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A pragmatic analysis of traditional Chinese toasts: the role played by age and gender

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Abstract

This study investigates the pragmatic aspects of traditional Chinese toasts, focusing on the role of age and gender in shaping their linguistic features and social functions. Toasts are a key component of Chinese social interactions, serving as vehicles for expressing respect, reinforcing relationships, and negotiating social roles. Drawing on data collected from spontaneous and elicited toasts across diverse social settings, this research examines how age and gender influence the structure, style, and strategic delivery of toasts. The findings reveal that older participants tend to use more formal and respectful language, emphasizing traditional values and hierarchy, while younger speakers favor casual and innovative expressions, reflecting modern social dynamics. Gender differences are also evident, with males often employing assertive and status-oriented language, whereas females prioritize relational and emotive strategies. By providing a detailed analysis of the pragmatic and cultural dimensions of traditional Chinese toasts, this study enhances our understanding of the intersection between language, culture, and social identity. The findings have broader implications for research on speech acts and intercultural communication, highlighting the evolving role of language in maintaining social cohesion and navigating cultural change.

Keywords: Toasts; Chinese; Pragmatic analysis; Age; Gender; Social roles

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Research motivation

In Chinese social culture, toasting is an extremely common and important behavior, which runs through various social occasions, such as family gatherings, business banquets, and friends' gatherings. Toasting is not only a simple drinking ritual, but also an important part of interpersonal communication. Through toasting, people can express respect, gratitude, blessings and other emotions to others, thereby strengthening the connection between each other, maintaining and enhancing social relations. For example, in family gatherings, toasting is often a way to express family affection and family harmony; in business banquets, toasting helps to establish cooperative relationships and promote business exchanges. Although this behavior varies in different cultural backgrounds, it occupies a unique position in social interaction.

Toasting behavior has a long history in China and can be traced back to ancient society. In ancient times, wine was an indispensable part of sacrificial and celebratory activities, and toasting was an important ritual in these activities. Shi (1999)'s research on the origin of Chinese etiquette mentioned the important position of wine in ancient etiquette activities, which provided a basis for the historical origin of toasting behavior. Over time, toasting behavior gradually expanded from the religious and sacrificial fields to social occasions in daily life, becoming a way to express emotions and social interaction. For example, in ancient poetry, we often see descriptions of toasting scenes, which reflects the important position of toasting in social life at that time.

In modern society, although toasting behavior retains its core value, it has also been affected by modern culture and social changes and has undergone some evolution. On the one hand, with the progress of society and the change of people's concepts, the

ways and etiquette of toasting have become more diverse and flexible; on the other hand, the complexity of modern social occasions has also made toasting behavior acquire more functions and meanings. For example, in business banquets, toasting is not only a form of social etiquette, but may also involve the maintenance of business interests and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, the advocacy of healthy and civilized drinking in modern society has also had a certain impact on toasting behavior. Peng's (2017) study of traditional etiquette and contemporary civilization also reflects the evolution of etiquette in modern society, which inspired me to think about the changes in toasting behavior too.

Some time ago, when I was chatting with a former classmate, he mentioned that the company he worked for held an annual meeting and drank a lot of wine. In order not to lose manners in front of the leader, he was very nervous and prepared a lot of toasts in advance. This reminds me that in daily social life and observations of Chinese culture, I deeply appreciate the universality and importance of toasting in interpersonal communication. Hu and Yang (2000) emphasized the important role of etiquette in society in their research, which further aroused my attention to toasting. At the same time, with the increasing frequency of cross-cultural communication today, I found that people from different cultural backgrounds have great differences in their understanding and practice of toasting. For example, Bian and Gao (2004)'s research on the differences between Chinese and Western food cultures discussed differences in table etiquette, which also included differences in toasting behavior.

My research on Chinese toasting behavior aims to explore its cultural meanings and the social factors that shape it, ultimately providing insights for its development in modern society.

1.2 Research objectives

This study aims to explore the multifaceted manifestations of toasting behavior in China under the influence of different social variables. The core goal is to reveal the

expression and strategic changes of toasting behavior in different social contexts, as well as the complex social and cultural factors involved behind them. Specifically, the study focuses on the three key issues.

First, I focus on the influence of different ages, genders, and social roles on the language practice of toasting. The vocabulary, sentence structure, and communicative strategies used in toasting may vary significantly among different groups. For example, young people may prefer to use concise, modern vocabulary and more casual expressions, while older people may pay more attention to traditional, formal wording. People of different genders and social status, who may thus interact with peers, superiors and subordinates, may have different preferences in their toasting discourse.

Second, I explore how these factors affect individuals' views on toasting behavior. People of different ages, genders, and social roles may have different perceptions of the purpose, meaning, and importance of toasting. For example, young people may regard toasting as a way of social interaction and expressing friendliness, while older people may emphasize its importance in inheriting culture and maintaining social relations. Also, during toasting events, women may pay more attention to the role of emotional communication, while men may pay more attention to its status and influence in social occasions. Finally, depending on their role-relationships, communication participants during toasting events may mention different topics or perform different functions.

Finally, I want to explore the social functions, values and norms of toasting behavior among different social groups such as in family gatherings, professional occasions and social activities. In family gatherings, toasting may serve more to express family affection and family harmony; in professional occasions, toasting may be related to business cooperation, interpersonal relationship maintenance and career development; in social activities, toasting may focus on expanding personal connections and

enhancing friendship. At the same time, people may abide by different norms and have different value judgments on toasting, which reflect their different social and cultural backgrounds and group membership.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This paper divided into five chapters. This chapter introduces the background, purpose and significance of the study, and explains why toasting behavior in Chinese social gatherings is chosen as an object of study and the research objectives to be achieved. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature, including existing research on Chinese etiquette, food culture, table etiquette, drinking table culture and toasting behavior, and analyzes the achievements and shortcomings of existing research. Chapter 3 describes the research methods, covering research design, participant recruitment, data collection tools and procedures, and data analysis methods. Chapter 4 presents the research results and analyzes the differences in the language and structure of toasts, topic selection, behavioral motivations, and views on toasting rules among different groups. Chapter 5 discusses and summarizes the research results, compares the results of this study with previous studies, highlights the contributions and the limitations of the study, and makes suggestions for future research directions.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter offers a review of the literature related to the cultural practice of toasting during meals and gatherings. Section 2.2 outlines the main traits of Chinese etiquette; Section 2.3 delves into the origin of Chinese food culture and the cultural heritage behind it; Section 2.4 explores the different table-manners cultures that developed around the world; and Section 2.5 zooms into different forms of etiquette at the wine table, and the use and meaning of toasts.

I looked for studies on Chinese etiquette, Chinese toasts, dining cultures and wine table etiquette in the online catalogue of Padua University (i.e., *GalileoDiscovery*), within the 1973-2023 time span, and using the following word combinations as my search words for relevant titles: *Chin* AND etiquette**, *toast**, *dining* AND cultural**, *Chin* AND toast**, *Chin* AND pragmatic**, *wine* AND table* AND etiquette* AND toast**, and *Chin* AND food**, *cultur* AND dimension*, *cultur* AND Chin**.

2.2. Chinese etiquette

Chinese etiquette, as an important part of China's long cultural tradition, developed over thousands of years of civilization. From the ancient Zhou rites (1046.B.C. - 256.B.C.) to today's modern etiquette, Chinese etiquette is not only a formal expression of politeness, but also a profound cultural symbol and a norm of social behavior. It embodies Chinese people's highly valued pursuit of harmony, respect and courtesy, and is an indispensable spiritual guide in interpersonal communication and social activities.

Etiquette education encompasses all aspects of social life, including appearance, manners, expressions, clothing, conversation, and interactions. It covers a range of interactions – personal, public, hospitality, dining, gifting, and civilized. Its core

principles are respect for others, self-discipline, moderation, and sincerity, thus ensuring polite and appropriate behavior.

Etiquette originates from within a social structure consisting in a clan system where hierarchical relationships are valued, which is then adapted to the needs of society. The Chinese word for *etiquette*, that is, “礼仪”, *Li Yi*, literally means ‘etiquette’ (*Li*) ‘ritual’ (*Yi*). *Li* is about behavioral norms and moral standards; *Yi* is about appearance and manners. *Li Yi* reflects the willingness of people to respect each other in communication, including in their use of language, appearance, manners and general demeanor.

According to the *Book of Changes*, written during the Western Zhou period (1046 B.C.-771 B.C.), behaving properly involves respecting heaven and earth, embodying ethnic, political, and religious ethics, and adhering to the core principles of etiquette and righteousness. Xunzi’s *On Rites* (312.B.C.) states: “Serving heaven above, serving the earth below, respecting the ancestors, and honoring the emperor and teachers are the three principles of ritual.” In particular, *Li*, or traditional etiquette culture, follows three primary ethical principles, that is, the natural ethics in harmony with heaven and earth, the family ethics centered on the emotion of commemorating ancestors, and the political ethics of advocating the king and teacher as the political and religious.

In modern times, the three traditional ethical principles have evolved; that is, more emphasis is placed on ecological ethics of harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature rather than passive worship of the gods of heaven and earth; more emphasis is placed on the social ethics of family and social harmony, rather than strictly adhering to hierarchical distinctions between superiors and subordinate; and more emphasis is placed on the “people-centered” political ethics of the socialist country, rather than the condescending “autocratic” rule (Xiao, 2022).

Shi (1999) explores Chinese etiquette's historical roots and cultural significance. This comprehensive study traces the development of ritual practices back to the primitive clan commune period, suggesting that Chinese ritualistic behaviors were deeply intertwined with societal and spiritual life from the earliest times. Shi emphasizes how these practices evolved from simple tribal customs to complex systems of rites governing social and spiritual life, eventually shaping Chinese civilization. He discusses various aspects of early rituals, including their role in tribal cohesion, social stratification, and the integration of spiritual beliefs with daily practices, highlighting how these early forms of etiquette played a pivotal role in ancient China's social structure and cultural identity. This exploration provides a foundational understanding of how deeply rooted Chinese etiquette is in the historical and cosmic beginnings of the culture, reflecting its profound influence on later societal developments.

Hu (2000) delves into the essential role of etiquette within social interactions and its broader implications for societal and moral development. Hu discusses how etiquette, deeply rooted in moral standards, guides behaviour and interpersonal relations, reinforcing social harmony and mutual respect. By promoting values such as respect for the elderly, courtesy in public settings, and appropriate behaviour in various social contexts, etiquette is portrayed as a pivotal element in advancing social civilization, cultivating personal morality, and facilitating effective communication.

Peng (2017) discusses how traditional Chinese rituals and manners, deeply rooted in Confucian philosophy, have historically promoted social harmony and personal dignity. He emphasizes the need for a resurgence of these practices to address modern societal challenges, such as the decline in public civility and the pervasive spread of crude internet language. The author advocates integrating these time-honoured principles into modern educational systems and public life to cultivate a more refined and respectful society. Peng argues that, by upholding these traditional values, China can reinforce its cultural heritage and enhance its national character, contributing positively to a global community.

After briefly outlining the historical origins and evolution of Chinese etiquette in general, I next describe the essential characteristics of Chinese food culture.

2.3. Chinese food culture

“What people eat is of course limited by availability, but it is also limited by culture” (Stephanie, 2022: <What is culture?>). Since the pre-Qin Dynasty (222 B.C. - 207 B.C.), Chinese diet and culture have evolved significantly in terms of ingredients, eating habits, and etiquette as a result of the influence of the yin-yang¹ and five-element² philosophy, Confucian ethics, traditional medicine and nutrition. Nowadays, Chinese food culture is renowned worldwide for its long history and profound cultural heritage.

Liu (2003) explores the rich and enduring nature of Chinese culinary culture, highlighting its deep ties to Chinese civilization. Its enduring appeal is due to its integration with core Chinese principles like harmony, a holistic approach to life, and the concept of “food as medicine.” Liu also emphasizes the significance of China’s early agricultural society, which provided a robust economic foundation for its diverse culinary landscape. The author shows how Chinese food culture is a mirror reflecting the historical, philosophical, and social fabric of the nation.

Yu (2002) discusses various aspects of Chinese cuisine such as meal composition, dietary habits, and ancient health beliefs about the benefits of warm and cold foods for digestion and well-being. Moreover, Yu explores the intricate role of flavor in Chinese cooking, where achieving a harmonious balance among diverse tastes is paramount, often involving complex seasoning techniques, in line with the

¹ *Yin* and *Yang* are two complementary forces in Chinese philosophy. *Yin* represents darkness, femininity, and passivity, while *Yang* symbolizes light, masculinity, and activity. Their balance is believed to maintain harmony in the universe.

² The Five Elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) are the fundamental building blocks of the universe in Chinese philosophy. They interact in a cyclical way to explain natural phenomena and to maintain balance in traditional Chinese medicine, divination, and other practices.

philosophical underpinnings of Chinese culture, which emphasizes harmony and balance in life. He also details the use of specific dining implements, such as chopsticks, which exemplify the technical and cultural nuances of Chinese dining. The sequence in which food is served, prioritizing the presentation and ritualistic aspects of dining, is also discussed as a reflection of the broader social values and hierarchical structures within Chinese society. This sequential serving method is seen as a way to honor guests and reflect the host's respect and hospitality, further illustrating how deeply intertwined food and social conduct are in Chinese culture. Through this detailed analysis, Yu elucidates how Chinese dietary traditions are not merely about sustenance, but are a profound expression of cultural identity and social ethics.

Wan (2002) elaborates on the complex interplay of factors that have sculpted China's diverse and rich culinary traditions. Wan attributes the development of Chinese cuisine to the varied natural environments across the vast landscape of China, continuous advancements in agricultural productivity, a cohesive political system, and deep-seated Confucian values. These components nurtured the physical ingredients available for distinct regional cuisines and shaped the cultural attitudes and practices surrounding food. The author argues that food in China is deeply intertwined with broader societal elements such as social hierarchy, cultural ideology, and political unity, showcasing how these factors collectively contribute to the sophistication and variety of Chinese culinary traditions.

Bian and Gao (2004) analyze the differences in food culture between China and Western nations like the UK and the USA. They examine the contrasting views on food, from its ceremonial importance in China to its utilitarian function in the West, highlighting communal dining and elaborate meals in Chinese culture versus the focus on nutrition and individual meals in the West. The authors explain that these distinctions are deeply rooted in historical and social contexts, influencing daily practices and interactions at the dining table. They also discuss the implications of

these differences for cross-cultural communication and the potential for mutual cultural enrichment, as globalization facilitates more significant interaction between these diverse food cultures.

Sun (2009) examines how historical contexts and philosophies have shaped the distinct dietary cultures of China and the U.S., reflecting broader cultural values like collectivism in China and individualism in the U.S. through differences in dietary conceptions and table manners. The study delves into the contrasting dietary structures, with a detailed analysis of meal composition and the predominance of certain food types, such as the emphasis on fresh vegetables and diverse cooking methods in Chinese cuisine versus the more straightforward, nutrition-focused meal preparation in American cuisine. Furthermore, Sun discusses the cultural implications of dining etiquette and meal-sharing practices, emphasizing how these practices not only reflect, but also reinforce social values and interpersonal relationships within each culture

Li (2023) provides an in-depth comparison of dietary cultures between the East (specifically China) and the West. It discusses how Chinese cuisine, diverse and technically elaborate, emphasizes the sensory experience of dining, focusing on flavors and communal eating. In contrast, Western cuisine prioritizes nutritional value and individual portions, reflecting a more utilitarian approach to food preparation and consumption. The book also explores the role of dining in social interactions and how these practices reflect broader cultural values, suggesting that understanding and respecting these differences is crucial in cross-cultural exchanges and globalized interactions.

Shen (2020) explores China's unique dining traditions, highlighting how communal dining reflects broader cultural philosophies. The practice of sharing meals from everyday dishes fosters harmony, togetherness, and social interaction. The author highlights various elements of Chinese dining etiquette, such as the hierarchical

seating arrangements and the ritualistic aspects of serving and sharing food, which reinforce social bonds and reflect the Confucian values of respect and propriety. Additionally, the analysis addresses the idea of harmony in food preparation, where a balance of flavors and ingredients symbolizes the philosophical pursuit of balance and unity in life. The discourse extends to the role of food and dining in expressing and maintaining 'face' or social respectability. The study critiques certain practices, such as excessive hospitality and the pressure to over-order or overeat, as a display of status and generosity, which can lead to waste, suggesting a need to refine these practices in modern times to align with contemporary values of sustainability and efficiency. The study suggests that these practices are evolving in response to changing social dynamics and values.

Overall, Chinese food culture can be described along several dimensions. First, it emphasizes the theory of nutrition and health, focusing on mainly vegetarian food, medicinal diets, and tonics. Second, it highlights the harmonious state of the five flavors, including sour, sweet, bitter, spicy, and salty. Furthermore, Chinese cuisine places a high value on fresh, delicious, and palatable flavors, complemented by innovative yet traditional cooking methods and a refreshing culinary philosophy that emphasizes gentle politeness and educational aspects through food. Also, Chinese food culture pays attention to the bright and picturesque color matching of dishes and the kind of interest generated by the dining atmosphere.

Finally, Chinese food culture directly affects Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and other countries, being the pivot of Eastern food culture; at the same time, it also indirectly affects Europe, America, Africa, and Oceania. Indeed, China's vegetarian culture, tea culture, sauce and vinegar, pasta, medicinal diet, ceramic tableware, and soybeans have benefited billions of people worldwide.

In short, Chinese food culture is a long-standing, multifaceted, regionally diverse culture. It has evolved in terms of the food sources and tableware it uses, the

preparation methods it adopts, and the attention it pays to nutrition, health care, and aesthetics, thus influencing the material and spiritual wealth of countries around the world.

2.4. Dining culture and etiquette

Table manners, as the name suggests, refer to the etiquette and common sense that should be followed when dining at the table, and refer to the various politeness standards recognized by human society when dining. Table manners vary across cultures and countries, but are always highly valued. In China, people who respect etiquette are more likely to gain the respect of others, which plays a vital role in shaping their image. Similarly, in the West, by learning and mastering dining etiquette, you can not only create a good image in front of others and win respect, but improve your accomplishments. In general, dining etiquette reflects personal qualities and the culture behind them.

Lin (2017) delves into the cultural significance of face, a concept deeply rooted in social esteem and respect, as manifested through the dining practices of Chinese and Western societies. More specifically, Lin examines the divergent approaches to dining etiquette, including the contrasting atmospheres at the dining table, customary practices in ordering food, the cultural implications of toasting, and the nuances of table conversation. This study highlights how broader cultural values—collectivism in China and individualism in the West—influence these practices, thereby shaping how face is maintained, negotiated, and valued in social interactions. Lin's work not only illustrates the differences in face culture, but also suggests the implications these differences have for cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Zhang's (2017) study provides a detailed comparative analysis of dining practices, emphasizing the cultural distinctions between the two cultures' seating arrangements, attire, meal sequences, and tableware usage. The document reveals how these dining protocols are not merely about food consumption, but are deeply integrated into the

cultural ethos, reflecting social values, tradition, and interpersonal communication. Chinese dining is portrayed as communal and celebratory. In contrast, Western dining emphasizes formality and nutritional balance, showcasing the significant role that cultural backgrounds play in shaping everyday social practices.

Wang (2015) offers an in-depth analysis of the differences and similarities in dining etiquette between China and Russia, highlighting how traditional values and social norms influence cultural practices. It covers aspects like host-guest protocols, dining manners, and use of utensils, illustrating how these practices reflect each culture's approach to hospitality and social interaction. For instance, Chinese dining emphasizes a collective experience where food and interaction are central to showing respect and building relationships, often involving lively conversations and communal eating. In contrast, Russian dining etiquette focuses more on formal settings with a structured use of cutlery, promoting a more subdued and orderly meal experience. This comparative analysis provides valuable insights into how deeply ingrained cultural values shape everyday practices in different societies.

Kong (2020) compares Chinese and Western dining etiquette, highlighting cultural, historical, and philosophical differences in seating, utensil use, and dining atmosphere. In Chinese culture, dining is a communal activity emphasizing harmony and collective enjoyment, where the use of chopsticks symbolizes the traditional values of togetherness and equality. Seating is hierarchically arranged to reflect respect for age and social status, encapsulating the Confucian principle of order within the family and society. Conversely, Western dining practices prioritize individuality and practicality, with meals often plated individually, and cutlery tailored to a dining style that respects personal space and convenience. Western etiquette also has specific rules about the placement of utensils and the manner of eating, which are less about communal harmony and more about individual dining experience and efficiency. The document explores how these dining practices reflect underlying cultural values and affect interpersonal relationships and social dynamics, offering insights into how such

rituals influence and are influenced by broader societal norms. This comparative approach not only enriches understanding between these diverse cultures, but also illustrates the significant role that dining etiquette plays in transmitting cultural values and conducting social interactions.

Kong (2020) provides an extensive comparative analysis of dining etiquette between Chinese and Western cultures. In Chinese culture, dining is a communal activity emphasizing harmony and collective enjoyment, using chopsticks that symbolize the traditional values of togetherness and equality. Seating is hierarchically arranged to reflect respect for age and social status, encapsulating the Confucian principle of order within the family and society. Conversely, Western dining practices prioritize individuality and practicality, with meals often plated individually, knives, and forks tailored to a dining style that respects personal space and convenience. Western etiquette also has specific rules about the placement of utensils and the manner of eating, which are less about communal harmony and more about individual dining experience and efficiency. The document explores how these dining practices reflect underlying cultural values and affect interpersonal relationships and social dynamics, offering insights into how such rituals influence and are influenced by broader societal norms. This comparative approach illustrates the significant role that dining etiquette plays in transmitting cultural values and conducting social interactions.

Guan (2003) explores the concepts of ‘position’ and ‘order’ within social etiquette to reveal their intertwined roles in structuring interpersonal interactions and preserving cultural norms. The study elucidates how ‘position’ pertains to the physical and symbolic placement of individuals within a given space—such as seating arrangements at a social gathering, which are influenced by factors like directionality (e.g., facing north or south), proximity to essential elements (like the host or an entrance), and the social or political importance attributed to specific spots. These positions are culturally loaded and reflect broader societal values regarding respect, status, and hierarchy. ‘Order’ complements ‘position’ by addressing the sequencing of

events or actions within these spatial configurations, dictating who should perform specific actions first or how individuals should enter or leave space during formal events. This aspect of etiquette manages the temporal distribution of interactions, ensuring that activities proceed to respect social hierarchies and cultural expectations, such as allowing seniors to speak first or having higher-ranking individuals initiate specific ceremonial actions. Together, 'position' and 'order' form a fundamental framework within etiquette that governs not only the logistics of social interactions, but also conveys respect, acknowledges status, and facilitates effective communication. These guidelines ensure that each participant knows their place and role, thereby minimizing social friction and reinforcing the social fabric that holds the community together. Guan's study highlights how these practices, deeply embedded in cultural tradition, maintain order and harmony in societal interactions.

