive settings without a specific performer or performers. According to Goffman, "when individuals come into one another's immediate presence in circumstances where no spoken communication is called for, they none the less inevitably engage one another in communication of a sort, for in all situations, significance is ascribed to certain matters that are not necessarily connected with particular verbal communications." (Goffman, 1966) For example, when I enter a public rest room where no one is the leading performer and no explicit communication is called for. This kind of public setting without a leading performer, but at the same time everyone is a potential performer in what Goffman called an "unfocused interaction" settings. Goffman discussed the involvement one can have within an unfocused interaction setting, and I will discuss each kind of involvement.

**Body idiom**

Body idiom here refers to the body language or body gestures and the bodily appearance one presents when he or she enters an unfocused interaction setting. This body idiom is not necessarily related to verbal languages, but more like how one present his or her body with movement or appearance. This includes bodily appearance and personal acts: dress, bearing, movement, position, sound level, physical gestures such as waving or saluting, facial decorations, and broad emotional expression (Goffman, 1966).

According to Goffman, body idiom is a conventional and normative discourse. "There is typically an obligation to convey certain information when in the presence of others and an obligation not to convey other impressions, just as there is an expectation that others will present themselves in certain ways." (Goffman, 1966) That means people expect the other setting occupants to act in certain way and within certain moral limits. Even when an individual stops talking, the body idiom is hard to stop so "he must 'say' either the right thing or the wrong thing, he cannot say nothing (with body idiom) " (Goffman, 1966).

This concept of "body idiom" corresponds with the "expressive signs one gives off" in Goffman's impression management framework. One gives off expressions with actions. Body language and these actions build up the vibe of the setting. In my study, a language barrier is built up by a group of Chinese performers. So in many cases, body idiom is the only evidence the English speakers are able to grasp to estimate if the foreign performers are offending them or not.

**Involvement idiom**

The second type of involvement Goffman discusses in an unfocused interactive setting is the "involvement idiom". This means to engage in occasioned activity and to "sustain some kind of cognitive and affective engrossment in it, some mobilization of one's psychological resources" (Goffman, 1966) In short, engaging in occasioned activity means to be involved in it. The involvement in the situation refers to the way an individual handles his or her situated activities.   The involvement an individual sustains within a particular situation is "a matter of inward feeling" (Goffman, 1966). But the performers within the unfocused interactive setting, who wish to assess the involvement of other performers, must use some kind of outward

expression. When an individual "finds that he must convey something through body idiom, and is required to convey the right thing, so also he finds that while present to others he will inevitably convey information about the allocation of his involvement, and that expression of a particular allocation is obligatory." (Goffman, 1966) That means within different groups, people have certain obligatory rules of action in order to be involved.

In this section, Goffman also points out that although the involvement idiom of a group seems apparent and conventional, it would be more difficult if it were a cross-culture or just cross-subculture study. My study of Chinese people applying their Chinese involvement idiom in American settings is a cross-culture one. When one setting contains multiple groups and they don't share one culture involvement idiom, it becomes more complicated to explore, but at the same time, more interesting.

**Involvement shields**

Goffman's concept of "involvement shield" is similar to the "verbal vacuum" Chinese speakers create for themselves using a foreign language. The "verbal vacuum" is a Chinese slang I translated into English that means staying in your own zone and not caring about what' happening outside. According to Goffman, within an unfocused interactive setting, we may be expected to find a variety of barriers used as "involvement shields." Behind the involvement shield, "individuals can safely do the kind of things that ordinarily result in negative sanctions" (Goffman, 1966). One perceives the individual's involvement in reference to the whole context of his activity, but involvement can be shielded by "blocking perception of either bodily signs of involvement or objects of involvement, or both" (Goffman, 1966).

In my study, the Chinese people use Chinese as a tool to build up their involvement shields and block American audiences' perceptions to their conversation. At the same time, with the objects of the involvement (the conversation itself) being blocked, the only thing American audiences can grasp to assess this involvement is the body language Chinese speakers give off, that's the reason many of the American interview participants talked about "the vibe" of a Chinese conversation.

In addition to what Goffman said about the unfocused interactive settings, Cahill's definition of the public-meanwhile-private setting in his 1985 article is also applicable for my research. In this article, Cahill et al. studied people's behavior and interactive orders in public bathrooms. What makes the setting of public bathroom distinctive is that it is a public-meanwhile-private setting. The bathroom itself is public and opens for everyone, but at the same time, when a performer enters the bathroom, it became his private and backstage setting. The most intimate activities are conducted in the bathroom. As Cahill puts it, "Toilet stalls in public bathroom are, therefore, publicly accessible yet private backstage regions" (Cahill, 1985) This "turning a front stage setting into a public setting" appears more clearly in my study. Chinese speakers use Chinese to make themselves a vacuum, and this vacuum can be considered as a backstage setting in a larger front stage setting. This is similar to the "public-private bathroom" setting Cahill studied in his research in 1985.

Front Stage Performance

What is performance? What is front stage performance? In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman defined "performance" as "all the activities of a given participant on a given occasion which is used to influence in any way any of the other participants. Taking a

particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute to the other performances as audience, observers, or co-participants." (Goffman, 1959) In this approach, Goffman assumes that there will be a potential audience group in the performance. Later, he labeled the concept "performance" as "front stage performance" which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. He also made an interesting analogy between front stage and living room. In that case, the performance of the front stage tends to be formal, attention attracted, and it follows the moral rules of a specific setting. Setting, as Goffman puts it, is a "geographical term and it tends to stay put. People start their performance when they get into the setting and terminate their performance when they leave" (Goffman, 1959). Different settings share different moral rules, which I'll refer to below.

In my early mentioned experience when I ride the bus and talk to my Chinese friends, the setting is the bus. On the bus, bus riders share one public space, but there's no specific performer or audience because everyone is minding their own business. Nonetheless, in that case, everyone is a potential performer, and at the same time, everyone is a potential audience.

Moral Right and Restrictions

As Goffman claims, people do not live by specific decisions. Instead, they live by inferences. In other words, people make assumptions about what happens in their settings. For instance, if I'm on the bus, I infer that no one is about to hurt me, no one is going to throw me out of the window and no one is going to punch me in the face. Nevertheless, I don't actually know that. People will be unable to do anything without making assumptions or inferences. This kind of inference leads to the definition of "moral order." According to Goffman, "We must not

overlook the crucial fact that any projected definition of the situation also has a distinctive moral character. It is this moral character of projections that will chiefly concern us in this report. Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way" (Goffman, 1959). In this way, when someone defines and projects one situation and claim to be a certain type of people in that situation, they automatically triggered a moral demand upon others to treat them as certain type of person they think they have the right to expect. And the rules of these expectations are the moral rights or moral orders. For example, when people are sharing a public space on the bus, the specified type of roles we play are bus passengers and bus driver. The most elementary moral order on the bus may be: You cannot hurt other passengers physically or mentally.

In my study, when a foreign language is brought into consideration, the moral rules the performers obey may change as well, and sometimes the rules foreign language speakers obey may appear like a deviation from the conventional moral rights, for example, gossiping about people around you, talking about private topics like sexual intercourse when there are people around, judging people's appearance or behavior in front of their faces. In this way, I'm able to answer my research question about the role of impression management when an unfamiliar language is used in public. Thus, this study looks at a more complicated version of impression management.

In Goffman's *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*, he also discusses the rules and regulations in an unfocused-interactive setting. Goffman calls this as "the regulation of mutual-involvement" (Goffman, 1966). Goffman says that he wants to consider the regulation of mutual involvement as "restrictions on the way in

which individuals in an accessible encounter can properly give themselves up to each other, that is, properly invest themselves in mutual-involvements that are exposed to bystanders" (Goffman, 1966). What is "mutual involvement exposed to bystanders"? The mutual involvement corresponds to the "unfocused-interactive settings" Goffman refers to in the same book. This kind of setting does not have a specific label guiding people what to do within it, like a conference room, a restaurant or a computer lab. In the unfocused-interactive settings, a variety of performances are welcomed at the same time, and the performers are not obligated to communicate or conduct certain acts. In this kind of unfocused interactive setting, subgroup activities are exposed to all the other setting occupants. Thus, the other setting occupants, though not involved in the direct subgroup interactions, are mutually involved. This is what Goffman means for mutual-involvement.

Comparable to the moral rules, mutual involvement too has its restrictions. According to Goffman (1967), one of the reasons that rituals are so important is that they are a mechanism by which individuals can present a particular self to the world and simultaneously demonstrate their commitment to the integrity of those with whom they interact. Performers in unfocused interactive settings can engage in smaller subgroup activities, but they are supposed to always keep the "exposed bystanders" in mind and not conduct performances that the bystanders cannot tolerate. Goffman provides an example. "A couple necking or arguing on a business street might well be considered an affront in the situation—an obtrusion of private matters in places where a more public orientation is required" (Goffman, 1966). Bystanders' tolerance level for intimate display varies based on the settings. If kissing and necking are happening in an airport or railway stations, it is much more tolerable than it happens in the rest area in a public library. The

restrictions for each unfocused-interactive setting differ, but it is obligatory to consider the reactions other bystanders' might have and perform matched performances.

Goffman also talks about the "involvement shield" provided by the conversation. Creating a "conversation circle" can help smaller groups to protect their conversations. The shields Goffman refers here are physical shields like an automobile, the backseat of the car or a private room. Nonetheless, in my study, the Chinese conversation itself plays the role of the "involvement shield." When a difficult foreign language is used to conduct a conversation in a subgroup within unfocused-interactive settings, the speakers can ignore the exposed bystanders and talk about whatever they want because the bystanders don't have knowledge in the foreign language they are speaking. Also, a physical conversation shield is not required to protect and secure the Chinese conversations.

## Impression Management

Goffman claims that individual's expressions involve two parts: the expression that he gives and the expression that he gives off. The former involves "verbal symbols or their substitutes which he uses admittedly and solely to convey the information that he and the others are known to attach to these symbols" (Goffman, 1959). The latter involves "a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor. The expectation is that the action was performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way" (Goffman, 1959). What Goffman refers to as impression management is that an individual is likely to calculate his or her expression to act a certain given way in order to "evoke" and "guide" his or her audience to give a certain definite response. In controlling his or her own performance, one is actually managing the reaction and feedback from their audiences. What makes the impression management in

public places special is that everyone is a performer of his own and a probable audience for everyone else. In this approach, the actions one gives are mostly related to what he was talking about, so impression control conducted by using words and verbal communication is what I'll focus more in my study. The actions will be considered when I study audiences' reactions to the performance. With the language barrier, the audiences are most likely to pay attention to actions such as body languages, facial expressions or eye contacts.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL MONO-LANGUAGE SETTING ANALYSIS

Impression management theory in Goffman's book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* describes how people constantly send out messages to others concerning and trying to manipulate their perceptions of them. Impression management, as a purposive act people conduct to achieve certain goals, is mostly studied when it is successfully conducted in mono-language settings. After practicing impression management successfully, performers are able to conceal certain identities or features they are not willing to exchange; at the same time, reveal certain identities they wish to be broadcast. Most empirical studies using impression management study the success of the practice. In other words, they wish to study how people successfully conceal or reveal certain features of themselves. In general, culture differences were hardly brought into consideration. Most of impression management studies focus on people's interactive behaviors in a mono-language, single-cultured setting. With the setting being mono-language, the previous studies usually didn't include a cross-culture comparison. Goffman also pointed out that it is much difficult if a researcher takes in culture differences into a study.

The mono-language classroom is a very typical setting for impression management analysis and application since the teacher on the stage is a very salient front stage performer, and the students are the audience. Unlike unfocused interactive settings where everyone is a potential performer and a potential audience at the same time, a classroom setting has a clear boundary between its performer and the audiences. In a 2009 article Preves and Stephenson applied

impression management theory to the classic classroom setting. But what makes it more interesting is that the teaching style in the classroom was collaborative teaching, which means two teachers sharing the same classroom setting but doing different teachings. In this case, the teachers teaching in a collaborative style take on multiple roles—they are the performer of their student audiences, as well as the audience for one another. Acting in such an extemporaneous manner while trying to successfully manage others' impressions of oneself is complicated significantly when one has a co-performer with whom to convey a desired meaning (Brown 2003). The paper used the framework of impression management to analyze one type of especially challenging performance in a unique setting in which multiple-dimensional roles for performers are to be taken. It concludes that " sharing the classroom stage creates ongoing challenges in negotiation of teacher identities and perhaps even students' perceptions" (Preves & Stephenson, 2009). This research follows the direction from impression management framework to its application in the setting of a mono-language classroom.

Other mono-language settings include campus book stores, job interview settings and speed dating settings. Lewittes and Simmons' article in 1975 uses impression management to analyze college males' behavior when they want to buy a "girlie magazine" in a bookstore. Observations were made in the university bookstore on the title of the magazine they bought, whether they requested a bag, whether they bought other goods and their impressions during the process. In Chen's article impression management was applied to job interviews: The author extended the research setting from experiment context into real interview settings, thus the research design "has the advantage of reflecting 'the physical, emotional, and cognitive fidelity of interviews where there are real outcomes for both interviewer and applicant' (Posthuma, Morgeson & Campion,2002)" (Chen, Yang & Lin, 2010). In the research of Larson and Tsitsos,

a college sociology professor asked students to conduct speed dating in pairs in order to analyze how they manage their own impression and percept their "dates" action at the same time (Larson and Tsitsos, 2012). Another example is Grant and Mayer's research to analyze if one's strong impression management can lead to not expressing negative feelings, such as concern or empathy in risky forms of citizenship, "such as voicing problems in ways that threaten supervisor or challenge the status quo" (Grant and Mayer, 2009).

