Analyzing the Impromptu Speech Style of a Job-Hunting Reality TV Show Host: A Case Study of "It's You"

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Abstract

In the post-epidemic era, the employment situation has become increasingly serious, and job-hunting reality shows have innovated significantly to meet the current market demand. Given the diverse nature of the live context involved in these programs, it is crucial for the hosts to possess strong improvisational speech skills. However, some hosts struggle to effectively handle the various scenarios presented in the program, leading to ineffective communication. Therefore, this study focuses on the TV show "It's You" as the research corpus and employs discourse control acts theory, discourse analysis, and descriptive statistics to examine the patterns of impromptu speech initiation by the hosts of this job-seeking reality show. In this study, the job-hunting reality show is divided into three stages, with the second stage, known as the multiple interaction stage, chosen as the focus of the analysis. Within this stage, two situational contexts are identified and a total of seven initiation words and twelve initiation sentences are summarized. Furthermore, quantitative statistics are conducted by considering the initiation object and initiation position. Based on the findings, two distinct expression patterns are identified: the suit deepening + derivative penetration + intersectional embedding mode, and the continuity + insertion jump + homeopathic deepening mode.

Keywords: *job-hunting reality TV show; improvised verbal expression; verbal initiation; discourse control acts theory; expression model.*

1. Introduction

Reality TV has gained widespread popularity globally, encompassing various categories (Baú 2022). Among these, job-hunting reality TV programs fall under the sub-category of life service reality TV shows and have gained significant attention worldwide. One of the main reasons for their popularity is the growing demand resulting from social development. For instance, in China, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security held a conference on employment and entrepreneurship for college graduates in 2023, where it was announced that the expected number of ordinary college graduates for the class of 2023 would reach 11.58 million, an increase of 820,000 compared to the previous year. This highlights the severity of the job-hunting environment. Similarly, major countries like the United States are also facing similar challenges in finding employment. According to the latest data released by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2022, the youth unemployment rate had reached 18.2% by April, with 18 unemployed individuals for every 100 people.

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In this context, the job-hunting reality TV show effectively blends mass media with social services, transforming the initially serious "job hunting field" into an entertaining and dramatic spectacle. It successfully caters to the audience's desire for entertainment while conveying the right notions of job hunting and employment to society. Undoubtedly, it offers a fresh solution to the prevailing "job hunting dilemma."

In the job-hunting reality show, the hosts play a crucial role in maintaining a balance between professionalism and entertainment. Given the diverse and complex nature of the participating guests, the hosts need to interact with job seekers, job consultants and recruitment teams, guiding the program's progression to meet the demands of both job seekers and recruitment companies. As conversation controllers, the hosts should be adept at adjusting their verbal skills based on contextual changes, flexibly adapting the level of interaction, pace, and speaking style, while tactfully responding to unexpected situations (Simon-Vandenbergen 2000). Consequently, the host's improvisational skills become a core factor in guiding and effectively managing the smooth flow of the program.

However, our research has revealed that in certain job-hunting reality TV programs, the performance of hosts varies, with some demonstrating competence while others fall short. For instance, some hosts struggle to establish suitable role relationships based on the discourse context, leading to a lack of clarity in their communicative purposes when guiding interactions between job seekers, interviewers, and career consultants. This often results in instances of comedic or aimless questioning, hindering information sharing, cognitive consensus, and empathetic engagement among guests. By studying scientifically derived patterns of improvised speech, appropriate guidance can be provided to hosts, effectively preventing similar occurrences and ensuring a more successful program.

To date, there has been a limited amount of research in the field of psychosocial linguistics that investigates the discourse of hosts using social psychology-based speech acts and pragmatics theories. Existing studies have not thoroughly examined the specific patterns and characteristics of reality TV hosts' improvised discourse. Hence, this paper aims to fill this research gap by exploring the scientific improvisational speech patterns employed by hosts in the context of a job-hunting reality TV show.

The discourse control acts theory, grounded in social psychology, provides a solid theoretical foundation for examining the improvisational speech patterns of hosts in job-seeking reality TV shows, specifically focusing on identity specificity. This theory encompasses three interconnected levels of control behaviors: discourse controller, post-discourse evaluation, and cooperative controller (Thomas 2014). Within the context of a job-hunting reality show, the host assumes the role of the dominant discourse controller. This entails not only maintaining reasonable control over the purpose, boundaries, content, and duration of the conversation but also effectively managing the progression of the discourse and the conversational behavior of other participants. By exerting control at different stages of the show, the host strives to ensure the conversational flow, purposeful interaction, and successful culmination of the discourse.

This study aims to investigate the improvised speech patterns of the hosts in the renowned Chinese reality TV show "It's You." The research will involve extracting relevant discourse data from the show's corpus for detailed analysis. The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

(1) Summarize and categorize the different forms of improvised speech initiated by the hosts based on the corpus analysis.

(2) Analyze the objectives and motivations behind the hosts' improvised speech in different contexts during the high-interaction and diverse-interaction stage.

(3) Investigate the hosts' speech initiation patterns in different interactive situations, considering the target and position of their impromptu speech initiation.

(4) Conduct a comprehensive statistical analysis to summarize the expression patterns observed in different contexts during the stage of multiple interactions.

By accomplishing these research objectives, a deeper understanding of the hosts' improvised speech patterns in "It's You" will be gained.

2. Literature review

2.1 Investigating discourse in job-hunting reality TV shows

The diverse roles of hosts in job search reality shows result in varied modes of expression within the dialogues. Andrejevic (2008) conducted research on the rhetoric of reality TV hosts, analyzing various aspects such as the contextual factors, principles of discourse, language usage characteristics, and strategies of language organization employed by the hosts. Masaitienė (2004) specifically discussed four characteristics of institutional conversations in job-seeking reality TV shows. These characteristics include the sequential and organizational nature of conversations, the defined procedures and patterns followed in conversations, the explicit purpose of conversations in the context of job recruitment, and the apparent unequal communicative status between the two parties engaged in the conversation. Additionally, the openness and multiplicity of conversations, the significance of feedback, and the inclination towards entertainment were also identified as important aspects in such shows.

In job-hunting reality shows, speech plays a key role in identity construction. The host must be careful to control the range of language used when creating discursive relationships. Blitvich and Lorenzo-Dus (2013) emphasized in their study that the linguistic features exhibited by hosts in job-hunting reality shows manifest through vocal expression, linguistic proficiency, and scientific application. Analyzing the principles and characteristics of the hosts' discourse offers an effective approach for leveraging the dialogic traits skillfully.