Cai (2017) examines the cultural nuances and differences between Chinese and Japanese dining etiquette, reflecting on how these practices are influenced by each country's history, geography, and social philosophies. The study highlights distinct practices such as seating protocols, the use of utensils, and the sequence of meals. It points out how Chinese dining often involves waiting for all guests to arrive and emphasizes communal eating, while Japanese meals are characterized by individual servings and a greater emphasis on expressing appreciation before eating. The paper also discusses the ingredients and cooking styles prevalent in both cultures, noting how geographical and cultural factors shape these culinary traditions. For example, chopsticks are common, but their design differs between the two cultures to suit specific types of food, like sushi in Japan. The analysis aims to foster a better understanding of these cultural differences to improve cross-cultural communication and dining interactions between China and Japan.

As an essential social skill, table manners reflect a person's upbringing and qualities, and play an indispensable role in establishing and maintaining good interpersonal relationships. Through discussions on table manners, we understand the details that

need attention during the meal, including the correct use of tableware, proper dining posture, and politeness and respect when interacting with others. These etiquette norms apply to family gatherings and play a key role in formal business banquets.

2.5. Wine table manners and toasting

Since ancient times, whether in family-and-friends gatherings, business banquets, or significant celebrations, wine tables have played an essential role in connecting interpersonal relationships and enhancing emotional exchanges. In this unique social environment, toasts are an indispensable part. Toasts are a means of expressing blessings and respect, and a manifestation of etiquette, reflecting a person's cultivation, wisdom, and emotions.

The history of wine table culture can be traced back to the Shang (1600.B.C. - 1046.B.C.) and Zhou (1046.B.C. - 256.B.C.) dynasties, when wine was necessary for sacrifices and celebrations. Ancient scholars and poets used wine as a medium to create many famous poems and songs. In the West, wine was also an indispensable element at banquets in ancient Greece and Rome, accompanied by rich myths and religious rituals.

In East Asia, especially in China, Japan, and South Korea, toasting involves paying attention to beautiful words and emphasizing respect for elders and superiors. In Europe, people express their emotions with short and sincere toasts in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Regardless of the form, toasts are always the highlight of wine table culture, showing people's yearning for a better life and cherishing of friendship. Research has been carried out on table manners and toasts in different countries.

Li and Chen's (2022) delved into the significance of toast intervention in Chinese dining practices. They analyze 21 audio-recorded Chinese dining events and post-event interview data to understand the impact of factors like moral identification, power relationships, and social distance on toast interventions. Moral identification in

a toast intervention reflects how much the person making the toast (the intervener) aligns with the communal moral values, indicating their agreement and support. The study shows that in Chinese dining contexts, moral identification significantly influences toast interventions more than social distance and power relations, helps improve participants' interpersonal relationships, and is primarily relationally constructive, reinforcing social bonds by addressing moral transgressions through ritualistic practices. The findings reveal the complexities involved in ritual communication and the maintenance of moral order in social interactions, showing how cultural norms and expectations influence perception of politeness and impoliteness.

Mao et al. (2021) delve deep into the cultural and social significance of Chinese toasts. On the one hand, toasts help detect sincerity and compliance in social interactions. On the other hand, they play a crucial role in the cultural, moral, and emotional dimensions of social interactions. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of 158 instances from TV shows, films, and online videos to uncover the two distinct types of Chinese toasts – courteous and coercive. Courteous toasts are characterized by the use of respectful language, polite requests, and expressions of appreciation, blessing, and agreement, while coercive ones are characterized by attempts to provoke, insult, or threaten others. Toast words help establish hierarchies, reinforce social norms, and maintain social relationships. As such, toasts are not just a simple social gesture but are deeply ingrained in Chinese culture and society. Overall, the study highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context of social interactions to foster better cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Kruglova et al. (2021) examine toasting as an essential speech genre in various cultures, analyzing samples from literary works and real-life observations. Their study reveals the complex forms, functions, and themes of toasts within social and cultural contexts. The study underscores how toasts serve to celebrate communal values, strengthen social bonds, and convey wishes for well-being, prosperity, and happiness

despite their diverse expressions. The results demonstrate that toasts are dynamic social tools that reinforce group identity and cohesion while reflecting cultural norms and values.

Ajayi (2018) utilizes ethnographic research methods (i.e., participant and non-participant observations) to explore how certain English words have adapted to the Nigerian context. The findings reveal that words such as *toast*, which traditionally means ‘making a drink pledge’ or ‘browning bread’ in English, have taken on the meaning of ‘to woo or ask someone out’. This research shows how Nigerian English is uniquely shaped by local socio-cultural realities, highlighting Nigeria’s dynamic interplay between language, culture, and social interaction.

Ye (2019) provides a detailed examination of the cultural practice of urging others to drink at Chinese dining events. It discusses how alcohol, as a central part of Chinese social and ceremonial life, is used to build relationships and express sentiments. It also notes the complexities and potential pressures associated with the tradition of ‘persuading to drink.’ The paper points out that, while these practices can enhance gatherings’ communal and festive atmosphere, they also impose a form of social obligation that can lead to discomfort or health issues. The tradition of persuading people to drink can enforce conformity to potentially harmful social norms.

Lin (2001) elaborates on the six virtues of drinking in Chinese culture. These virtues include “逸” (‘Ease’), emphasizing relaxation and enjoyment of life through moderate drinking; “和” (‘Harmony’), which advocates for the balanced state of mind that should accompany drinking; “友” (‘Friendship’), highlighting the role of alcohol in fostering social bonds and community spirit; “敬” (‘Respect’), which involves showing reverence and proper etiquette while drinking; “雅” (‘Elegance’), stressing the importance of a refined and civilized approach to drinking; and “节” (‘Moderation’), urging self-control and restraint to avoid overindulgence. The text illustrates how alcohol, when consumed within these virtues, can enhance social

interactions, contribute to cultural practices, and inspire artistic expression. This study serves not only as a guide to the cultural significance of alcohol in China, but also as a moral framework for its consumption.

Ling (2009) provides a comprehensive guide on toasting etiquette at formal banquets. It emphasizes the importance of correctly proposing a toast, highlighting that the host usually initiates it to honor guests or celebrate a specific occasion. Key elements include delivering short toasting speeches, choosing the right moment for the toast during the meal, and the manner of holding and clinking glasses to signify respect and goodwill. The document also discusses the sequential and hierarchical nature of toasting, where age, position, and relationship dictate the order of toasts. Additionally, it covers the respectful practices for those who do not drink alcohol, suggesting they may hold a glass without consuming its contents or use a non-alcoholic alternative. This protocol ensures that all participants, regardless of their drinking preferences, feel included and respected throughout the event. The guide thoroughly addresses cultural nuances in Western and Chinese settings, aiming to facilitate smooth and respectful interactions at mixed-culture gatherings.

In general, the literature shows that the wine table has long surpassed the simple act of drinking and has become an essential platform for exchanging emotions, enhancing friendships, and building connections. In particular, as one of the core elements of the wine table culture, toasts carry people's wishes for a better life and respect for each other. They require not only beautiful words but also a high level of emotional intelligence and social wisdom. Through appropriate toasts, you can win the favour and respect of others at the wine table and promote the further development of social relationships.

2.6. Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided a review of the literature on Chinese etiquette, food culture, dining culture, and the significance of wine and toasts in social interactions.

Chinese etiquette, with a history spanning over 5000 years, originated in the late Neolithic Age. Initially reflected in tomb ceremonies honouring the deceased, etiquette developed into a complex system integral to national governance and social norms. Modern Chinese etiquette, embodying values of harmony, respect, and courtesy, remains a profound cultural symbol and a norm of social behaviour.

Chinese cuisine is also shaped by Chinese etiquette, emphasizing harmony, health, and balance, and reflecting broader cultural principles like a holistic approach to life and the concept of “food as medicine.” Studies highlight its diversity and global influence, showing how Chinese food culture intertwines with historical, philosophical, and social elements, contributing to its rich, dynamic nature. More specifically, dining culture and etiquette are crucial in reflecting and reinforcing social values and interpersonal dynamics. Chinese dining practices emphasize communal harmony, respect for hierarchy, and collective enjoyment, contrasting with Western individualistic approaches that prioritize personal space and convenience. The literature highlights the cultural significance of dining etiquette, including seating arrangements, the use of utensils, and the sequence of meals. Studies here provide comparative analyses of Chinese and Western dining practices, illustrating how these rituals convey cultural values and affect social interactions.

As part of wine table culture, toasting practices, with their intricate forms and cultural connotations, are essential in maintaining social harmony and building connections. Research by Li and Chen (2022), Mao et al. (2021), Kruglova et al. (2021), Ajayi (2018), Ye (2019), Lin (2001), and Ling (2009) explores the dual nature of toasts—both courteous and coercive—and their role in reflecting social hierarchy, reinforcing moral order, and facilitating social bonding. These studies highlight the importance of understanding cultural contexts in toasting practices to foster better cross-cultural communication and social interactions.

Yet, to this date, there are only a few studies on toasts, and these are more related to table etiquette, rather than the linguistic practices with which they are expressed, and how these may vary across people of different social groups. In this thesis, my goal is to examine how people of different ages, genders and identities (e.g. students, employees) linguistically perform toasts in Chinese social gatherings. In the next chapter, I will outline the method I adopted to carry out my research.

CHAPTER 3: Method

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodological approach used to investigate pragmatic aspects of traditional Chinese toasts, focusing specifically on how age and identity factors influence these practices. A mixed-method research design was employed, which involved: collecting and analyzing spontaneously produced data, and administering an online survey to collect data about toasting views and practices.

Section 3.2 outlines the research questions addressed. Section 3.3 describes the criteria and approach adopted to select participants. Section 3.4 describes the data collection instruments. Section 3.5 explains the data collection procedure. Section 3.6 details and exemplifies the methods used to analyze the data. Section 3.7 summarizes the content of the chapter, and announces the topic of Chapter 4.

3.2. Research questions

This study aims to investigate how traditional Chinese toasts are expressed, and if their strategies or formulations vary across social variables. I address the following research questions:

RQ1-A: How are Chinese toasts expressed in social gatherings?

RQ2-A: How do age, gender, and social identity, if at all, influence the linguistic practices of, and the views on, toasting in Chinese social gatherings?

RQ3-A: What are the perceived social functions, values, and norms of traditional Chinese toasts in various social gatherings?

The above research questions are operationalized as follows:

RQ1-B: What are the linguistic, strategic and structural characteristics of traditional Chinese toasts in various social contexts? That is, what recurrent phraseologies are

employed? What illocutions are performed? In what sequence are topics mentioned and functions performed?

RQ2-B: How do age, social roles, and gender affect the recurrent phraseologies, illocutions performed, and the sequence in which topics are presented and functions served in various social contexts?

RQ3-B: What are the perceived social functions, values, and conventions of Chinese toasts, and how do the rules and norms governing these practices vary across different demographics?

On the basis on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and my personal experience, I posited the following hypotheses:

- I. Younger participants will use more informal and creative toasts compared to older participants, who will adhere to traditional and formal structures.
- II. Superiors will produce more elaborate and formal toasts, while peers will adopt a more informal and relaxed style.
- III. Males will use more formal and authoritative language in their toasts, while females will employ more relational and emotive language in their toasts.

3.3 Recruitment of participants

The participants for this study were selected to ensure a representation of various age groups, professional statuses, and social roles within Chinese society.

First, to obtain authentic data on toasting expressions, I attended a 2 social gatherings in Sanmenxia on July 15, 2023, and on July 28, 2023, and one in Zhengzhou on August 10, 2023, and audio-recorded the interactions that participants engage in, including the toasting events that occurred during them. In addition, I asked friends to do the same, if possible, and then to give me their recordings and some background information about those gatherings such as the number of participants, their social-demographic characteristics, and the occasions being celebrated during such events.

In total, I collected 8 recordings of as many social gatherings, including a 90th birthday party, a dinner with my junior high school classmate, a bar gathering, a classmate's birthday dinner, a wedding, a graduation dinner, a business banquet, and a company annual party. The number of the participants involved in these events is difficult to specify, also because I was not a direct participant in all of them (see above). However, considering that, for each, I knew the nature of the event, and that I know how small or large these various gatherings tend to be, I could estimate that the total number of event participants was roughly 260.

After transcribing the toasting episodes contained in each recording, I was able to specify the exact number of people who proposed toasts and their social characteristics. These people included 216 males and 68 females; 171 people aged 18-35 and 113 people ages 36 and older; 182 employees, 12 managers/leaders, 1 professor and 22 students.

Second, to collect data on people's knowledge of and views on toasting events, I recruited participants online, posting messages on these social media platforms: *WeChat Moments*, *WeChat* and *QQ* group chats, *Douyin*, and *Zhihu* so as to reach a high number of different user groups.

WeChat Moments, *WeChat* and *QQ* are the most widely used messaging applications in China, similar to *WhatsApp*. *WeChat* is typically used at work and for formal communication, while *QQ* is typically used by college students and younger students. *WeChat Moments*, *WeChat* and *QQ* group chats are my main social networks, also used by a large number of friends, classmates and family members. Also, given the high user activity on *WeChat*, I thought it would be easy for my friends and family to forward my post to others.

Douyin, known internationally as *TikTok*, is a leading short-form video platform by

ByteDance. It allows users to create and share engaging videos from 15 seconds to 3 minutes, often featuring music, special effects, and creative editing. *Douyin* is primarily used for entertainment and social interaction, with content ranging from dance and music performances to comedy and life hacks. The platform's advanced algorithms personalize the content feed, ensuring users see videos tailored to their interests. *Douyin*'s interactive features, such as likes, comments, and shares, make it a dynamic space for entertainment and communication. I utilized *Douyin* to leverage its large and active user base. The platform's personalized recommendation algorithms and interactive features helped increase the visibility and participation rate of the questionnaire, ensuring a broad and diverse audience was reached.

Zhihu is China's largest question-and-answer platform, similar to *Quora*. Launched in 2011, *Zhihu* allows users to ask questions, share knowledge, and engage in discussions on a wide range of topics. It has a strong emphasis on high-quality, informative content, with many users being experts and professionals in their fields. *Zhihu* supports long-form articles, live sessions, and columns, making it a valuable resource for in-depth information and professional networking. I chose *Zhihu* as a platform to reach users who are likely to be knowledgeable about, and professionally engaged with, or at least interested in the topic of my research. I thought that this way, the people reached would provide relevant data.

On *WeChat Moments* and in various *WeChat* and *QQ* group chats, I posted a message inviting my personal network—comprising friends, family, classmates, and colleagues—to participate in a survey. The message encouraged participants to forward the survey to others in their network, facilitating a snowball sampling effect. Here is the translation of the content I posted:

Hello everyone, I am currently a graduate student, completing my graduation thesis. I have a questionnaire about my thesis topic that needs to be administered. Its topic is “How do you have toasts?” I hope everyone will fill

it out carefully and help me forward it, thank you!³

On Zhihu, I posted my message in discussions related to linguistics, cultural practices, and social behavior. This is the translation of what I posted:

Hello everyone! I am a graduate student in linguistics, and I am currently conducting a survey on “how people have toasts”. *Zhihu* is a platform for knowledge sharing, and I hope you can help me collect some valuable opinions. The questionnaire only takes 15 minutes to complete. Your answers are very valuable to my research, and the data will be strictly confidential. Thank you for your support and help!⁴

On *Douyin*, I shared a short video that included a QR code linking to a questionnaire. The video was designed to be engaging and aligned with popular content trends on the platform to maximize visibility and participation. In this video, I used an AI voice to read out a message encouraging college students to interact with each other and complete surveys. In my message, I mentioned that I would sincerely fill out other people’s surveys and hope that they would do the same for me. I also explained how participants could verify the completion of the survey by taking screenshots and viewing the backend data. Finally, I wished everyone academic success and graduation in 2024.

In total, 119 people completed the questionnaire I posted online, including 77 males and 42 women, aged 17 to 89. I categorized them into two age groups: 18-35-year-olds and 36-year-olds and older. The former group comprises young people who may still be pursuing their education or just entering the workforce and

³ The original message was this: 大家好，我目前是一名研究生，正在完成毕业论文。我有一个关于毕业论文题目的问卷需要填写。它的题目是“你是否，如何使用敬酒词？”希望大家认真填写并帮我转发，谢谢！

⁴ The original message was this: 大家好！我是一个语言学的研究生，现在在做关于“人们如何敬酒”的调查。知乎是个分享知识的平台，希望大家能帮我收集一些宝贵的意见。问卷只需要15分钟，您的回答对我的研究非常重要，数据会严格保密。感谢您的支持和帮助！

gaining little experience in their profession. This group may be in the process of developing a social identity, forming their own social style, and building professional networks. The latter group comprises individuals who are likely to have established professional and social identities. They may be at a critical stage in their career development, have an important position in their profession, and have rich social and professional experience.

3.4 Data collection instrument

The instrument used for collecting data on participants' toasting habits, preferences, and perceptions was an online questionnaire, structured into 3 main sections, each targeting specific aspects of the participants' backgrounds and their toasting behaviors.

The first section, *Background Information*, aimed to gather demographic data, including age, gender, occupation, education level, and regional background.

The second section, *About Toasts*, delved into the participants' actual toasting practices. It was divided into several sub-sections that explored, by means of multiple-choice questions, the frequency of toasting, the contexts in which toasts are made (such as family gatherings, business banquets, and social events) and the motivation for toasting, and which investigated, by means of open-ended questions, the content of toasts, and views on and knowledge about toasting, in various, by means of open-ended prompts.

The content of toasts was investigated with Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) presenting a number of scenarios. The scenarios described different social situations in which people are likely to propose toasts to individuals who may be their superiors, subordinates or equals. For each scenario, each participant had to indicate what they would say if they found themselves in the circumstances represented therein, and then to explain why by choosing one out of a few options listed below (i.e. to express

respect, promote communication, or convey blessings). Therefore, the DCT prompts were designed to collect information about the formulation of toasts that people would use in different scenarios and the reasons for choosing them.

Additionally, in the same section, participants were invited to indicate whether, and exemplify how, toasting practices might differ based on age or social roles, and to report on existence, value and application of possible conventions regarding toasting practices.

By way of illustration, here is the second DCT listed in the questionnaire together with its accompanying question prompts:

2b. Your company has organized a team-building activity. During it, what would you say in a toast to your **colleagues**?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

In the third section, *Comments*, questionnaire respondents could leave a comment about their own toasting customs or the survey itself. This might serve to capture aspects of toasting that may not have been fully addressed in the structured questions, thereby providing a deeper understanding of individual differences in toasting behavior. The full questionnaire is found in Appendix A.

3.5 Data collection procedures

To collect spontaneously produced toasting discourse, I audio-recorded and had others audio-record, interactions in different types of social settings where toasts were likely to occur, and thus including family dinners, gatherings with friends, and business banquets. The goal was to collect data that would reflect the linguistic characteristics and social functions of toasting across various social contexts. The participants were all volunteers.

In the social gatherings I myself participated in, I asked each individual, upon arrival, if they agreed to have the conversation audio-recorded for my research, briefly explaining my goals and methods, while also emphasizing the confidentiality of the data and the anonymity of the participants. If they agreed to being recorded, I placed the recording device on a table in the room where everyone could see it.

Additionally, since I had been spending most of my time outside of China at the time I started this research, and since, as a student, my access to various social settings was somewhat restricted, the number of gatherings I could attend was limited. To overcome these limitations, I enlisted the help of friends to record toasts during gatherings they attended, such as company annual meetings and other events. Similarly, I asked them to ask for consent from all participants before data collection, to explain the purpose of data collection and the goal of the study, and to ensure the confidentiality of the data and the anonymity of the participants. I also instructed them to place the recording equipment needed for data collection nearby so as to ensure that everyone could see it. The goal was to collect recordings from a wider variety of contexts and participant demographics under the same contextual conditions.

In the end, I personally collected 3 recordings: one of an elder's birthday party; another, of a gathering of friends who had not seen each other for a long time; and a third one of friends having fun in a bar. The total duration of the 3 events was 8 hours and 30 minutes, but the total duration of the recordings is 119 minutes, namely, 37

minutes for the 90th birthday party, 44 minutes for the gathering among friends, and 38 minutes for the gathering in a bar. The total number of participants was 52, namely 40 for the 90th birthday party, 4 for the gathering among friends, and 8 for the gathering in a bar.

My friends collected 5 recordings: of a classmate's birthday party; of a wedding banquet; of a graduation party attended by professors; of a business banquet; and of a company annual meeting. The total duration of the 5 events is 13 hours and 55 minutes, but the total duration of the recordings was 237 minutes, namely, 47 minutes for the classmate's birthday party, 78 minutes for the wedding banquet, 44 minutes for the graduation party, 36 minutes for the business banquet, and 32 minutes for the company annual meeting. The total number of participants was 232, namely 10 for the classmate's birthday party, 120 for the wedding banquet, 10 for the graduation party, 12 for the business banquet, and about 80 for the company annual meeting.

Following the collection of spontaneously produced data, the questionnaire was administered online on social media platforms. Participants were given a week to complete the questionnaire, with periodic reminders to ensure a high response rate.

All data were securely stored on encrypted digital devices, with backups made to prevent loss. Participant anonymity was preserved by anonymizing all identifiable information and assigning unique codes to each participant. This approach upheld the ethical standards of the study and protected the privacy of all participants.

3.6 Data analysis

In this section, I describe how I prepared and treated data for analysis.

3.6.1 Analysis of spontaneously produced data

To process the recordings, I first listened to each one in its entirety. This helped me fully grasp the context, tone, and flow of the social gatherings. On the basis of this, I

wrote down a brief overview of the setting. This included details such as where the gathering took place, how many people were participating, the duration of the event and the nature of the event (e.g. a formal banquet, a casual family gathering, or a business dinner).

As I listened, I focused my attention on identifying the toasts among the general conversation. To do so, I paid attention to verbal cues like phrases that signaled a toast, such as “喝一杯” or “祝你” (“Let’s raise a glass” or “I wish you,”) as well as non-verbal indicators like the sound of glasses clinking. For each toast, I transcribed the full turn uttered by the person proposing the toast, and the responses coming from other participants, if provided. The full transcripts are provided in Appendix B.

I analysed both the wording and the content of the toasts recorded in my transcripts. To analyse the wording, I repeatedly read the transcripts and noted down recurring phrases (e.g. “Cheers” or “I wish you health”), registering how often these phrases occurred in the text, and then counting their frequency of occurrence across settings, age groups or social roles.

Next, to analyse the content of toasts, I aimed to identify their strategic components, that is, the head act and the supportive moves. The head act is the main message or core of the toast, which most succinctly and explicitly expresses the speaker’s intention, that is, the part that the whole turn could be reduced to and still count as a toast; typically, this is a blessing or wish, such as “I wish you success.”. The supportive moves are additional utterances that surround and enhance the head act with relevant content and more local communicative functions. These can include expressions of gratitude, personal anecdotes, or reflections on shared experiences.

For example, during the birthday party in honor of my grandmother, my father said: “Mom, let me toast you first. Thank you for raising me with so much hardship and for always caring about us brothers. I hope you will be healthy and live a long life!” In

this turn, the head act is the wish for health and longevity, “I hope you will be healthy and live a long life!” The supportive moves include a preparatory move announcing the intention to have a toast (“let me toast you first”); an act of thanking his mother for her dedication in raising her children (“thank you for raising me with so much hardship”) and a reflection on the challenges she faced (“for always caring about us brothers”).