Schweingruber (2008) learned about the engagement proposals and the audiences' perceptions to them. Engagement proposal serves as a setting for conducting impression management, and one precondition for this study is that the person who conducts the performance of proposal and the audiences all share the same language background and understand the language of proposing. Thompson's research in 2007 explored the interactions and dramaturgical performances within Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) support groups. When the bodily language is limited and sometimes stigmatized, the group members are still able to convey the communication information and present themselves using the language that all the members understand.

Symbolic interactionists don't believe in fixed meanings. They believe that meanings are attached by performers to meet their purposive goals and those meanings don't necessarily have to be the same. In the process of managing one's impressions in a performance, how and why certain meanings are attached can be learned by the researchers. Using impression management theory to study people's different performances is an important part of the symbolic interactionist studies. As Schweingruber (2010) said in his study, "Interactionists takes seriously the proposition that human beings are creative problem solvers. We are not stuck with the world as it presents itself to us."

No matter the focus is on setting or performance, the majority of the empirical studies found about the success of impression management. In all of these studies, a cross-culture comparison is not included. Most of the researchers didn't look at the multi-language settings, and most of them conduct the studies in their own country. However, I am taking a look at the interactive behaviors of the people from my own group in a cross-culture setting. The observation subjects are speaking Chinese, but their performance of Chinese speaking is embedded in an English speaking setting. With this different setting structure, I was able to explore the role of impression management framework in multi-language and cross culture settings.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

The methods I used in this study are field research and interviews. Covert observation was conducted in order to understand how people actually speak or react without my intervention. Those "private talks" wouldn't be private anymore if the participants had to explain the content to a complete stranger. Semi-structured interviews were conducted also as a triangulation with the field research findings. Conducting a covert observation doesn't let me also take part in Chinese people's private conversations, so adding interviews provided me with more details about the meanings of people's conversations. For example, how do people make sure that their setting is "clean" and other people in the setting cannot be offended by their words? In what scenario do they use Chinese and in what scenario do they use English? Those questions cannot be answered by covert observation only.

Covert Observation

Zelditch argues that the most important criteria for selecting an appropriate research methodology are adequacy (validity) and efficiency. Validity is the extent to which a methodology can adequately reflect the truth of the social phenomenon, and efficiency is the ability of a methodology to gather information with a minimum effort, expense and waste (Besser, 1996). I selected covert observation as one of the methods to conduct my research because it is apt to answer my question related to private talks in public places. I define those talks as "a deviation from the moral rule", in other words, these talks may offend other people in

the same setting or they are not public appropriate. By using covert observation without my intervention to the setting, I was able to observe the most authentic talks and interactions.

The observation sites I selected were public multi-purpose spaces, Goffman labels those settings as "unfocused interactive" settings. The settings are multi-purposed without a specific label (for example, the conference room, classroom) of this area, so people's behavior and types of interaction are not limited to a definite type. Everyone is a potential performer; meanwhile, everyone is also a potential audience. I also ensured the diversity of the observation settings where Chinese people are the minority group in this setting to make sure the private conversations can be heard and agreed to by their Chinese friends but not become public topics. (E.g. if someone talks about taboo topics in a restaurant where Chinese people are the majority, their privacy will "leak" to other Chinese speaking restaurant customers and make this conversation not private anymore.)

Following those criteria, I selected three major locations as my formal covert observation sites. They are the first floor of Carver Hall, Memorial Union food court and the Bus. The first floor of Carver Hall is a place where students come to rest, study, eat, or talk with each other. It is a public place with comfortable sofas, desks and chairs, and it serves as a multi-purpose space where many of the students' need can be fulfilled. It is also a public place where every group of people tends to mind their own business without focusing on one or more specific space occupants. After doing field research at the first floor of Carver Hall for one week, I realized that the density of Chinese students and the frequencies of them dropping by were not satisfying. But at the food court in MU, from the time period of 4 to 6 each afternoon, there are always many groups of Chinese students sitting there doing their homework or having dinner. So my main observation site changed from the first floor of C Hall to the food court in MU.

I did around 50 hours of formal observation in one and a half month time period. Around 40 hours of data was collected on the Memorial Union food court observation site. Informal observations include the talks on the Cyride bus, or other everyday living site in the U.S. The observation hours are showed in Table 1.

Table 1: Observation hours

| Observation settings | Carver Hall | Memorial Union | Cyride Bus |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observation hours | 10 hours | 40 hours | 2 hours |

Interviews

Using interviews as another method helps me explore the information which covert observation cannot provide. I asked questions like "How do you feel when you talk in Chinese with your friends in front of other American people? If there are only Chinese people in the setting, will you be talking about the same topics as you do when you and your friends are the only foreigners in the setting?" An interview is an effective way to collect information related to people's subjective perceptions in order to discover what thoughts are behind their actions.

My research question is about the role Goffman's impression management framework plays when people's front stage performances include an unfamiliar language, and I'm a foreign researcher in an American university. So I believe almost every Chinese student in Iowa State has some related experience talking to their Chinese friends about private topics in front of Americans intentionally or unintentionally. I used snowball sampling and asked my Chinese friends to introduce me with one of their Chinese friends. Chinese students studying in the U.S. more or less have the experience of speaking Chinese in front of American friends. Selecting

Chinese participants was not a difficult task for me. Also, I interviewed the Chinese employees in the two ISU Dinning sites. These interview participants were introduced to me by my friend who works there. I interviewed the employees working in the kitchen in the C Dinning. I selected them because I cannot conduct a covert observation in the back kitchen because I'm not an employee there, but I already got information about private topics being mentioned all the time in that kitchen. In total, I did 9 interviews with Chinese students in the U.S.

Also, in order to be in a position to get an effect of impression management, I learned about the opinions of the audiences. I also included American students in my research, and I used snowball sampling to select my participants. I asked each of my Chinese interviewees and American friends to introduce me to one of their American friends they usually spend some time with. In this approach, I was able to measure the audiences' reaction to what is happening in the setting. In total, I did 5 interviews with American students.

My interview participants signed a confidentiality form before our interview started. Records identifying participants were kept confidential and were not made publicly accessible. To ensure confidentiality, the following measures were taken: participants were assigned a unique identifier to be employed on forms instead of their names. Pseudonyms was employed for analysis. If the results are published, their identities will remain confidential. Interview transcriptions were sent to each interview participants to see if there's any misinterpretation. All the interview participants have a right to see the result and the final research paper if they are willing to.

The interviews are semi-structured, so I didn't ask questions one by one. Instead, I led them in a direction and let them talk as much as they can. Several sample questions are listed below. These questions are generated from my observation, and they are mainly about answers I

could not figure out merely by observing people. An interview protocol can be found in the appendix.

- In what scenarios do you utilize Chinese/English to talk to your friends?

- When do you switch between two languages?

- Have you noticed about how other people perceive it when you speak Chinese in a public setting where most people speak English?

- What kind of feelings do you get when you use Chinese in front of native Americans?

- What kind of talk do you think may embarrass or offend people in the same setting if the conversations are conducted in English?

I recorded the interview with an audio recorder, and I informed my interview participants that I was recording our conversations. Because I recorded the interview and transcribed it afterwards, the paper trail (notes) I took during the interview were more likely not related to the words we were saying (because I can get those words from my record). What I did was to keep track of the interviewee's subtle emotional change, tone change, long pauses and so on. Keeping these notes was really helpful when I generate categories from the transcriptions and notes. All of the paper records (including observation paper trial and interview paper trial) are kept in a locked cabinet in my office, and other people will not have access to the paper trail. The records of the interview were transferred to my computer with a password. After that, all the records were deleted from my recorder in case it may get lost and leaked to the public.

The external validity is ensured by the sample. In the former part of method section, I have talked about the sample strategy, the number of interviews and the time of my total observation. The interviews for Chinese students and American students all reached saturation.

One of the methodological challenges is doing observation in public settings. Because I'm doing covert observation, so I cannot "manipulate" or lead my observation participants. The success of one day's research depend a lot more on luck. When doing pilot observations in the Carver Hall, I have had those bad days when I sat there for three hours, but didn't have any Chinese people entering my observation sites. I suppose choosing covert observation is the most appropriate method to answer and analyze my research questions, but I also have to admit that it's very time consuming. I had to devote more of my time in order to do a fair field research. The participants' demographics are showed in Table 2.

Table 2: Participants' demographic

| Participant's identifier | Gender | Nationality | Education level |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. 1 | Female | American | Freshman |
| No. 2 | Female | American | Sophomore |
| No. 3 | Male | American | Freshman |
| No. 4 | Female | American | Freshman |
| No. 5 | Male | American | Graduate student |
| No. 6 | Male | Chinese | Graduate student (Master) |
| No. 7 | Male | Chinese | Graduate student (Master) |
| No. 8 | Female | Chinese | Graduate student (Master) |

Table 2 continued

| No. 9 | Male | Chinese | Graduate student (Ph.D.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. 10 | Male | Chinese | Junior |
| No. 11 | Male | Chinese | Senior |
| No. 12 | Female | Chinese | Graduate student (Master) |
| No. 13 | Female | Chinese | Graduated in 2014, now working at a U.S. company in LA |
| No. 14 | Female | Chinese | Graduated in 2014, now working at a supply chain company in China. |

Analysis

I used grounded theory to examine my observation and interview data. Grounded theory is a research analysis method that allows researchers to seek out and conceptualize the latent patterns embedded in their data. I have been taking Dr. Schweingruber's grounded theory seminar for a year and a half. In the seminar, the group members brainstormed to open code each member's qualitative data.

Open coding and data collection were conducted simultaneously. Open coding is the first stage of analysis. It involves micro-analysis of samples of the data to develop categories and concepts. It is more like to code everything for everything and to explore the core concepts in the open coding process. Eventually, the main categories and major concepts became apparent and clear.

Memo writing is a very important part of the grounded theory analysis, and it is conducted through out the entire research process. I wrote a memo that has a description of each category and several examples and quotations from my interview transcripts and observation field notes. I have presented the memo in the grounded theory seminar for several times and called for advice from all the group members. After writing the first memo generated from the open coding process, I conducted selective coding to figure out the core categories and related categories. What follows is to write another memo based on the selective coding results and the core categories I have generated. By writing a second memo, I was able to best organize my substantive codes. My final findings are a much-extended version of my final memo.In this way, the research findings were generated from the interview transcriptions and observation field notes inductively.

CHAPTER 5


FINDINGS



Inappropriate Topics: What Are They Talking About?

First of all, I would like to provide my readers with the information of "what are Chinese people actually talking about" in public settings. Are those conversation topics different from what they normally talk about in China, and how are those topics different? To answer the last two questions, I will firstly be talking about what those topics are.

**Making judgment about people in the same setting**

Making judgment about people in the same setting is the most common private topics Chinese students have in public settings, and those topics represent the major difference of having a private conversation in Chinese to American audiences and having private conversations in a Chinese-speaking setting back in China. As one of my interview participants puts it:

> I will never do the same thing (making a judgment of an American student's outfit when he walks towards him) when I'm back in China. On the one hand, it is rude to judge people if they can understand or overheard what you said; on the other hand, I have never encountered a Chinese student dressing like that.

Judging people's attractiveness or behaviors in the same setting using verbal language violates the moral rules, and the target audience is very likely to feel offended. Obeying the moral rules of not offending people in the same setting leads us to manage our impression by not

using certain offensive verbal-language and not conducting certain body acts. But if another language, which is highly unfamiliar to the majority of audiences in the setting, is used, it is different to manage your verbal language impression. Among my observation and interviews, making judgment of people's behavior and attractiveness (usually connected to sexually suggestive comments) emerged from the data at least six times. For example, in one of my observations on the school bus, two Chinese students are talking about another passenger's appearance and outfits:

--- "Do you think this girl is hot? "

--- "Yeah, maybe a little bit. But she's not my type. I prefer girls in a smaller size."

Another example in my observation in the public food court relates to judging people's eating behavior by using Chinese:

--- "Look. That guy only ordered fried rice and a bowl of soup, how strange! "

--- "Yeah, it sure is! "

Either making judgment about people's appearance, outfits or behaviors is still indirect compared with insulting people right in front of their face. Whether making judgments of people in the same setting violates the moral rules or not, insulting people right in front of their faces are definitely offensive. In one of my interviews, the participants, who are an employee in the university dining, talks about their Taiwanese head chef who criticizes and complains about American employees to him in Chinese all the time:

--- "What are the most common topics of your conversations?"

--- "Well, mostly it's him talking to me in Mandarin and I just listen to him while doing my job. He likes to criticize those American employees in front of them and he always thinks that they are slow and not good enough. But I think it's just his

personality, he likes to gossip, but he may not mean that and he's not a mean person as well."

Going to a higher level of offense, one of my interview participant shared his experience when one of his Chinese friend actually insult an American girl in Chinese right in front of her face:

> I remember clearly that one time, a Chinese guy said 'She's an asshole!' to me in front of that girl's face. I remember so vividly because I couldn't help laughing at that time when he said that. I think, wow, he's saying that in font of her face, that's crazy!

Using a secret code to conduct a private conversation in a public setting does not necessarily need to involve an unfamiliar language. In my case, the "secret code" is represented by the language of Chinese, which is a rather complicated language for the audiences in English-speaking settings. But when we extend this research and not focusing on a foreign language specifically, couple using secret code only themselves can understand when talking with other people, or teenage child texting their friends about what their parents say while having family dinner can all be seen as an extension to the impression management in front stage performances.

**The secret PDA (Public Display of Affection)**

When it comes to the display of affection, the Chinese group is always considered as the conservative one. In a much longer history and a much longer time exposed and rooted in the traditional Confucius culture, Chinese people are less likely to display their affection, publicly or privately, to their romantic partners. According to one study of public display of affection among Asian and Latino heterosexual couples on a college campus, "a significantly higher proportion of Latino couples than Asian couples engaged in touching behavior (68.2% vs. 36.4%; $z = -2.16$, $p < .02$). Latino couples were more likely than Asian couples to show one-

armed embracing while walking together in public (50% vs. 22.7%; z = 1.88. P <.05) " (Regan, Jerry, Narvaez & Johnson, 1999).