2.2 Investigating impromptu oral expression

In the realm of auditory language expression, the ability to improvise in spoken language is also a crucial aspect of the foundational competencies required for program presenters. Reviewing the literature reveals that scholars have conducted relevant research on improvised oral expression from the perspective of communication science. Peterson (2007) have analyzed the characteristics of improvised spoken expressions, proposed essential elements and techniques for improvised oral expression, and emphasized the importance of hosts being flexible and creative within the program's context. They advocate for the accurate and appropriate application of improvised spoken expressions to ensure the program's engagement.

The advent of new media has markedly changed the impromptu oral presentations of presenters. Holmes (2004) examined the progressive stages of presenters' improvised spoken expressions and the discourse transformation process influenced by new media. It was noted that in today's demanding and high-standard media landscape, the role of improvisation has significantly increased, making improvised spoken expressions all the more crucial.

2.3 Research on verbal initiation

Nofsinger (1991) proposed that discourse wheels can be formed by four different unit-length conversational structures. These discourse wheels can consist of independent words or phrases. Viboonkan et al. (2023) suggests that while the response-triggering form is often observed in conversations, the distinction between the two is not significant in many examples. Gee (2005) investigates the formal characteristics and the matching relationship between trigger and answer sentences, constructing a question-answer system

based on modern Chinese. Agar (1985), by transcribing recorded anticipations, further organizes and summarizes the features of answering pairs, highlighting that the initiation imposes constraints on generating answering pairs. It is evident that the initiation holds a compelling force in generating corresponding answering pairs.

Media dialogue encompasses the diverse methods of conveying and distributing information to the public across various platforms, including newspapers, radio, and television. Within the realm of media communication, media interviews possess distinctive discourse organization and expression. Antaki et al. (2003) have conducted an analysis and investigation of the "elicitation and response" patterns in media talk shows, categorizing television talk shows based on the diverse functions of the initiation stage in the discourse. Lorenzo-Dus and Blitvich (2013) have compiled patterns of question elicitation in media interviews, emphasizing information communication as the primary objectives of these conversations. Biber (2007) has utilized pragmatics as a framework to analyze the discourse of interview programs, incorporating discourse analysis and other theories, and has identified the main types of questioning in interview programs: suggestion, confirmation, search for information, expression of surprise, request for confirmation, request for options and answer.

2.4 Discourse control acts theory

The theory of discourse control acts, put forward by Jenny Thomas, posits that conversation comprises the dialogue itself, the fundamental discourse at the level of dialogue, and signals of dialogue strategies. It encompasses the strategy signals that emerge during the process of dialogue, the discourse control acts carried out by the interlocutor in accordance with the communicative purpose. It encompasses discourse controllers, post-discourse evaluation, and cooperative controllers.

In reality TV programs, discourse control is based on the theoretical framework of the verbal communicative behavior model, which investigates the factors influencing discourse control. The main participants in the program are the host, guests from various parties, and the audience, forming a central control core to achieve communicative intent and diverse communicative forms. By connecting communicative forms with communicative intent and balancing various factors, the purpose of discourse control is achieved (Ilie 2001). The moderator constructs a set of discourse control patterns through the selection, design, and processing of the question wheel, which is reflected in the structure, tone, and expression. Depending on specific information needs and communicative intentions, the moderator can combine and utilize various strategies and methods to adjust the effectiveness of control throughout the program (Tolson 2001). During the communicative process of the program, the moderator conveys communicative intentions to the interviewee through linguistic symbols, ensuring that the question-and-answer process aligns with predetermined goals. Through the interpretation of linguistic symbols, both the interviewee and the audience understand and comprehend the purpose of the communication, actively participating in the communicative act. The moderator plays a key role in initiating the communicative process and maintaining a smooth communicative relationship.

3. Methodology

This study will employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyze the discourse of the hosts in the job search reality show "It's You." Drawing upon the theory of discourse control acts and utilizing conversation analysis to examine the micro-level impact of the host's speech, we aim to examine the objects, motives, positions, and forms of the hosts' improvised speech triggers in different contexts. By constructing the expression pattern of the hosts' improvised speech triggers in the current stage of the job hunting reality TV program, we seek to uncover the underlying essence of

the program's conversation and the fundamental principles guiding the hosts' control over the overall stage situation.

This study will begin by collecting the research corpus, specifically focusing on the 2019 episodes of the reality TV show "It's You" aired on Tianjin TV. The episodes will be randomly numbered, and using the Random function in Excel, 15 programs will be selected as research samples. The video corpus will be transcribed to create a preliminary text corpus. Next, the programs will be analyzed to identify the overall flow and situational contexts within them. The corpus will then be annotated, and a comprehensive analysis will be conducted on the objects, motives, locations, and forms of improvisation triggered by the hosts in the programs, supported by specific examples. Finally, an attempt will be made to construct the expression patterns of the hosts' improvisation triggers in different contexts.

4. Data

4.1 Selection of corpus

This study focuses on a corpus of 15 episodes from the 2019 season of "It's You," a reality TV show aired on Tianjin TV in China. "It's You" is the country's pioneering interactive reality program. Since its inception, the show has gained significant popularity.

The program was selected for exploration and analysis in this study for the following reasons: First, "It's You" is China's first job-hunting reality TV program. Since its launch in 2010, it has maintained its status as the longest-running reality show focused on job searching. Second, the host of "It's You," Tu Lei, is known for his outstanding language style. His unique approach adds depth and significance to the program's discourse. Third, "It's You" has garnered widespread acclaim from viewers and consistently ranks among the top in terms of viewership. Overall, these factors contribute to the significance and suitability of selecting these programs for in-depth analysis in this study.

4.2 Description of corpus annotation

The corpus annotation for this study follows the annotation methods and symbols used in Liu's (2004) Conversational Structure Analysis, with some custom symbols employed. The annotation symbols used are as follows:

(1)   "H" represents the host.

(2)   "Ine" stands for the job seeker or interviewee.

(3)   "Inr" represents the recruiting team or interviewer.

(4)   "High-Ine" signifies job seekers with a high cultural background.

(5)   "Low-Ine" denotes job seekers with a low cultural background.

