

Toward a Methodological Framework for Analyzing Talk Show Discourse: Qualitative Analytical Model

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a structured and replicable methodological framework for analyzing talk show discourse, focusing on female marginalization in celebrity-centered media interactions. Although contemporary talk shows are marked by informality and apparent inclusivity, they function as structured environments in which power operates through subtle interactional practices. Addressing a methodological gap, the study integrates Conversation Analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and Co-Cultural Theory to examine both interactional organization and underlying ideological processes. The framework is demonstrated through audiovisual data from American and Pakistani talk shows, using systematic procedures of data selection, transcription, coding, and interpretation. Attention to multimodal features, including verbal and paralinguistic elements, reveals patterns of silencing, asymmetry, and representational bias. By outlining a stepwise analytical pathway, the paper offers a transferable model for examining mediated discourse and contributes to methodological development by providing tools for identifying subtle forms of gendered power in contemporary media interactions.

Keywords: Talk Shows, Feminist Discourse Analysis, Female Marginalization

Introduction

The contemporary talk show, particularly in its celebrity-driven format, calls for renewed methodological attention. While often characterized by informality, humor, and celebration, it operates as a highly structured interactional space in which power is enacted through subtle and normalized mechanisms. Female celebrities, positioned as visible and culturally influential figures, are frequently engaged within environments that appear appreciative and inclusive, yet involve more complex processes of symbolic marginalization through humor, topic control, sexualized framing, and asymmetrical participation structures.

A central methodological challenge arises from the nature of these practices. Because marginalization is embedded within performances of wit, friendliness, and entertainment, it becomes difficult to identify using conventional approaches to discourse analysis. Practices such as ridicule, mockery, and symbolic diminishment are often normalized within talk show conventions, rendering them analytically less visible. This raises an important question for discourse-oriented research: how can power be systematically examined when it is performed through laughter, pleasure, and apparent equality rather than overt domination? To address this challenge, the present paper advances a methodological framework for analyzing talk show

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discourse that captures both interactional dynamics and underlying ideological processes. Drawing on an integrated use of Conversation Analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and Co-Cultural Theory, the approach demonstrates how subtle forms of marginalization can be identified through a combination of micro-level interactional analysis and macro-level critical interpretation. The framework is illustrated through its application to a corpus of American and Pakistani talk show interactions featuring female celebrities, establishing its relevance across distinct cultural contexts.

The paper outlines a structured analytical pathway, including data selection, the integration of complementary analytical frameworks, and stepwise procedures for discourse analysis and interpretation. By presenting these stages in an integrated manner, it offers a replicable methodological model for analyzing talk show discourse and related forms of mediated interaction.

Research Paradigm and Methodological Orientation

The analysis of talk show discourse, particularly subtle and context-dependent forms of marginalization, requires a qualitative and interpretive methodological orientation. Qualitative inquiry enables a contextually grounded examination of meaning, representation, and interactional practice, moving beyond surface description toward nuanced meaning-making processes (Blaxter et al., 2010; Flick, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This orientation suits examining how marginalization is enacted and negotiated in mediated interaction rather than measured through predefined variables (Creswell, 2003). Within this framework, the interpretive paradigm provides an epistemological basis by treating meaning as socially and culturally constructed, with discourse as a site where realities are produced through interaction shaped by context, perspective, and power (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Stahl, 2005). Phenomenological sensitivity further informs this approach by attending to how experience is expressed within interactional settings (Orbe, 2000, Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). In talk show discourse, this enables examination of participants' responses and positioning as situated expressions of experience, supporting a grounded analysis of gendered meanings and power asymmetries in mediated environments.