Unlike what is "supposed" to be happening publicly, in my observations as well as the interviews, many Chinese participants displayed intimacy solidarity in public by saying romantic words to each other or discussing sexual topics. In one of my observations on the Cyride bus, a couple is talking with one another in Chinese:

--- "I love you so much sweetie."

--- " I know. Don't say that in public, you are embarrassing me."

--- "No one even understands it! "

An interview participant also share his story of verbally display affection in public from a different angle:

> When my ex-girlfriend and I were dating she went to study in Japan. At that time, when we were having a long distance relationship, we had a routine of saying 'Good night. I love you baby!' (In English) before we hang up the phone every night. But one time after I said 'Good night, I love you baby!' To her, she didn't say it back. She said something weird I cannot remember and hung up the phone. This makes me very suspicious. I called her the next day and pushed her to tell me why she didn't say our routine sentence. Finally she told me that she was with another Japanese guy that night, and she wants him to be her boyfriend in Japan. So she didn't want to say the routine sentence in English because the Japanese guy can understand it as well. That was the time I caught her cheating in our relationship.

When there are Chinese couples who use Chinese to express their love to one another in public in order to avoid being overheard and being awkward, there is also at least one Chinese woman who refused to use English, a language that is internationally understandable, to hide their romantic relationship to another intimate partner. According to Goffman, impression management can be conducted by verbal language, which are the expressions that one gives, and acts, which are the expressions that one gives off (Goffman, 1959). With the bilingual language

ability, a performer is in a position to conduct backstage performances in front stage settings by creating a language barrier for the audience in the same setting. Impression management using verbal language is not conducted conventionally all the time. The front stage performers are able to use language to build up a vacuum for themselves, and within that vacuum, they can drop impression management constraints and "publicly" display their affection to their intimate partners.

**Politically incorrect talking**

When using another difficult language to talk in public, being politically correct is less important. During my observations, I heard many statements reflecting gender biases towards women and the gay community. When two Chinese students are talking in the food court about getting a new car, their conversation was as follows:

---"First of all, you should get a girlfriend, then you get a nice car."

---"Yeah sure. What are you doing with a nice car without a lady sitting next to you."

Another similar conversation took place in the food court between a group of Chinese students chatting with each other also contains gender biases toward women and objectifies women's body:

---"She's my roommate."

---"Is she a soft girl (ruan mei zi)?"

---"Yeah I believe she is."

---"Get a picture of her for me! "

The phrase "soft girl" here is an offensive Chinese slang to describe a group of girls who have little thoughts, are obedient to their intimate partners and very easy to get. By referring a

girl as a "soft girl" they are mocking her of being simple-minded, silly and loose. At the same time, they suppose the group of women who share the similar characteristics as the "soft girl" are inferior to those "not soft girls" and are supposed to be chosen randomly by men like a commodity.

Also, in my observation in public settings, I have heard people talking with one another using the gay community as a reference to some feminine, not masculine enough acts. In one of my observations in a restaurant, one Chinese student was talking about his trip in California:

> When I was in California, once I realized that there was a guy approaching me, and he looks super gay.

Note that most of my observations are conducted on a university campus, where people have higher than average education levels and are most likely to follow the politically correct rules for acting as if everyone is equal and to not speak offensively to any specific gender or sexual oriented group. The moral rules that everyone is equal and to not speak ill to any group of people in public are less powerful when a foreign language is used in public discussion.

The Setting Space: The Places Where You Are Or Aren't Offended

In this section, I will discuss the setting where those private conversations took place. According to my interviews with American audiences who have had the experience of being exposed to a foreign dialogue, whether they feel offended by the private conversation highly depend on the level of privacy of the setting, which makes the analysis of conversation settings especially important.

The observation settings I chose are all multi-purpose, public settings without a specific label like "conference room" or "classroom". All kinds of actions are happening in the setting without a definite front stage performer, like a teacher in the classroom. But at the same time,

every person in the setting is a potential performer, as well as a potential audience of other people's performances.

The first observation setting is the first floor of Carver Hall. It is a public place with couches, chairs and desks where students can rest, chat, wait for their classes to begin and occupy themselves to whatever they want to do in that public space. Although the first floor of Carver Hall is a public setting with no straight limitation of the action and verbal language happening there, it is still a building where students normally go to have classes. So the observation of Chinese students' talking in this setting is mostly study-related. There are three groups of Chinese students who regularly talk about their homework and use the public space to conduct their study group discussions. During my one-month observation cycle, the private Chinese talks, which may offend audiences in the same setting usually, usually take place on late hours of the day, especially on Friday and weekend nights. Carver Hall was also not the setting where I collected the majority of my data.

The second observation setting is the food court in Memorial Union. Although labeled as a place to eat, this label is only salient around lunch hour (12:00 pm to 1:00 pm) and dinner hour (5:00pm to 5:40pm). For the rest of the time, it is a public space where students come to do their work, chat or watch television. The food court is located in Memorial Union. MU is an administrative building with bookstores, coffee shops and a supermarket. Unlike Carver Hall, there is no classroom in the Memorial Union, so there is not the potential "study" label in this setting. Although the study sessions also emerged in my observation in MU, but it is not the majority part. For the most of the time, during my observation, Chinese students are chatting with their friends, talking on their phones or just hanging out. This is the setting where I got most of my data during my one-month observation period.

The last observation setting of mine is the Cyride bus. Unlike the other two settings, the bus is less public and requires more moral rules guiding one's acts and verbal language. I still consider it as a front stage without specific front stage performers, but just like the other two settings, everyone can be the potential performer at the same time. The private conversations happened on the Cyride bus usually contains a smaller group of people compared with the conversations in the other two settings. The conversation usually happens among two or three people sitting in the same row of the seat. All of the topics relate to intimate solidarity are from this observation setting.

Apart from the three public observation settings mentioned above, there are also other settings emerged from my interview with American and Chinese students. Settings emerged from the interview tend to be more private, and they are usually brought up by interviewees when they talk about whether the foreign conversation is offensive or not.

The first, and most commonly brought-up setting in the interviews was the nail salon. A great number of nail salons in the U.S. is owned by East Asians. Those shop owners usually hire employees from the same ethnic group who share the same cultural background, and also, speak the same Asian language. When an American client enters the nail salon, he or she became the minority group in that small setting who also cannot understand the language happening at the same time. Many of my interview participants brought up nail salon without me mentioning anything, and have strong feelings about the talking happened in the salon:

> Me: How about strangers? Do you encounter some strangers speaking another language in front of you?
>
> A: Yeah.
>
> Me: Do you feel offended?

A: Yeah, if I'm in the nail salon, I do. I feel like they are talking about me, sometimes I do, yeah.

Another interview participant expressed the same concern about being the conversation topic the nail salon:

If I'm in a nail salon getting my nails done, and the women working there are talking in another language with each other, I would definitely feel offended and assume that they are talking about me.

Another setting that emerged from the interviews is a small party meeting space including both American students and Chinese students. There are no specific geographical labels attached. The physical space can be anywhere as long as the performers occupying that space are mixed with Chinese and Americans. One of the American participants interpreted this kind of setting and her perceptions of the conversation happening in that setting:

I never find it rude if they are in public settings, and I've never personally been through the scenario that I think it would be rude, but say that if it's just me and two of my friends and they can speak the same language, when they don't want to share something with me they talked in another language with each other, maybe this would be rude. But not really in other case, I think.

The worry of being excluded from a foreign conversation with people they know is usually considered as rude and offensive. Another American participant explained the same "fear of exclusion":

But if you are with somebody else, you are interacting with somebody else, you are speaking another language with another person, it kind of gives out the feeling that they are talking about me, like what are they talking about, something like this.

This kind of "fear of exclusion" corresponds to the thought to not excluding people in this mixed-group setting when I interview Chinese students. I asked my Chinese participants when they would speak Chinese and when they would speak English, as well as the switching point of two languages, one participant says:

> If I am in a study-group with my Chinese friends and American friends, I will try to use English to explain my thoughts all the time because I don't want my American friends to feel excluded. I think it's not polite if you are doing homework with American students but still using Chinese to discuss one problem.

The observation settings I chose to do my field research are all public settings where the talks can be heard for everyone within a reasonable distance. And private settings like a nail salon conversation or a mixed-group meeting were brought up in my interview with American and Chinese students. I classify all these settings as front stage, because no matter how small or private the setting is, the individual performer is still facing different amount of audiences, and their performances should follow the most basic level of moral rules. Front stage settings are supposed to be occupied with front stage performances, but when another language is used to set up a language barrier, many front stage performers can, on the verbal language level, do some backstage performances.

## The Language Tool: Why Chinese?

In this part, I would like to explore the reasons for Chinese speakers to use Chinese in an English-speaking setting. When the Chinese speakers I interviewed speak Chinese strategically and purposely, either to say something private, to comment on the people in the same setting or just to figure out what to do when followed by a homeless person on the train for over 30 minutes, one of the most important reason for them to choose Chinese is that the Chinese speakers have a very salient Asian-like appearance. That is, they are easily distinguishable by the appearance from the other language speakers in the same setting. Unlike French or Spanish speakers who generally share the same appearance as the native English speakers, by taking a quick and simple glance at the setting, the Chinese speaking interviewees are able to make sure that their setting is "clean" and their conversations are not easily overheard.

The difficulty level of Chinese as a foreign language also secures the safeness of talking about private topics in public places in Chinese. English is an Indo-European language, and belongs to the West Germanic group of the Germanic languages. The modern languages that have the same origins with English are German, Dutch, Frisian and Scots. Being a foreign language that is completely out of the English language system, which doesn't even use the 26 English letters, Chinese is known as the "most difficult language to learn". According to a study by the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California in the 1970s, "Chinese is rated as one of the most difficult languages to learn for people whose native language is English, together with Arabic, Japanese and Korean." In the interviews I did with American students, none of them had the training of Chinese when they are at school. One of my Chinese interviewee mentioned. "Although some of my American friends have learned Chinese back in high school, they couldn't catch up with the long spoken sentences we say because of the complexity of the language itself and fast speed when we speak."

The third, and most commonly mentioned reason for choosing Chinese is simply because of its convenience. Using one's mother language when talking with other people from the same region can be more accurate when expressing oneself. Language is a tool for communication, and Chinese is the most handy tool Chinese speakers can grab when they want to use language to convey certain information. Here's what one of my Chinese participants said during the interview:

> Well, the main reason for me to choose Chinese is that it's more direct and clear. I've been speaking Chinese for a long time, so sometimes I can only express what I truly mean by using the language I'm most familiar with. It's all about convenience.

Another participant also expressed the same thought when I asked the "Why Chinese" question:

> Language is just a tool for me; so I select the one that I can use to better express myself, no matter it's English or Chinese. For now, my Chinese is better than my English, but maybe few years later, I can use English to better express myself, then I'll choose English to conduct a conversation.

Choosing the language to conduct the private conversation in public places seems intuitive for the Chinese interviewees. For most of the time, their risk evaluation process before the conversation and concerns after the conversation lie on the topics they want to talk about and the safeness of the conversational settings.
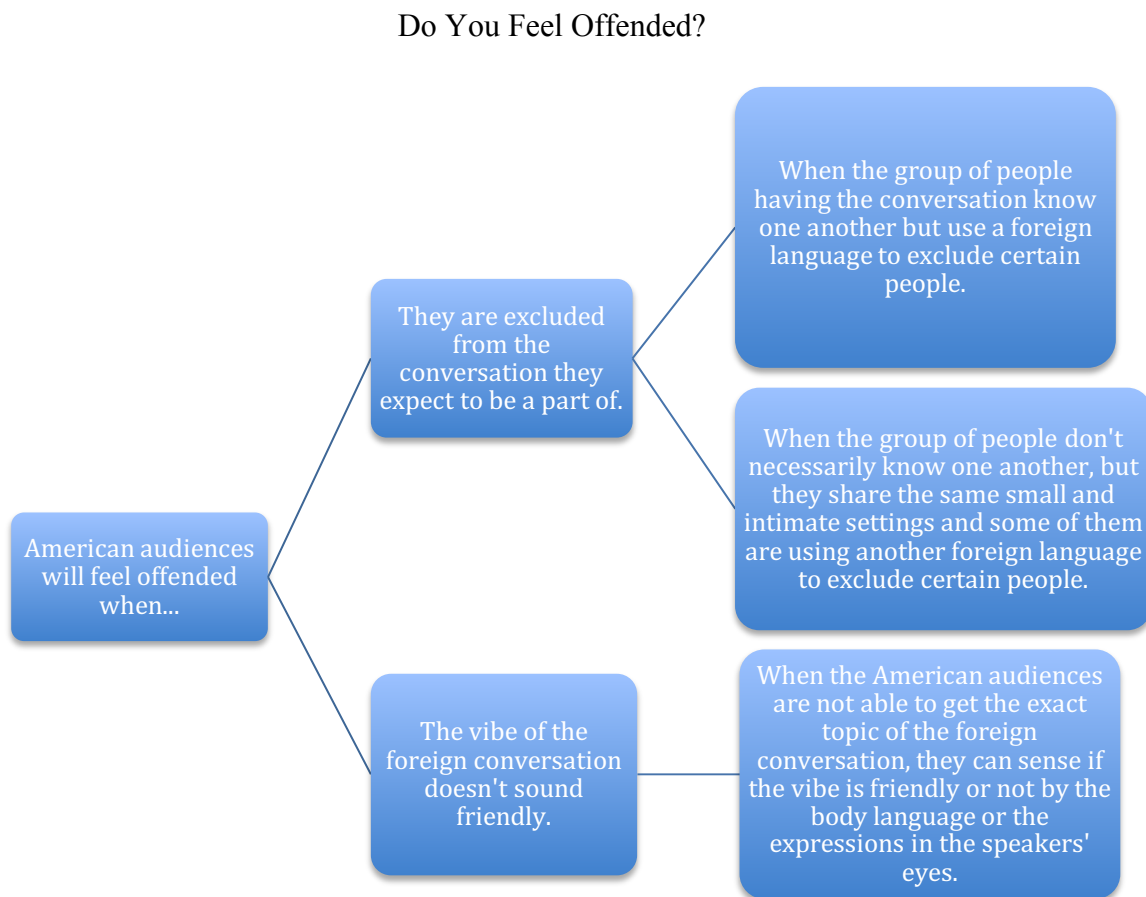
Do You Feel Offended?