In another instance, during a gathering of old friends, my classmate Zhu said, “Let’s have another drink to our friendship that’s stood the test of time!” Here, the head act is the wish for continued friendship, “Let’s have another drink to our friendship.” The supportive moves include reminiscing about the strength of the friendship over the years and its endurance (“that’s stood the test of time”), adding emotional depth to the toast.

Finally, at a business banquet, General Manager Zhao said: “This toast is for all of you — thank you for your contributions, and I wish for long-lasting successful cooperation in the future!” In this example, the head act is the wish for future success, “I wish for long-lasting successful cooperation.” The supportive moves consist of expressing gratitude for everyone’s contributions to the project and acknowledging their hard work, which adds context and appreciation to the main message.

While analyzing the toasts in the data, I sometimes encountered difficulties in identifying the head act and its supportive moves. In some toasts, multiple head acts were present, where a speaker would give more than one wish or blessing, such as “I wish you health” followed by “I wish you success in the future.” In such cases, I treated both statements as co-head acts because of their identical function and degree of explicitness. In other cases, a toast seemed to lack a clear head act, focusing instead on supportive moves, such as thanking the audience or sharing personal stories without a direct wish or blessing. In such cases, I considered the toast as having no head act, focusing only on supportive moves. By looking at the context of the

situation and the relationship between the speaker and the audience, I could still understand the overall purpose of the toast. This approach helped me deal with cases where the main message wasn't obvious, and I made sure my analysis captured the true meaning of the toasts.

I then counted the frequency of occurrence of head acts and supportive moves across settings and groups of participants.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

Of the 119 questionnaire I collected, some had to be excluded because they contained incomplete or invalid data (e.g. some information had not been provided or some answers were inconsistent with one another). This left me with 108 valid completed questionnaires, of which 41 compiled by women and 67 by men; and 65 compiled by people aged 18-35 and 43 by people aged over 35. The smallest group, therefore, comprised 20 women aged over 35, and the largest comprised 46 men aged 18-35.

To have quantitatively balanced datasets, I kept all the questionnaires provided by female respondents aged over 35 (i.e. 20 people), and then I used random sampling to select 20 questionnaires in each group or participants (i.e. males aged 18-35, females aged 18-35 and males aged over 35) to ensure equal representation of all social categories.

3.6.2.1 Responses in different scenarios

When I processed the data from the "IIb. The content of toasts", I carefully examined the responses provided by the respondents, looking for patterns, that is, recurrent words and phrases, and with a view to classify them under broad headings: "health," "happiness," "success," and "gratitude." For example, a toast such as "I wish you good health" was classified as related to health, while "I hope you find happiness" was categorized under happiness. Instead, toasts that included words like "achievement" or "prosperity" were placed in a category related to success. Finally, if

someone said “Thank you for always being there,” or “Thank you for your support”, I categorized it as gratitude. If a given expression was compatible with two interpretations, I classified it for both. For example, a toast like “I wish you health and happiness” was tagged with both health and happiness. In Excel, I created a row for each response and right next to it, I wrote my semantic classification of it.

I also assessed the level of formality or informality in the responses collected. To do so, I examined the specific vocabulary and structure of each toast to determine how formal or casual the language was. For example, I recognised formal language in the use of complete sentences, traditional expressions, and polite phrases like “I wish you a prosperous future” or “May you enjoy continued success.” Such phrases, typically elaborate and respectful, indicated a higher level of formality. On the other hand, informal language was recognized in the use of casual expressions, abbreviations, or conversational tone, such as “Congrats on your big day!” or “Cheers to many more good times.” These phrases, concise, familiar, and relaxed, reflected a lower level of formality.

Categorizing each response based on its level of formality enabled me to understand not only the participants’ linguistic preferences but also how the tone varied across different social settings, such as family gatherings, where informal language is more common, and business events, where formal expressions were expected.

3.6.2.2 Purpose and reasons for different responses

I downloaded to an Excel file the participants’ responses focused on the reasons for their toasts (e.g. “expressing respect”, “offering blessings”) in various scenarios. Each respondent’s reason for toasting was associated with the respondent’s demographic details like age and gender, specified under neighbouring column.

Once the data was organized, I imported the quantitative part of it, that is the responses to the multiple-choice questions, into SPSS and conducted a

cross-tabulation analysis. Using SPSS, I analyzed the relationship between demographic variables (age, gender) and the reasons for toasting. This allowed me to calculate the frequency and percentage of each reason within specific demographic groups, such as how many males aged 18-35 expressed “respect” as their main reason for toasting.

After completing the SPSS analysis, I exported the results into another Excel file. This file presented the summarized data, with columns representing different demographic groups and rows showing the toasting reasons, along with the corresponding frequency and percentage for each. This process transformed the raw data into a structured format suitable for further analysis.

3.6.2.3 Open-ended questions in the questionnaire

To analyze the answers in Sections IIc and IId, I used a qualitative approach. I repeatedly read the responses in which participants had discursively expressed their views, and categorized the answers into broad groups based on the content. For example, in Section IIc, which asks about differences in how people of different ages express toasts, I labeled the responses based on the specific points participants made. For instance, if a participant mentioned that “younger people tend to be more casual and relaxed when toasting,” I categorized this under the label ‘casual language in younger individuals.’ In contrast, if a participant wrote, “toasts across ages are generally the same,” I labeled this response as ‘no differences across age groups.’ This approach ensured that each label directly reflected the participants’ actual responses.

In section IId, where participants were asked whether they follow toasting rules, I used a similar approach. Responses were categorized based on whether participants reported adhering to traditional etiquette or not. For instance, responses in which participants wrote they follow rules because “it’s respectful” were grouped under the label of ‘adherence to etiquette’. Instead, reasons like “I don’t follow the rules because they’re outdated” were categorized as ‘thinking they are outdated’. By

grouping the responses in this way, I could explore the reasons behind different behaviors in toasting etiquette.

Additionally, I looked at where participants said they learned these toasting rules. Responses were grouped based on whether the knowledge came from family, work, or social gatherings. For example, if a participant indicated “I learned toasting etiquette from family dinners,” this response was categorized as ‘under family influence’. The responses mentioning that the rules were learned through professional settings were grouped under the category ‘workplace learning.’. This allowed me to see how different environments contribute to the participants’ knowledge of toasting rules.

After categorizing the responses, I compared the findings based on demographic factors like age and gender to explore how different groups perceive and follow toasting practices.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methods used to study the spontaneous and elicited data about Chinese toasting practices and the views on them. By analyzing recordings and questionnaires, I explored how age, gender, and social roles influence the structure and content of toasts. The next chapter will present the results of the study, detailing the variations in (views on) toasting practices and highlighting differences in linguistic choices across groups of participants belonging to different age and gender groups.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the results of the analysis of the data taken into consideration. Section 4.2 describes the content and strategies of spontaneous toasts. Section 4.3 reports on the frequency of choice of the themes of toasts across age groups, genders and situations. Section 4.4 reports on the reasons given by people of different ages and genders for proposing toasts in different situations. Section 4.5 illustrates the respondents' views on the rules of toasting. Section 4.6 provides a summary of the findings.

4.2 Analysis of spontaneously produced toasts

In this section, I analyze the language and structure of 68 toasts produced in different formal and informal contexts, focusing on their wording and strategies across various participant groups.

4.2.1 Wording of toasts

This section reports on the most frequently used toasting phrases and their contexts of occurrence. The analysis highlights both the overall usage frequencies and how different expressions were preferred depending on the formality of the occasion and the respondents' age groups.

The phrase “干杯” (‘Cheers’) was by far the most common, appearing in both informal and semi-formal gatherings, and accounted for approximately 30% of all recorded toasts. This expression was especially favored by younger participants (ages 18-35), particularly during casual social events such as birthday parties and friend meet-ups. Another frequently used phrase was “祝您身体健康” (‘I wish you health’), occurring in 20% of the toasts, especially during formal family gatherings, often spoken by older participants (ages 35 and above). In professional or business settings,

expressions such as “感谢您的支持” (‘Thank you for your support’) were dominant, accounting for 15% of the toasts. Less frequent phrases, such as “为我们的友谊干杯” (‘Here’s to our friendship’) and “祝你们百年好合” (‘To a lifetime of happiness together’), appeared in approximately 14% of the toasts, often in semi-formal celebratory contexts like weddings and reunions.

Chinese toast expression	English translation	Frequency of occurrence
干杯!	‘Cheers!’	15 (22%)
让我们为……敬酒!	‘Let’s toast to’	8 (11.8%)
为我们的友谊干杯!	‘Here’s to our friendship’	6 (8.8%)
喝一杯!	‘Let’s drink!’	6 (8.8%)
祝您幸福安康!	‘I wish you happiness and health’	5 (7.4%)
敬一杯!	‘I would like to toast’	5 (7.4%)
感谢您的支持!	‘Thank you for your support’	4 (5.8%)
希望您长命百岁!	‘I hope you will live a long life’	4 (5.8%)
祝你们百年好合, 幸福美满!	‘To a lifetime of happiness together’	4 (5.8%)
感谢您的到来!	‘Thank you for coming’	3 (4.4%)
感谢您的奉献!	‘Thank you for your dedication’	3 (4.4%)
愿您前程似锦!	‘May your future be bright’	3 (4.4%)
让我们继续创造辉煌!	‘May we continue to achieve great things’	2 (2.9%)
Total		68 (100%)

Table 4.1: Frequency of occurrence of toasting phrases

In summary, informal settings were dominated by simpler, expressions like “干杯,” (‘Cheers’) primarily used by younger participants, while more formal family gatherings leaned towards health-oriented blessings uttered by older participants. Professional environments, on the other hand, favored gratitude-based expressions, highlighting the speaker’s respect for the addressee and their acknowledgment of professional relationships. Table 4.1 summarizes these findings, showing the frequency of commonly used Chinese toasting expressions along with their English translations.

4.2.2 Wording of toasts in formal and informal settings

Table 4.2 shows the frequency of occurrence of various toasting expressions across formal and informal settings.

Expression (translation)	Formal settings	Informal settings	All settings
	Frequency of occurrence	Frequency of occurrence	Total
干杯! ('Cheers!')	3 (4.4%)	12 (17.6%)	15 (22.0%)
让我们为.....敬酒! (‘Let’s toast to’)	6 (8.8%)	2 (2.9%)	8 (11.8%)
为我们的友谊干杯! (‘Here’s to our friendship’)	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.4%)	6 (8.8%)
喝一杯! (‘Let’s drink!’)	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.4%)	6 (8.8%)
祝您幸福安康! (‘I wish you happiness and health’)	4 (5.8%)	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.4%)
敬一杯! (‘I would like to toast’)	5 (7.4%)	0 (0%)	5 (7.4%)
感谢您的支持! (‘Thank you for your support’)	4 (5.8%)	0 (0%)	4 (5.8%)
希望您长命百岁! (‘I hope you will live a long life’)	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.8%)
祝你们百年好合, 幸福美满! (‘To a lifetime of happiness together’)	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.8%)
感谢您的到来! (‘Thank you for coming’)	3 (4.4%)	0 (0%)	3 (4.4%)
感谢您的奉献! (‘Thank you for your dedication’)	3 (4.4%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.4%)
愿您前程似锦! (‘May your future be bright’)	3 (4.4%)	0 (0%)	3 (4.4%)
让我们继续创造辉煌! (‘May we continue to achieve great things’)	2 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.9%)
Total	41 (60.3%)	27 (39.7%)	68 (100%)

Table 4.2: Frequency of use of toasting expressions in formal and informal settings

In informal settings, casual expressions are highly prevalent, aligning with the relaxed and inclusive atmosphere characteristic of these occasions. They include ‘Cheers!’ (12 out of 15 occurrences) and ‘Let’s drink!’ (5 out of 6 occurrences) and ‘Here’s to our friendship’ (5 out of 6 occurrences). Conversely, formal, more structured, settings show a preference for expressions that convey respect, gratitude, and well-wishing, such as ‘Thank you for your support’, ‘Thank you for your dedication’, ‘I would like to toast’ and ‘May we continue to achieve great things’ (4 out of 4 occurrences, 3 out of 3 occurrences, 5 out of 5 occurrences and 2 out of 2 occurrences, respectively). Others are mostly, but not only, used in formal settings, for instance ‘I wish you happiness’ (4 out of 5 occurrences), and ‘To a lifetime of happiness together’ and ‘Let’s toast to’ (3 out of 4 occurrences and 6 out of 8 occurrences, respectively).

Expression	Younger speakers	Mature speakers
‘Cheers!’	10 (67%)	5 (33%)
‘I wish you happiness...’	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
‘Let’s toast to’	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
‘Thank you for your support’	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
‘Here’s to our friendship’	4 (67%)	2 (33%)
‘I would like to toast’	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
‘Thank you for your dedication’	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
‘May your future be bright’	1 (33%)	2 (67%)
‘I hope you will live a long life’	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
‘Let’s drink!’	4 (67%)	2 (33%)
‘May we continue to achieve great things’	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
‘To a lifetime of happiness together’	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
‘Thank you for coming’	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Total	30 (44%)	38 (56%)

Table 4.3: Frequency of use of toasting expressions by younger and mature speakers

In summary, informal gatherings predominantly feature inclusive and spontaneous

language use, as evidenced by the high frequency of phrases like ‘Cheers!’ and ‘Let’s drink!’. In contrast, formal gatherings emphasize structured expressions of respect and appreciation, such as ‘Thank you for your support’ and ‘May your future be bright,’ which align with the decorum and interpersonal dynamics typical of such settings.

Table 4.3 shows the frequency of use of the toasting expressions employed by the younger and the mature speakers. The younger participants favored casual, inclusive phrases like ‘Cheers!’, ‘Here’s to our friendship,’ and ‘Let’s drink!’, which highlight camaraderie and informality, and create a lively, shared experience. Conversely, the mature respondents leaned toward more formal, respectful expressions like ‘Thank you for your support’, ‘I hope you will live a long life,’ ‘Thank you for your dedication’ and ‘May we continue to achieve great things,’ which reflect appreciation and reinforce formal decorum. Other formulae, like ‘Let’s toast to’ and ‘I wish you happiness,’ were used in both age groups, bridging formal and semi-formal contexts.

4.2.3 Head acts

The head acts in this study all express the notion of invitation to drink and/or celebrate. The one translated as ‘Here’s to our friendship’ additionally conveys appreciation for the friendship shared by the convivial party. Of these head acts, ‘Cheers!’ was especially common in informal gatherings (12 occurrences), where camaraderie and a lively atmosphere are central. In contrast, phrases such as ‘Let’s toast to’ and ‘I would like to toast’ were more frequent in formal settings (6 and 5 occurrences, respectively), reflecting their structured and respectful tone.(See Table 4.4)

Table 4.5 shows that the younger speakers (ages 18-35) favored suggestion-related head acts, using casual, social phrases like ‘Cheers!’ (10 times) and ‘Let’s drink!’ 4 times). In contrast, the older speakers (35+) display a balanced use of suggestion and acknowledgment head acts, with more formal expressions like “I would like to toast” appearing 3 times. The older participants also frequently select

acknowledgment-related head acts, highlighting a preference for structured, respectful expressions. Therefore, the younger speakers leaned toward casual, social expressions, while the older speakers favored acknowledgment and formality across various settings.

Head Act	Formal contexts	Informal contexts	Total
‘Let’s toast to’	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	8 (20%)
‘Cheers!’	3 (7.5%)	12 (30%)	15 (37.5%)
‘Let’s drink!’	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	6 (15%)
‘Here’s to our friendship’	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	6 (15%)
‘I would like to toast’	5 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	5 (12.5%)
Total	16 (40%)	24 (60%)	40 (100%)

Table 4.4: Frequency and dispersion of head acts across formal and informal contexts

Head Act	Younger speakers	Older speakers	Total
‘Let’s toast to’	4 (10%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)
‘Cheers!’	10 (25%)	5 (12.5%)	15 (37.5%)
‘Let’s drink!’	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)
‘Here’s to our friendship’	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)
‘I would like to toast’	2 (5%)	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)
Total	24 (60%)	16 (40%)	40 (100%)

Table 4.5: Frequency of use of head acts by younger and older speakers

4.2.4 Supportive moves

In the toasts analyzed, a range of supportive moves were used to reinforce and elaborate on the head acts. They included expressions of gratitude, anecdotes, reflections on relationships, encouragement for future success, good wishes, and blessings specifically tailored to the social occasion,.

Expressions of gratitude (21 occurrences) and reflections on relationships (18 occurrences) emerged as the most frequent supportive moves, particularly in formal settings like business events and family celebrations. Encouragement for future success was also common, with 14 instances, and frequently found in both formal and informal settings. Good wishes (15 occurrences) were more prevalent in informal contexts, where they conveyed casual and friendly intentions, while blessings (12 occurrences) were predominantly reserved for formal settings and often aligned with major life events or significant social gatherings.

Expressions of gratitude appeared in 21% of the toasts analyzed, with a higher occurrence in formal settings (75%) compared to informal gatherings (25%), and among older speakers (60%) compared to younger speakers (40%). Anecdotes — personal stories or humorous memories that foster connection — appeared in 25% of all toasts, predominantly in informal gatherings, where they accounted for 80% of supportive moves. They emphasized personal connection and shared experiences over formalities.

Reflections on relationships appeared in 18% of all toasts analyzed, serving to underscore the significance of personal and professional connections. These supportive moves were more frequent in informal gatherings, comprising 70% of the instances, where they emphasized personal bonds and shared experiences. In formal settings, they made up 30% of all occurrences.

In summary, expressions of gratitude were the most frequently used supportive move in formal settings, appearing in 21 instances. Reflections on relationships, with 18 occurrences, added a focus on professional or family bonds within these gatherings. In contrast, informal gatherings showed a marked preference for good wishes and anecdotes, with 15 and 10 occurrences, respectively. Overall, the formal settings tend to emphasize gratitude and respect through supportive moves, such as expressions of gratitude and reflections on relationships, while the informal contexts favored

personal connections and shared experiences, as seen in the use of good wishes and anecdotes.

4.3 Analysis of elicited toasts

This section will introduce the results of the textual analysis of different toasts spontaneously produced on different social occasions.

4.3.1 The themes of the toasts

The elicited toasts encompassed a range of themes, reflecting commonly celebrated values in both social and formal settings (see Figure 4.1). These themes included success, exemplified by phrases like “祝您事业有成” (‘Wishing you success in your career’); happiness, as in “祝您幸福” (‘Wishing you happiness’); gratitude, as conveyed by “感谢您的支持” (‘Thank you for your support’); health, expressed as “祝您身体健康” (‘I wish you health’); emotions, reflected in heartfelt phrases like “为我们的友谊干杯” (‘Here’s to our friendship’); and well-being and prosperity, such as “福禄寿全” (‘Wishing you complete fortune, prosperity, and longevity’). These thematic categories reflect core values frequently celebrated in social contexts.

Success emerged as the most frequent theme in the toasts, making up 32% of all responses, followed by happiness at 23%. Gratitude represented 18% of the responses, often expressing appreciation and acknowledgment. Collectively, these three themes accounted for 73% of the total. The remaining 27% included health (5%), emotions (14%), and well-being and prosperity (5%), each reflecting a range of personal and social values celebrated in toasts.

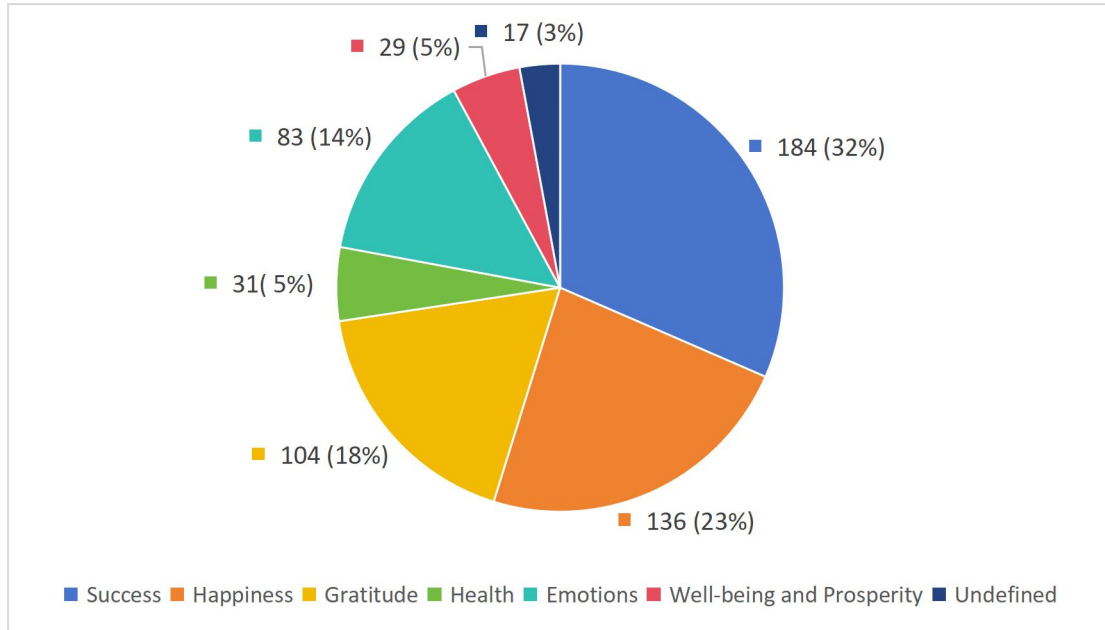


Figure 4.1 Frequency of themes in elicited toasts

As Figure 4.2 shows, while success, happiness, and gratitude were common across settings, each theme showed context-specific preferences, with gratitude and health more prominent in family contexts, and success in professional settings. Age differences also influenced the choice of themes, with younger participants favoring happiness and camaraderie, while mature participants leaned more toward gratitude, health, and well-being.