Feminist Qualitative Approach and Research Design

Building on this interpretive foundation, a feminist qualitative approach provides a critical lens for examining gendered dimensions of talk show discourse. Feminist inquiry foregrounds how knowledge production engages with women's lived realities and interrogates forms of marginalization often normalized within dominant discursive practices (Creswell, 2009; Landman, 2006; Olesen, 2018). In talk show contexts, this perspective highlights how female celebrities are positioned, represented, and responded to within interactional environments that appear informal and celebratory but remain structured by power asymmetries. It also ensures that subtle marginalization embedded in humor, ridicule, and performative interaction is examined with critical depth. The research design follows this orientation, offering a structured yet flexible approach to talk show discourse. A qualitative design enables analysis of audio-visual data as naturally occurring mediated interaction, preserving the performative and institutional conditions of meaning-making.

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Data selection is guided by purposive criteria to ensure relevance to female-centered discourse while capturing variation across contexts (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The analytical process is inductive and iterative, involving sustained engagement through coding, categorization, and identification of recurring patterns and themes (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Thomas, 2006; Creswell, 2009). This design integrates complementary frameworks, including Conversation Analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and Co-Cultural Theory, enabling a layered examination of discourse at interactional and ideological levels. Overall, this methodological orientation provides a coherent and adaptable framework for examining how gender, power, and interaction intersect in talk show discourse and related mediated settings.

Data Collection

The analysis of talk show discourse requires a data collection strategy that captures the multimodal and interactional nature of mediated communication. In this study, audiovisual material in the form of YouTube video clips serves as the primary data, enabling examination of language, performance, and interaction in talk show environments. This allows analysis of visual and auditory dimensions alongside verbal interaction, providing a comprehensive basis for meaning-making processes (Guest et al., 2013; Heigham & Croker, 2009). The dataset includes selected clips from prominent American and Pakistani talk shows (2018–2023), such as *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, and *The Late Late Show with James Corden*, as well as Pakistani talk shows including *Mazak Raat*, *Hasna Mana Hai*, *G Sarkar*, and *The Talk Talk Show*, chosen for prominence, format comparability, and relevance to gendered interaction.

The temporal range enables examination of continuity and variation in discourse while capturing shifts in media production. Data collection is iterative, combining retrospective sampling with recent material to refine the dataset in response to emerging insights. Selection follows defined inclusion criteria aligned with gendered discourse. Interviews featuring female guests are prioritized, while male-only clips are excluded unless they involve interaction with female guests. Recurring female guests are analyzed collectively to ensure consistency in interactional patterns.

The dataset is refined through repeated viewing and close observation to identify recurring communicative patterns. Selected clips are then prepared for transcription and analysis. All data is catalogued in an Excel-based tracking system to document sampling decisions and analytical progression, ensuring consistency and traceability. The final dataset comprises clips from selected American and Pakistani talk shows that are comparable in format, supporting cross-cultural analysis of interactional practices.

Rationale for Data Selection

Data selection is oriented towards prime time talk shows, providing a productive context for examining gendered power relations in mediated interaction. These formats, typically hosted by male figures, use satire, humor, parody, and spectacle, enabling both overt and subtle marginalization. Such settings allow examination of how power operates through interactional dynamics that appear informal and

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entertaining yet remain structurally asymmetrical. Political talk shows are excluded due to their policy-driven orientation, which prioritizes formal debate over interactional nuance. Daytime and female-hosted formats are also excluded, as they do not consistently exhibit male-dominated interactional structures central to this analysis. This delineation ensures the dataset remains focused on contexts where gendered power relations are interactionally enacted and analytically observable.