(6)   "Ine < Inr" indicates that the job seeker is less potent or influential than the interviewer.

(7)   "Ine > Inr" indicates that the job seeker is more potent or influential than the interviewer.

(8)   "Ine-clear" signifies that the job seeker's intention is clear.

(9)   "Ine-vague" means that the job seeker's intention is not clear.

These annotation symbols are utilized to analyze and categorize the roles, intentions, and dynamics of the participants in the conversations.

5. Data analysis

Based on the analysis of the corpus and the concept of interaction degree, this paper categorizes the program into three stages: the opening stage with low interaction degree, the multiple interaction stage with high interaction degree, and the decision end-stage with medium interaction degree. The qualitative analysis focuses on the host's discourse and language control models during the high interaction stage of job-hunting reality shows. The high interaction stage is the central and most intense part of the program, involving all the guests present, including the host, job seekers, recruitment team, and career consultants. During this stage, the participants engage in debates and discussions, expressing their own perspectives and highlighting different interpretations of the topics and phenomena being discussed. This enhances the program's intensity and captivates the audience's attention.

This study aims to analyze the target, motivation, location, and form distribution of the host's improvised speech elicitation in various contexts during the multiple interaction stage. It will further summarize the patterns of improvised speech initiation that align with each specific context.

5.1 Exploring variations in initiating improvised speech

5.1.1 Initiating words

The initiating words are predetermined phrases or words that have specific usage and meaning in the elicitation language, and they serve the purpose of prompting or eliciting a particular response (Yang 2012).

☐   Directly initiating words

Direct initiating words are specific words or phrases that directly initiate or prompt a response during a conversation. These words typically have a commanding or controlling meaning. Examples of direct initiating words include "say it," "go on," "come on," and so on.

☐   Response initiating words

Response initiating words serve as feedback from the host, expressing their acknowledgement or approval of the guest's response and also encouraging the guest to continue speaking. These words indicate active listening and convey the message of "I'm listening, please go ahead."

☐   Prompt initiating words

Prompt initiating words are used by the host during the dialogue with guests to prompt them to provide specific answers or examples. These words include phrases like "for example," "specifically," "give an example," "and," "so it," and others.

☐   Interrupting initiating words

Interrupting initiating words are used by the host to forcefully interject and seize the guest's speaking turn at crucial moments. This is done to steer the program in a predetermined direction and prevent any potential awkwardness.

☐   Repeat initiating words

Repeat initiating words emerge as the host paraphrases guest's statements, repeating them in order to emphasize certain points or raise doubts, thereby capturing the audience's attention.

☐   Addressing initiating words

Addressing initiating words are used by the host during interactions with guests to maintain control over the timing and smoothly guide the program. By addressing the

guest by name, the host triggers a response, ensuring that the conversation remains organized and engaging, avoiding any potential chaos or lulls in the conversation.

 Question initiating words

Question-initiating words are employed by hosts during interactions with guests to convey surprise, doubt, or exclamation regarding the events or attitudes expressed by the guest. These words are intended to prompt the guest to provide additional explanation or clarification regarding the described events, thereby adding more specific details.

5.1.2 Initiating Sentences

An initiating sentence is a type of utterance that serves an eliciting function in the conversation. It is used to initiate or elicit a response from the interlocutor and has a specific meaning and usage within the context of the conversation. Initiating sentences can be classified into two types: simple initiating sentences and compound initiating sentences, as discussed by Yang (2012).

 Expressive initiating sentences

Expressive initiating sentences are used by the host to describe or explain an objective fact, with the intention of stimulating the guest to express their views and feelings regarding the discussed event. The purpose is to seek the guest's approval, addition, agreement, or disagreement.

 Solicited initiating sentences

Solicitated initiating sentences are used by the host to lead the guest in providing a response and conveying specific information. These sentences often begin with phrases such as "I want to ask," "I want to know," or "I am curious," directly indicating the host's statement and request for information.

 Transitive initiating sentences

Transitive initiating sentences involve the use of transitions in the conversation between the host and guest to change and connect topics. These sentences serve as a bridge between different aspects of the discussion, facilitating a smooth transition from one topic to another.

 Triggering initiating sentences

Triggering initiating sentences are characterized by the use of general statements such as "you say," "talk," "comment," "tell," "please," and similar expressions. These sentences are typically used to introduce an open-ended topic, inviting the guest to provide a detailed and declarative response.

 Restatement initiating sentences

The host utilizes restatement-initiating sentences to actively express surprise, wonder, or astonishment in response to the information provided by the guest. To ensure clarity and avoid any misunderstanding, the host restates the guest's words or expresses the same meaning using phrases like "meaning..." or "That means...". These confirmatory phrases aim to prompt the guest to respond again, reinforcing the clarity of the previous message.

 Selective initiating sentences

Selective initiating sentences are to create a decision-making situation where the guest is prompted to choose between different options or provide their preference. This is often done using a fixed format such as "...... or ......", "is it ...... or ......" and similar structures to elicit specific information from the guest.

☐ Hypothetical initiating sentences

A hypothetical initiating sentence occurs when the host presents a hypothetical situation to the guest and prompts them to respond. It is commonly structured using phrases such as "What if ...... you would ......?" or "What if ...... what if ......?" The purpose is to engage the guest in a thought experiment and elicit their response or opinion on the hypothetical scenario.

☐ Divergent initiating sentences

Divergent initiating sentences are characterized by the use of interrogative pronouns or phrases by the host to replace the unknown part of the elicitation when seeking a response from the guest. Common examples of interrogative pronouns and phrases include "How do you..." "How..." "Which..." and so on. These types of sentences allow for a higher degree of freedom in the guest's answer, encouraging them to provide more detailed information or insights.

☐ Restricted initiating sentences

Restrictive initiating sentences involve one party asking a specific question that restricts the response of the other party. These types of trigger sentences impose limitations on the content of the answer, narrowing down the range of possible solutions and focusing on specific information. They demonstrate the host's greater control over the guest, guiding the respondent to follow predetermined ideas in their response and ensuring the conversation stays on track.

☐ Exclamatory initiating sentences

Exclamatory initiating sentences involve the use of an exclamatory clause within the presenter's initiating statement. They express a sense of exclamation, surprise, excitement, or other emotional reactions to the preceding content.