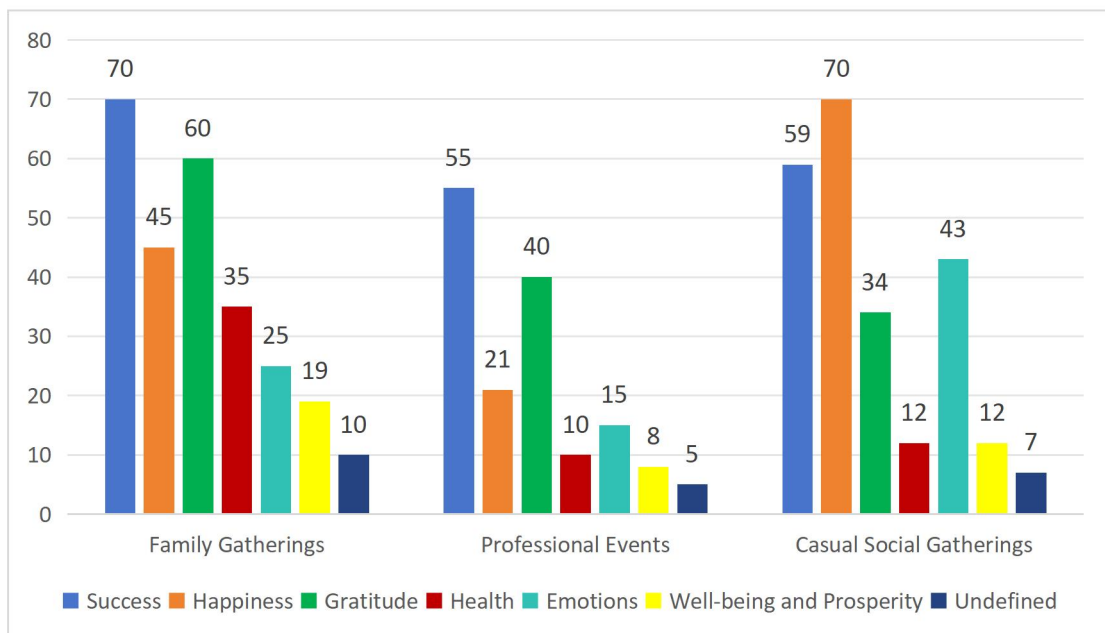


Figure 4.2 The frequency of toast themes across situations

In family gatherings, success, gratitude, and health were prominent themes. Success appeared in 70 out of the total toasts, indicating a focus on achievements and aspirations within family contexts (e.g., during a family reunion, several toasts highlighted the personal and professional accomplishments of younger family members). Gratitude was also common, with 60 toasts expressing appreciation and acknowledgment (e.g., at an anniversary celebration, family members expressed heartfelt thanks to the hosts for organizing the event and fostering family unity). Health, representing wishes for longevity and well-being, appeared in 35 toasts (e.g., at a grandparent's birthday, multiple toasts wished for continued health and long life, often in the form of “祝你长命百岁身体健康” – ‘I wish you long life and health’).

In professional events, success and gratitude were the primary themes, with 55 and 40 mentions, respectively. Success-focused toasts highlighted achievements and career advancement (e.g., at a company's year-end banquet, the CEO praised the team's efforts and successes over the past year). Gratitude conveyed appreciation for teamwork and support (e.g., during a business dinner, senior managers toasted to their partners, acknowledging their valuable contributions to the collaboration). Health and well-being were less frequent in professional settings, with only 10 mentions of health and 8 of well-being, showing that professional toasts prioritized achievement over personal welfare.

In casual social gatherings, happiness was the dominant theme, appearing in 70 toasts, reflecting a focus on enjoyment and camaraderie (e.g., at a friend's birthday party, the guests frequently toasted to happiness and fun memories shared). Emotions were also frequently expressed, with 43 toasts conveying heartfelt sentiments (e.g., during a school reunion, many toasts emphasized the deep bonds of friendship and the joy of reconnecting). Gratitude, though less frequent, appeared in 34 toasts, and well-being was mentioned in 12 toasts, often through informal phrases like ‘Cheers to many more great times!’ (e.g., during a spontaneous night out, friends raised their glasses to toast

to future gatherings filled with joy and laughter).

In summary, while gratitude, health, and success appeared in both formal and informal settings, gratitude prevailed in family and professional gatherings, health in family events with elder attendees, and success in business contexts. Furthermore, age differences influenced thematic choices, with younger participants favoring happiness and camaraderie, while mature participants leaned toward gratitude, health, and well-being, highlighting generational values across diverse social priorities.

4.3.2 Degree of formality of the toasts

The toasts were classified into two main categories: formal and informal. Formal toasts used honorifics, structured sentences, and respectful language such as “我谨代表...” (‘I humbly represent...’) and “祝您身体健康” (‘Wishing you health’), often maintaining a serious tone throughout. In contrast, informal toasts were characterized by shorter phrases, a relaxed or humorous tone, and casual language like “干杯” (‘Cheers’) and “让我们举杯” (‘Let’s raise a glass’), creating an inclusive and spontaneous atmosphere.

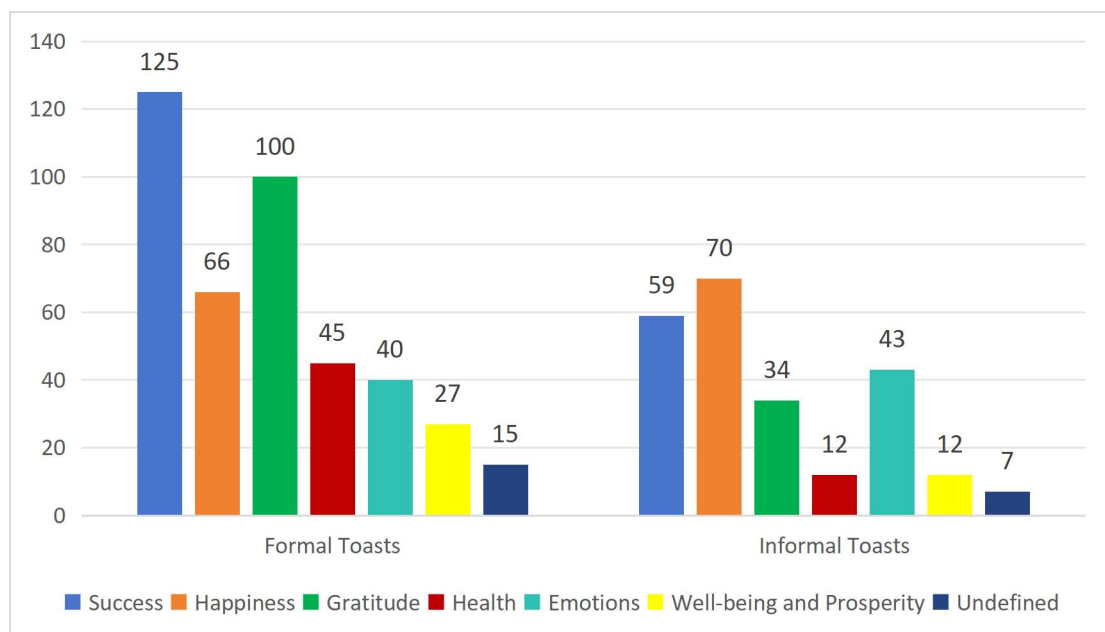


Figure 4.3 Frequency of formal and informal elicited toasts

As shown in Figure 4.3, formal toasts accounted for 125 out of all responses, with the majority found in family gatherings and professional events. In the formal toasts, success and gratitude were frequent themes, appearing in 125 and 100 instances, respectively. Common phrases included “祝您事业有成” (‘Wishing you success in your career’) and “感谢您的支持” (‘Thank you for your support’), reflecting the structured, respectful language characteristic of formal settings. Health-focused toasts (e.g. “祝您长寿健康”: ‘Wishing you longevity and health’), also appeared in 45 formal toasts, underscoring wishes for vitality and well-being, especially in family contexts.

In contrast, informal toasts made up 59% of all responses, with happiness and emotions dominating these gatherings. Happiness appeared in 70 toasts, often expressed with phrases like “愿我们永远年轻” (‘May we stay forever young’), while emotions were highlighted in 43 toasts, reflecting heartfelt sentiments typical of social settings. The informal toasts used relaxed, inclusive language that encouraged participation, creating a warm, convivial atmosphere. The tone was intentionally informal, emphasizing camaraderie and enjoyment, aligning with the social nature of casual gatherings.

4.3.3 Age-related differences in toasting

Age appeared to affect head act selection, level of language (in)formality, and thematic preferences in toasts.

The older participants (35+) frequently used gratitude and health as primary themes, reflecting values of respect, appreciation, and well-being. Health and success were particularly prevalent, with health mentioned in 36% of their toasts, especially in family gatherings. The respondents also commonly (i.e., 63% of the time) produced structured toasts, often organized with an introduction, main message, and concluding wishes for health and longevity (e.g., ‘Thank you for your guidance’ and ‘Wishing

you long life and health’). Supportive moves, such as reflections on relationships, added emotional depth and respectfulness to these toasts.

In contrast, the younger participants (18-35) preferred informal, socially engaging toasts, particularly in casual social gatherings. They prioritized happiness, mentioned in 35% of their toasts. They also frequently incorporated phrases like “Cheers to the future!” and “Let’s raise a glass” to foster camaraderie, and focus on enjoyment and social bonds. Instead, formal toasts accounted for only about 30% of their toasts.

These findings (see Figure 4.4) showed that the older participants favored formal, structured expressions in family or professional contexts, reflecting traditional values, while the younger participants preferred informal, camaraderie-focused toasts, aligning with a more spontaneous, social tone. The differences were significant for these themes: success, gratitude, health, and well-being.

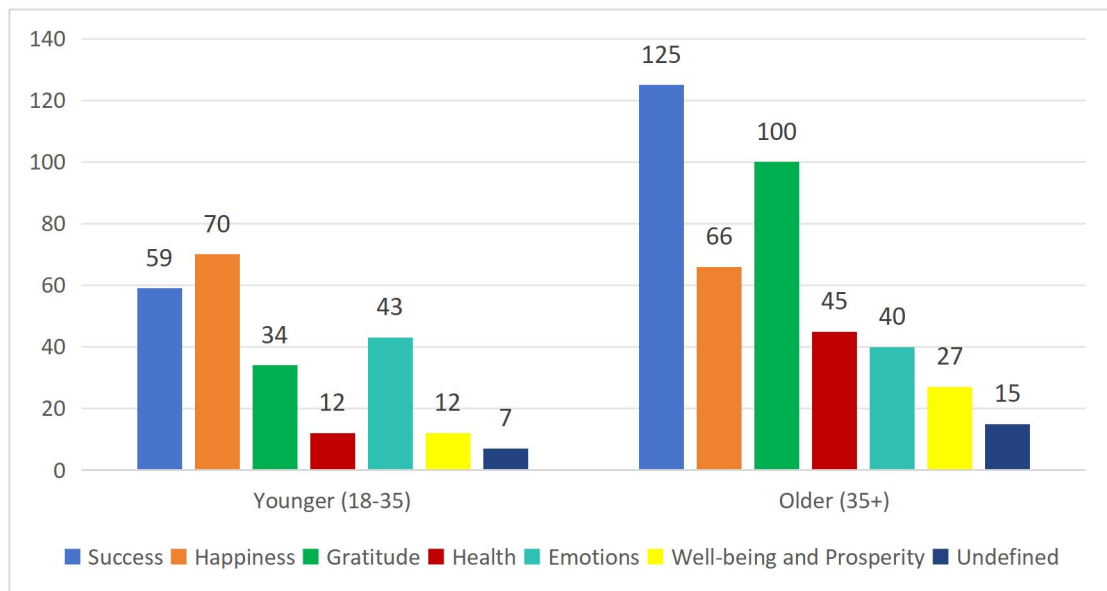


Figure 4.4 Frequency of occurrence of themes in toasts uttered by younger and older speakers

4.3.4 Frequency of head acts and supportive moves

Each toast was analyzed for the presence of head acts (the main message of the toast) and supportive moves (additional content that provides context or emotional depth), whose frequency is reported in Figure 4.5.

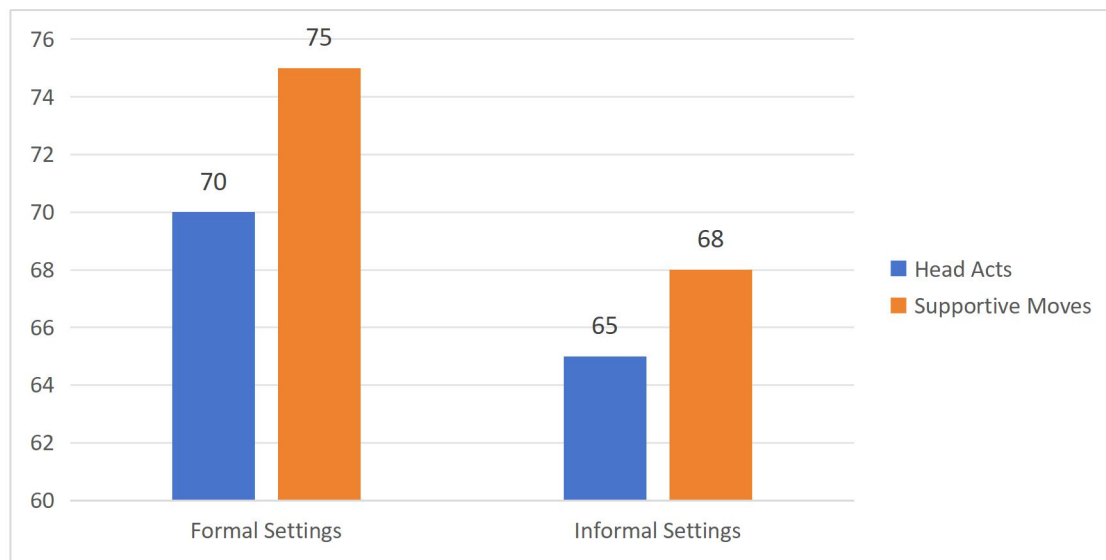


Figure 4.5 Frequency of head acts and supportive moves

In formal settings, such as family gatherings and professional events, 70 formal toasts (i.e. 25.2%) contained head acts and 75 (i.e. 27%) included supportive focused on the notions of success, happiness, or gratitude, which emphasize relationships and traditional values. In informal settings like casual meet-ups, there were 65 head acts (23.4%) and 68 supportive moves (24.4%) fostering camaraderie and enjoyment, such as ‘Cheers to the future!’. Overall, the supportive moves were more frequent than the head acts in both formal and informal settings.

4.4 The reasons for toasting

This section will report on (the frequency of mention of) the different reasons for, or goals of, toasting, indicated by the questionnaire respondents.

4.4.1 Reasons for toasting across situations

In this section, I report how often the participants mentioned various reasons for

motivating the practice of toasting. The total numerical values do not amount to 100% because the respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer for every questionnaire item

Reason for toasting	Family	Work	School
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	142 (59%)	156 (75%)	124 (76%)
Express respect	90 (38%)	37 (18%)	39 (24%)
Convey blessings	182 (76%)	121 (58%)	104 (64%)
Promote communication	142 (59%)	155 (75%)	127 (78%)

Table 4.6 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in three settings

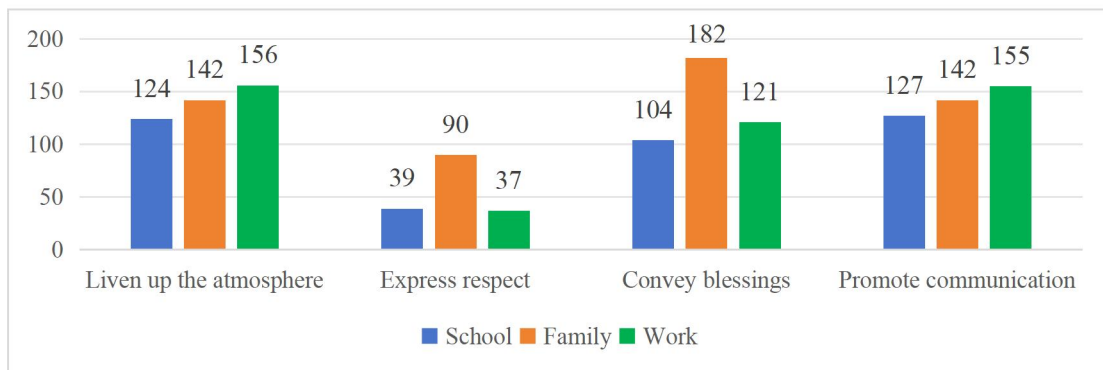


Figure 4.6 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in three settings (raw figures)

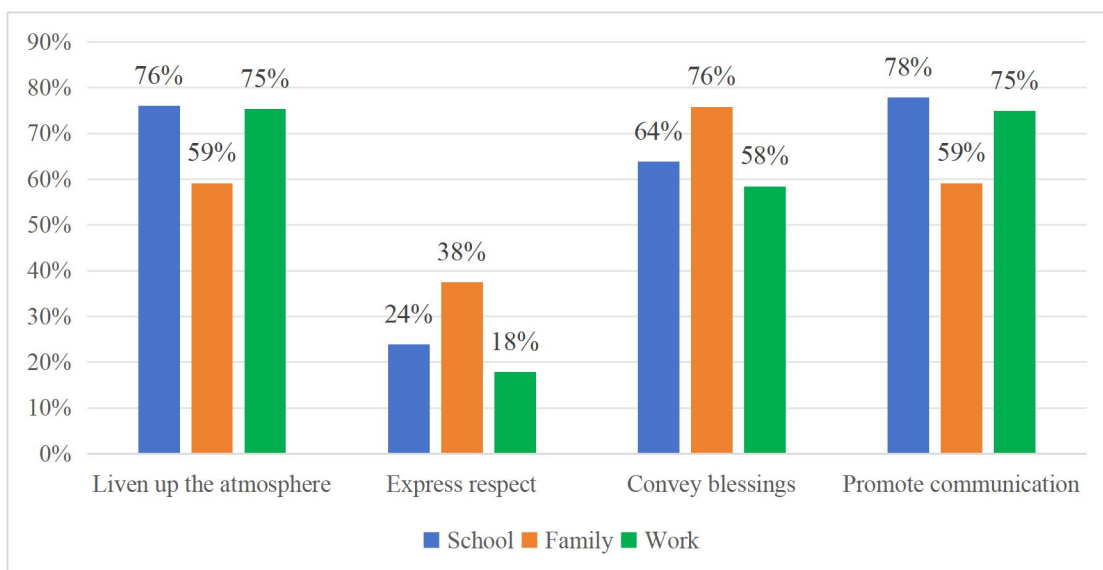


Figure 4.7 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in three settings (percentage values)

Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7 show the main goals of toasting — “Livening up the atmosphere”, “Conveying blessings”, and “Promoting communication” — are mentioned with reference to different settings, but with varying degrees of emphasis. In the workplace, the focus is largely on creating a lively, harmonious environment, whereas in family settings, the act of toasting is more closely tied to emotional expressions of blessings and respect. School settings, instead, led respondents to place greater emphasis on promoting communication and fostering a positive social atmosphere.

Reason for toasting	Family
Category	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	142 (59%)
Express respect	90 (38%)
Convey blessings	182 (76%)
Promote communication	142 (59%)

Table 4.7 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in family settings

As shown in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.8, in family gatherings, the main purposes of toasting that were mentioned were to convey blessings (33% of all responses), and to promote communication (26%). Livening up the atmosphere and expressing respect, instead, represented 25% and 16% of all responses, respectively.

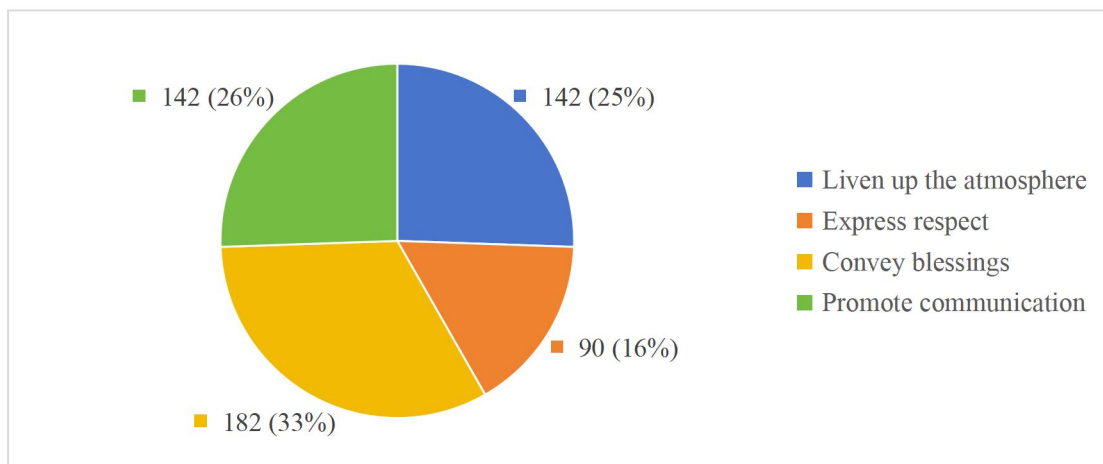


Figure 4.8 Frequency of mention of toast motivations in family settings

Reason for toasting	Work
Category	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	156 (75%)
Express respect	37 (18%)
Convey blessings	121 (58%)
Promote communication	155 (75%)

Table 4.8 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in work settings

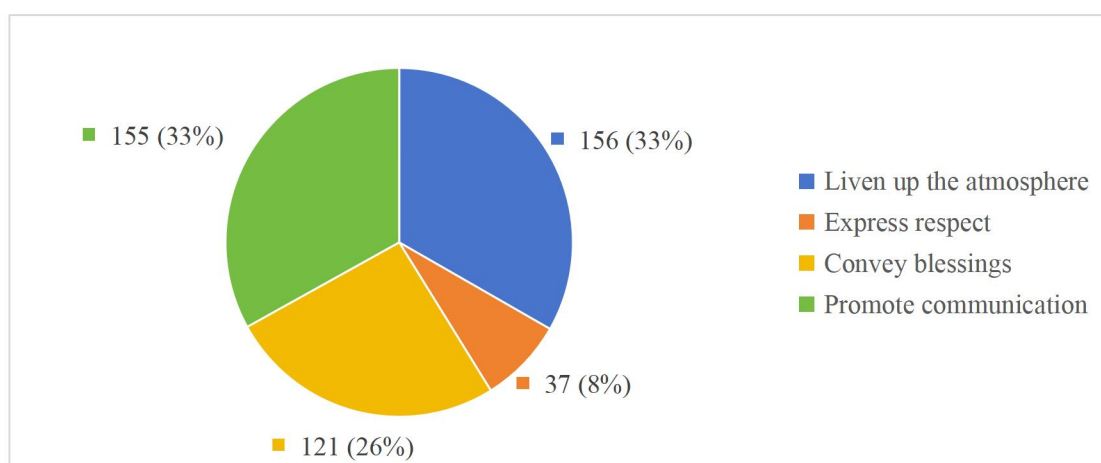


Figure 4.9 Frequency of mention of toast motivations in work settings

As shown in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.9, the primary reasons for toasting in work settings were to liven up the atmosphere and promote communication, accounting for 33% of all responses. Instead, conveying blessings made up 26% of responses, and expressing respect was less emphasized, representing 8% of the total.