Sampling Strategy

The selection of data in talk show discourse analysis is guided by purposive sampling, enabling identification of information-rich cases aligned with the analytical focus. Within qualitative inquiry, sampling prioritizes depth, relevance, and contextual sensitivity rather than statistical representativeness (Miles et al., 2014). Purposive sampling remains a flexible, evolving process shaped by emerging insights and ongoing theoretical refinement, enabling selection of cases that offer meaningful variation and analytical value through informed judgment aligned with the research objectives (Dörnyei, 2007; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020; Crookes & Davis, 1998). In talk show discourse, this allows close examination of participants' responses, reactions, and interactional positioning as situated expressions of experience (Orbe, 2000; Lester, 1999; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Sampling decisions are guided by adequacy, saturation, and analytical yield, recognizing that qualitative value lies in interpretive richness rather than quantity (Mason, 2010). The process is iterative and context-dependent, with refinement occurring alongside the development of emerging themes and conceptual boundaries (Sim et al., 2018). Emphasis is placed on generating data that supports depth of analysis and transferability of findings (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). The dataset comprises 20 video clips drawn from eight talk shows across American and Pakistani contexts, typically ranging from 5 to 10 minutes and occasionally exceeding 15 minutes, selected for relevance to gendered discourse and interactional dynamics. Selection criteria include cultural impact, linguistic accessibility, presence of female-centered interactions, and variation in political and social orientations. These criteria ensure coverage of diverse interactional settings while maintaining focus on contexts where gendered power relations are most visible. The sampling design is informed by a comparative orientation, recognizing talk shows as culturally situated media forms. American talk shows, often associated with liberal, entertainment-driven political commentary are examined alongside Pakistani talk shows shaped by patriarchal structures and socio-cultural constraints (LaMarre et al., 2009; Symons, 2019; Cheema, 2017; Amjad et al., 2025). The temporal focus on 2018 to 2023 enables analysis of continuity and change, while the selection of comparable formats ensures analytical alignment across contexts. This sampling strategy provides a coherent framework for cross-cultural discourse analysis, supporting examination of interactional practices, power relations, and gendered language use in talk show environments.

Analytical Framework

The analysis of talk show discourse is conducted through an integrated application of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). These frameworks enable a layered examination of discourse, capturing both the interactional organization of talk and the ideological processes through which power

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and marginalization are produced. While CA facilitates detailed analysis of interaction in real time, FCDA provides a critical lens for interpreting its gendered dimensions. Together, they offer a complementary and replicable framework for examining talk show discourse across contexts.

Conversation Analysis (CA)

Conversation Analysis (CA) provides a methodological foundation for examining how talk show interactions are structured and organized. It enables the systematic identification of how social actions are produced through talk, with a focus on language-in-use and the sequential organization of interaction (Clayman & Gill, 2012; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). In talk show discourse, interaction is treated as a site where social relationships, identities, and roles are produced and negotiated (Drew & Curl, 2008). This is particularly relevant in broadcast contexts, where interaction is both structured and publicly performed. The analysis therefore attends to turn-taking mechanisms and the organization of interaction in formats such as interviews and talk shows (Hutchby, 2006). Analytically, CA focuses on features such as turn-taking, interruptions, sequencing, and topic control, through which power relations are enacted and negotiated (van Dijk, 2015). Examining these interactional patterns enables a systematic understanding of how participants assert identities, maintain positions, and negotiate power within talk show discourse.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) extends the analytical framework by enabling a critical examination of the gendered dimensions of power embedded within interactional patterns. As an extension of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it focuses on how “social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2001, p.352), while specifically interrogating the processes through which gender ideologies are normalized and contested within discourse (Lazar, 2018). In applying FCDA, the analysis directs attention to the naturalization of gendered power relations, including the “taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations” that shape communicative practices (Lazar, 2007). It further examines how such asymmetries are enacted, negotiated, and, at times, resisted, drawing on the framework’s capacity to analyze both domination and strategies of resistance and empowerment (Lazar, 2014). The analytical procedure involves identifying linguistic and semiotic features that signal power imbalances, including turn-taking, interruptions, hedging, topic control, presuppositions, framing devices, and lexical choices. Through these features, patterns of silencing, marginalization, and the erosion of female authority are examined in relation to recurring interactional dynamics such as host dominance, conversational suppression, and dismissive questioning. The use of verbatim transcription, attentive to overlaps and sequential organization, supports a detailed examination of both overt and subtle strategies through which female voices are constrained. Data coding is guided by thematic categories derived from feminist theory and discourse analytical principles, ensuring that interactional features are systematically linked to broader sociocultural structures of gender inequality. In addition, FCDA extends the analysis beyond verbal language to incorporate visual and paralinguistic elements such as gesture and sound, reflecting the

inherently multimodal nature of talk show discourse. When combined with Conversation Analysis, which accounts for the sequential organization of interaction, this approach enables a comprehensive understanding of discourse as both structured interaction and a site of ideological production. Both frameworks share a focus on naturally occurring talk, its context-dependency, and its organization across multiple levels of meaning and action (van Dijk, 1999), thereby offering a coherent and transferable model for analyzing gendered dynamics in talk show discourse.