☐ Evaluative initiating sentences

Evaluative initiating sentences involve the host providing an evaluative response to the guest's event or viewpoint in the previous round of conversation. These statements serve to trigger the guest to provide further elaboration or explanation, facilitating a deeper exploration of the topic.

☐ Compound initiating sentences

A complex elicitation refers to a compound sentence composed of multiple clauses, each serving different discourse functions. This type of sentence, also known as a compound elicitation, combines various forms to create a complex trigger for the guest's response.

5.1.3 Analysis of expression patterns in the multiple interactions——high interaction stage

☐ Interactive situational analysis: job seekers are less potent than the interviewer situation

The term "power" refers to the social status of the two parties involved in the discourse, where one holds more power than the other in a specific context (Holmes and Stubbe 2015). Through corpus analysis, it was observed that in the multiple interactions stage, the interviewers gain a basic understanding of the job seekers and actively participate in the core exploration session, where they begin to ask questions and assess the capabilities of the job seekers. Conversely, the job seekers strive to present themselves in the best possible light to impress and receive recognition from the interviewers, ultimately securing suitable positions. In this scenario, the interviewers hold more speaking power, while the job seekers find themselves in a passive position. This study refers to this situation as the power imbalance where the job seekers have lower power than the interviewers.

(1) Objects and motives triggered by improvised speech

In the multi-interaction stage, the moderator plays a crucial role in stimulating interaction among the job seeker, interviewer, and career consultant, facilitating the exchange of valuable information. In situations where the job seeker's power is lower than that of the interviewer, the job seeker finds themselves in a vulnerable position. To assist the job seeker in securing employment within a limited timeframe, the host actively engages in the conversation process by introducing, supplementing, encouraging, clarifying, and employing other expressions to ensure understanding.

The host prompts the job seeker to express themselves while ensuring the interviewer speaks at the appropriate times. This interaction serves two purposes: firstly, it allows for a deeper exploration of the topic through interaction with the interviewer, and secondly, it enables the transmission of information regarding the interviewer's hiring requirements and the initial impression of the job seeker. Through a comprehensive understanding of both parties' needs, a brief interaction with the career consultant is initiated.

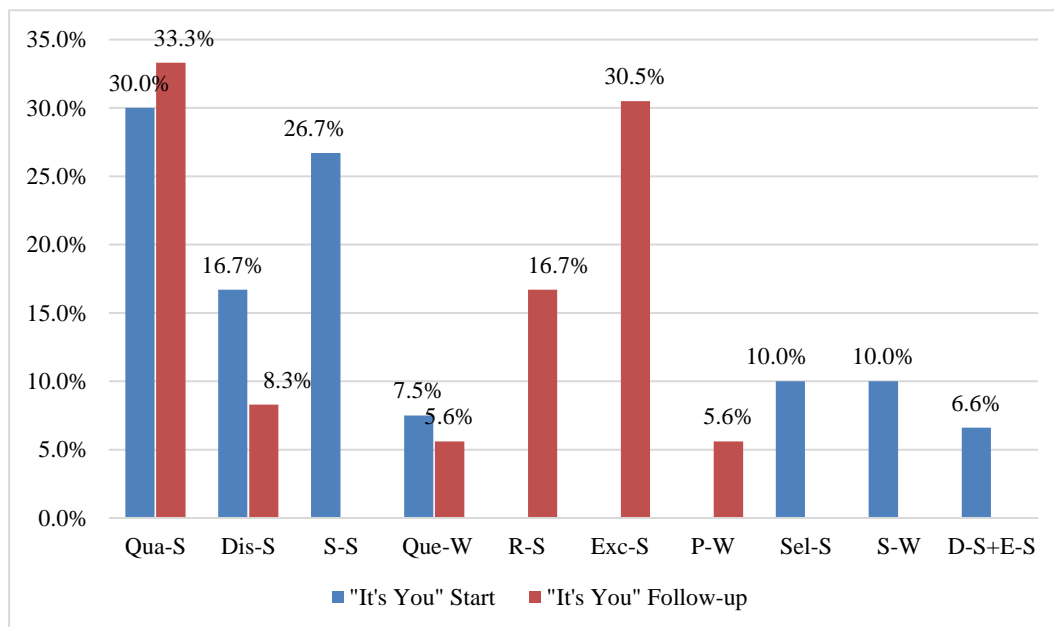(2) Location and form distribution of improvised speech initiation

Figure 1. Frequency distribution diagram of Ine form triggered by host's speech in the scenario of Ine＜Inr

As depicted in Figure 1, during the multiple interactions—high interaction stage, when the power of the job seeker is lower than that of the interviewer, the moderator employs seven different forms of verbal triggers at the initial trigger position when engaging the job seeker. In the "It's You" program, the moderator primarily utilizes restrictive and solicited trigger sentences, accounting for 30.0% and 26.7%, respectively. Given the passive state of the job seekers in this context, the hosts need to guide them in continuously presenting themselves to allow the interviewers to gain a better understanding and assist them in securing suitable positions within a limited time.

By using a restricted form of trigger, the moderator aims to elicit specific information from the job seeker, thereby narrowing the scope of their response and prompting them to provide more precise details. This approach serves to bridge the psychological gap between the host and job seeker, encouraging the job seeker to share their deeper thoughts and provide elaborate explanations.

In the subsequent trigger position, the moderators utilized seven verbal triggers. In the program "It's You," the hosts predominantly employed limiting and evaluative stimuli for

guidance, accounting for 33.3% and 30.5% respectively. The objective is to delve deeper into the topic and provide more detailed information to the interviewer. By using a narrower range of answers and clearer direction, similar to the "follow-up" trigger form, the host advances the discussion following the initial elaboration by the job seeker in the starting position.

To elicit a more profound perspective from the job seeker, the moderator briefly evaluates the information or ideas expressed by the job seeker in the previous round of dialogue. This evaluative approach serves to capture the attention and interest of the job seeker and subsequently inspire them to convey valuable information.