Reason for toasting	School
Category	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	124 (76%)
Express respect	39 (24%)
Convey blessings	104 (64%)
Promote communication	127 (78%)

Table 4.9 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in school settings

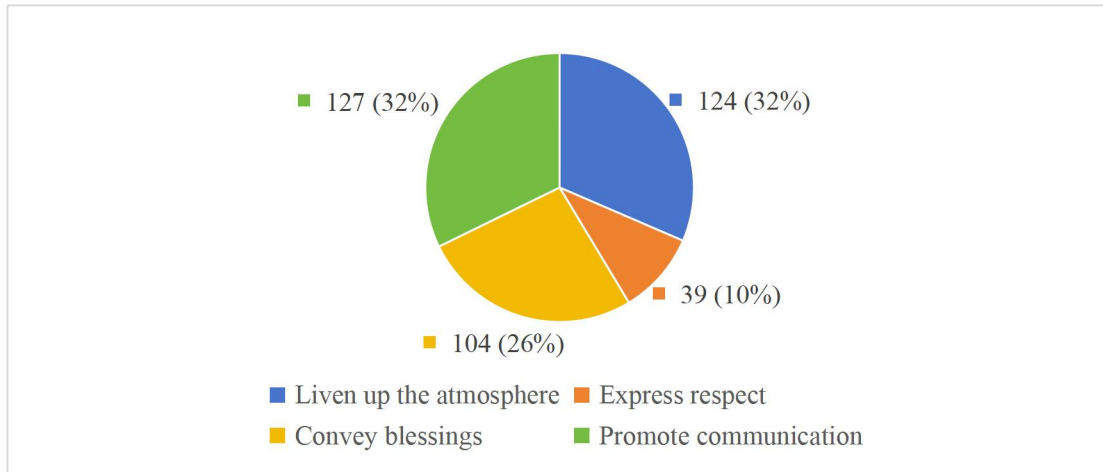


Figure 4.10 Frequency of mention of toast motivations in school settings

As shown in Table 4.9 and Figure 4.10, school settings show a balance between promoting communication and livening up the atmosphere, each accounting for 32% of all responses. Conveying blessings made up 26% of responses, while expressing respect was less frequently cited, representing 10% of the total.

4.4.2 Age- and gender-related differences in motivations for toasting

Different patterns of choice were detected in the reasons for toasting across age and gender groups, which are summarized in Table 4.10.

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	108 (70%)	135 (82%)	60 (43%)	110 (73%)
Express respect	41 (26%)	29 (18%)	68 (49%)	38 (25%)
Convey blessings	101 (65%)	135 (82%)	54 (39%)	105 (70%)
Promote communication	125 (81%)	140 (85%)	50 (36%)	109 (73%)

Table 4.10 Frequency of mention of reasons for toasting across age and gender groups

This analysis indicates that the difference in the frequency of choice of the reason

“Express respect” between younger and older groups is statistically significant; the others are not, though “Convey blessings” is close to the threshold for significance. The female participants also mentioned three of the reasons for offering toasts (i.e. “Livening up the atmosphere”, “Conveying blessings”, and “Promoting communication”) more often than the male participants. The differences were statistically significant for the reasons “Express respect” and “Convey blessings.” On average, the group that most frequently mentioned the various reasons for toasting was that of the older females, with “Promote communication” being the most frequently mentioned reason across all groups.

4.4.2.1 Age- and gender-related differences in family settings

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	39 (65%)	48 (80%)	17 (28%)	34 (57%)
Express respect	22 (37%)	18 (30%)	31 (50%)	19 (32%)
Convey blessings	44 (73%)	57 (95%)	34 (57%)	47 (78%)
Promote communication	45 (75%)	48 (80%)	19 (32%)	33 (55%)

Table 4.11 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in family settings

As shown in Table 4.11 and Figure 4.11, different age and gender groups emphasize various reasons for giving toasts in family settings. For the younger females (65%) and the older females(80%), the most common reason for toasting is to liven up the atmosphere. Males, however, show less inclination to toast for this purpose, with only 28% of younger males and 57% of older males selecting it.

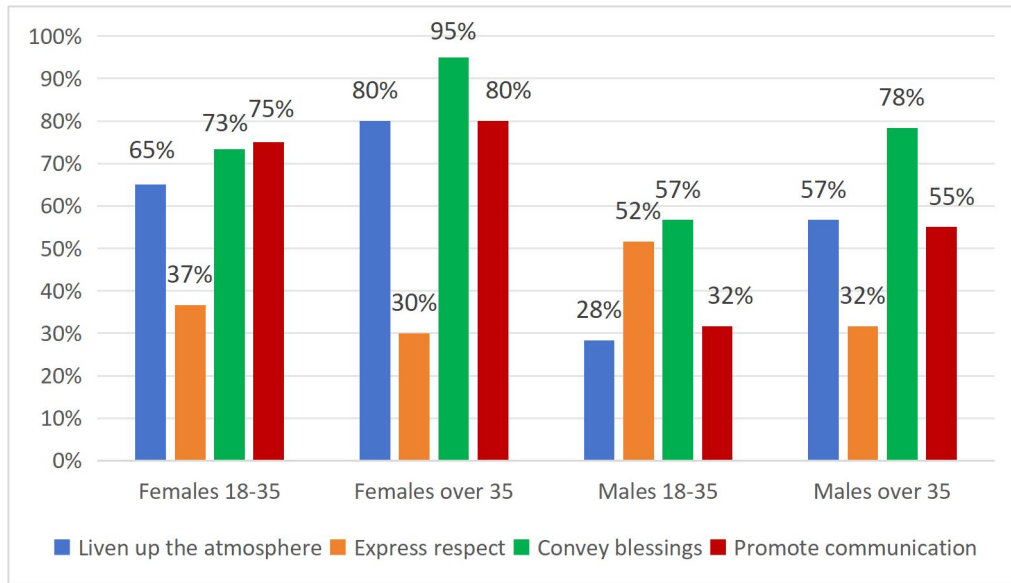


Figure 4.11 Frequency of mention of toast motivations in family settings across participant groups

In family settings, different patterns emerge in the reasons for toasting among different age and gender groups. The younger females (18-35) were more likely to choose “Liven up the atmosphere” (65%) and “Promote communication” (75%) as their reasons for toasting. They also had a relatively high preference for “Convey blessings” (73%). For younger males (18-35), “Express respect” was a prominent reason (52%), while they showed less inclination towards “Liven up the atmosphere” (28%) and “Promote communication” (32%). However, more than half chose “Convey blessings” (57%).

The older females (over 35) highly prioritized “Convey blessings” (95%) and also showed a strong preference for “Liven up the atmosphere” (80%) and “Promote communication” (80%). The older males (over 35) were more inclined to choose “Liven up the atmosphere” (57%) and “Convey blessings” (78%). Their choice of “Promote communication” was at 55%, while they chose “Express respect” less frequently (32%).

Overall, the data highlights age and gender differences in motivations for toasting at family gatherings, but of different magnitude. Among the female participants,

age-related differences were not significant. However, among the male participants, the differences were significant for all the motivations. Therefore, across gender and age groups, the same reasons for toasting are given different priorities.

4.4.2.2 Age- and gender-related differences in work settings

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	37 (73%)	55 (92%)	21 (67%)	48(80%)
Express respect	10 (20%)	5 (8%)	15 (42%)	10 (17%)
Convey blessings	30 (59%)	44 (73%)	11 (31%)	37 (62%)
Promote communication	43 (84%)	50 (87%)	12 (33%)	48 (80%)

Table 4.12 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in work settings

In professional environments, the females over 35 showed a strong preference for using toasts to liven up the atmosphere (92% chose this), convey blessings (73%), and promote communication (87%). The females aged 18 - 35 also favored these, with 73% for livening up the atmosphere, 59% for conveying blessings, and 84% for promoting communication. The younger males (18 - 35) were more inclined to use toasts to express respect (42%), while having a lower tendency to promote communication (33%). The older males (over 35) were more likely to use toasts to liven up the atmosphere (80%) and promote communication (55%), sharing similarities with older females in emphasizing a cohesive and lively work environment.(See Table 4.12)

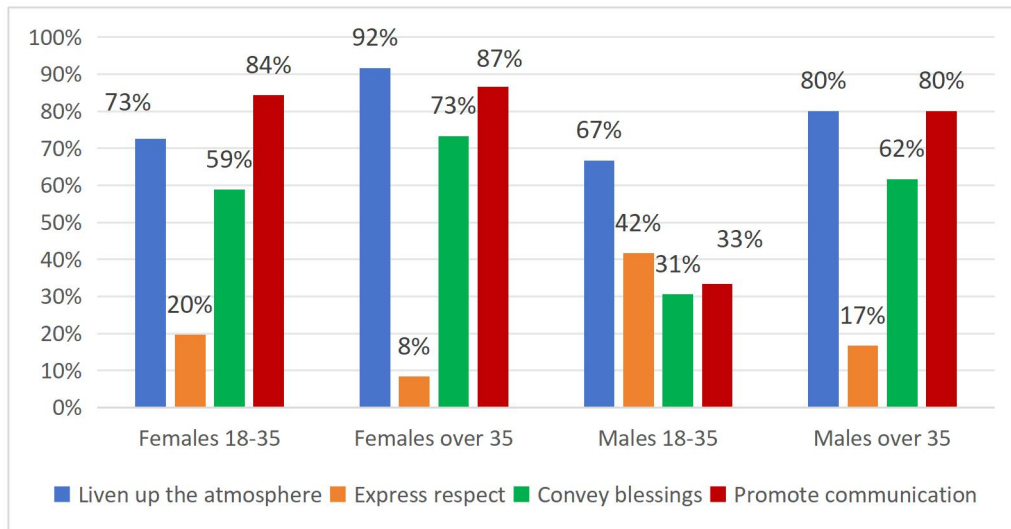


Figure 4.12 Frequency of mention of toast motivations in work settings across participant groups

Figure 4.12 shows that, among the female participants, age-related differences were not significant. However, among the male participants, the differences were significant for all the motivations. Additionally, the females mentioned all reasons for toasting more frequently than the males, with significant gender-based differences observed for each motivation. In summary, the females, particularly the older ones, were inclined to use toasts to create a lively atmosphere, convey blessings, and foster communication, reflecting their focus on positive workplace interactions. In contrast, the younger males focused more on expressing respect, while the older males aligned more closely with the older females, valuing communication and a positive atmosphere.

4.4.2.3 Age- and gender-related differences in school settings

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	32 (67%)	32 (71%)	19 (45%)	28 (93%)
Express respect	9 (19%)	6 (13%)	22 (52%)	9 (30%)
Convey blessings	27 (56%)	34 (76%)	9 (21%)	21 (70%)
Promote communication	37 (77%)	40 (89%)	19 (45%)	28 (93%)

Table 4.13 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in school settings

In school settings, the females over 35 often chose to promote communication (89% with 40 occurrences) and liven up the atmosphere (71% with 32 occurrences). The younger females (18 - 35) also frequently selected promoting communication (77% with 37 occurrences) and livening up the atmosphere (67% with 32 occurrences). The females in both age groups expressed respect less often, with younger females at 19% (9 occurrences) and older females at 13% (6 occurrences). Conveying blessings was chosen by 76% (34 occurrences) of the older females and 56% (27 occurrences) of the younger females. (See Table 4.13)

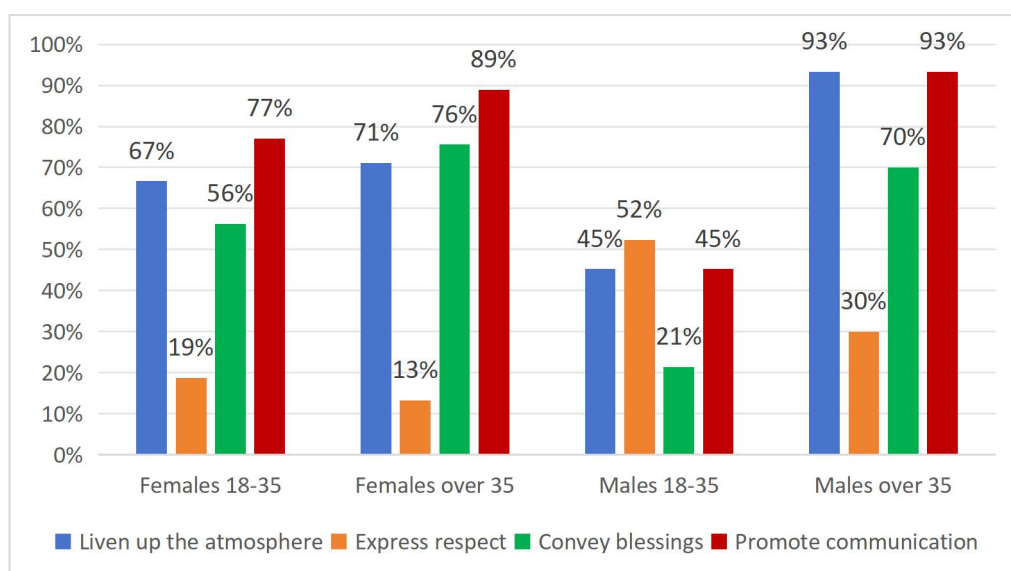


Figure 4.13 Frequency of mention of toast motivations in school settings across participant groups

As shown in Figure 4.13, for the males, the older ones (over 35) highly prioritized promoting communication and livening up the atmosphere, both at 93%. The younger males (18 - 35) were most likely to express respect (52% with 22 occurrences), while they chose promoting communication and livening up the atmosphere only 45% of the time. Conveying blessings was selected by 70% (21 occurrences) of the older males and only 21% (9 occurrences) of the younger males.

On average, the differences between the age groups and between the gender groups

were not statistically significant. Overall, the data shows that the females and the older males used toasts mainly to foster communication and create a lively environment, reflecting an emphasis on engagement and interaction. The younger males, however, focused more on expressing respect, showing a different priority within the school setting.

4.4.3. Reasons for toasting in different role-relationships

This section will briefly introduce people’s choice of different toasts when facing different roles.

Reason for toasting	Superiors	Peers	Subordinates
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	106 (52%)	142 (70%)	156 (76%)
Express respect	108 (53%)	90 (44%)	37 (18%)
Convey blessings	121 (59%)	182 (89%)	121 (59%)
Promote communication	122 (60%)	142 (70%)	155 (76%)

Table 4.14 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting in different role-relationships

The main reasons for toasting change depending on the role-relationship between the toast proposer and the addressee. When toasting to superiors, the focus was primarily on promoting communication and expressing respect, with blessings as a secondary emphasis. Among peers, conveying blessings and fostering a lively atmosphere were more prominent, reflecting camaraderie and equal footing. In interactions with subordinates, creating an engaging environment and encouraging open communication took precedence, with less emphasis on respect, as the focus was on bridging social distances.(See Table 4.14)

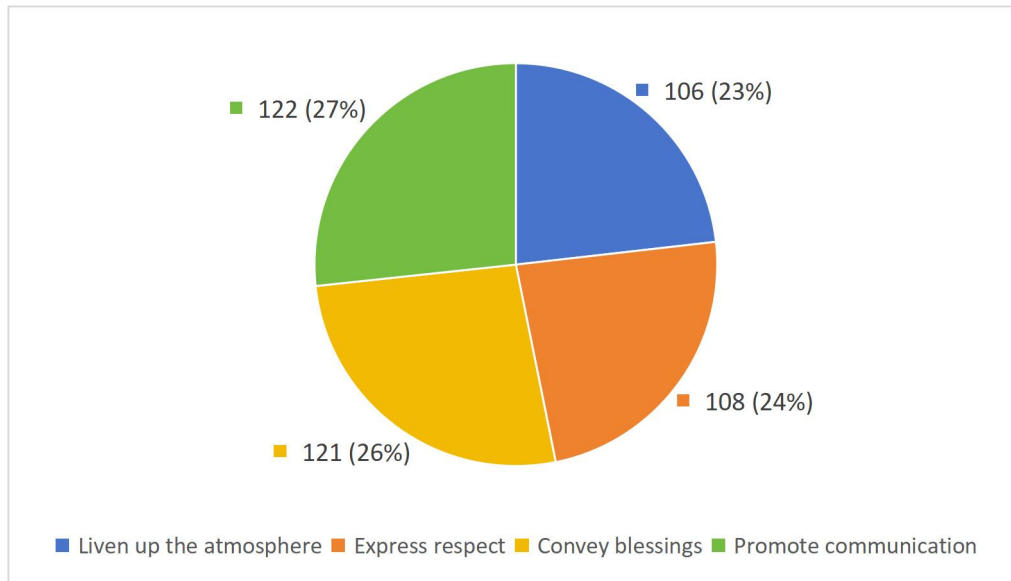


Figure 4.14 Frequency of mention of toast motivations when toasting to a superior

Figure 4.14 shows that when giving toasts in the presence of a superior, the main purposes were to promote communication (27% of all responses), and to convey blessings (26%). Expressing respect and livening up the atmosphere were mentioned slightly less frequently, representing 24% and 23% of all responses, respectively.

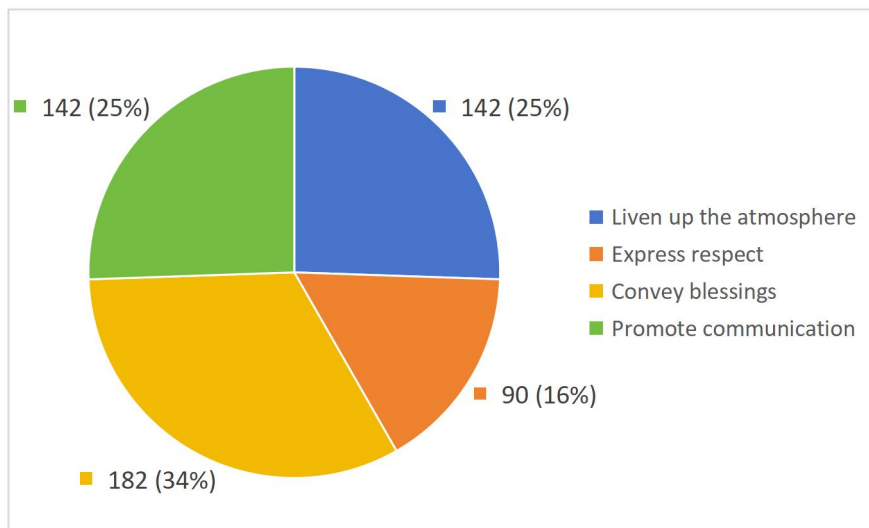


Figure 4.15 Frequency of mention of toast motivations when toasting to peers

Figure 4.15 shows that, when toasting among peers, individuals focused mainly on conveying blessings (34%), with livening up the atmosphere and promoting communication each accounting for 25%. Expressing respect was only represented

16% of all responses. Overall, when toasting with peers, individuals prioritized blessings, atmosphere, and communication, reflecting a focus on camaraderie and positive interpersonal relationships.

Figure 4.16 shows that, when toasting to subordinates, participants emphasized creating a positive environment and fostering communication, with both livening up the atmosphere and promoting communication at 33% each. The reason for conveying blessings was mentioned in 26% of responses, while expressing respect was selected less frequently, representing only 8% of all responses. Overall, toasts to subordinates were largely aimed at fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive atmosphere, with a relatively lower emphasis on respect.

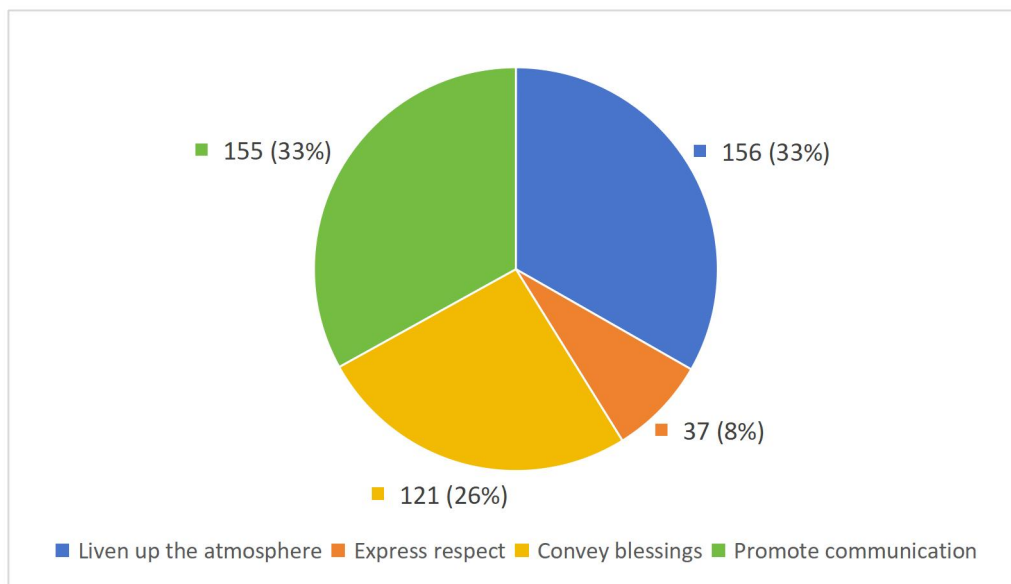


Figure 4.16 Frequency of mention of toast motivations when toasting subordinates

4.4.4 Age- and gender-related differences in motivations for toasting in different role-relationships

This section will describe how age and gender affected people's choice of different reasons for toasting in different role-relationships.

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	108 (68%)	140 (85%)	58 (42%)	110 (73%)
Express respect	41 (26%)	45 (27%)	68 (49%)	38 (25%)
Convey blessings	101 (64%)	89 (54%)	54 (39%)	105 (70%)
Promote communication	125 (79%)	136 (82%)	150 (36%)	109 (73%)
Total number of people	159 (100%)	165 (100%)	138 (100%)	150 (100%)

Table 4.15 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting

As shown in Table 4.15, the most frequently mentioned reason for toasting among women, regardless of age, was to liven up the atmosphere. The younger women chose this reason 68% of the time, and this value increases to 85% among women over 35. This suggests that women viewed toasting primarily as a way to enhance the social atmosphere. Another popular reason for toasting among women was to promote communication, with 79% of younger women and 82% of older women selecting this option. This indicates that women generally see toasting as a means to foster social interaction. In contrast, the reasons of conveying blessings (64% for younger women and 54% for older women) and expressing respect (26% for younger women and 27% for older women) were mentioned less frequently.

For the men, the most common reason for toasting was also to liven up the atmosphere, though it was selected less frequently compared to women, that is, by 42% of the younger men and 73% of the older men. Additionally, conveying blessings was more common among the older men (70%), compared to the younger men (39%). Similarly, promoting communication was mentioned more frequently by the older men (73%) than the younger men (36%). The reason of expressing respect was more common among the younger men (49%) than the older men (25%).

Differences were also detected across age groups Among the younger participants, the

most commonly mentioned reason was to liven up the atmosphere, with 68% of younger women and 42% of younger men selecting this reason. The second most frequent reason for toasting was promoting communication, with 79% of younger women and 36% of younger men choosing this option. On average, the differences between the age groups were not statistically significant, while the results were statistically significant between the gender groups.