**Figure 1: Do you feel offended?**

In this part of my findings I would want to explore whether the audiences of those publicly conducted foreign conversations feel offended or not. What are the rules that are important to them when they are exposed to a scenario when another unfamiliar language is spoken?

According to my American interview participants, whether they feel offended or not depend on two conditions: their expectations to be included in a conversation and the vibe this foreign conversation gives off. When they expect themselves to be a part of the conversation or group but are excluded, or the vibe of the conversation does not sound friendly based on the body languages or eye expressions of the speakers, the American participants are more likely to feel offended and sometimes angry. I will speak about two conditions specifically in the following section.

**Expectations to be included**

In what scenarios do American participants expect to be a part of the conversation? According to my American interview participants, when the group of people know one another so they expect to be involved in all the activities and conversations the group of people conduct; or when the group of people don't necessarily know one another but they share a small and intimate space without segregations or barriers, so the group of people who share this space automatically became one group and expect to be involved in the group conversations and activities.

When a group of friends who know one another is having a conversation, two or three members started to speak another language that other group members cannot understand, the mono-language speakers are likely to feel offended, disrespectful and excluded. Many of my

American interview participants have expressed their feelings about being excluded in a group conversation:

> But say that if it's just me and two of my friends and they can speak the same language, when they don't want to share something with me they talked in another language with each other, maybe this would be rude.

Another American participant expressed the same concern when two of her friends started to talk with each other in another language (in this case, Spanish and she doesn't speak Spanish):

> A: Do you have other examples to demonstrate this?

> B: Uh, I just experience it a lot. Just like they'll walk by, and they'll look and say something, others will say something. At some point they all start laughing. I had experienced it a lot. And if my friends and I are all together, and two or three of them started using their own language to talk with one another. I feel like it's rude too.

To conclude, to create a subgroup in a group by using a foreign language is not tolerable for American participants. When a group contains people who know one another, the moral rule of a conversation is to include every member in this group instead of including some of them and excluding the others.

But another scenario came up: will American participants feel offended in a group conversation when they don't necessarily know one another? The answer is: sometimes yes.

In my interviews with American students, many of them said that they won't feel offended when the conversation is happening in a public place with multiple, diverse groups. For example, if an American student is having lunch in the food court where there are many other small groups of people eating at the same time, and two Chinese students sitting in the next table are talking with one another in Chinese, the American student won't be offended by the Chinese

speaking next to him or her. One of my American participants generalized this "not offensive" situation in this way:

> I never find it rude if they are in public settings, and I've never personally been through the scenario that I think it would be rude.

But almost every American participant mentioned that they are offended by the foreign conversations in a nail salon:

> A: Do you feel offended?
>
> B: Yeah, if I'm in the nail salon, I do. I have the impression that they are talking about me, sometimes I do, yeah.

Or:

> A: Do you think this is rude under any circumstances, or only under several specific circumstances?
>
> B: I think it's always rude. You can kind of tell what they are talking about, especially in the nail salons, they are doing your nails, you have to pay them, but they are talking about you. It makes it really awkward.

Why is it not rude in a restaurant, but rude in a nail salon? It is likely because the restaurants have the barriers such as booths, tables, seats or separate sitting areas. People who share the same space are seen as one group, and other people who don't share the same space don't expect to be included in the group discussion. For example, when I'm having lunch in a restaurant with my friend, I only expect to be included in the conversations my friends are having on this table, and I don't expect to be included in the conversations the people are having next to my table. Nonetheless, when I enter a smaller and more intimate space like a nail salon, the invisible barriers disappear because of the tiny size and rather intimate activities (people touching my hands and doing my nails) of the setting. So the people in that smaller space, even if they don't necessarily know one another, automatically became one group. In that group,

members expect to be included in the conversation and will be offended if they cannot understand the foreign conversations happening in front of them.

## The vibe of the foreign conversation

Many of my American interview participants said that even if they don't understand the exact content of a foreign conversation, they can tell if the vibe is friendly or not by paying attention to the tones of the conversation, the body languages and eye expressions of the speakers. Goffman has said that when people are managing their impressions, they manage the impressions they give, which is the verbal language, and the impressions they give off, which can be generalized as the "vibe" here. (Goffman, 1959) With the language barrier, American audiences base their judgment of one foreign conversation mostly on the impressions the speakers give off. One of my American interview participants said that in the nail salon, she cannot understand the language those employees are speaking about, but when they started to act strangely, she is able to tell that she has become the topic of the conversation. This makes her feel offended and sometimes a bit angry:

> A: Do you feel like language is the biggest barrier for you to understand their conversation?

> B: Yeah. But I can kind of tell what they are talking about based on their body language.

Another American interview participants expressed similar thoughts about basing their judgment on the vibe of the conversation, but she admits that even if she can sense the vibe, sometimes she is still lost so language is still the biggest barrier for her to fully understand one conversation:

> A: But do you also think you can kind of tell what they are talking about based on their body language, or emotions or tones?

B: Yeah, based on their tone, you can definitely tell if they are speaking angrily or something like that. And if there's somebody around they are talking about you can sometimes get that vibe but definitely I'm still lost because I don't know their language.

In conclusion, American audiences feel offended by the foreign conversation when they are expected to be included in the conversation, but some speakers use an unfamiliar foreign language to exclude them; and when the vibe of the conversation does not sound friendly and American audiences suspect themselves to be the target topic of one foreign conversation.
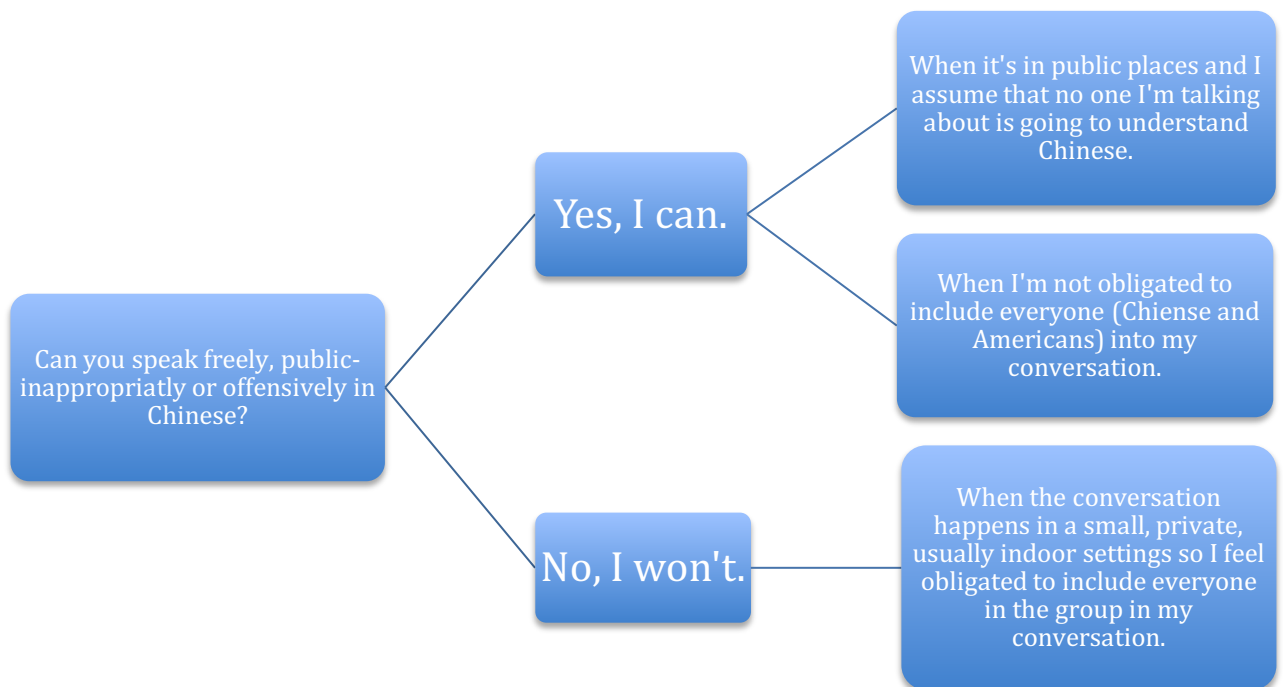
Can I Talk Offensively In Chinese?

Can you speak freely, public-inappropriatly or offensively in Chinese?

Yes, I can.

When it's in public places and I assume that no one I'm talking about is going to understand Chinese.

When I'm not obligated to include everyone (Chiense and Americans) into my conversation.

No, I won't.

When the conversation happens in a small, private, usually indoor settings so I feel obligated to include everyone in the group in my conversation.

Figure 2: Can I talk offensively in Chinese?

In this section, I would want to explore the "offensive" topic from the side of the Chinese speakers. Being bilingual speakers in a mostly mono-language college campus, in what scenarios can Chinese speakers ignore the moral rules of public speaking and speak freely, public-inappropriately or sometimes offensively?

**Obligated to include everyone in the conversation or not**

According to my observations, in public places and interviews with Chinese students, I can generalize that the offensive conversations happen more in public settings instead of private settings. Chinese speakers manage their verbal impressions differently when they share a public space with other American students because they don't feel obligated to include the other American students into their conversation. But when the setting become smaller and more private, for example, when a group of Chinese students are in a study group with other American students, they are more likely to manage their verbal impressions and try not to leave a sign of being disrespectful, offensive or unfriendly.

When the setting is public with different small groups, the Chinese speakers in one of these groups don't feel obligated to involve everyone in the setting in their conversation. One Chinese interview participant talked about his experience that he never talks offensively in private settings:

> Well yeah, but this kind of talking never happened in a private, indoor situation. It only happened, for example, when I was walking with my Chinese friend on campus, I may discuss the person walking towards me. For instance, "Look how strange he dresses! It's only 30 F but he only wears a short sleeve shirt.

According to this participant, the only "appropriate" way to talk about or judge other American students is when the setting is large enough, in this case, outside on campus. But if the

setting is small, he feels obligated to include everyone in the conversation and assume that every member of the group wants to be included:

> That's why I don't use Chinese to discuss the person in the same scene, especially in a tiny, indoor setting. When you speak about someone, you don't want to take the risk that they may understand the language you are speaking. Although I know, it's very rare because Chinese is a rather difficult and secure language. When I was in the study group with both Chinese students and American students, I felt unfair for the American friends if I discuss the homework with my Chinese friends using Chinese. I feel like he didn't have the chance to listen to my thoughts on this problem, so I usually choose to speak English for the majority of the time.

"The obligation to include every group member" is the most critical criteria for Chinese participants to decide if they can speak offensively. In a large setting with multiple groups, Chinese speakers don't feel obligated to involve everyone, so the content of their talks are their own business, not every else's. But when the setting is smaller and more private, everyone in the setting became one group automatically. So the Chinese speakers don't want to use a foreign language to create a subgroup because everyone in this group feels obligated to include everyone else.

**The confidence levels of the difficulty of Chinese**

Besides the "obligations to include everyone in the conversation or not" criteria, another important criteria for Chinese speakers to choose to speak offensively or not is their confidence level of Chinese as a difficult foreign language.

According to my Chinese interview participants, they are able to talk about whatever they what in public and ignore the moral rules of public speaking because Chinese is very difficult to understand for Americans, and Chinese speakers have a very specific Asian appearance so it's also easier for Chinese speakers to make sure their setting is clear:

Sometimes we are just having everyday conversations, but the other times when we are actually talking about the person standing next to me or something like this, I assume that he or she cannot understand Chinese. This is one privilege of being a Chinese speaker in the US, right?

The Chinese speakers who conduct public-inappropriate conversations in public places have a very high confidence level of the difficulty of Chinese as a foreign language. They are certain that their setting is clear or clear enough (no other Chinese speakers are at present), and their conversations are not understandable for Americans.

To conclude, speaking offensively or public-inappropriately in Chinese usually happens in public settings where Chinese speakers don't feel obligated to concern about everyone in the same setting. Nonetheless, when the setting is smaller and more private, they are more likely to manage their verbal impressions and try not to leave the American students with the impressions of being rude or unfriendly. This also makes my public observation more interesting because in public places, I am more likely to observe deviant Chinese speaking which sound rude or offensive for American audiences when translated into English. I am able to learn about how Chinese speakers doing impression management differently when they are able to create a small vacuum in public places by using a foreign language.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In the section, I would like to answer the question of why this research is important and worth doing. The answer to this question will be divided into 2 parts: First of all, the study of using a foreign language to create oneself a "verbal vacuum" so the verbal impression management is conducted unconventionally explores Goffman's impression management framework in a multi-language setting. Secondly, Chinese is not the only secret code one can use when talking in order to include certain people and exclude the others. Teenage children texting with each other about their parents at home, or couples and friends create their own secret language to talk more freely in public are some examples of some other situations this study can apply to. I will also talk about some drawbacks of this study as well as what I will do for future research.