In summary, in the high interaction stage of multiple interactions, the job seeker's power is lower than that of the interviewer. The host's primary objective is to trigger the job seeker to help them secure a job by employing a more focused form of questioning. This approach facilitates a closer and more specific interaction between the two parties, leading to clear and precise responses to each question. Subsequently, the topic is further explored, enabling the interviewer to gather more information about the job seeker and deepen their understanding. This article can be summarized as an in-depth style of follow-up questioning.
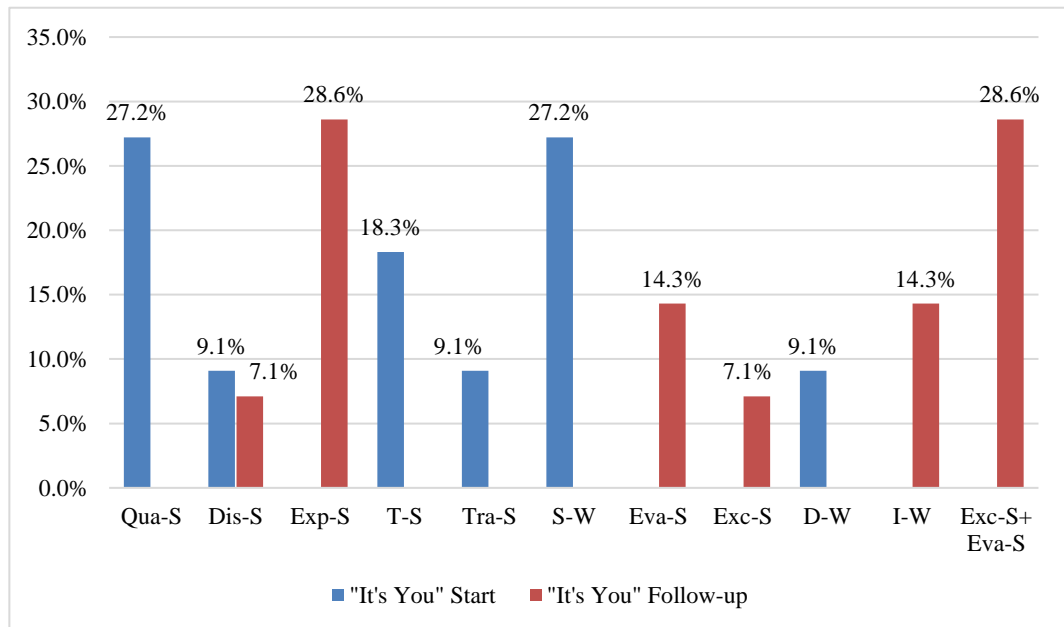

Figure 2. Frequency distribution diagram of Inr form triggered by host's speech in the scenario of Ine＜Inr

As depicted in Figure 2, in the high interaction stage of multiple interactions, where the job seeker's power is lower than that of the interviewer, the host employs six forms of verbal triggers to initiate interactions with the interviewer at the starting position. In the program "It's You," the host primarily utilizes restrictive triggering sentences and address triggering words, with each accounting for 27.2%. Given this context, the job seekers are in a highly solicited position, and the host needs to trigger both the job seekers and the interviewer to provide relevant information and make statements during the process. The moderator employs specific questions to facilitate precise information exchange between the two parties. Since the interviewer may not have complete control over the program or be as familiar with its rhythm as the host, the host must use addressable trigger words to provide sufficient cues and ensure a smooth transition when handing over the show to the interviewer.

In the follow-up initiation position, the hosts employed six verbal triggers. In the program "It's You," the hosts mainly used expressive initiation sentences and compound initiation

sentences combining exclamatory and evaluative elements, with each accounting for 28.6%. After triggering the interviewer to provide relevant job information in the starting position, the host continues by providing accurate descriptions of the topic or expressing their own opinions, engaging in a lively exchange with the interviewer to encourage further discussion. As the high interaction stage serves as the climax of the program, the host aims to delve deeper into the topic. Therefore, they construct comprehensive and elaborate compound trigger sentences to convey their emotions, which not only encourages the interviewer to speak from the heart but also facilitates the transfer of information to the job seekers indirectly.

To summarize, in the multiple interactions——high interaction stage, the job seeker has lower power compared to the interviewer. The moderator plays a crucial role in granting the interviewer the opportunity to speak at the appropriate time, allowing the job seeker to understand the interviewer's stance. By employing qualitative trigger sentences, the moderator maintains control over the conversation's overarching objective. They use prompt trigger words to transfer the discourse power and engage in a collision of viewpoints with the interviewer, gradually advancing the interactive topic. This paper categorizes these interactions as a derivative penetration style.
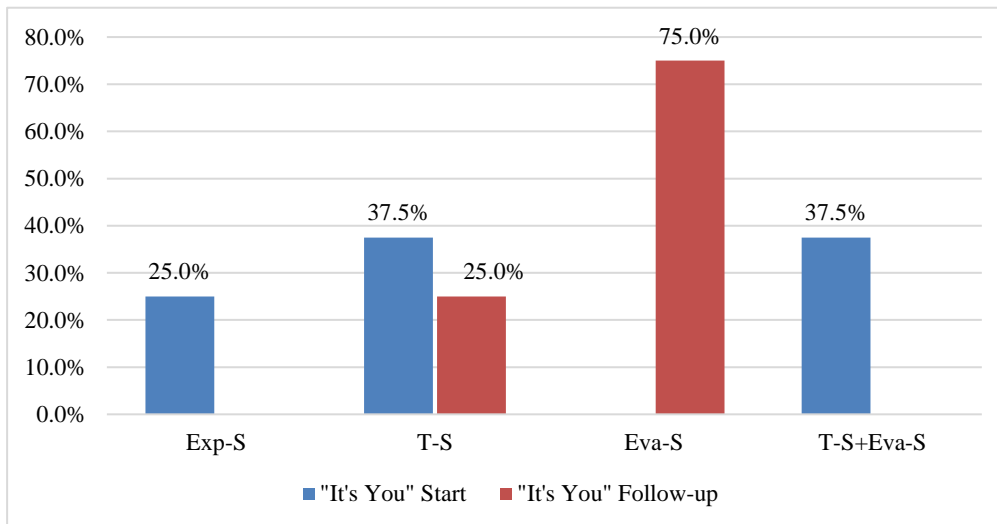

Figure 3. Frequency distribution diagram of E form triggered by host's speech in the scenario of Ine＜Inr

As depicted in Figure 3, in the multiple interactions——high interaction stage, where the job seeker has less power than the interviewer, the presenter employed three discourse trigger forms at the initial triggering position when engaging the career advisor. In the program "It's You," the presenter predominantly utilized triggering initiating sentences and trigger + evaluation compound initiating sentences, each accounting for 37.5%. In this scenario, the moderator, candidate, and interviewer were engaged in an intense discursive exchange phase. To provide comprehensive and reasonable analysis to both candidates, the host utilized a straightforward sentence such as "Please tell me..." or "Comment on..." to directly shift the discourse to the career advisor, who speaks and advises both parties.