Data Analysis Process

The analysis of talk show discourse proceeds through a systematic and iterative process designed to ensure rigor and transparency. It begins with the organization and screening of audiovisual data, where collected clips are categorized into American and Pakistani datasets and reviewed for analytical relevance. This is followed by close familiarization through repeated viewing, enabling the identification of recurring interactional patterns and thematic consistencies. Particular attention is directed toward the communicative practices of the host, including interactional style, modes of addressing female guests, and strategic rhetorical moves, while also situating interaction within its broader institutional and performative context. Urdu-language clips are translated into English in accordance with Squires (2009), with emphasis on conceptual equivalence and cultural specificity. Attention is given to humor, satire, and code-switching to preserve interactional meaning. The data are transcribed using a combination of verbatim and conversation-analytic conventions, capturing relevant verbal and paralinguistic features. Transcription focuses on analytical relevance and is supported by professional assistance to ensure consistency.

Coding is conducted manually using a mixed strategy, beginning with provisional coding to identify emergent themes, followed by axial coding to organize these into broader categories through iterative refinement (Saldaña, 2013; Miles et al., 2014).

These stages are integrated into a structured analytical sequence, culminating in interpretation through the combined application of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), enabling a layered examination of interactional structures and power relations. This process supports the identification of both overt and subtle strategies of marginalization, providing a replicable framework for analyzing female representation in talk show discourse across cultural contexts.

Translation of Pakistani Talk Show Clips into English

The translation of Pakistani talk show data into English is approached as an integral component of analysis, requiring methodological attention to both conceptual accuracy and cultural meaning. In cross-language qualitative research, translation involves interpretive decisions that shape analytical outcomes and must therefore preserve interactional and contextual meaning rather than rely on direct lexical equivalence (Squires, 2009; Abfalter et al., 2021). A key principle guiding this process is conceptual equivalence, ensuring that meaning is accurately conveyed across languages while accounting for culturally specific linguistic strategies such as humor, satire, and interactional nuance (Squires, 2009). This is particularly important in talk show discourse, where meaning is often embedded in speech acts, conversational tactics, and context-dependent expressions. A researcher-as-translator approach is adopted to

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enable close engagement with the data and contextually informed interpretation (Zhu et al., 2019). This facilitates sensitivity to features such as code-switching and culturally embedded expressions while maintaining transparency in the translation process (Temple & Young, 2004; Wong & Poon, 2010). The translation procedure follows Squires' (2009) framework, with a single translation approach employed to allow direct and sustained engagement with the data. Special attention is given to linguistic and cultural challenges arising from differences between Urdu and English, including the use of Punjabi colloquialisms, humor, and satire, which require careful contextual interpretation to preserve their interactional function. The translated data are integrated with the analytical frameworks of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), ensuring suitability for examining both interactional structures and gendered power relations. This approach provides a transparent and replicable model for handling translation in cross-cultural discourse studies.