Why Does This Study Matter?

**This study explores multi-language impression management settings**

According to Goffman, "…when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation" (Goffman, 1959). Impression management refers to the strategies one uses in a performance in order to "manipulate" the perceptions the audiences have for oneself. According to this framework, if one wants to manage his or her impressions, he needs to control both the expressions that he gives

and the expressions he gives off. The expressions he gives are "verbal symbols or their substitutes which he uses admittedly and solely to convey the information that he and the others are known to attach to these symbols." (Goffman, 1959) To simplify this definition, the expressions one gives can be considered as verbal language or the message the language conveys in a performance. The expressions he gives off "involves a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor, the expectations being that the actions were performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way." (Goffman, 1959) In other words, the expressions one gives off can be seen as the non-verbal actions within one performance, or the vibe of the performance which can be sensed by the body language or other forms of actions.

Goffman also discusses the breakdown of impression management. In those cases, performers "are more frequently introduced by intentional verbal statement or non-verbal acts whose full significance is not appreciated by the individual who contributes them to the interaction." (Goffman, 1959) Impression management may fail when "unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions and faux pas" cause embarrassment or dissonance within one setting. The failure of impression management also include "making a scene" which according to Goffman, is a form of breakdown in the dramaturgical co-operation. "Some scenes occur when teammates can no longer countenance each other's inept performance and blurt out immediate public criticism of the very individuals with whom they ought to be in dramaturgical co-operation." (Goffman, 1959) A breakdown often includes the non-cooperation of people involved in the performance. The performers or audiences may feel offended or angry by the performance, consider this performance unbearable and decide to make a scene to "destroy" it.

In my study, by using another language that is unfamiliar to the majority of the audiences, one can manage their verbal impressions in an unconventional way. The foreign

languages, in my case Chinese, enable the performers to create a vacuum in which they are able to speak freely and not managing the verbal expressions they give. A different and unfamiliar language here functions as a "secret code" to include certain people and exclude the majority of the audiences who cannot speak this language. In this vacuum, the performers' verbal expressions won't leak to a certain group of audience. With this convenience, this group of audiences sometimes became the topic of their conversations and they are unaware of what is in fact happening. Failure of impression management Goffman refers is not necessarily a failure when the verbal expressions are conducted in Chinese. The audiences or other performers who don't speak Chinese won't feel offended by the verbal signs Chinese speakers gives. Thus they have no reason to make a scene and trigger a breakdown of the impression management process.

In Goffman's impression management framework, he assumed that verbal signs one performer gives are understandable for all the other performers as well as audiences. So inappropriate verbal signs will cause the failure of impression management. But I want to extend this framework by considering that the verbal language one gives as an expression is not always understandable by all the performances and audiences. With the language barrier, verbal impression management in front of monolingual audiences is not always necessary for the multi-language performers. In this approach, this study brings Goffman's impression management framework into a bilingual and cross-culture setting. Unlike many previous research using impression management framework, which apply the theory to different settings and follow the direction from theory to setting analyze, my study starts from the study of the activities in the setting and brings a new exploration of the framework.

**This study is applicable to other areas of study within social psychology**

As I have mentioned before, this research studied how Chinese people use Chinese to create themselves a verbal vacuum so they don't have to manage their verbal impression in a front stage performances. To study how people use foreign language to speak in front of American audiences may seem overly specific, but actually it is comparable and applicable to many social psychology fields.

"Using a foreign language" is only one of the strategies one can use to include certain people and exclude the others in a conversation. In this case, Chinese serves as a secret code only people within my group can understand. But with technology playing a more and more important role in people's lives, technology can play the same role as Chinese here to create a subgroup vacuum and helps people to have a multiple-layered conversation. For example, when I am having dinner with my parents, I can text my friends at the same time to complain about my parents even they are at present with me at the dinner table. Or when I am having a class with all of my classmates, and I can text with some of my friends in a chatting group commenting on a certain classmates who is also at present in the classroom.

Other than texting or using other technology to prevent a conversation to be eavesdropped, children or teenagers also create their own secret language to exclude their parents or teachers from knowing what they are up to. The secret language here is comparable to Chinese, which is secure, not understandable and usually difficult without leaking any logical clues. One of the most famous secret codes in English language may be the "Pig Latin". For words that begin with consonant sounds, the initial consonant or consonant cluster is moved to the end of the word, and "ay" (some people just add "a") is added. So "pig" becomes "igpay",

"happy" becomes "appyhay". English language can be altered based on this rule so the original meaning of certain sentences can be concealed. In order to get the real meaning of what people who are using Pig Latin are talking about, you will have to crack the code first. Couples can also create their own secret language that no one else understand or have other secret symbols with secret meanings attached to it so they are able to present in public without other people's awareness.

A secret code, no matter whether it's a foreign language, a technological way of communication or a secret language a group of people creates to conceal certain information, create a verbal vacuum and separate certain performers from the others. Within that verbal vacuum, the performers can ignore the rules of verbal impression management and conduct their verbal performances without the constraints of the moral rules of that setting. Thus, my case of Chinese people speaking Chinese in front American audiences can be applied to other social psychology research areas. Also, with China being more open, hundreds of thousands of Chinese students choose to study in the U.S. each year. At the same time, more and more Americans started to learn Chinese for the convenience of communication or doing business. Exploring the Chinese speaking in an English speaking setting enriches people's knowledge within the bilingual or multilingual language speaking area.

<center>Drawbacks and Future Research</center>

In this part, I would like to discuss the drawbacks of this study and what I will do for future research.

The most apparent drawback here must relate to language. I'm not a native English speaker and this is the first time for me to write such a long piece in English. I always tell people

that I am able to figure out if a piece of English writing is understandable for me or not, but I'm not able to tell if the writer is a good writer as well as his or her writing style. This can also refers to the way I write: I am able (or at least I think I am able) to write clearly and try my best to express what I mean in English, but I'm not able to develop a writing style and write artfully or creatively.

Another concern about language is that I did the interviews for Chinese students in Chinese and translated them into English in order to be quoted in my final piece. But translating from Chinese to English makes some of the meanings contained in the original language disappear. At the same time, it is difficult to find someone who masters both in Chinese and English to check the translations for me and help me discover the lost meanings between two languages. I haven't figured out a good way to do a bilingual research, so this is another weakness relates with language.

I did 9 interviews with Chinese participants and 5 interviews with American participants. Although their interviews already started to show similarities and reach saturation, I still wish I could interview more people, especially American students. Combining field research with interviews and transcript translation is time consuming. If I had more time and expand this study, I would spend more time to both methods.

For my future research, I would like to do participatory observations in a multi-language setting. Almost every American interview participants mentioned their feelings about people talking in a foreign language in a nail salon. So I would like to do field research in a nail salon owned by Chinese or Taiwanese. This kind of observation will provide me with more evidence of how people, both the performers and the audiences, behave and react in a bilingual setting. Also, it would be great if I can expand the study of "secret code" from using Chinese to other

areas I have mentioned before, like teenagers' texting behavior or people who creates their own language to include their group and exclude other people. It would be interesting to draw a comparison between those different types of secret codes people use to secure their verbal settings. If I had time to do more interviews with Chinese students, I would also want to explore more about how they use language as a tool to create a "cultural playground" in a foreign country. By using Chinese, they are also applying Chinese cultural standards to American settings. At the same time, they create a feeling of belonging within the Chinese group by sticking together and judging outsiders. Using Chinese to apply Chinese standards to American settings are also interesting and worth further exploring.

REFERENCES

Albas, Daniel, and Cheryl Albas. 1988. "Aces and Bombers: The Post-Exam Impression Management Strategies of Students." *Symbolic Interaction* 11(2):289-302.

Besser, Terry. 1996. *Team Toyota: Transplanting the Toyota culture to the Camry plant in Kentucky*. State University of New York Press.

Brown, David K. 2003. "Goffman's Dramaturgical Sociology: Developing a Meaningful Theoretical Context and Exercise Involving 'Embarrassment and Social Organization.'" *Teaching Sociology* 31(3):288-299.

Cahill, Spencer E., William Distler, Cynthia Lachowetz, Andrea Meaney, Robyn Tarallo, and Teena Willard. 1985. "Meanwhile Backstage: Public Bathrooms and the Interaction Order." *Urban Life* 14(1):33-58.

Chen, Chien‐Cheng, Irene Wen‐Fen Yang, and Wei‐Chih Lin. 2010. "Applicant impression management in job interview: The moderating role of interviewer affectivity." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 83(3):739-757.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* New York: Doubleday and Company.

Goffman, Erving. 1966. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on Social Organization of Gatherings.* New York: Free Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior.* Garden City, NY:
Anchor Books.

Gordon, Cynthia. 2011. "Impression Management on Reality TV: Emotion in Parental Accounts." *Journal of Pragmatics* 43(14):3551-3564.

Grant, Adam M., and David M. Mayer. 2009. "Good soldiers and good actors: prosocial and impression management motives as interactive predictors of affiliative citizenship behaviors." *The Journal of Applied Psychology* 94(4):900-912.

Larson, Jeff A., and William Tsitsos. 2012. "Speed Dating and the Presentation of Self: A Teaching Exercise in Impression Management and Formation." *Teaching Sociology* 41(3):307-313.

Posthuma, Richard A., Frederick P. Morgeson, and Michael A. Campion. 2002. "Beyond employment interview validity: A comprehensive narrative review of recent research and trends over time." *Personnel Psychology* 55(1):1–81.

Preves, Sharon, and Denise Stephenson. 2009. "The Classroom As Stage: Impression Management in Collaborative Teaching." *Teaching Sociology* 37(3):245-256.

Stebbins, Robert. 1972. "Modesty, Pride, and Conceit: Variations in the Expression of Self Esteem." *Pacific Sociological Review* lS(October):461-481.

Schweingruber, David, Alicia D. Cast, and Sine Anahita. 2008. "A Story and a Ring: Audience Judgments about Engagement Proposals." *Sex Roles* 58(3-4):165-178.

Schweingruber, David, and Nancy Berns. 2010. "Organizing Door-to-Door Sales: A Symbolic Interactionist Analysis." Chapter in Peter Kivisto (ed.) *Illuminating Social Life*, 5th ed.

Thompson, Alex I. 2013. ""Sometimes, I think I might say too much": Dark Secrets and the Performance of Inflammatory Bowel Disease." *Symbolic Interaction* 36(1):21-39.

**APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

<u>Questions for Chinese students</u>

Thanks for participating in my interview. The interview is about your experience of speaking Chinese in an English-speaking environment. I will be asking you a set of questions, but if you have anything you want to add, please feel free to contribute at any time of this interview. All the information will remain confidential.

➢ Background:

- Birthdate & place, where grew up, parents' jobs, high school & graduation date

- Why decided to come to Iowa State, how long here, major.

- Are you glad you came to Iowa State? What has your experience been like?

- What languages do you speak? How well?

➢ While you are in the United States, when do you speak Chinese and when do you speak English? Why?

➢ Do you ever switch languages in the middle of a conversation? Why?

➢ Has anyone ever asked you to change what language you are speaking or complained about the language you were speaking?

➢ Have you ever sensed that someone was irritated or upset by what language you were speaking (even if they didn't say anything about it)?

➢ When you are speaking (language) what positive feelings have you felt? What? Why? What negative feelings have you felt?

➢ Have you ever chosen to speak a language so non-speakers couldn't understand what you were saying? When? Why? What did you say?

➢ When you're speaking Chinese in front of American students, are there things you say that you wouldn't say if you were speaking English? What things? Why?

➢ Do you agree with the following moral rules when you speak a language in public? Why?

● Don't talk about me, or just makes me feel that you are talking about me.

● Don't exclude me in a conversation. (In what scenarios do you feel like you have the right to be included?)

● Speak the language that includes the majority of people presented in the setting.

● Don't violate national identity. (A nation's language represents its nation identity, so you are always supposed to speak the native language in the nation you are in.)

● …… (anything else?)

Questions for American students

Thanks for participating in my interview. The interview is about your perception of Chinese people speaking Chinese in an English-speaking environment. I will be asking you a set of questions, but if you have anything you want to add, please feel free to contribute at any time of this interview. All the information will remain confidential.

➢ Background:

● Birthdate & place, where grew up, parents' jobs, high school & graduation date

● Why decided to come to Iowa State, how long here, major.

● Are you glad you came to Iowa State? What has your experience been like?

● What languages do you speak? How well?

➢ (If they speak more than one language) When do you speak English vs. other languages you know?

➢ Do you have friends who speak other languages? What languages? Have you ever attended one of their gatherings and what do you feel about being in there?

➢ Do you think it's always rude to speak another language in an English-speaking environment? Why? Or under what circumstances do you think it's rude?

➢ When other people are speaking a language you don't know in front of you, do you feel offended? Can you suspect what they are talking about and what is your clue? What is the biggest barrier to understand an unfamiliar language?

➢ Do you agree with the following moral rules when you speak a language in public? Why?

- Don't talk about me, or just makes me feel that you are talking about me.

- Don't exclude me in a conversation. (In what scenarios do you feel like you have the right to be included?)

- Speak the language that includes the majority of people presented in the setting.

- Don't violate national identity. (A nation's language represents its nation identity, so you are always supposed to speak the native language in the nation you are in.)

- …… (anything else?)

**APPENDIX B: IRB**

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Date:**    5/8/2015

**To:** █████████        **CC:** ███████████

2931 West St. Unit 4        404 East Hall

**From:**    Office for Responsible Research

**Title:**    Ready to say bad things of him in front of his face? A symbolic interactionism study of private talks in public places

**IRB ID:**    15-186

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Approval Date:** | 5/7/2015 | **Date for Continuing Review:** | 5/6/2017 |
| **Submission Type:** | New | **Review Type:** | Expedited |

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.**

- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study,** when documented consent is required.

- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.

- **Immediately inform the IRB of** (1) **all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.

- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses,** unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.

- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

# INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
## Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans

IRB ID: 15-186

| Title of Project: Ready to say bad things of him in front of his face? A symbolic interactinism study of private talks in public places |
|---|

| Principal Investigator (PI): ███████ | | Degrees: Master |
|---|---|---|
| University ID: 912158247 | Phone: 5158173977 | Email Address: mfhy@iastate.edu |
| Correspondence Address: 2931 West Street unit 4 | | |
| Department: Sociology | College/Center/Institute: Liberal Art and Sciences | |

PI Level: ☐ Tenured, Tenure-Eligible, & NTER Faculty  ☐ Adjunct/Affiliate Faculty  ☐ Collaborator Faculty  ☐ Emeritus Faculty
☐ Visiting Faculty/Scientist  ☐ Senior Lecturer/Clinician  ☐ Lecturer/Clinician, w/Ph.D. or DVM  ☐ P&S Employee, P37 & above
☐ Extension to Families/Youth Specialist  ☐ Field Specialist III  ☐ Postdoctoral Associate  ☐ Graduate/Undergrad Student  ☐ Other (specify: )

| FOR STUDENT PROJECTS (Required when the principal investigator is a student) | | RECEIVED |
|---|---|---|
| Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty ███████ | | |
| University ID: | Phone: 5152944079 | Email Address: dschwein@iastate.edu |
| Campus Address: 318 East Hall | | Department: Sociology |
| Type of Project (check all that apply):  ☒ Thesis/Dissertation  ☐ Class Project  ☐ Other (specify: ) | | |

MAR 06 2015
By IRB

| Alternate Contact Person: | Email Address: |
|---|---|
| Correspondence Address: | Phone: |

## ASSURANCE

- I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate and consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies. Misrepresentation of the research described in this or any other IRB application may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct.
- I agree to provide proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any problems to the IRB. See Reporting Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems for details.
- I agree that modifications to the approved project will not take place without prior review and approval by the IRB.
- I agree that the research will not take place without the receipt of permission from any cooperating institutions when applicable.
- I agree to obtain approval from other appropriate committees as needed for this project, such as the IACUC (if the research includes animals), the IBC (if the research involves biohazards), the Radiation Safety Committee (if the research involves x-rays or other radiation producing devices or procedures), etc., and to obtain background checks for staff when necessary.
- I understand that IRB approval of this project does not grant access to any facilities, materials, or data on which this research may depend. Such access must be granted by the unit with the relevant custodial authority.
- I agree that all activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and Iowa State University policies.

| ███████ | ███████ |
|---|---|
| Signature of Principal Investigator          Date | Signature of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty    Date |
| | (Required when the principal investigator is a student) |

- I have reviewed this application and determined that departmental requirements are met, the investigator(s) has/have adequate resources to conduct the research, and the research design is scientifically sound and has scientific merit.

| ███████ | ███████ |
|---|---|
| Printed Name of Department Chair/Head/Director | Signature of Department Chair/Head/Director          Date |

| For IRB Use Only | Full Committee Review: ☐ | Review Date: May 7, 2015 |
|---|---|---|
| | EXPEDITED per 45 CFR 46.110(b): 1 | Approval/Determination Date: May 7, 2015 |
| Approval Not Required: ☐ | Category 6,7  Letter | Approval Expiration Date: May 6, 2017 |
| Not Research: ☐ | EXEMPT per 45 CFR 46.101(b): | |
| No Human Subjects: ☐ | Not Approved: ☐ | Risk: Minimal ☒   More than Minimal ☐ |
| IRB Reviewer's Signature | ███████          May 7, 2015 | |

# Research Involving Humans Study Information

Please provide answers to all questions, except as specified. Incomplete forms will be returned without review.

PART A:  KEY PERSONNEL

1. **List all members and relevant qualifications of the project personnel and define their roles in the research.** Key personnel include the principal investigator, co-principal investigators, supervising faculty member, and any other individuals who will have contact with the participants or the participants' data (e.g., interviewers, transcribers, coders, etc.). This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that each person will perform on the project. For more information, please see Human Subjects – Persons Required to Obtain IRB Training.

| NAME | Interpersonal contact or communication with subjects, or access to private identifiable data? | Involved in the consent process? | Contact with human blood, specimens, or other biohazardous materials? | Other Roles in Research | Qualifications (i.e., special training, degrees, certifications, coursework, etc.) | Human Subjects Training Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▇▇▇▇▇▇ | ☒ | ☒ | ☐ | principle investigator | Bachelor in sociology, two-year training in graduate school | 02/23/2015 3/10/2015 |
| ▇▇▇▇▇▇ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | major professor | | 09/19/2000 |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | | |

Please complete additional pages of key personnel as necessary.

| ☐ Yes  ☒ No | 2. | Does your study include children (persons under age 18) as research subjects? |
|---|---|---|
| | | If *Yes*, please read and respond to the following:<br><br>ISU policy requires that background checks be completed for all researchers and key personnel who will have any contact with children involved in this research project.  Details regarding this policy can be found <u>here</u>. **Principal Investigators and faculty supervisors are responsible** for ensuring that background checks are completed BEFORE researchers or key personnel may have any contact with children. Records documenting completion of the background checks must be kept with other research records (e.g., signed informed consent documents, approved IRB applications, etc.) and may be requested during any audits or Post-Approval Monitoring of your study. |
| ☐ Agreed | 2.a. | Please check here to indicate that you have read this information and agree that you will comply with these requirements. |

---

## PART B:  FUNDING INFORMATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

| ☐ Yes  ☒ No | 1. | Is or will the project be externally funded? |
|---|---|---|
| | | If *No*, skip to question 8. |
| | | If *Yes*, please identify the type(s) of source(s) from which the project is directly funded.<br><br>☐ Federal agency<br>☐ State/local government agency<br>☐ University or school<br>☐ Foundation<br>☐ Other non-profit institution<br>☐ For-profit business<br>☐ Other; specify: |
| ☐ Yes  ☐ No | 2. | Is ISU considered to be the Lead or Prime awardee for this project? |
| ☐ Yes  ☐ No | 3. | Are there or will there be any subcontracts issued to others for this project? |
| ☐ Yes  ☐ No | 4. | Is or will this project be funded by a subcontract issued by another entity? |
| ☐ Yes  ☐ No | 5. | If ISU is the recipient of the subcontract, does it involve any federal funding, such as federal flow-through funds? |
| 6. | | If this project will be externally funded, please provide the complete name(s) of the funding source(s); please do not use acronyms. If any subcontracts will be issued to others, please describe and include a list of all entities. |
| | | |

| ☐ Attached | 7. Please attach a <u>complete and final copy</u> of the entire grant proposal or contract from which the project is or will be funded. |
|---|---|
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 8. Do or will any of the investigators or key personnel listed on this application have a conflict of interest management plan in place with the Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development? |

## PART C: GENERAL OVERVIEW – PURPOSE AND EXPECTED BENEFITS

| 1. **Research Objectives** – Briefly explain in language *understandable to a layperson* the purpose and specific aim(s) of the study. |
|---|
| To analyse Chinese people's talks in public places by using a different language and American audiences' perceptions. |
| 2. **Broader Impacts/Significance** – Explain in language *understandable to a layperson* why this research is important and how the information gained in this study is expected to advance knowledge and/or serve the good of society. |
| My research will bring an extension to Goffman's impression management theory (people tend to follow the moral order and manipulate their impression, and my case is a deviance from this theory, so it will extend the theory) |

| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 3. **Benefits to Participants** – Are there any expected direct benefits to research participants from participation in the research? **Note:** Monetary compensation is *not* considered to be a benefit of participation in research. |
|---|---|
| | If *Yes*, please describe the expected benefits to participants. |

## PART D: PARTICIPANT SELECTION

| 1. How many individuals do you plan to include in the study (including those involved in screening procedures)? The number listed here is the **maximum number** of participants that may be included in the study. |
|---|
| 30 |
| 2. **Inclusion Criteria** – Describe the specific characteristics of persons that will be included in your study, **and provide justification for these requirements.** |

15 of them need to be Chinese people because I'll be interviewing them about them speaking Chinese in public places in front of American audiences. Another 15 people need to be American because I'll be asking them about their perception about the Chinese spoken in front of them.

| 3. | **Exclusion Criteria** – Describe the characteristics of persons who will not be allowed to participate in your study, **and provide justification for their exclusion.** |
|---|---|

Chinese people whose mother language is not Chinese will not be able to participate in this research.

---

**4. Do you intend, or is it likely, that your study will include any persons from the following vulnerable populations? (Check all that apply.)**

- ☐ Children (any persons under age 18, including ISU/college students who may be under age 18)
  - Specify age range:
- ☐ Prisoners
- ☐ Persons with impaired decision-making capacity, such as those with dementia or severe cognitive impairment, those declared incompetent, persons in life-threatening situations, etc.
- ☐ Wards of the State
- ☐ Persons who are institutionalized
- ☐ Pregnant women or fetuses
- ☐ Neonates
- ☐ Educationally disadvantaged
- ☐ Economically disadvantaged
- ☐ Students in a class taught by the researchers
- ☐ Employees or subordinates of the researchers
- ☐ Other vulnerable population, given the setting of your research; please describe:

---

| ☒ Yes　☐ No | 5. | **Will ISU students or other college students be asked to participate in your study?** |
|---|---|---|

| ☐ Yes <br> see 5.a.(2) | ☒ No <br> see 5.a.(1) | **5.a.** If *Yes*, do you plan to *include* college students who may be under age 18? |
|---|---|---|

| | **5.a.(1)** If *No (i.e., students under 18 will be excluded from your study),* please describe how you will ensure college students under 18 do not participate in the study. <br><br> I'll ask for their age and if they are under 18, I'll not select them. I'll also put the age limitation on my flyer calling for interview participants. |
|---|---|

| | **5.a.(2)** If *Yes (i.e., students under 18 will be included in your study),* please be sure to describe the parental consent and minor assent processes in <u>Appendix E</u>. |
|---|---|

---

**PART E: RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

| 1. | **How will you identify or search for potential participants? (Check all that apply.)** |
|---|---|
| | ☐ Review of public records (e.g., voter lists, utilities lists, phone directory, ISU directory, etc.) <br> ☐ Review of private records (e.g., medical records, student records, other private records) <br> ☐ Purchased mailing lists |

☒ Personal contacts/knowledge
☒ "Snowball" sampling
☐ Participant responses to posted advertisements (electronic or hardcopy) or flyers
☐ Other; please describe:

---

2. **Please describe the details of how each of the methods checked in #1 above will be implemented.**

I'll ask my Chinese friend to introduce me with his other friends to participate in my research. I'll be recruiting American audiences ~~from the class I TA for this semester.~~ by asking my American friends to introduce me to their friends. ~~per 5/5/2015 email~~ (ker)

---

3. **What methods will you use to contact potential participants? (Check all that apply.)**

☒ Letter or email
☒ Phone call
☐ Posting flyers
☐ Posting announcement on website (Check all that apply.)
    ☐ ISU Department of Psychology SONA system
    ☐ ISU Department of Marketing/MIS SONA system
    ☐ ISU Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development
    ☐ ISU Departmental/Research Project websites
    ☐ Other; please describe:
☐ Distribution of email or advertisement via Listserves or online bulletin-boards
☐ Television or radio advertisements
☐ Personal or verbal announcement, such as in a class, meeting, etc.
☐ Informal, personal communication
☐ Other; please describe:

---

4. **Please describe the details of how each of the methods checked in #3 above will be implemented.**

My Chinese friends will provide me with their friends' phone number so I can contact them by phone. I'll also send out email to my American students and see if they are willing to participate in my research.