In the follow-up initiation position, the hosts employed two forms of verbal initiation: provocative and evaluative initiation sentences. In the program "It's You," the moderator predominantly used evaluative initiation sentences, accounting for 75.0%. After triggering the career advisor in the starting trigger position to provide guidance and assessment to the job seeker and interviewer, the presenter would further encourage the career advisor to respond with a self-opinionated tone and guide them to offer more professional and detailed advice.

To sum up, in the multiple interactions - high interaction stage, where the power of the job applicant is lower than that of the interviewer, the moderator effectively intervenes during the interaction between the two parties. This is achieved through timely interjections, precise comments, and the use of derived, supplementary, and corrective approaches to trigger the involvement of the career consultant. The career consultant conveys professional perspectives and values to guide the two-way selection process between candidates. This phenomenon is referred to as intersectional embeddedness in this paper.

☐　　　Interactive situational analysis: job seekers are more potent than the interviewer situation

After entering the multiple interaction stage, a unique situation arises where exceptionally outstanding job seekers receive high recognition from the interviewer and become sought after by the interviewer members. In this scenario, the power dynamic reverses, and the applicants take the initiative to apply for the job while the interviewer members find themselves in the position of being selected. This paper refers to this situation as a scenario where the applicant's power is higher than that of the interviewer.

(1) Objects and motives triggered by improvised speech

In a situation where the power of the job seeker is higher than that of the interviewer, the moderator is also crucial in provoking the job seeker, interviewer, and career counselor to facilitate the interaction among all three parties and ensure the smooth progress of the job hunting. In this scenario, the host plays a primary role in prompting the job seeker to respond, aiming to guide them towards expressing their job search needs in more elaborate detail, enabling the interviewer to gain a deeper understanding of the job seeker. The host initiates the interviewer's core motivation, which is to maintain control over the topic and the program's overall process, preventing the interviewer from dominating the conversation and causing chaos. When multiple participants engage in the interaction, it is inevitable that there will be overlapping speech, which can impact the fluency and clarity of the conversation. Therefore, the moderator can intervene appropriately by triggering the interviewer's responses.

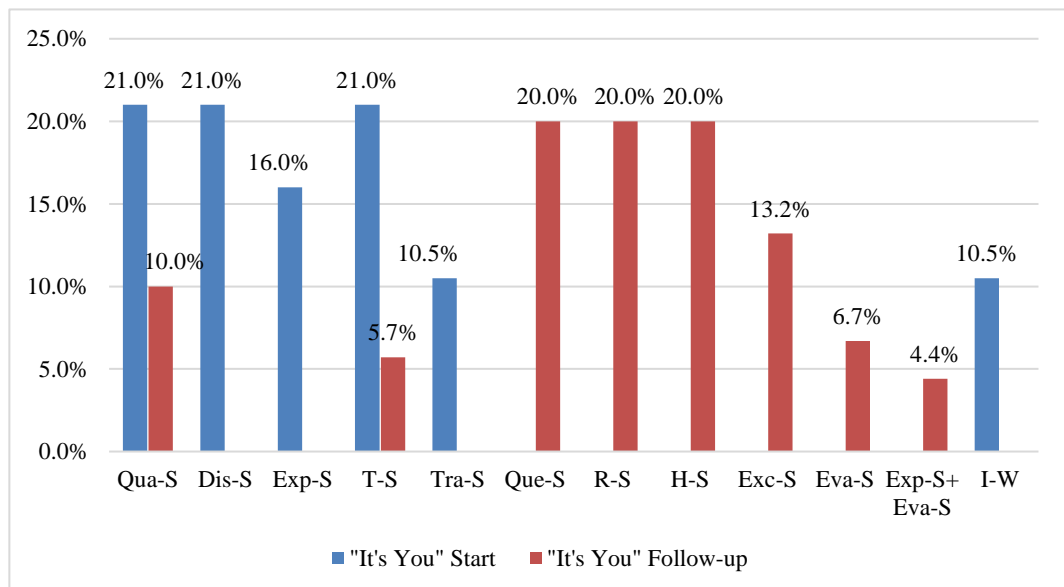(2) Location and form distribution of improvised speech initiation

Figure 4. Frequency distribution diagram of Ine form triggered by host's speech in the scenario of Ine＞Inr

As shown in Figure 4, in the multi-interaction - high interaction stage, where the power of the job seeker is higher than that of the interviewer, the moderator employs six types of verbal triggers at the initial initiation position when provoking the job seekers. In the program "It's You," the moderator predominantly utilizes restrictive initiation sentences, divergent initiation sentences, and trigger initiation sentences, with each accounting for 21.0%. In this context, the hosts aim to elicit specific ideas and intentions from the job seekers by triggering their responses. They employ qualitative triggers to maintain control over the overall direction of the topic, while employing divergent and triggered triggers to encourage the job seekers to express more responses, ideas, attitudes, and information.

The hosts primarily utilized eight forms of verbal initiation in the follow-up initiation position. In the program "It's You," the hosts predominantly employed question-initiating words, restatement initiating sentences, and hypothetical initiating sentences, each accounting for 20.0%. After introducing the topic, the host's objective is to guide the job seekers to provide more precise and detailed expressions. They achieve this by using phrases like "Oh?" or "Is that so?" to seek confirmation and affirmation from the job seekers regarding their statements. Additionally, the host may rephrase the job seeker's words to confirm understanding. At times, the host may propose hypothetical scenarios to prompt the job seekers' response, aiming to gauge their ability to handle different situations and assess their problem-solving skills. Moreover, the host may employ evaluative statements to summarize the job seeker's previous statements, conveying this information to the interviewer to facilitate the job seeker's success.