Transcription

Transcription constitutes a critical stage in the analysis of talk show discourse, enabling the transformation of audiovisual interaction into a format suitable for systematic examination. In qualitative research, it is understood as an interpretive practice that supports immersion in the data and the development of analytical insights (Lapadat, 2000). Transcription conventions are aligned with the objectives of the study and the analytical framework employed, allowing practices to be adapted to the nature of the data rather than relying on a single standardized system (Lapadat, 2000; Bucholtz, 2007; Davidson, 2009). This approach ensures a balance between consistency and analytical relevance. In this study, transcription focuses on capturing interactional features central to the analysis of power and communication, including verbal content and relevant paralinguistic elements. Features not directly related to the analytical focus are excluded to maintain clarity. This selective approach aligns with the principles of Conversation Analysis and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, which prioritize interactional and contextual features. The transcription procedure draws on the principles outlined by Dressler and Kreuz (2000), which emphasize consistency, transparency, and adaptability. This framework allows for integration of verbatim and conversation-analytic techniques, supporting a detailed yet manageable representation of talk show interaction. While verbatim transcription is often valued for capturing nonverbal and contextual detail (Stuckey, 2014), attention is also given to avoiding excessive detail that may obscure analytical clarity (Butler, 2015). To ensure reliability and consistency, transcription is conducted with the support of a professional transcriber, while maintaining the researcher's close engagement with the data. This collaborative approach enhances the accuracy and trustworthiness of the transcripts, particularly in handling large datasets. Through this process, transcription functions not only as a preparatory step but as an integral component of analysis, enabling a systematic and replicable examination of discourse within talk show interactions.

Coding Process

Coding constitutes a central stage in qualitative analysis, enabling systematic organization and interpretation of patterns within discourse. It involves assigning

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meaning to segments of data and grouping them into analytically relevant categories, facilitating pattern identification and interpretation (Saldaña, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). In this study, coding begins with close engagement with the data to identify recurring themes, interactional patterns, and linguistic features. Segments reflecting these patterns are labeled as codes and organized into broader categories through iterative refinement. A mixed coding strategy is employed, combining provisional and axial coding. Provisional coding provides an initial set of guiding codes, supporting exploratory engagement with the data, while axial coding organizes these into coherent categories by identifying relationships between them

(Saldaña, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This iterative process enables the development of a structured yet flexible analytical framework, supporting the identification of interactional strategies and broader themes related to gender, power, and marginalization within talk show discourse.

Coding Development and Categorization

The development of codes proceeds through an iterative process moving from initial identification to conceptual organization. Provisional coding establishes a preliminary set of codes informed by research questions, theoretical orientation, and emerging insights from the data. These codes are continuously refined through repeated engagement with the dataset, allowing them to evolve into more clearly defined themes. Analytical memos support this process by documenting coding decisions, emerging patterns, and the development of categories (Saldaña, 2013). Memo-writing facilitates the tracing of interpretive insights and the identification of relationships between codes, supporting subsequent stages of analysis. The process then advances to axial coding, which organizes and refines initial codes by identifying relationships between categories and subcategories. This stage involves consolidating related concepts, eliminating redundancy, and developing a more coherent analytical structure (Miles et al., 2014). Categorization follows, in which refined codes and themes are grouped into broader categories to support interpretation. This layered process enables progression from descriptive coding to conceptual analysis, supporting the examination of patterns related to gender, power, and interaction within talk show discourse.

Interpretation through Conversation Analysis and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

The final stage of analysis involves the interpretive examination of coded data through the integrated application of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). This stage brings together interactional and critical perspectives, enabling an understanding of how discourse operates at both structural and ideological levels. CA provides an interactionally grounded approach for examining how talk is organized and how social actions are produced through sequential practices (Sidnell, 2010). In this study, it is used to analyze features such as turn-taking, sequencing, and topic control, through which participants construct meaning and negotiate social relations. This facilitates the identification of interactional patterns through which asymmetries of power emerge within talk show discourse. FCDA extends this analysis by situating interaction within broader sociocultural and ideological contexts, foregrounding the relationship between language, gender, and

power (Lazar, 2005). It enables examination of how gendered meanings are constructed, normalized, and contested, as well as how communicative practices contribute to patterns of marginalization. The integration of CA and FCDA enables a layered analytical approach in which interactional features are linked to broader structures of power and ideology. This combined framework supports the identification of both overt and subtle forms of marginalization and facilitates the examination of how interactional practices shape the negotiation of female agency within talk show discourse.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