---

☒ Yes   ☐ No   5. **Attached are copies of any letters, emails, phone/verbal scripts, flyers, announcements, or advertisements that will be used. Please know the IRB must review final and complete copies of all materials used to contact or recruit subjects. For verbal processes, a script or list of points to be covered during the discussion must be provided.**

If *No*, please explain why:

---

## PART F: SCREENING PROCEDURES

☐ Yes   ☒ No   1. **Will participants be asked to provide any information about themselves (e.g., medical history, personal characteristics) for screening purposes prior to enrollment in the study?**

If *Yes*, please describe:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | **2.** | **Will participants be asked to take part in any interventions (e.g., fasting, blood draws, etc.) for screening purposes prior to enrollment in the study?** |
| | | | If *Yes*, please describe: |
| **3.** | **If *Yes* to question 1 and/or 2, please describe how you will obtain the informed consent of participants PRIOR to their participation in screening activities.** | | |
| | | | |

## PART G: COMPENSATION

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☒ Yes | ☐ No | **1.** | **Will participants receive any of the following types of compensation for their participation in your research? (Check all that apply.)**<br><br>☐ Money (cash or check)<br>☐ Gift cards<br>☒ Gifts<br>☐ Reimbursement for expenses (i.e., costs of travel to lab, child care, meals, etc.)<br>☐ Course credit (including extra credit)<br>☐ Other; specify: |
| | | **2.** | If *Yes*, please answer questions 2a through 2d. ***This information should also be provided in the informed consent document.*** |
| | | | **2.a.** Describe the specific amount of compensation to be provided (i.e., in monetary terms, points for course credit, value of gifts, etc.). |
| | | | Gift around 5 dollars. |
| | | | **2.b.** Explain how compensation will be provided if the participant withdraws prior to completion of the study. **Note:** Completion of all study procedures cannot be a requirement for research participants to receive compensation. |
| | | | |
| | | | **2.c.** If course credit is given, describe alternative ways students can earn the same amount of credit and how these alternatives are *genuinely comparable* to participation in the study in terms of time and effort. |
| | | | |

| |
|---|
| **2.d**. If the study involves multiple visits, sessions, or time-points, how will compensation be prorated (e.g., how much will be provided per visit/session/time-point)? |
| My study does not involve multiple visits, it's a one-time interview. |
| **Note:** Compensation plans must be in accordance with policies set forth by the ISU Controller's Department. Detailed information is <u>available here</u>. |

PART H: RESEARCH PLAN

| |
|---|
| 1. **Research Procedures** – Using *layperson's terminology*, please describe in detail your plans for collecting data from participants. Include a description of **all** *procedures, tasks, or interventions* participants will be asked to complete during the research (e.g., random assignment, any conditions or treatment groups into which participants will be divided, mail survey or interview procedures, observation protocols, sensors to be worn, amount of blood drawn, etc.).<br><br>**Note: When referencing attached documents (i.e., surveys, interview protocols, copies of stimuli, instructions for tasks, etc.), please ensure that each attachment is clearly labeled and clearly referenced in this section.** |
| The interviews for Chinese students contain topic relates with their experience speaking Chinese in a English-speaking settings, the topics they speak and how do they feel differently compared with speaking Chinese in China. The interviews for American students are about their perception of Chinese speaking in front of them, what are they thinking about it, do they feel offended. *Interviews will be audio recorded.* per 5/5/2015 email ⓔ |

RESEARCH INVOLVING DECEPTION OR INCOMPLETE DISCLOSURE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Yes  ☒ No | 2. | Will participants be *deceived or misled* about anything during the study?<br>If *Yes*, please answer questions 2a through 2d in <u>Appendix A</u>.<br>If *No*, please skip to question 3. |
| ☐ Yes  ☒ No | 3. | Do you plan to *intentionally withhold* information from participants, such as the full purpose of the study, a full description of procedures, etc.?<br>If *Yes*, please answer questions 3a through 3d in <u>Appendix A</u>.<br>If *No*, please skip to question 4. |

RESEARCH INVOLVING EXISTING DATA OR INFORMATION FROM RECORDS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Yes  ☒ No | 4. | Does the research involve the collection or study of currently existing data or information to be gathered from records, such as the following? (Check all that apply.)<br>☐ Student/educational records (including collection of class assignments, tests, etc.)<br>☐ Medical records (If checked, submit the <u>Application for Use of Protected Health</u> |

Information.)
☐ Data collected for a previously conducted study
☐ Information from government databases, such as the US Census, Iowa Dept. of Public Health records, etc.
☐ Samples from specimen/tissue banks
☐ Other; please describe:

If *Yes*, please answer questions 4a through 4g in **Appendix B**.
If *No*, please skip to question 5.

**RESEARCH INVOLVING OBSERVATION**

| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 5. **Does the research involve collection of data from observation of people's behaviors or activities?**<br>If *Yes*, please answer 5a through 5d in **Appendix C**.<br>If *No*, please skip to question 6. |
|---|---|---|

**RESEARCH INVOLVING INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH**

| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 6. **Will the research take place in an international setting?**<br>If *Yes*, please answer 6a through 6c in **Appendix D**.<br>If *No*, please skip to question 7. |
|---|---|---|

**RESEARCH INVOLVING INVESTIGATIONAL DRUGS, DEVICES, DEXA/CT SCANS, X-RAYS, OR HUMAN CELLS OR TISSUES**

| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 7. **Does this project involve an investigational new drug (IND)?** Number: |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 8. **Does this project involve an investigational device exemption (IDE)?** Number: |
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 9. **Does this project involve DEXA/CT scans or X-rays?** |
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 10. **Does this project involve human blood components, body fluids, or tissues?** |
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | 11. **Does this project involve human cell or tissue cultures (primary or immortalized)?**<br><br>If you answered *Yes* to either question 10 or 11 and the cells, body fluids, etc., have not been documented to be free of blood-borne pathogens, personnel handling these substances are required to take Blood-borne Pathogens Training annually.<br><br>Bloodborne Pathogens training is online via the EH&S website.<br><br>If you have any questions, contact EH&S at (515) 294-5359. |

**PART I: DATA ANALYSIS**

| 1. Describe how the data will be analyzed (*e.g., statistical methodology, statistical evaluation, statistical measures used to evaluate results*). |
|---|
| The data will be analyzed using open coding to find out the general themes. |

## PART J: CONSENT PROCESS

**According to federal regulations, participants can only be included in research if they, or their legally authorized representative, provide legally-effective informed consent. In some cases, the IRB can waive this requirement.**

### I. Consent for Adult Participants

| ☒ Yes ☐ No | **A. Will you obtain the informed consent of all participants?** |
|---|---|
| **If A is *Yes*, please answer the following questions:** | |
| | **1. Describe the procedures you will use to provide information about the details of the study to participants.** |
| | I will give an oral explanation of my research information and give them a handout describing the purpose of the research. All study subjects will be required to read and sign the consent form. I will explain that the study is voluntary, that subjects can refuse to answer any question and that they can end their participation at any time for any reason. |
| | **2. Who, in general, will obtain informed consent from participants (i.e., explain the study, collect signed forms, etc.)? Please do not list actual names of study staff; rather, describe their role such as "the principal investigator," "research assistants," etc.** |
| | The principle investigator |
| | **2.a. What training have they received or will they receive regarding how to appropriately obtain informed consent?** |
| | The principal investigator has completed the NIH training course "Protected Human Research Participant". The principal investigator also has received the training regarding how to appropriately obtain informed consent from his major professor. |
| | **3. Information conveyed to participants must be in a language understandable to them. Please describe the measures you are taking to ensure the informed consent process is understandable (e.g., translation into another language, using commonly understood terminology, assessing reading level of the consent form, etc.).** |
| | I'll provide them with the understandable information by avoiding jargons and use the simple language. I can also explain to them in Chinese. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | **3.a.** If translation is required, please provide the name of the person(s) who conducted the translation(s) and his/her qualifications for doing so. |
| | | The principle investigator. Chinese is her native language. |
| | | **4.** **When will informed consent be obtained in relation to beginning data collection?** |
| | | At the beginning of each interview. |
| ☒ Yes ☐ No | **5.** | **Will all participants sign a consent form to document the consent process? Note:** Signatures must be handwritten by the participant; typing one's name on a form does not constitute a legally valid signature according to federal regulations.<br>If **No**, please explain why. |
| | | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | **6.** | **Do any of the researchers or key personnel involved in the study have a supervisory, evaluative, or other position of "power" over participants? If Yes,** please describe the measures you are taking to minimize any coercion or undue influence (real or perceived). |
| | | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | **7.** | **Are any participants likely to be unable to provide consent for themselves, such as those who have severe cognitive impairments, dementia, are in life-threatening situations, cannot communicate, etc.? If Yes,** please describe plans to obtain consent from the participant's legally authorized representative. |
| | | |
| | | **7.a.** To the extent possible, given the condition of the participant, how will you ensure they agree to take part in the research? |
| | | |
| | If **A** is **No**, (i.e., you will NOT obtain informed consent from all participants), please answer the following: | |
| | **8.** | **Please provide strong and compelling justification for why you cannot carry out your study if you had to obtain informed consent. Note:** The fact that obtaining consent would be inconvenient or time consuming is **not** considered to be sufficient justification. |
| | | |
| | **9.** | **Please explain why participants' rights and welfare will not be adversely affected if you do not obtain their consent.** |
| | | |

**II. Parent/Legal Guardian Consent and Child Assent (applies when participants are under age 18 or are considered to be children in the country where the research takes place)**

| ☐ Yes ☒ No | A. Does your study involve children? |
|---|---|
| If A is *Yes*, please complete the questions in **Appendix E**. | |

**PART K: RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

| ☐ Yes ☒ No* see 1.a.-1.g. | 1. Are there any foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants from taking part in your research? *If *No*, please answer the following question. |
|---|---|
| | If *No (i.e., there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants)*, please explain why you believe this is the case: |
| | I anticipate no risks greater than a normal conversation about the study's topics. I regularly have such conversations withour problems. |
| | If *Yes*, please answer *Yes* or *No* to items **1.a through 1.g** below. Indicate whether the following types of risks/discomforts are foreseeable. When *Yes*, please describe the risks/discomforts **and** explain how each will be mitigated or minimized. |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 1.a. Physical Risks (e.g., injury, bruising from a blood draw, pain, side-effects from drugs administered, allergic reactions, etc.) |
| | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 1.b. Psychological Risks (e.g., emotional discomfort from answering questions, stress or anxiety from procedures, mood alterations, viewing offensive or "shocking" materials, etc.) |
| | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 1.c. Social Risks (e.g., harm to reputation, embarrassment, or stigmatization if participation becomes known, disruption of personal or family relationships, etc.) |
| | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 1.d. Economic Risks (e.g., loss of money, loss of or harm to employment, etc.) |
| | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | 1.e. Legal Risks (e.g., criminal liability if information about participants' illegal behaviors is |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | collected) |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | | **1.f.** Informational Risks (e.g., harm if information collected about the participant were disclosed or overheard, such as embarrassment, retribution, stigmatization, disruption of personal relationships, legal liability, etc.) |
| | | |
| ☐ Yes ☒ No | | **1.g.** Other Risks, given the setting of your research |
| | | |

## PART L: PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

| |
|---|
| **1.** Describe how participants' privacy will be protected during recruitment and data collection (e.g., discussions/procedures will be conducted in private locations, messages regarding the research will not be left on answering machines without permission of participant, documents or recordings will be kept secure, etc.). |
| The interviews will be conducted in a private place like ~~the café~~ *a private room in the ISU Library*, I'll ask for permission when I want to record the interviews. The participants' personal information will not be identified in my final research paper. *per 5/5/2015 email* |
| **2.** Please answer the following questions to describe the methods you will employ to maintain confidentiality and security of the data at all points in the research process (e.g., during data collection, during analysis, etc.): |
| **2.a.** Who will have access to the data and study records? |
| PI and her major professor. |
| **2.b.** Describe how/where physical copies (i.e., paper files, samples, etc.) of data and study records will be stored (e.g., in cabinets, desks, shelves, etc.). |
| In my desk draw in the office with a lock. |
| **2.c.** Describe security measures in place to maintain security of physical/paper data, samples, or study records (e.g., how access will be controlled, locks, etc.). |
| Ther will be a lock on my draw and I'm the only person with key to that lock. |
| **2.d.** Describe how/where electronic data will be stored (e.g., a desktop computer, laptop, portable drive, shared drive, etc.). |
| I'll store them in my computer. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **2.e.** Describe the measures in place to maintain security of electronic data (e.g., encryption, password-protection, firewalls, using university controlled systems, etc.). |
| | Each of my electornic data will be secured with passwords. The laptop will be encrypted. |
| ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** | **2.f.** Will your data include any audio recordings and/or video recordings of participants? If *Yes*, please answer the following: |
| | **2.f.(1)** Who will have access to the audio and/or video recordings? |
| | PI |
| | **2.f.(2)** Describe how/where the audio and/or video recordings will be stored (e.g., in a cabinet, on a computer, etc.). |
| | The interviews will be recorded on my iphone, and when the interview is finished, I'll store them on Cybox and delete the original records on my phone. If my iphone is lost before I store the record, I'll use the "find my iphone" function to get the data from icloud and delete it on my phone. |
| | **2.f.(3)** Describe the measures in place to maintain security and confidentiality of the audio and/or video recordings (e.g., how access will be controlled, locks, password protection, firewalls, etc.). |
| | Each recording file will have password. All of the recordings will be transferred to my encrypted computer quickly after the interview is done. |
| ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No** | **2.f.(4)** Will the actual recordings or images of participants from recordings be shared in any dissemination (e.g., manuscripts, reports, presentations, etc.) of the study results? If *Yes*, what measures will you take to disguise their identity (i.e., blurring facial images, voice alteration methods, etc.)? |
| | |
| ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No** | **2.g.** Will any identifiers or identifiable information (e.g., names, social security numbers, addresses, phone numbers, exact dates of birth, etc.) be collected with or linked to the study data at **any point in time**? If *Yes*, please answer the following: |
| | **2.g.(1)** Describe the identifiers that will be collected or linked to the study data. |
| | |
| | **2.g.(2)** Why is it necessary to collect identifiers or link identifiers to the study data? |
| | |
| | **2.g.(3)** At what point in the process will identifiers be separated or removed from the data? |
| | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | **2.g.(4)** Please describe any coding systems you will use to maintain confidentiality of identifiable data (e.g., plans to replace names with ID codes or pseudonyms). |
| | | |
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | **2.g.(5)** Will you create a "key" linking identifiers with any ID codes or pseudonyms? |
| | | If *Yes*, how will you maintain control of the key and ensure the key is kept secure? **Note:** Best practice is to store the key in a separate location from the study data. |
| | | At what point will the key be destroyed? |
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | **2.h.** Have you or will you obtain a Federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this study? If *Yes*, please submit a copy of the certificate materials with this application. **Note:** Certificates of Confidentiality are designed to protect identifiable research records against forced disclosure (e.g., subpoena). Certificates can be sought from the National Institutes of Health in certain circumstances. Visit the **Certificates of Confidentiality Kiosk** for more information. |
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | **2.i.** Will the data be shared or submitted to a repository or registry, such as the Clinical Trial Registry Databank (ClinicalTrials.gov), the Database of Genotypes or Phenotypes, or via other data sharing agreements? If *Yes*, please describe. |
| | | |
| **3.** | | What specific steps will you take to ensure participants are not identifiable (directly or indirectly via "deductive disclosure") when research results are reported? |
| | | I will not record their names and appearance, specific locations or other specific identifiers mentioned in my interviews will not be included in the final report. There will not be any identifier or identifiable information in the research results. *See Addendum for more details.* (FA) |
| ☒ Yes | | **4.** Please check here to confirm that you will retain research records (i.e., signed consent forms, approved IRB applications, etc.) for at least 3 years after the study is complete. Doing so is required by federal regulations. |

---

**PART M: REGISTRY PROJECTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | **1. Does this project establish a registry or databank?** |
| | | **Note:** To be considered a registry or databank: (1) the individuals whose data are in the |

| | |
|---|---|
| | registry/databank might be contacted in the future; and/or (2) the names and/or data pertaining to the individuals in the registry/databank might be used by investigators other than the one maintaining the registry/databank. |
| | If *Yes*, please answer the following questions: |
| | **1.a.** What information/data will be included in the registry? |
| | |
| | **1.b.** What is the reason for establishing a registry (i.e., how will data from the registry be used)? |
| | |
| | **1.c.** Who will be involved in establishing and providing oversight of the registry? |
| | |
| ☐ **Yes**  ☐ **No** | **1.d.** Will the data in the registry be available to anyone other than the investigator(s) who maintain the registry? |
| | |

**Checklist for Attachments**

> **Listed below are the types of documents that should be submitted for IRB review.** Please check **and attach** the documents that are applicable for your study:
>
> ☐ Grant proposal or contract—must be the complete and final version submitted to funding agency
> ☒ Recruitment fliers, phone scripts, or any other documents or materials participants will see or hear
> ☒ A copy of the informed consent document or letter of introduction containing the elements of consent
> ☐ A copy of the assent form if minors will be enrolled
> ☒ Data-gathering instruments (including surveys, interview questions, focus group protocols, cognitive tests, observation protocols, etc.)
> ☐ When applicable, copies or detailed descriptions of stimuli participants will be exposed to, instructions for testing, investigator's brochures, etc.
> ☐ Appendices attached when applicable
>     ☐ Appendix A
>     ☐ Appendix B
>     ☐ Appendix C
>     ☐ Appendix D
>     ☐ Appendix E

The original signed copy of the application form, any completed appendices, and one set of accompanying materials should be submitted for review in hard copy to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson, or electronically to IRB@iastate.edu.