To summarize, in the multiple interaction-high interaction stage, where the job seeker holds more power than the interviewer, the moderator initiates the conversation by employing a mix of closed and open-ended approaches. The aim is to guide the job seeker in presenting themselves and encourage them to elaborate on various aspects of their information. To delve deeper into the topic and extract more details, the moderator may evaluate, restate, or express doubt about the information discussed in the previous conversation round, prompting the candidate to provide additional information or specific explanations. This paper refers to this style as a continuation advancement approach.
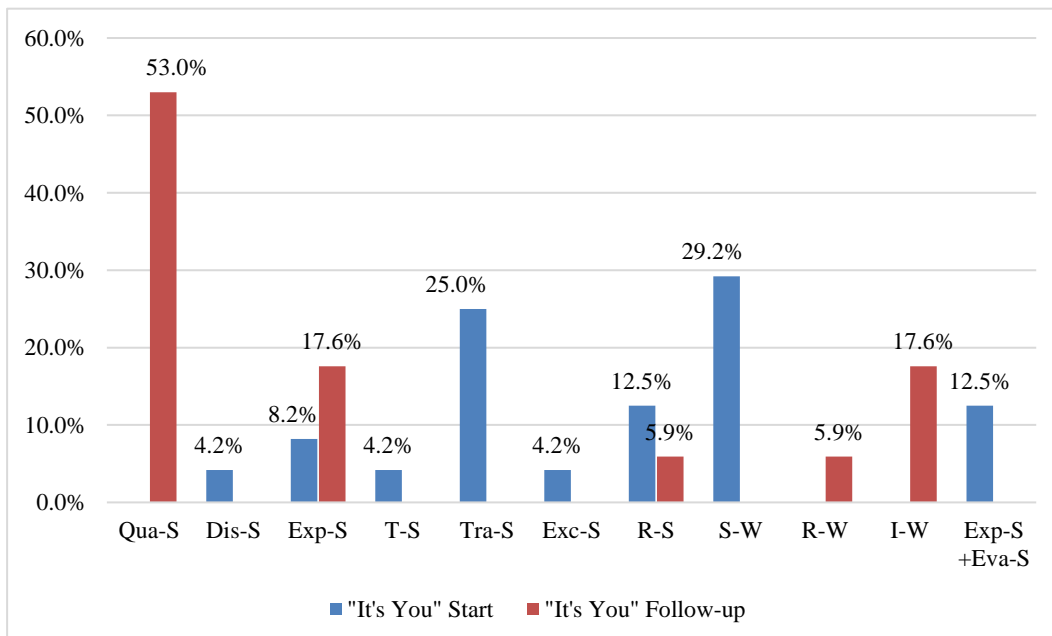

Figure 5. Frequency distribution diagram of Inr form triggered by host's speech in the scenario of Ine＞Inr

As shown in Figure 5, in the multiple interaction-high interaction stage, where the job seeker holds more power than the interviewer, the hosts employ eight forms of verbal

initiations at the starting initiation position to trigger the interviewer. In the program "It's You," the hosts predominantly use addressable trigger words and transitive trigger sentences, accounting for 29.2% and 25.0% respectively. In tense situations, the hosts may interrupt the conversation and use concise guiding language such as "next...", "the following..." to properly trigger, guide, and control the interviewer in a precise and effective manner.

In the follow-up initiation position, the hosts utilized five verbal initiation sentences. In the program "It's You" the moderator primarily employed restrictive initiations, accounting for 53.0%. After the moderator initiates the conversation with addressable or transitive triggers in the starting position, they delve deeper into the topic and use a narrower range of responses to guide the interviewer in providing more specific details about the job opportunity. This helps the job seeker gain a better understanding of the position and facilitates their potential decision-making.

In summary, during the stage of multiple interactions with high engagement, the power dynamic between the job seeker and the interviewer is characterized by the job seeker holding a position of greater authority. The moderator strategically triggers the interviewer to respond in order to avoid any competition among interviewer members to speak first, which could lead to confusion and an imbalance of power, thereby disrupting the program's flow. By skillfully utilizing transitive initiation sentences, addressable initiation words, and qualitative initiation sentences, the moderator interjects at appropriate moments and guides the interviewer to delve deeper into the topic. This paper refers to this approach as "insertion leap".
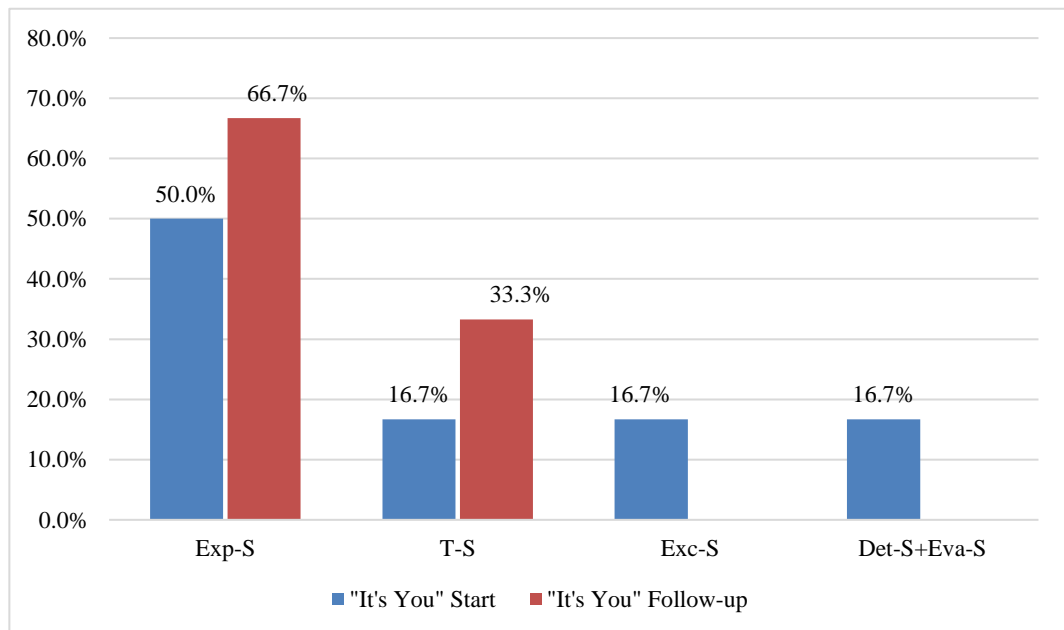

Figure 6. Frequency distribution diagram of E form triggered by host's speech in the scenario of Ine＞Inr

As depicted in Figure 6, the host employed four types of verbal initiation sentences at the beginning of the triggering process when engaging career consultants in the multiple interactions - high interaction stage, where the power dynamic favors the job seekers over the interviewer.