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	31 (58%)	42 (76%)	4 (9%)	29 (58%)
Express respect	21 (40%)	21 (38%)	37 (80%)	29 (58%)
Convey blessings	33 (62%)	43 (78%)	13 (28%)	32 (64%)
Promote communication	39 (74%)	45 (82%)	7 (15%)	32 (62%)

Table 4.16 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting when toasting to superiors

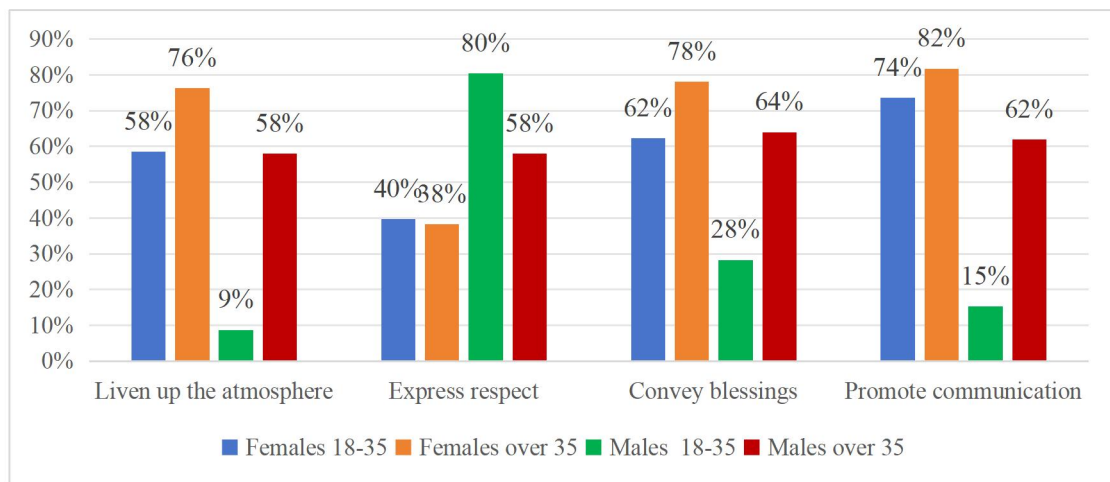


Figure 4.17 Frequency of mention of toast motivations across participant groups when toasting to superiors

According to Table 4.16 and Figure 4.17, when addressing superiors, males aged 18-35 primarily mentioned the reason of expressing respect (80%), while males aged over 35 mainly mentioned the reasons of conveying blessings (64%) and promoting

communication (62%). For females in the 18-35 age group, the primary purpose for toasting mentioned was to promote communication (74%), followed by conveying blessings (62%). Females aged over 35 said that they mainly toasted to promote communication (82%), conveying blessings (78%), and liven up the atmosphere (76%). In sum, when addressing superiors, the women focused more on the need to promote communication, creating a cheerful atmosphere, and expressing blessings. The men, especially young men, placed importance on using this opportunity to express respect to their superiors.

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	37 (70%)	51 (93%)	24 (52%)	41 (82%)
Express respect	7 (13%)	5 (9%)	11 (24%)	3 (6%)
Convey blessings	35 (66%)	43 (78%)	26 (57%)	39 (78%)
Promote communication	43 (81%)	43 (78%)	17 (37%)	40 (80%)

Table 4.17 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting when toasting to peers

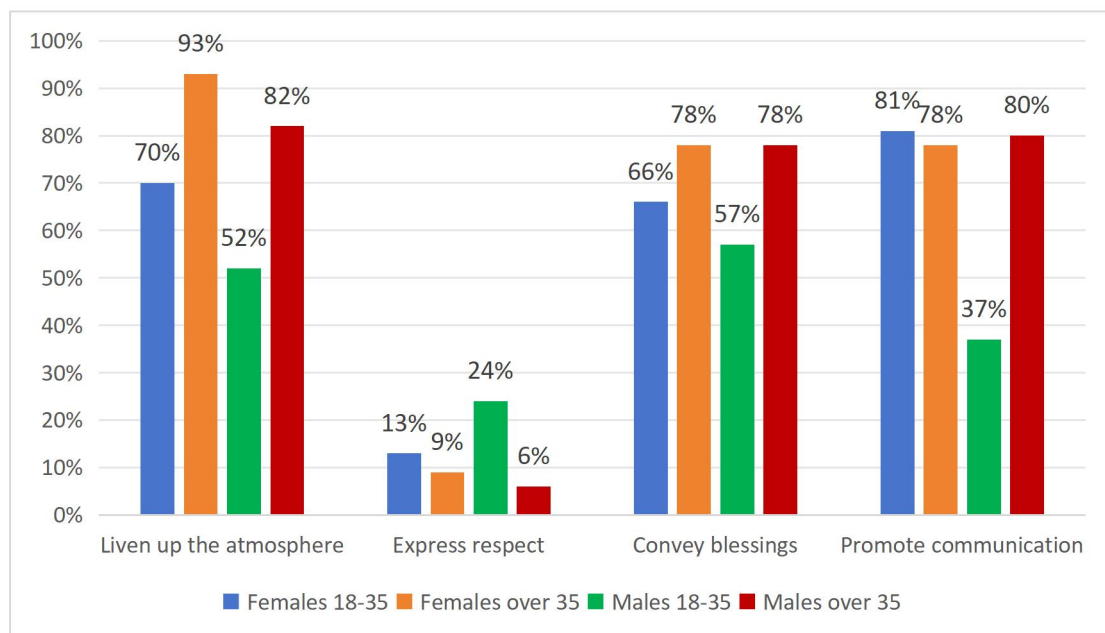


Figure 4.18 Frequency of mention of toast motivations across participant groups when toasting to peers

As shown in Table 4.17 and Figure 4.18, when toasting among peers, the males aged 18-35 primarily focus on conveying blessings (57%) and livening up the atmosphere (52%), while the older males (over 35) prioritized creating a lively atmosphere (82%) and promoting communication (80%). For females, those aged 18-35 primarily indicated that they toast to promote communication (81%) and liven up the atmosphere (70%), while women over 35 focused more on livening up the atmosphere (93%), conveying blessings (78%), and promoting communication (78%). In general, the younger individuals, regardless of gender, emphasized communication and creating a lively environment, while the older individuals prioritize fostering a positive atmosphere, conveying blessings, and promoting communication.

On average, the differences between the age groups and between the gender groups were not statistically significant. Overall, when facing peers, all groups placed more emphasis on creating a cheerful and harmonious atmosphere when toasting, while also using this opportunity to convey blessings and promote communication. Compared to the other groups, the younger men place the highest importance on using toasts to liven up the atmosphere.

Reason for toasting	Females 18-35	Females over 35	Males 18-35	Males over 35
Category	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Liven up the atmosphere	40 (75%)	47 (85%)	30 (65%)	40 (80%)
Express respect	13 (25%)	19 (35%)	20 (43%)	6 (12%)
Convey blessings	33 (62%)	3 (5%)	15 (33%)	34 (68%)
Promote communication	43 (81%)	48 (87%)	26 (57%)	38 (76%)

Table 4.18 Frequency of mention of various reasons for toasting when toasting to subordinates

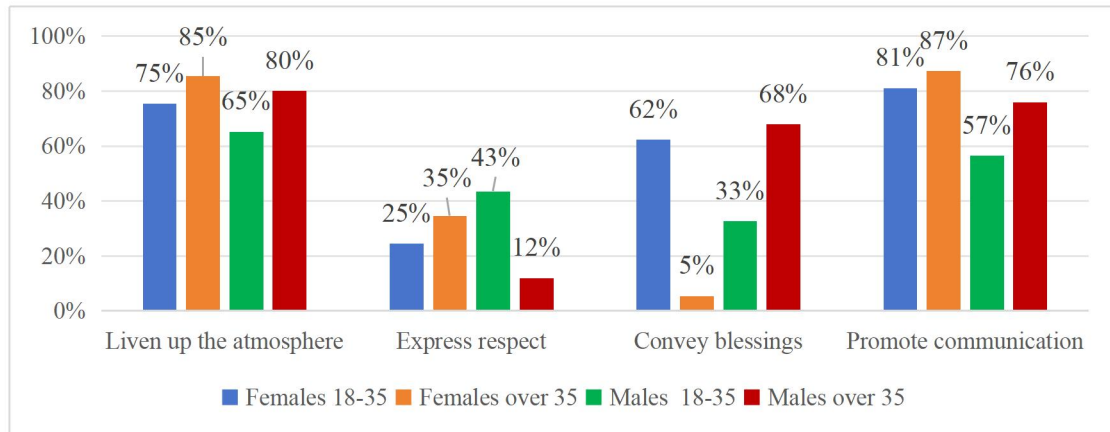


Figure 4.19 Frequency of mention of toast motivations across participant groups when toasting to subordinate

As shown in Table 4.18 and Figure 4.19, when toasting to subordinates, both the males and the females generally prioritized creating a joyful atmosphere and promoting communication. The younger males (18-35) emphasize livening up the atmosphere (65%) and promoting communication (57%), while the older males (over 35) focused more on fostering a lively environment (80%) and communication (76%). The females aged 18-35 similarly prioritized communication (81%) and livening up the atmosphere (75%), while the older females (over 35) place greater importance on both promoting communication (87%) and creating a positive atmosphere (85%).

In general, the males tend to emphasize respect, particularly the younger males, while the females focus more on communication and interaction. The older participants, both males and females, had more comprehensive toasting motivations, blending a focus on atmosphere, communication, and blessings. The younger participants, however, prioritize different aspects based on the situation, with males placing relatively more importance on respect. On average, the differences between the age groups and between the gender groups were not statistically significant.

4.5 Views on and knowledge of toasts

This section will introduce people's views on traditional Chinese toasts, including factors that people think can influence the choice of toasts, and their knowledge of traditional toast etiquette.

4.5.1 Age-,role- and gender-related differences in toasting expressions

This section presents findings from participants' answers to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, which explored their toasting behaviors across different age groups, social roles, and genders.

The younger participants (18-35) generally preferred an energetic and informal style of toasting, often using phrases related to passion, friendship, and future goals. In contrast, the older participants (35+) leaned toward structured and reflective expressions that emphasized stability, family, and life experiences. Social roles also influenced the style of toasting; participants tended to adopt formal and respectful language when addressing superiors, motivational tones with subordinates, and casual, camaraderie-focused language with peers. Gender further shaped these expressions, with the men more likely to focus on hierarchy and achievement, while the women emphasized emotional connections and shared experiences.

According to the statistics (Figure 4.20), among the 80 respondents, 65 (81.2%) believed that the age of the person making the toast would affect the choice of toast words, while 15 (18.8%) believed that it would not. In particular, 37 men and 28 women, and 41 younger people and 24 older people believed so (see Figures 4.21).

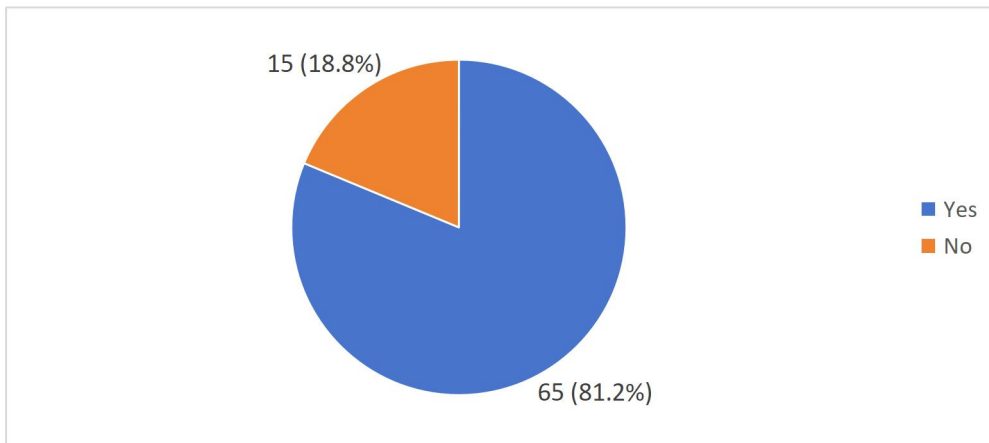


Figure 4.20 Frequency of people who think age has or has no effect

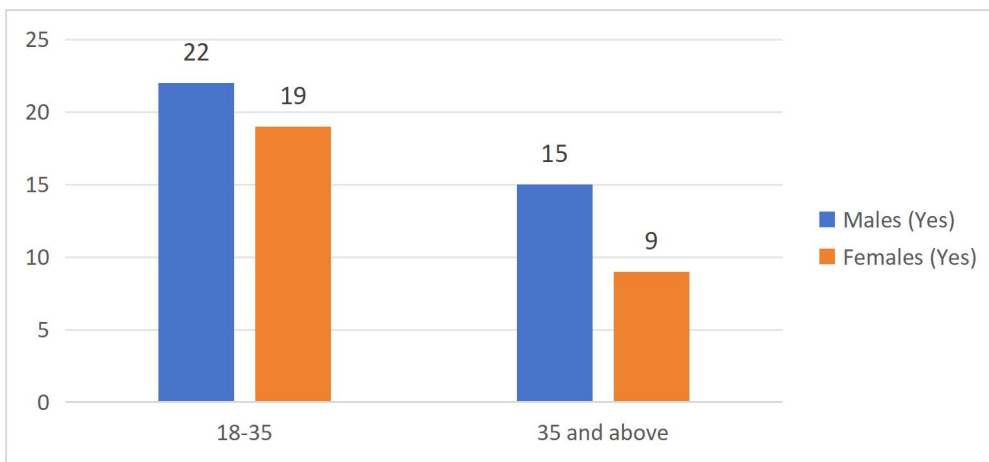


Figure 4.21 Frequency of people who think age has an impact

As shown in Figure 4.22, 69 respondents (86.2%) believed that role differences would affect the choice of toasts, while 11 (13.8%) believed that it would not. The age and gender composition of the 65 participants who believed that role differences influence the choice of toast words is illustrated in Figure 4.23.

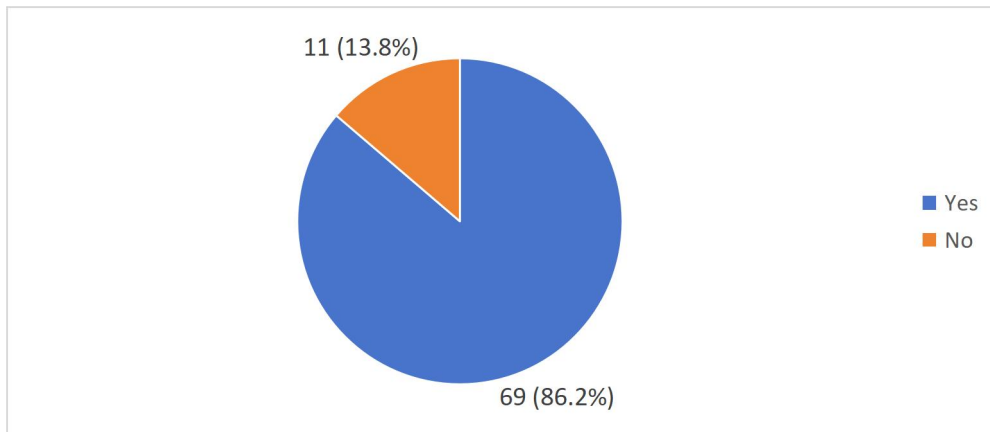


Figure 4.22 Frequency of people who think role has or has no effect

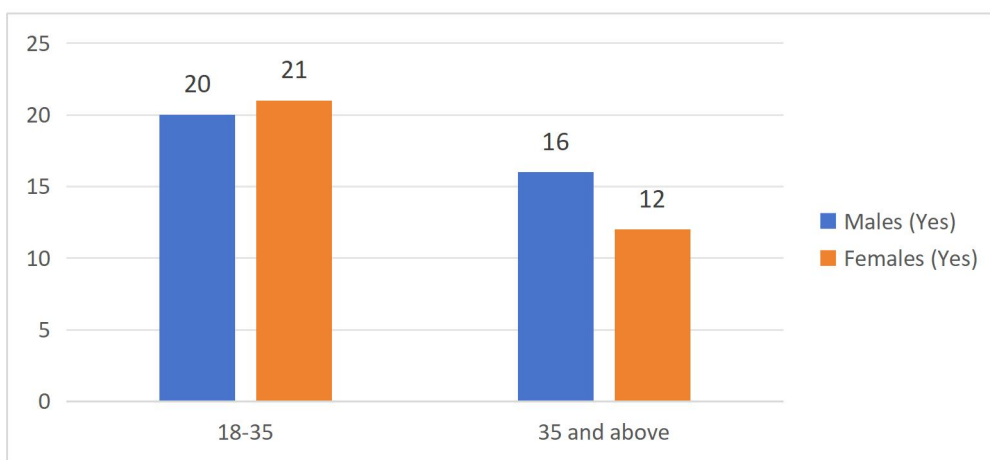


Figure 4.23 Frequency of people who think role has an impact

The male participants were more likely to emphasize hierarchical and motivational aspects of toasting, especially when addressing superiors or subordinates. Phrases like “共创辉煌” (‘together create brilliance’) and “勇往直前” (‘march forward bravely’) were found in 18 out of 20 male responses (90%). The female participants placed greater emphasis on emotional connections and personal relationships. In 16 out of 20 female responses (80%), the women often used phrases such as “感恩栽培” (‘grateful for mentorship’) when addressing superiors and “共饮此杯，情深似海” (‘drink together, emotions as deep as the sea’) when toasting peers. On average, the differences between the age groups were not statistically significant, but those between the gender groups were.

4.5.2 Toasting etiquette rules and sources of learning

Responses about toasting etiquette highlighted rules shaped by social hierarchy, formality, and event context, with age and gender differences. The participants emphasized respect for hierarchy, appropriate conduct, and the need to maintain harmony in both formal and informal settings.

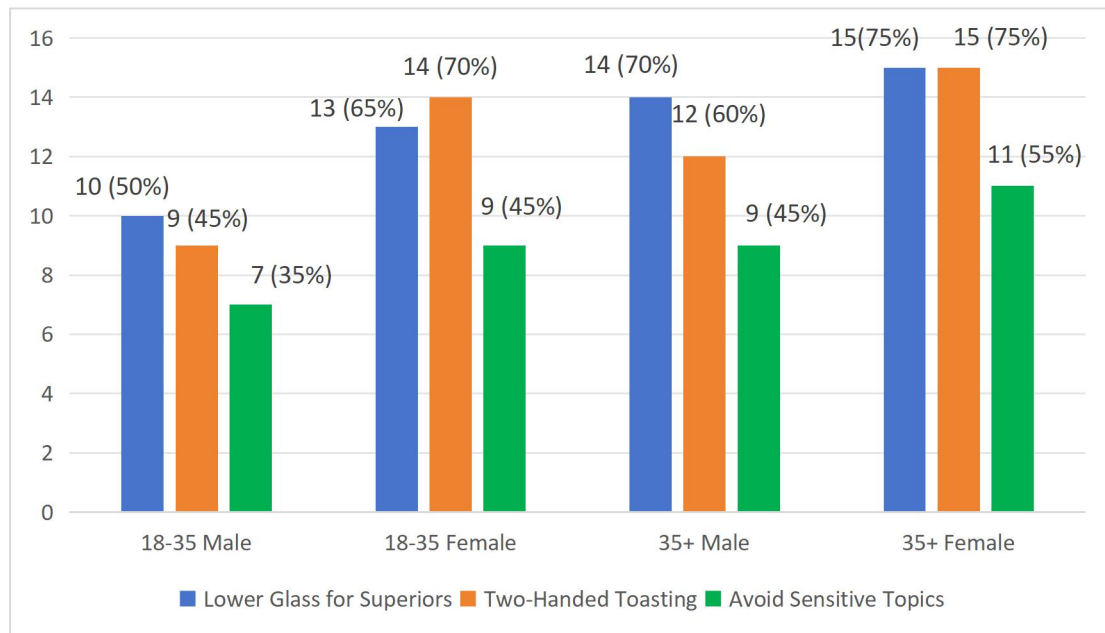


Figure 4.24 Etiquette rules of toasting indicated by questionnaire respondents

A dominant theme is the emphasis on hierarchy and respect (see Figure 4.24). Participants, particularly those aged 35 and above, frequently mentioned lowering the glass when toasting with a superior, waiting for the host or elder to initiate the toast, and avoiding interrupting a leader or elder during their toast. For instance, 14 out of the 20 male participants (70%) aged 35 and above emphasized lowering the glass as a sign of respect. The younger participants (18-35) also stated that they follow these rules, but adopting a more casual approach, with 10 out of the 20 male participants (50%) and 13 out of the 20 female participants (65%) mentioning that they maintain respect without being overly formal.

The physical aspects of toasting were also highlighted, such as using both hands to hold the glass, maintaining good posture, and ensuring that clinking glasses is done

gently to avoid breakage. Among participants aged 35 and above, 15 out of 20 women (75%) emphasized the importance of using both hands while clinking glasses, compared to 12 out of 20 men (60%) in the same age group.

Another important rule mentioned across all age groups was to avoid sensitive topics during toasts, particularly in business or family gatherings. Participants emphasized that discussions should remain positive and light. Specifically, 11 out of 20 (55%) female participants and 9 out of 20 (45%) male participants aged 35 and above explicitly mentioned the need to steer clear of controversial issues during toasts.

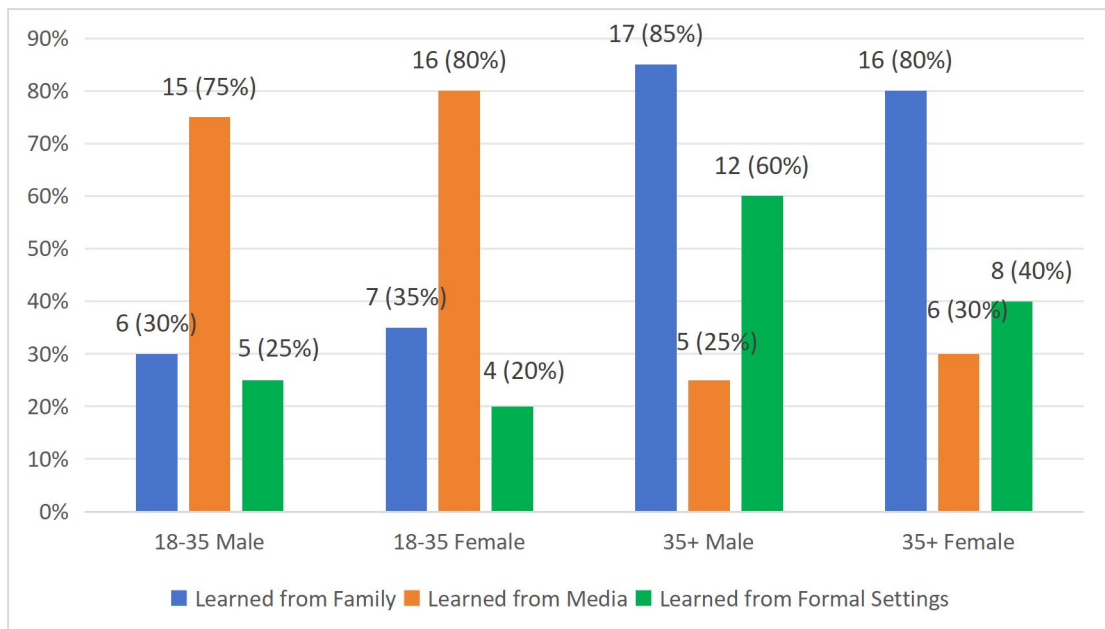


Figure 4.25 Sources of learning etiquette rules about toasting

The source of learning these toasting rules mentioned by the questionnaire respondents varied remarkably between generations and genders (see Figure 4.25). The older participants, particularly those aged 35 and above, reported that they primarily learned these rules from family members, particularly their parents or elders. 17 out of 20 male participants (85%) aged 35 and above indicated that their knowledge of toasting etiquette came from family traditions, compared to 16 out of 20 female participants (80%) in the same age group. In contrast, the younger participants

(18-35) were more likely to mention learning from social interactions, friends, and media sources such as online videos, TV shows, and movies. 15 out of 20 male participants (75%) and 16 out of 20 female participants (80%) aged 18-35 mentioned learning through social experiences or media, reflecting the growing role of digital platforms in shaping modern etiquette practices.