# APPENDIX

The sections in this appendix are color-coded to correspond with the colored sections in the main application. Please complete the items in the appendix only if directed to do so in the main application. Please ensure all questions in the main application and any necessary appendices have been addressed before sending to the IRB for review.

## A.  RESEARCH INVOLVING DECEPTION OR INCOMPLETE DISCLOSURE

| Continuation from Part H: #2: |
|---|
| **2.a.** Please explain in detail how persons will be deceived or misled. |
| |
| **2.b.** Please provide strong and compelling justification for why it is scientifically necessary to deceive or mislead participants in order to conduct the research and why a non-deceptive methodology is not possible. |
| |
| **2.c.** Please explain the steps you will take to ensure participants' rights and welfare are not adversely affected by deceiving or misleading them. |
| |
| **2.d.** Please describe the process you will use to "debrief" participants and explain the ways they were deceived or misled during the study. A copy of the information to be provided during debriefing must be attached. |
| |
| **Continuation from Part H: #3:** |
| **3.a.** Please explain in detail what information will be withheld. |
| |
| **3.b.** Please provide strong and compelling justification for why it is scientifically necessary to intentionally withhold information from participants in order to conduct the research. |
| |
| **3.c.** Please explain the steps you will take to ensure participants' rights and welfare are not adversely affected by withholding information from them. |
| |

| **3.d.** Please describe the process you will use to "debrief" participants and explain the information that was withheld. A copy of the information to be provided during debriefing must be attached. |
| --- |
|  |

**Continue to Part H: #4 (Existing Data)**

**B.** RESEARCH INVOLVING EXISTING DATA OR INFORMATION FROM RECORDS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Continuation from Part H: #4:** | |
| | **4.a.** What is/are the source(s) of the data/records? |
| | |
| ☐ **Yes**  ☐ **No** | **4.b.** Are *all of* the data/records **publicly** available, without restriction? |
| | **4.c.** Describe the specific variables, information, or content that will be obtained from the data/records. |
| | |
| ☐ **Yes**  ☐ **No** | **4.d.** Is the use of the data/records subject to any restrictions, such as the following? (Check all that apply.)<br><br>☐ FERPA—The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (applies to student records)<br>☐ HIPAA—The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (applies to medical records) – *If checked, submit the Application for Use of Protected Health Information.*<br>☐ Institutional policies (for personnel records or other private records)<br>☐ Confidentiality provisions promised to the persons whose data you will obtain, such as those described in previously signed informed consent documents<br>☐ Other; please describe: |
| | **4.d.(1)** If *Yes*, please describe how you will meet or address those restrictions when obtaining the data. |
| | |
| ☐ **Yes**  ☐ **No** | **4.e.** Will any of the following identifiers be included with the information you obtain from these records? (Check all that apply.)<br><br>☐ Names:  ☐ First Name Only  ☐ Last Name Only  ☐ First and Last Name<br>☐ Phone/fax numbers<br>☐ ID codes that can be linked to the identity of the participant (e.g., student IDs, medical record numbers, account numbers, study-specific codes, etc.)<br>☐ Addresses (email or physical)<br>☐ Social security numbers<br>☐ Exact dates of birth<br>☐ IP addresses<br>☐ Photographs or video recordings<br>☐ Other; please specify: |
| ☐ **Yes**  ☐ **No** | **4.f.** Is there a reasonable possibility that participants' identities could be ascertained from any combination of information in the data? If *Yes*, please describe: |
| | |

| Yes | No | 4.g. Will you obtain the permission/consent of the persons to whom the data/records pertain to use their information in your research? |
|---|---|---|
| | | **4.g.(1)** If *Yes*, please describe this process. |
| | | |
| | | **4.g.(2)** If *No*, please provide **strong** justification for why obtaining permission/consent is not necessary or not possible. **Note:** The fact that obtaining consent would be inconvenient or time consuming is **not** considered to be sufficient justification. |
| | | |
| | Attached | **4.g.(3)** If access to the data/records is subject to any restrictions, please attach documentation from the record holder indicating that you may have access to the data/records without the written consent of the participant. |

## C. RESEARCH INVOLVING OBSERVATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Continuation from Part H: #5:** | | |
| | | **5.a.** Please describe the specific behaviors or activities that will be observed. |
| | | |
| | | **5.b.** How will you record information during observation (e.g., field notes, audio/video, etc.)? |
| | | |
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | **5.c.** Will any identifying information about participants be recorded during the observations? If *Yes*, please describe: |
| | | |
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | **5.d.** Will participants give informed consent to be observed? If *No*, please provide **strong** justification for why obtaining permission/consent is not necessary or not possible. **Note:** The fact that obtaining consent would be inconvenient or time consuming is **not** considered to be sufficient justification. |
| | | |

**D. RESEARCH INVOLVING INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH**

| Continuation from Part H: #6: |
| --- |
| **6.a.** Please describe the experience, knowledge, or other qualifications the investigators have related to conducting the research in this international setting(s). |
| |
| **6.b.** Please describe the specific steps you are taking to ensure the research is conducted in accordance with the local norms and customs, cultural expectations, language needs, etc., in the international setting(s). |
| |
| **6.c.** Please describe the specific steps you are taking to ensure the research is conducted in accordance with any policies, laws, or governmental requirements in each country where the research will take place. |
| |

## E. CONSENT PROCESS FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

| Continuation from Part J.II: #2: |
|---|

Parent/Legal Guardian Consent and Child Assent (applies when participants are under age 18 or are considered to be children in the country where the research takes place)

According to federal regulations, children can only be enrolled in research if their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have given consent, unless the IRB waives this requirement. Children must also agree to participate in the research to the extent such agreement is possible, given the child's age, communication abilities, etc.

| ☐ Yes ☐ No | B. | Will you obtain the informed consent of the parent/legal guardian for all children included in the study? |
|---|---|---|
| If B is *Yes*, please answer the following questions: | | |
| | 1. | Describe the process you will use to inform parents or legal guardians about the child's participation in the study (i.e., how you will make contact with parents/guardians, what will be shared with them, etc.). |
| | | |
| | 2. | Who, in general, will obtain informed consent from parents/legal guardians (i.e., explain the study, collect signed forms, etc.)? Please do not list actual names of study staff; rather, describe their role such as "the principal investigator," "research assistants," etc. |
| | | |
| | | 2.a. What training have they received or will they receive regarding how to appropriately obtain informed consent? |
| | | |
| | 3. | Information given to parents/legal guardians must be in a language understandable to them. Please describe the measures you are taking to ensure the information is understandable (e.g., translation into another language, using commonly understood terminology, assessing reading level of the consent form, etc.). |
| | | |
| | | 3.a. If translation is required, please provide the name of the person(s) who conducted the translation(s) and his/her qualifications for doing so. |
| | | |
| | 4. | When will parental consent be obtained in relation to beginning data collection with children? |
| | | |

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><strong>5. How will you ensure that all children have the consent of their parent/legal guardian before including them in the study?</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>☐ Yes    ☐ No</td><td><strong>6. Will a parent sign a consent form to document the consent process? Note:</strong> Signatures must be handwritten by the parent; typing one's name on a form does not constitute a legally valid signature according to federal regulations.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>If <strong><em>No</em></strong>, please explain why.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">If <strong>B</strong> is <strong><em>No,</em></strong> (i.e., you will NOT obtain informed consent from all parents/legal guardians), please answer the following:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><strong>7. Please provide strong and compelling justification for why you cannot carry out your study if you had to obtain parent/guardian consent. Note:</strong> The fact that obtaining consent would be inconvenient or time consuming is <strong>not</strong> considered to be sufficient justification.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><strong>8. Please explain why participants' rights and welfare will not be adversely affected if you do not obtain parent/guardian consent.</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The goal of the assent process is to ensure children are informed about the study and freely agree to take part. The process for obtaining assent from children must be appropriate for the age and development of the children involved in the study; in some cases, true assent may not be possible (such as with infants). Documentation of assent may not be appropriate for children who cannot read or write. Additionally, multiple assent processes may be necessary to ensure both younger and older children are adequately informed.

<table>
<tr><td>☐ Yes    ☐ No</td><td><strong>C. Will you obtain assent for all children included in the study?</strong><br>If <strong><em>Yes</em></strong>, please answer the following questions:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">If <strong>C</strong> is <strong><em>Yes</em></strong>, please answer the following questions:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><strong>1. Describe the process you will follow to obtain the assent (i.e., "affirmative agreement") of each child.</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><strong>2. Who, in general, will obtain assent from each child (i.e., explain the study, collect signed forms, etc.)?</strong> Please do not list actual names of study staff; rather, describe their role such as "the principal investigator," "research assistants," etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

| |
|---|
| **2.a.** What training have they received or will they receive regarding how to appropriately obtain assent, given the age range and developmental status of the children? |
| |
| **3.** What steps are you taking to ensure information about the study is presented to each child in a language understandable to them (e.g., translation, simplified language, assessing reading level of any assent document, etc.)? |
| |
| **4.** When will assent be obtained in relation to beginning data collection? |
| |
| **5.** How will you know that each child has given assent (i.e., agreed to take part in the study)? (Check all that apply.)<br><br>☐ Each child will sign an assent document following a verbal overview of the study (*applicable for children who can read and understand an assent document*).<br><br>☐ Each child will verbally indicate their agreement to participate (*applicable for children too young to read, who cannot read, or where a verbal process is most appropriate, given the age and ability of the children*).<br><br>☐ Other indication of assent (Please describe.) |
| If **C** is *No*, (i.e., you will NOT obtain assent from all children), please answer the following: |
| **6.** Please provide strong and compelling justification for why you cannot carry out your study if you had to obtain each child's assent. **Note:** The fact that obtaining assent would be inconvenient or time consuming is **not** considered to be sufficient justification. |
| |
| **7.** Please explain why the child's rights and welfare will not be adversely affected if you do not obtain their assent. |
| |

**Continue to Part K (Risks)**

**Addendum**
**15-186**
**Per 3/13/2015 email from F. Ma**

**Pre-Reviewer Question:** Part L item 3 asks about both direct identifiers and indirect identification of participants in your final report. I note that you have stated that there will not be identifiers reported in the research results. Not using names is a good start to protecting participant confidentiality; however, depending on the level of detail with which you describe the setting or the participants, your study subjects may be identifiable. *I see that you are collecting a lot of potentially identifiable information in your interview (i.e. birth date, where grew up, parents jobs, high school and college with dates, major and time at ISU, etc.).* It seems that depending on how much information you share about an individual, someone may be able to readily identify them. Can you please provide the IRB with some additional information about the steps you will take to ensure that participants are not indirectly identifiable? Or perhaps provide an example of the level of detail with which you will describe your participants in your findings.

**PI Response:** First of all, the information I collect in my interview about the participants' about their age, major, degree in ISU will be included in my final report as a generalized information of my interview participants. For example, I'll write "There are 30 participants in my interview, 2/3 of them are undergraduates, an 1/3 of them are graduate students." I won't be revealing their names, or specific information for one individual. I'll just use this information to provide my committee members with the basic information of my sample.

Secondly, the other related personal information such as "where did you grow up, what's your parents' job" helps me to determine if the participant knew and understand Chinese. For example, if you are an American citizen but you were born in China, or you have been in China with your parents because of their job, you are able to understand Chinese people's private talks in public places. Thus, this kind of participants may bring new ideas to my research. Even though it's pretty rare, I feel like I should still ask these questions. But again, their specific personalized information will not be included in my final project.

Last, I feel like this basic self introduction is necessary to break the ice of an interview. As a researcher, I want to let the participants to relax at the beginning of my interview by providing and exchanging some of our background information. But they can absolutely deny my request if they don't want to. Again, only generalized information about all my interview participants will be included, not individual's specific information.