In the program "It's You", the hosts primarily utilized expressive eliciting sentences, comprising 50.0% of their approach. In this scenario, job seekers are confronted with numerous employment options. The hosts employ a similar strategy by prompting with "Please ask the career advisor ....." to direct and guide them in making statements. They

also employ descriptive or explanatory statements to elicit the careeradvisor's perspectives and emotions.

In the follow-up initiation position, the hosts employed two types of verbal initiation: expressive initiation sentences and triggering initiation sentences. In the program "It's You," the hosts primarily used expressive initiation sentences, accounting for 66.7% of their approach. Typically, after listening to the career consultant's presentation, the host refrains from asking excessive questions or providing extensive comments to avoid disrupting the job seeker's thought process. Instead, they objectively present the facts to elicit further expression of the career consultant's opinions and ultimately offer a personalized career development solution for the job seeker.

To summarize, in the multiple interactions - high interaction stage, the power of the job applicant surpasses that of the interviewer. The host takes the role of guiding the career consultant to intervene in the recruitment process, providing comments and suggestions based on the job applicant's performance in real-time. This approach helps job applicants gain a clear understanding of their career path and make informed decisions regarding the available positions. This paper refers to this approach as a homeopathic method.

By analyzing the targets, motivations, positions, and forms of impromptu speech triggered by the host in the multiple interactions - high interaction stage, where the power dynamics vary between the job seeker and the interviewer, two modes of expression were identified: the chase deepening + derivative penetration + intersectional embedding mode, and the continuity + insertion jump + homeopathic deepening mode. These modes effectively capture the essence of the stage and provide a framework for understanding the different approaches employed by the host.

6. Discussion and conclusions

6.1 Discussion

This study focuses on the host's "improvisational speech initiation" in a job-hunting reality show. The study utilizes a research corpus consisting of 15 episodes of "It's You" and incorporates relevant theories in broadcasting, communication, and pragmatics. The study conducts a comprehensive analysis of the targets, motivations, positions, and forms triggered by the host's impromptu speech in different situations during the multi-interaction stage of job-hunting reality shows. It then constructs the expression modes resulting from the host's impromptu speech.

Based on previous relevant research, this study categorizes the multiple interaction-high interaction stage of the show, taking into account the distinctive features of job-seeking reality TV programs. This division is based on corpus analysis and distinguishes between situations where the job seeker's power is below that of the interviewer and situations where the job seeker's power is above that of the interviewer.

Besides, through corpus analysis, this study identifies seven types of initiating words and 12 types of initiating sentences. The location of improvised speech initiation is categorized into the starting initiating location and the subsequent initiating location. The objects of improvised speech initiation include job seekers, interviewers, and career consultants. By considering the objects, motives, and positions of improvised speech elicitation in different contexts, the forms of improvised speech initiation are quantitatively analyzed. The most frequently used initiation forms in each context are identified based on their distribution. Comprehensive analysis is conducted to construct expression patterns based on the findings.

Additionally, this study proposes a model of improvised verbal elicitation expressions in different contexts within the multiple interaction stage. In the scenario where the job seeker's power is lower than the interviewer's, the model consists of the pursuit

deepening, derivative penetration, and intersectional embedding mode. On the other hand, in the scenario where the job seeker's power is higher than the interviewer's, the model comprises the continuity, insertion jump, and homeopathic deepening mode.

6.2 Theoretical contributions

Based on a comprehensive analysis of pragmatics theory, this study integrates theoretical knowledge from broadcasting, psychology, and semantics to examine real conversational data from job-seeking reality TV programs. It constructs a discourse control mechanism and operational mode of speech acts in these programs, offering a theoretical foundation that can guide the advancement of reality TV programs and the hosting industry.

To begin with, leveraging the theory of discourse control behavior, this study performs a comprehensive analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, of the hosts' speech initiation expressions across diverse contexts within reality job search programs. It introduces novel forms of speech initiation employed by the hosts, thereby enriching the understanding of speech initiation and expanding the research scope within the media field.

Furthermore, this study introduces a systematic model for eliciting improvised speech from hosts of job-seeking reality TV programs, integrating multiple elements through a comprehensive analysis. The findings provide a new theoretical foundation for the advancement of improvised verbal expression in broadcasting and hosting. Moreover, they offer valuable insights for enhancing the theoretical framework of improvised hosting in the broadcasting and hosting industry.

Additionally, this study extends the application of the theory of discourse control behavior to the research domain of job-seeking reality shows, thereby enriching the theoretical framework of discourse control behavior. The findings serve as a valuable reference for further refining the theoretical system of discourse control behavior in this specific domain.

6.3 Practical Implications: Bridging Theory and Application in Job-Seeking Reality TV Programs

The synergy of theory and practice is evident as conducting a systematic analysis of the theory behind job-seeking reality shows holds significant value in guiding practical applications and enhancing their effectiveness. The insights gained from such analysis serve as a valuable reference for effectively implementing these theories in practical contexts.

To begin with, by leveraging the theory of discourse control acts, this study examines the expressive characteristics and patterns of impromptu speech initiation by the host across diverse scenarios within the multiple interaction stages. Subsequently, it constructs a comprehensive model of impromptu speech initiation. This research provides valuable insights for professionals involved in program hosting, addressing the challenge of effectively guiding guest interactions during the show.

Second, improvisation is a challenging task that requires skill and precision. This study aims to investigate the patterns and traits of hosts' improvised speech in job-hunting reality TV shows. The findings offer comprehensive and detailed references for both theoretical research and practical teaching of improvisational hosting courses.

Moreover, this study adopts the framework of "host initiation" and "guest response" to analyze the host's speech in job-hunting reality TV programs. It comprehensively investigates the characteristics and patterns of the host's speech in various contextual settings, providing valuable guidance and references for a wide range of reality TV programs.

6.4 Limitations and future research directions

It is important to note that this paper focuses solely on the analysis and research of job-hunting reality TV programs in China, without conducting a comparative study with similar programs in Western countries. Future research should consider expanding the scope to include comparative analysis, which would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and enable cross-cultural insights into the dynamics of such programs.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that this study employs a cross-sectional design, conducted within a relatively short time span, which inevitably imposes limitations on the breadth and depth of the research content. To address this limitation, future researchers should consider employing a longitudinal study approach. By observing the development and changes of job-hunting reality TV programs over an extended period, a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis can be conducted, allowing for a more robust understanding of the subject matter and its evolving nature.

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