The men aged 35 and above were more likely to cite professional settings, such as business dinners or formal training, as their source of learning, with 60% indicating they gained knowledge through work-related experiences. In contrast, 75% of women in the same age group mentioned that family played a significant role in transmitting these customs. On average, the differences between the age groups were statistically significant, and so were those between the gender groups.

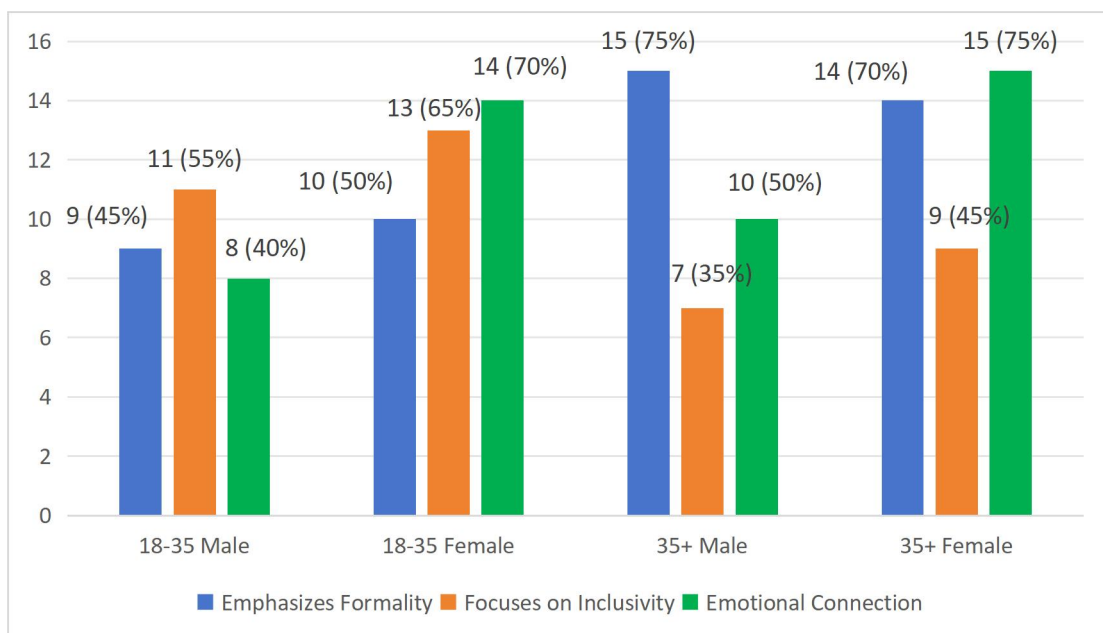


Figure 4.26 Gender and age variations in toasting etiquette

Both age and gender influence how participants follow toasting etiquette. As shown in Figure 4.26, the older men (35+) tended to emphasize hierarchy and tradition, stressing the need to wait for elders or superiors to initiate toasts and maintain a

formal tone. In this group, 75% of male participants highlighted the importance of strict formality during toasts. The younger men (18-35) and women, instead, focused more on maintaining a positive atmosphere and inclusivity. For example, 13 out of 20 (65%) younger women emphasized ensuring that all attendees feel equally respected during toasts. The women, especially those aged 35 and above, were more likely to emphasize the emotional and relational aspects of toasting. Indeed, 15 out of 20 women (75%) in this group mentioned that their toasts focus on fostering warmth and harmony rather than strictly adhering to hierarchical customs. On average, the differences between the age groups were not statistically significant, while those between the gender groups were.

The analysis of toasting etiquette rules and their sources of learning highlights the strong cultural emphasis on hierarchy, respect, and maintaining a harmonious atmosphere during toasts. While the older participants, particularly the men, tended to adhere more strictly to formal rules and hierarchical structures, the younger participants, and the women in particular, were more likely to prioritize inclusivity, emotional connection, and flexibility in their toasting practices.

The sources of learning these rules also reflect broader generational shifts. The older participants often relied on family traditions and formal settings to acquire etiquette knowledge, whereas the younger participants increasingly learnt through social interactions and media platforms. This shift highlights how digital media is playing a growing role in shaping modern etiquette practices.

4.5.3 Accepting and observing the etiquette of toasting

The majority of the participants across all age groups and genders stated they followed the etiquette rules, primarily driven by the desire to maintain social harmony and respect cultural traditions. However, the motivations for compliance differed slightly between the younger and the older participants, the former focusing more on creating a comfortable social atmosphere, the latter on tradition and respect (see

Figure 4.27).

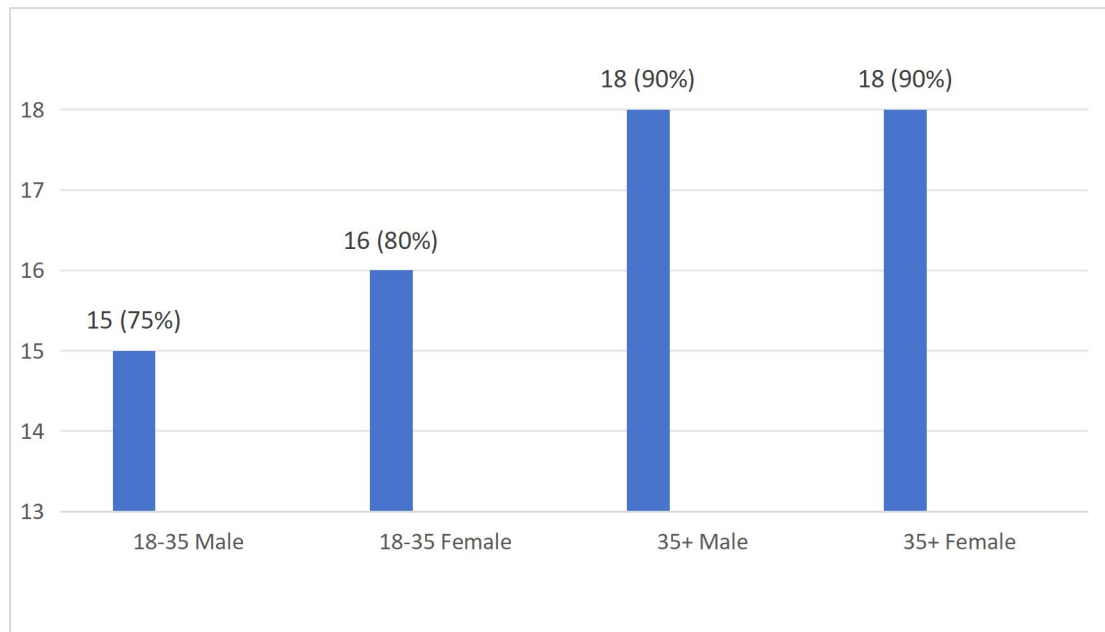


Figure 4.27 Number of people who respect the etiquette

A remarkable proportion of participants across all age groups reported adhering to toasting etiquette. Among the younger participants (18-35), 15 out of 20 men (75%) and 16 out of 20 women (80%) mentioned compliance, emphasizing the importance of creating a harmonious environment and smooth social interactions. Phrases like “这样大家都能感觉愉快” (‘This way everyone can feel happy’) highlighted their focus on social harmony.

For participants aged 35 and above, adherence was even higher, with 18 out of 20 men (90%) and 18 out of 20 women (90%) following toasting rules. This group cited respect for tradition as the main reason, believing it essential for maintaining cultural values and social order. Many expressed that following etiquette promotes mutual respect, with phrases like “遵守祝酒礼仪，就是尊重场合，尊重他人” (‘Following toasting etiquette shows respect for the occasion and others’) commonly mentioned.

While most younger participants (35 out of 40, i.e. 87.5%) cited social harmony as

their motivation, the older participants were more focused on preserving tradition (31 out of 40, i.e. 77.5%). Interestingly, 22.5% of the younger participants admitted to occasionally breaking the rules, citing the rules as too restrictive. In contrast, only 2 out of 20 men (10%) and 2 out of 20 women (10%) aged 35 and above admitted to occasionally disregarding the rules, typically in more casual settings.

In conclusion, the majority of participants declared they follow the rules, driven by either a desire for social harmony, especially among the younger participants (87.5% of younger respondents), or a respect for tradition, particularly among older respondents (77.5% of participants aged over 35). A small subset of participants, primarily within the younger age groups (22.5%), expressed that they occasionally find the rules restrictive and would prefer more flexibility in informal settings. On average, the differences between the gender groups were not statistically significant, but those between the age groups were.

4.5.4 Likes and dislikes about toasting etiquette

The participants' responses revealed general approval of toasting rules, appreciating the positive effects these rules have on social gatherings. However, the reasons for liking or disliking these rules varied depending on factors such as age, gender, respect for tradition, and the desire for social harmony.

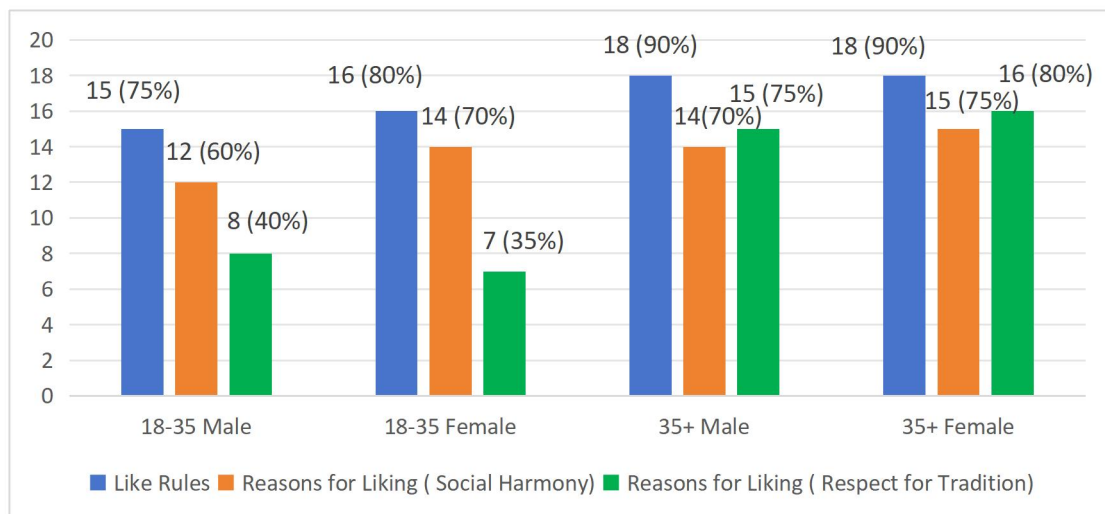


Figure 4.28 Appreciation of etiquette rules and reasons

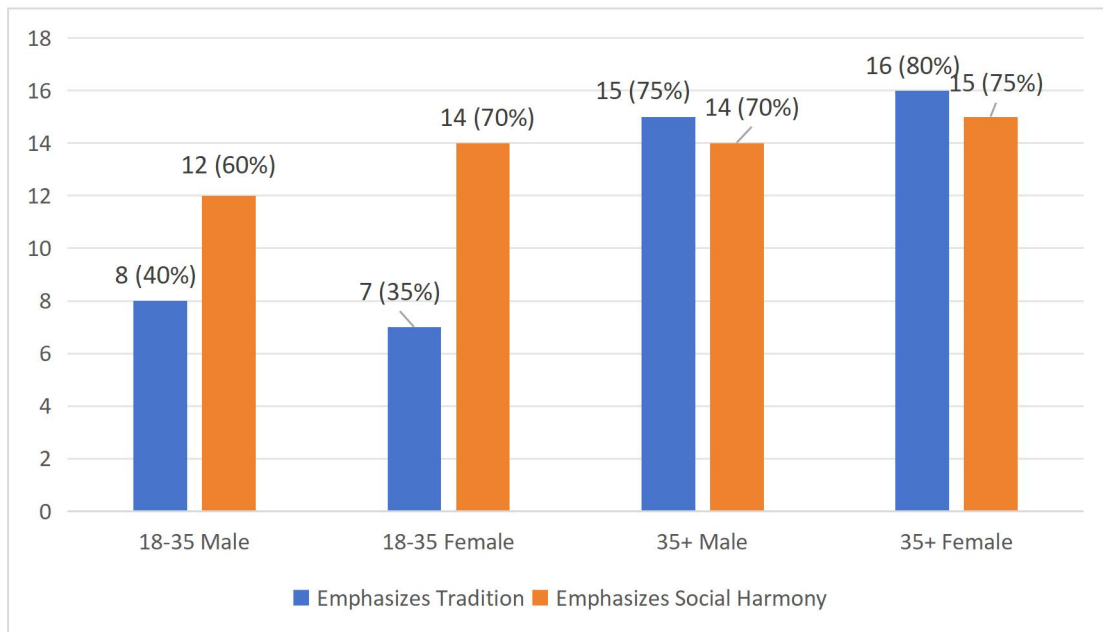


Figure 4.29 Participants' views on toasting etiquette

According to Figure 4.28 and 4.29, across all age groups, a majority of participants expressed approval of the toasting rules, though their reasons varied slightly by age and gender. Among the younger participants (18-35), 15 out of 20 men (75%) and 16 out of 20 women (80%) appreciated the rules for promoting social harmony and order at gatherings, often stating that “它们让聚会更和谐” (‘They make gatherings more harmonious’), highlighting their belief that the rules create a positive social environment. In contrast, the older participants (35+) emphasized the cultural significance of the rules. Both 18 out of 20 men (90%) and women (90%) valued them for reflecting cultural traditions, with phrases like “礼仪是文化的体现” (‘Etiquette reflects culture’), underscoring the role toasting rules play in maintaining social hierarchies and traditions.

There were also notable differences in how these groups viewed the rules. The older men (35+) tended to focus on the cultural aspects, with 15 out of 20 men (75%) highlighting the role of toasting in preserving values and traditions. On the other hand, the younger participants, especially women aged 18-35, were more likely to

appreciate the rules for fostering social harmony and inclusivity. In this group, 14 out of 20 women (70%) expressed that the rules helped create a more harmonious atmosphere, frequently mentioning phrases like “敬酒词让气氛更融洽” (‘Toasting words make the atmosphere more harmonious’). Overall, while the younger participants prioritized harmony, the older participants focused on tradition. On average, the differences between the age groups and between the gender groups were not statistically significant.

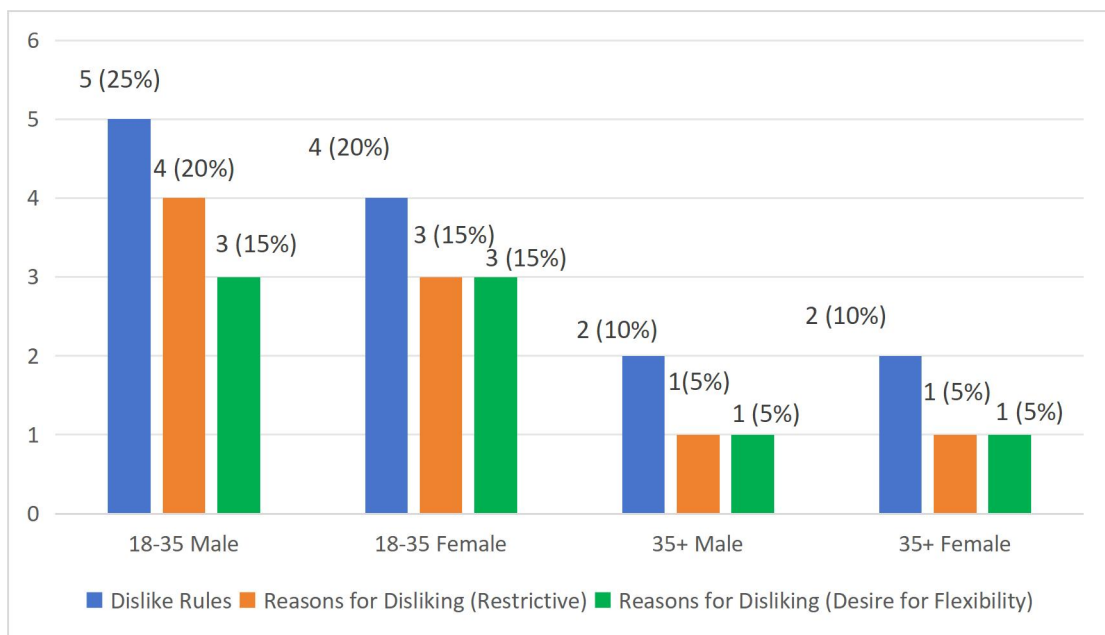


Figure 4.30 Number of people in each group who dislike etiquette rules and their reasons

While most participants appreciated the rules, a small subset expressed dissatisfaction, particularly among the younger participants (18-35) (See Figure 4.30). 5 out of 20 men (25%) and 4 out of 20 women (20%) stated that they found the rules too restrictive, reflecting a desire for more freedom and spontaneity in social interactions. The older participants (35+), on the other hand, were less likely to express dissatisfaction. Only 2 out of 20 men (10%) and 2 out of 20 women (10%) in this group indicated disliking the rules, often noting that they would prefer more flexibility in certain social situations. On average, the differences between the gender groups were not statistically significant, but those between the age groups were .

In conclusion, the analysis of participants' attitudes towards toasting rules shows that most participants, regardless of age or gender, approved of the rules for their contributions to social harmony and the preservation of cultural values. The younger participants (18-35) tended to appreciate the rules for creating a pleasant and structured social atmosphere, while the older participants (35+) emphasized the role of the rules in maintaining tradition and respect.

A small subset of participants, particularly the younger men, expressed a desire for more flexibility, citing the restrictive nature of the rules as a concern. Gender differences were also evident, with the men, especially those aged 35 and above, focusing more on the cultural and traditional aspects of the rules, while the women were more inclined to highlight the social and interpersonal benefits of toasting etiquette. This analysis underscores the evolving perceptions of toasting rules across generations, as younger participants seek a balance between tradition and modern social dynamics.

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has described the linguistic, thematic, and sociocultural aspects of toasting across various contexts, highlighting key patterns influenced by age, gender, formality, and social roles. The findings underscore that toasts serve as an important social tool, not only for celebrating milestones but also for reinforcing social bonds and hierarchical structures in both formal and informal settings. Key toasting expressions vary significantly depending on the context and demographics, with the younger participants favoring informal and spontaneous language, while the older participants tended to emphasize respect, gratitude, and well-being in their toasts. The role of supportive moves, such as expressions of gratitude and reflections on relationships, further enhances the social and emotional resonance of toasts, tailoring them to specific social dynamics.

This chapter has also revealed the complex interaction between individual preferences and broader cultural traditions, showing that toasting behaviors are shaped by deeply ingrained etiquette rules passed down through generations. The study highlights how participants, especially those aged 35 and above, adhere to traditional customs that emphasize hierarchy and respect, while the younger individuals increasingly embrace flexibility and inclusivity in their toasts.

The analysis of the motivations for toasting shows that the act of raising a glass transcends mere ritual, serving as a reflection of broader social values. Whether livening up the atmosphere, promoting communication, or conveying blessings, toasts are a means of fostering connection and promoting harmony within different social groups. However, the evolution of these practices, particularly among the younger participants, suggests a shift toward more egalitarian and emotionally expressive toasting, reflecting the ongoing modernization of social customs.

In summary, toasting remains a dynamic cultural practice that adapts to both traditional and contemporary values.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine and draw conclusions based on the data gathered through both questionnaires and recordings of spontaneous interactions. Section 5.2 will summarize and discuss the discursive and behavioral patterns observed among various participant groups. In Section 5.3, I will discuss the contributions and limitations of the study, followed by suggestions for future research on social etiquette and interactional dynamics within toasting customs.

5.2 Discussion of the results

In this section, I will analyze the data collected through questionnaires as well as through spontaneous generation. I will first reflect on the more general discursive patterns relevant to the variables considered. I will then comment on more specific patterns relevant to the various groups of study participants.

5.2.1 Age

Age appears to influence toasting behavior in several aspects, including language expression, topic selection, behavioral motivations, and adherence to etiquette.

The younger people (18-35 years old) often used casual and concise expressions, such as “cheers,” in informal settings, reflecting their preference for relaxed, informal and egalitarian communication styles. This applied whether they were toasting to superiors, peers or subordinates. For example, when toasting to subordinates, they employed motivational phrases like “Keep up the good work, and the future is promising,” always in a relaxed tone. With peers, they favored expressions such as “Cheers, bro,” emphasizing equality and camaraderie. However, the older participants (35+ years) favored more formal and respectful communication style, as revealed in such expression as “I wish you good health” in family gatherings or “Thank you for your support” in professional contexts. This preference was evident independently of

who they were toasting to. When toasting to subordinates, the older individuals typically used more authoritative and encouraging language, such as “I hope you keep working hard” or “You did great work,” emphasizing their role in guiding and motivating others. With superiors, they adopted an even more formal tone, with expressions like “I appreciate your guidance.” In interactions with peers, they still adhered to a high level of formality, signalling deference, respect and social distance (e.g. “This is a toast to you, thank you for your cooperation.”). This generational difference finds support in the literature: Hu and Yang (2000) observed that younger generations tended to give priority to informality, while older generations adhered to formal expressions that reflected social hierarchies and cultural norms.

The generational difference was noticeable also with regard to topics. Indeed, the younger individuals typically focused on the themes of happiness and emotional well-being. The older individuals, instead, gravitated towards discussions of gratitude, health, and career success. This contrast mirrored the broader developmental shifts in social focus, with the younger people being more sensitive to personal emotional fulfillment, while the older individuals emphasized stability and legacy.

Age also appears to have influenced the behavioral motivations behind toasting that were given by the participants. The younger participants saw toasting primarily as a means of enhancing social interactions, that is, as a way to bond and energize group dynamics. In comparison, the older participants viewed toasting more as a tool for maintaining and strengthening relationships, whether within the family or in professional settings. This could be accounted for with reference to Dunbar and Shultz’s (2007) theory on the evolution of social behavior, where younger individuals were driven by immediate social connection, while older individuals focused more on long-term relational maintenance.

Furthermore, the younger participants demonstrated greater flexibility with etiquette, adapting their behavior to fit the context, while still showing basic respect for elders.

The older participants, by comparison, adhered strictly to established norms, underscoring their respect for tradition and social roles. This pattern resonates with Goffman's (1995) work on self-presentation, which suggested that individuals from different generations might adopt varying strategies in their public and private interactions based on their cultural and societal expectations.

The above findings strongly suggest that language, themes, motivations, and adherence to etiquette vary by age, shaped by each group's social roles. The younger individuals tended to adopt a more casual and flexible approach to toasting, using informal language and focusing on social connection, while the older individuals emphasized formal language, respect, and adherence to traditional etiquette, especially when addressing superiors or elders. Additionally, the motivations behind toasting also differed, with the younger people viewing it as a social activity to enhance interaction, while the older individuals focused on maintaining relationships, promoting team cohesion, and passing on values.

