

Abstract

The study aims at investigating the different rules for formulation of disagreement in three cultures, namely Mainland China, Hong Kong and USA. Participants were asked to discuss a shipwreck scenario and rank the 15 survival items with descending order of survival facilitation in same-sex groups. A coding system was devised including counting of personal pronouns and a taxonomy of disagreement tactics. Results showed cultural and gender differences in formulating disagreement among the three cultures. Guangzhouese groups used the fewest personal pronouns as they were more hesitant to direct verbal inputs to others or to “own” their verbal inputs. The Guangzhou female and Hong Kong male groups also adopted more external resources as references to disagree with others, which can be explained by emphasis in harmony and collectivism in the Chinese groups. Further research is suggested to investigate any cultural difference between Hong Kong and Mainland China attributable to different social and political background.