The evaluation of qualitative research requires a framework that accounts for contextual depth, interpretive complexity, and methodological transparency. In this study, trustworthiness is approached as an ongoing process of aligning methodological choices with the research context and objectives, rather than as adherence to rigid criteria (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). The framework proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1986) guides this approach through four interrelated criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria provide a structured basis for ensuring rigor in qualitative inquiry (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility is supported through sustained engagement with data, iterative analysis, and detailed transcription and coding procedures that capture interactional features. Transferability is addressed through the selection of comparable talk show contexts and the provision of context-sensitive descriptions. Dependability is maintained through a transparent and systematic documented analytical process, including data selection, transcription, coding, and interpretation. Confirmability is strengthened through the integration of multiple analytical frameworks, including Conversation Analysis and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, ensuring that interpretations remain grounded in the data. Through these strategies, trustworthiness is embedded within the research design as a continuous and reflexive process, supporting a rigorous and transparent analysis of talk show discourse.

Operationalizing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this study is established through a set of interconnected strategies that ensure analytical rigor, transparency, and interpretive consistency. Drawing on Lincoln and Guba's (1985, 1986) framework, it is operationalized through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is supported through sustained engagement with data, iterative analysis, and detailed transcription and coding procedures that capture interactional features. The use of multiple analytical frameworks, including Conversation Analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and Co-Cultural Theory, further strengthens credibility by enabling a multidimensional examination of discourse. Transferability is addressed through the use of diverse yet comparable datasets and the provision of contextually grounded descriptions of talk show interactions. This involves detailed documentation of the research context, data sources, analytical procedures, and theoretical frameworks, allowing readers to assess the relevance of the findings to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Forero et al., 2018; Enworo, 2023). Dependability and confirmability are ensured through systematic documentation of the research process, including data selection, transcription, coding, and analysis. The use of an audit trail

and structured analytical procedures enhances transparency and traceability, while the integration of complementary frameworks ensures that interpretations remain grounded in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). Through these strategies, trustworthiness is embedded as a continuous and reflexive process, supporting a rigorous and transparent analysis of talk show discourse.

Ethical and Reflexive Considerations

Ethical and reflexive considerations are addressed through a feminist research orientation emphasizing accountability, reciprocity, care, and relationality. Accountability is maintained through transparency in methodological decisions and acknowledgment of researcher positionality. Reciprocity is reflected in the aim of contributing to broader discussions on gender and media. Care is enacted through sensitivity in interpreting discourse, ensuring that analysis does not reproduce marginalizing representations. Relationality informs the understanding that talk show interactions are embedded within wider social and gendered structures. These considerations support a reflexive and contextually grounded approach to analysis, complementing the methodological framework applied in this study.

Conclusion

This paper advances a structured and replicable methodological framework for analyzing talk show discourse, with a focus on examining female marginalization within celebrity-centered media interactions. It demonstrates how qualitative, interpretive inquiry can be systematically operationalized to investigate complex and context-dependent forms of power. By integrating Conversation Analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and Co-Cultural Theory, the framework enables a layered examination of discourse, capturing both interactional organization and broader dynamics of gender, ideology, and power. This approach facilitates the identification of subtle forms of marginalization embedded within humor, informality, and performative interaction. The methodological pathway outlined from data selection and transcription to coding and interpretive analysis provides a coherent and adaptable model for examining mediated interaction. Its emphasis on multimodal data, iterative analysis, and conceptual integration allows discourse to be analyzed as both structured interaction and a site of social meaning-making, extending its applicability beyond talk show contexts. By foregrounding female guests as a co-cultural group within male-dominated environments, the framework contributes to broader discussions in discourse, communication, and feminist studies.

It offers a methodological basis for examining how gendered hierarchies are constructed and sustained through everyday communicative practices.

Overall, the paper positions methodology as a critical tool for uncovering the subtle workings of power in contemporary media. By offering a transparent and transferable model, it invites further application across diverse contexts and contributes to ongoing scholarship on gender, representation, and inequality in mediated discourse.

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