5.2.2 Gender

Gender also remarkably impacted toasting behavior with regard to forms of expression, topic selection, behavioral motivations, and adherence to etiquette.

In their formulation of toasts, the men tended to use concise, direct phrases, especially in professional settings, reflecting societal expectations of decisiveness and clarity (cf. Holmes 1995). The women, on the other hand, used more emotionally expressive language, such as "I hope everyone is happy and satisfied", especially in family gatherings, reflecting their focus on emotional connections and society's expectations for women to express emotions more delicately.

Gender differences were also evident in topic selection. The men often toasted to career success and cooperation, emphasizing social status and professional roles (e.g. "With this cup, I hope our project goes smoothly."). The women, instead, focused on

family happiness in informal settings and on maintaining relationships in professional environments, (e.g. “You two should be well.⁵” and “I wish you a happy family and everything goes well.”).

The participants’ behavioral motivation also differed in the two gender groups. The women were more likely to use toasts to create a positive atmosphere and foster communication, particularly in family gatherings, aligning with expectations of women as relationship nurturers. The men, conversely, were more likely to use toasts to display social skills and build business relationships, consistent with societal expectations for men to focus on competition and status.

Finally, the women generally stated they adhered more strictly to etiquette norms, such as using both hands when toasting or being mindful of appropriate language, than the men. The reason may be that the women valued social norms more than the men.

Overall, the above findings are consistent with my expectations. In their toasting behavior, the men tended to focus on the themes of career success, leadership, and assertiveness, using toasts to assert authority. Instead, the women emphasized gratitude, respect, and family well-being, prioritizing harmony and mutual respect. The women also seemed to experience greater pressure to adhere to formal etiquette, especially in family settings. These gender differences are in line with broader societal expectations about traditional gender roles in social contexts.

5.2.3 Similarities and differences across participant groups

In their formulation of toasts, the younger male participants preferred direct and concise expressions like “Cheers”. Their topics mainly focused more on social interaction and emotions. Finally, they stated that their main objective in toasting was

⁵ “你们两口子要好好的。” In China, this is a blessing for a couple or a married couple to be happy and stable.

to liven up the atmosphere and promote communication, especially in gatherings with friends. Their behavior was in line with their age group, as they valued informality and social connection. It also fit the traditional male gender role of being assertive in social situations, albeit in a less formal manner. Their toasting approach combined youth-related casualness and male-linked social engagement.

The younger female participants also tended to express themselves directly and to pay attention to a gentle expression of emotions, choosing as topics 'family happiness' in family gatherings and 'smooth work' in professional occasions. They indicated that they used toasts to liven up the atmosphere, convey blessings, and promote communication, and that they followed etiquette norms carefully. The conduct exhibited and expressed by the younger female participants was in accordance with both their age and gender characteristics. On the one hand, they had superior language organization skills and were more responsive when replying to what others said. On the other, their attention to emotional expression, carefulness in following etiquette, and the choice of themes related to family and well-being were consistent with traditional female roles.

In expressing their toasts, the older male participants preferred formal and respectful expressions, especially in formal occasions like business banquets, using phrases like "Thank you for your support". They paid more attention to topics such as career, gratitude, and health on different occasions. Their motivations for toasting varied across situations, ranging from maintaining interpersonal relationships and promoting business cooperation in professional settings to expressing emotions and maintaining family relationships in family settings. They also stated that they strictly followed traditional etiquette norms like lowering the cup height when toasting to superiors and using both hands to toast. Their behavior clearly reflected both gender and age-related expectations. The formality of their language and respect for hierarchy were consistent with traditional male social behaviors, while their focus on career, health, and strict adherence to etiquette aligned with the values associated with their age

group.

In expressing their toasts, the elder female participants used formal and respectful expressions and were more euphemistic and delicate, using sentences like “Thank you very much for your care all the time, I hope everything is well with you.” They preferred gratitude, health, and family as themes on varied occasions. They also stated that they proposed toasts to liven up the atmosphere, convey blessings, and promote communication, and that they closely followed etiquette norms like paying attention to the wine glass height and using both hands to toast. Their behavior appeared to reflect both gender and age-related expectations. Their focus on family, gratitude, and health mirrored traditional female values, and at the same time, their strict adherence to etiquette and the use of toasts to maintain harmony also aligned with the social roles typically associated with their age group.

5.2.4 Global trends

In general, the groups of participants involved in this study displayed different forms of participants’ toasting behavior.

The men typically used concise and direct expressions, focusing on career-related themes and professional goals. They preferred informal approaches and displayed less adherence to strict etiquette, prioritizing pragmatism and social skills in their toasting behavior. The women, in contrast, employed more emotionally expressive language and focused on themes related to family and well-being. They adhered more strictly to etiquette norms, reflecting their sensitivity to social expectations and their role in maintaining harmony within social interactions. The younger participants favored informal and relaxed toasting styles, often emphasizing emotional well-being and social connections. Their motivations centered around enhancing group dynamics and fostering communication, with greater flexibility in adapting their behavior to the occasion. The older participants, however, favored formal expressions and focused on themes of stability, gratitude, and career success. They adhered to traditional etiquette

norms and viewed toasting as a means to maintain relationships and uphold social roles, particularly in professional and hierarchical contexts.

All the above findings are in line with the original expectations. Overall, toasting behavior in Chinese social gatherings is influenced by a combination of factors such as age, gender, and social identity, which are intertwined and jointly shape the differences and characteristics of toasting behavior among different groups.

5.3 Research implications

This study has explored toasting behaviors in Chinese culture, revealing the complex ways in which cultural traditions and social hierarchies shape these behaviors. By analyzing the language, themes, and social context of toasts, we can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying values and norms that govern social interactions during meals and gatherings.

This study examined toasting practices through a partly innovative lens. First, it analyzed Chinese toasting customs from a pragmatic and social perspective: it examined the conventions of means (i.e. strategies) and conventions of forms (i.e. formulations) of toasts, and considered the impact that age, gender, and social roles may have on discursive toasting practices..

Also, a mixed-methods approach was used to collect both spontaneously produced and elicited data. The former accurately exemplified real-life toasting behavior, while the questionnaire provided insights into people's opinions about what should constitute proper toasting interactional practices.

However, this study also has some shortcomings. First, the data are limited in size and representativeness. The spontaneous data come only from 8 social gatherings, all of which relevant to the circle of my family and friends. An examination of more numerous toasting events in more varied social settings would have allowed me to

better substantiate my claims about age-, gender- and addressee-related differences in toasting behavior, and also to explore the influence of other possible situational variables on the expression of toasts, such as humor. Also, the questionnaire data were collected from people who frequently use social media, who therefore cannot fully represent the diversity of Chinese society. If I had administered paper-based questionnaires, or conducted semi-structured interviews, among my acquaintances and neighbors during my most recent stay in China, I would have included among my participants also people with different socialization habits.

With regard to my research methods, the analysis of toast discourse was somewhat subjective because it was carried out only by me, and for some toasts which were liable to multiple interpretations, the accuracy of their classification was not double checked. Since different researchers may have different understandings and classifications of certain types of discourse, I would have benefited from enlisting the help of an additional text analyst so as to aim at higher objectivity in my analysis. Alternatively, I could have aimed at intra-subjective reliability by classifying my data twice, performing my second analysis far apart in time from the first one so as not to be influenced by it.

In addition, the study mainly focused on the impact of internal factors such as age, gender, and social roles on toasting behavior, while the discussion of external social environmental factors such as the participants' regional cultural differences and the level of socioeconomic development was not considered. It would have been useful, therefore, to collect more comprehensive demographic data, including participants' place of birth, length of residence in diverse regions, and occupation/income details. Subsequently, by employing statistical techniques like multivariate regression, I could have analyzed the interplay between these factors and age, gender, and social roles in shaping toasting behavior.

5.4 Future perspective

The present research could be expanded upon in more than one way. Observational studies in different settings (e.g., different types of restaurants, family dinners, or business banquets) could provide a more comprehensive view of how toasting occurs in various contexts. This would help capture a wider range of factors that may influence toasting, such as the physical environment, the presence of specific people, or the nature of the activity.

The findings of this study are specific to the Chinese culture. Future research could compare toasting customs across cultures to identify universal and culture-specific patterns. This would provide a more complete understanding of the role of toasting in social interactions and help illuminate the extent to which cultural factors shape these customs. Cross-cultural comparisons could thus explore how different cultural values and norms are reflected in toasting expressions, and how these customs influence cross-cultural communication and understanding. For example, understanding the differences in formal and informal toasts across cultures could be beneficial for individuals engaged in international business or social interactions.

In conclusion, this study on toasting behavior in Chinese social gatherings has provided insights into the complex interplay of age, gender, and social identity in shaping these practices. Through the examination of language expression, topic selection, behavioral motivations, and adherence to etiquette, it has shown how different groups exhibit distinct patterns that are deeply rooted in cultural traditions and social hierarchies. However, further research is required, across settings and across cultures, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the socially variable manifestations of, and the social values attributed to, toasting.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

敬酒词调查问卷

您好！

感谢您同意参加本次调查，本次调查的主题是中国人在餐桌上敬酒的习俗。我收集的数据将帮助我完成我在意大利的语言学硕士学位。

本次调查分为 3 个部分，大约需要 15 分钟完成。在第一部分，您需要输入一些个人数据。在第二部分，您将看到一些关于您的敬酒习俗和观点的问题。如果您愿意，可以在第三部分留下一般性评论。

收集的数据将以匿名和汇总的方式处理，一旦我完成分析，这些数据将被删除。

如果您有任何问题，或者想与我沟通问卷的内容，请写邮件到 yunhua.ren@studenti.unipd.it。

再次感谢您抽出时间完成本次调查。

祝您生活愉快。

任运华

第一部分 基础信息

1. 您的年龄：

- 18 岁以下

- 18-25 岁

- 26-35 岁
- 36-45 岁
- 46-55 岁
- 56 岁及以上

2. 您的性别：

- 男
- 女
- 其他/未知

3. 您的职业：

- 学生
- 公司职员
- 部门经理
- 企业主
- 自由职业者和创意产业专业人士（例如艺术家、设计师、媒体等）
- 公共服务人员（例如教育、医疗、政府等）
- 农业和渔业工作者
- 劳工
- 退休人员
- 其他（请注明：_____）

4. 专业经验年限：[可选]

- 不适用（学生/无业）
- 1-3 年
- 4-7 年
- 8-10 年
- 10 年以上

5. 教育程度：[可选]

- [] 小学及以下

- [] 初中

- [] 高中

- [] 大专

- [] 学士学位

- [] 研究生及以上

6. 您的母语（请填写）：

7. 您掌握的其他语言（请填写）

8. 您居住在中国哪个省份？（请填写）

第二部分 关于祝酒

II-a 祝酒的场合

1. 您参加社交聚会时，一般会举杯祝酒几次？

- [] 从不

- [] 一两次

- [] 三至五次

- [] 六次以上

- [] 不确定

2. 您参加社交聚会时，你会使用多少种祝酒词？

- [] 无

- [] 1 种或 2 种

- [] 3 至 5 种

- [] 6 种以上

- [] 不确定

3. 您通常在哪些社交场合举杯祝酒？（可多选）

- 家庭聚会
- 朋友聚会
- 商务宴请
- 传统节日
- 其他（请注明：_____）

IIb 祝酒的内容

根据以下场景，指出在所提及的情况下你会如何祝酒。首先说明你会说的具体词语，然后说明你选择的原因。

1. 在与朋友和/或家人的非正式聚会上

1a. 你会在你母亲或父亲的生日聚会上向她/他祝酒吗？

为什么？

- 表达尊重
- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请说明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议祝酒

1b. 你会在你朋友的生日聚会上向他/她祝酒吗？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛

- 传达祝福
- 其他（请注明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

1c. 在您的儿子或女儿的毕业聚会上，您会向他/她举杯说什么？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请注明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

2.在工作中。

2a. 您的领导带您出差，与其他公司的领导讨论业务。在晚宴上，你会向其他领导举杯祝酒说什么？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请说明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不建议举杯

2b. 贵公司组织了一次团队建设活动。在活动期间，你会向同事举杯祝酒说什么？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进沟通
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请注明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

2c. 您与所负责部门的员工一起参加庆功宴。您会对您负责监督的员工说些什么敬酒词？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进沟通
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请注明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

3. 在学校/大学

3a. 当你和教授一起出去吃饭时，你会向他/她举杯说什么？

为什么？

- 表达尊重

- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请说明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

3b. 你和学校同一俱乐部的同学一起出去参加团队建设活动。你会向他们举杯说什么？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请注明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

3c. 作为学生会主席，如果你带同学出去吃饭，你会向所有成员举杯说什么？

为什么？

- 表示尊重
- 促进交流
- 活跃气氛
- 传达祝福
- 其他（请注明：_____）
- 不确定/不适用
- 我不提议举杯

IIc 敬酒文化

1. 你认为不同年龄段的人在举杯方式上有什么不同吗？

- [] 是（请注明：_____）

- [] 否

2. 您认为不同角色关系（即上级、下级和同级）的人在祝酒方式上是否存在差异？

- [] 是（请注明：_____）

- [] 否

3. 您认为年轻人和老年人更常使用哪种祝酒方式？请列举几种。

- [] 年轻人常使用哪种祝酒方式：_____

- [] 成年人和老年人常使用哪种祝酒方式：_____

IIId 祝酒规则

1. 您是否知道任何有关祝酒的惯例，例如礼仪规则？如果有，请在下面列出：

2a. 您从谁或哪里学到了这些规则？

2b. 以及如何（例如，您是否接受过正式的“培训”？您是否在晚宴上观察过家庭成员）？

3a. 您是否遵循他们？

3b. 为什么或为什么不遵循？

4a. 您是否喜欢并认可他们?

4b. 为什么或为什么不遵循?

第三部分 问卷评价

如果您愿意，您可以在此处留下关于祝酒和/或问卷的评论。

再次感谢您的参与!

Questionnaire on Toasts

Hello!

Thank you for accepting to take part in this survey, which is about the Chinese practice of toasting at the dinner table. The data I aim to collect will enable me to complete my MA in linguistics in Italy.

The survey comprises 3 parts, and should take you about 15 minutes to complete. In part I, you will have to insert some personal data. In part II, you will find a few questions about your toasting practices and views. In part III, if you like, you can leave a general comment.

The data collected will be treated in an anonymous and aggregate fashion, and it will be deleted once I have completed my analysis.

If you have any question, or more generally want to get in touch with me, please write to yunhua.ren@studenti.unipd.it.

Once again, thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.

Wish you a happy life.

Yunhua Ren

Part I. Background Information

1. Your age:

- Under 18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55

- 56 and above

2. Your gender:

- Male

- Female

- Other/Undeclared

3. Your occupation:

- Student

- Company employee

- Department manager

- Business owner

- Freelancer and creative industry professional (e.g. artist, designer, media, etc.)

- Public service personnel (e.g. in education, healthcare, government, etc.)

- Agriculture and fishery worker

- Laborer

- Retiree

- Other (please specify: _____)

4. Years of professional experience: [optional]

- Not applicable (student/unemployed)

- 1-3 years

- 4-7 years

- 8-10 years

- Over 10 years

5. Education level: [optional]

- Primary school or below

- Middle school

- High school

- [] Associate degree⁶
- [] Bachelor's degree
- [] Postgraduate degree or above

6. Your native language(s) (please complete):

7. Other language(s) you know, to whatever extent (please complete)

8. Which Chinese province do you live in? (Please complete)

Part II. About toasts

II-a The context of toasts

1. When you take part in a social gathering, how many toasts do **you** propose?

- [] Never
- [] Once or twice
- [] 3 to 5 times
- [] 6 times or more
- [] Not sure

2. When you take part in a social gathering, how many toasts are proposed, in general?

None

- [] 1 or 2
- [] 3 to 5
- [] 6 or more

⁶ It is similar to a college degree. In China, if you do not obtain a high score in the university entrance examination, you can only receive education in a college which focuses on the development of practical skills for professions in such fields as auto repair, hairdressing, cooking and the like. People who graduate from such colleges start working earlier.

- [] Not sure

3. On what social occasions do you usually propose toasts? (multiple choices are possible)

- [] Family gatherings
- [] Friends' gatherings
- [] Business banquets
- [] Traditional festivals
- [] Other (please specify: _____)

IIb. The content of toasts

Consider the following scenarios, and indicate what toasts you would propose under the circumstances that are mentioned. First specify the exact words you would say, and then give the reasons for your choice.

1. At informal gatherings with friends and/ family

1a. What would you say in a toast to your **mother or father** at her/his birthday party?

Why?

- [] To express respect
- [] To promote communication
- [] To liven up the atmosphere
- [] To convey blessings
- [] Other (please specify: _____)
- [] Unsure/Does not apply
- [] I don't propose a toast

1b. What would you say in a toast to a **friend** at his/her birthday party?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

1c. What would you say in a toast to your **son or daughter** at his or her graduation party?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

2. At work.

2a. You are taken by your leader on a business trip to discuss business with the leaders of other companies. At the dinner, what would you say in a toast to **the other leaders**?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)

- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

2b. Your company has organized a team-building activity⁷. During it, what would you say in a toast to your **colleagues**?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

2c. You go to a celebration banquet with the employees in the department you are in charge of. What would you say in a toast to the **employees** whose work you supervise?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

3. At school/university

⁷ In China, team-building activities are social gatherings among club members or company employees.

3a. When you go out to dinner with your **professor**,⁸ what would you say in a toast to him/her?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

3b. You go out for a team-building activity with **classmates** from the same club at school. What would you say in a toast to your them?

Why?

- To express respect
- To promote communication
- To liven up the atmosphere
- To convey blessings
- Other (please specify: _____)
- Unsure/Does not apply
- I don't propose a toast

3c. As the student union president, if you take your fellow **student union members** out to dinner, what would you say in a toast to all of the members?

Why?

- To express respect

⁸ In China, it is customary for students and teachers/professors to have dinner together.

- [] To promote communication
- [] To liven up the atmosphere
- [] To convey blessings
- [] Other (please specify: _____)
- [] Unsure/Does not apply
- [] I don't propose a toast

Iic. Context

1. Do you think there are differences in the way toasts are expressed among people of different ages?

- [] Yes (please specify: _____)
- [] No

2. Do you think there are differences in the way toasts are expressed among people in different role-relationships (i.e. superiors vs subordinates vs peers)?

- [] Yes (please specify: _____)
- [] No

3. In your opinion, what toasts are more typical of young people vs mature-elderly adults? Please list a few.

- [] Typical of young people: _____
- [] Typical of mature adults and elders: _____

IId. The rules of toasts

1. Do you know of any conventions, such as etiquette rules, regarding toasting? If so, please list them below:

2a. Who or where did you learn these rules from?

2b. And how (e.g. did you receive formal “training”? Did you observe family members during dinner parties)?

3a. Do you follow them?

3b. Why or why not?

4a. Do you like them and approve of them?

4b. Why or why not?

Part III. Comment

If you like, you can leave a comment here about toasting and/or the questionnaire.

Thank you again for your participation!

APPENDIX

TRANSLATION OF THE TRANSCRIPTS OF CONVERSATION EXCERPTS FROM SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

Notes: head acts of are in bold, while supportive moves are in italics.

Only words with clear toasting “actions” such as “to toast...”, “to toast for...”, “cheers”, “this cup is for...” are considered head acts, and all others are supporting moves

1. At my grandmother’s 90th birthday party. (In China, after the age of 80, a large birthday party is held every 5 years to celebrate birthdays.)

Date: 07/28/2023

Number of participants: about 40 people

Location: Banquet hall of Mianchi Hotel, Mianchi;

Duration of the event: about 3 hours

Contextual details: Everyone is seated and the dishes are served

Time: 00:03:30

Toasting episode No. 1

Uncle (age: over 35; gender: male): *Today, thank you all for coming to celebrate my mother’s 90th birthday. It’s rare to have so many people gather together. **Let me toast to everyone.*** (Drink the wine in the glass) We have prepared a sumptuous meal today. Please enjoy your meal and drink your fill.

Toasting episode No. 2

My father (age over 35, gender: male): **Mom, let me toast you first.** *Thank you for raising me with so much hardship and for always caring about us brothers. I hope you will be healthy and live a long life!* I’ll drink first. (Drinking)

Toasting episode No. 3

Me (age 18-35, man): *Grandma, I wish your happiness and good fortune be boundless like the East Sea, and wish you live as long as the South Mountain! I will definitely accompany you after I graduate and come back! (Drinking)*

Grandma (age over 35; gender: female; addressee: me): You are so sweet-talker. I am looking forward to you graduating from school and bringing me along to enjoy a happy life.

Toasting episode No. 4

My brother (age 18-35, gender: male): Today is a great day. So many of you have gathered here to celebrate your birthday. Grandma must be very happy to see you. Grandma, **I toast you a glass.** *I wish you happiness and good health every day in the future! (Drinking)*

Grandma's former subordinate (age over 35, gender: male): *Teacher Li, thank you for your sincere teachings, which made me what I am today. With this cup, I wish you good fortune as vast as the East Sea, longevity as great as the Southern Mountains, and evergreen pines and cypresses⁹. (Drinking) With the second cup, I wish for you to always smile and that everything goes well! (Drinking)*

[...]

Time: around 00:32:00

Toasting episode No. 5

Grandma (age over 35, gender: female): *Thank you all for coming to my birthday party today. I am really happy to see so many younger generations, family members, and friends gathered together to celebrate for me. I am so excited. I*

⁹ This is a metaphor: pine and cypress trees are green all year round, and are used to bless the elderly to live long. At the same time, this sentence also has another meaning, which is to imply the noble quality of perseverance, because these trees can still maintain their true colors after going through so many hardships. But this meaning is rarely used.

have never been to school and have no cultural background. I don't know what to say. Today, **I will use tea instead of wine to toast everyone here! Cheers!**

Everyone: **Cheers!**

Everyone stands up, clinks glasses, and finishes their drinks.

2. My girlfriend Deng and I met my best junior high school classmate Zhu and his fiancée Ma.

Date: 08/10/2023;

Number of participants: 4 people;

Location: Huang Jihuang restaurant, Jinshui District, Zhengzhou;

Duration of the event: about 2 hours

Time: 00:18:30

During the meal:

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): So, how about we have a drink? It's been so long since we last met. Just a little, maybe some beer?

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): Sure, if you want to drink, I'll definitely join you.

.....

Time: 00:23:00

Ma (age 18-35, gender: male): Zhu told me that you two were super close in middle school. He's always telling me stories about the things you did together.

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): Of course! Let me tell you, back then, the teacher basically saw us as conjoined twins.

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): Hahaha, that's true! Whether it was eating, playing basketball, shopping, or whatever, we always did it together.

Toasting episode No. 6

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): *When you think about it, so much time has passed, but those memories are still so fresh, like it all happened yesterday. Enough talking, we should definitely have a drink to that—let's toast to 'reunion.'*

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): **Cheers!** I'm so happy to see you today, we've got to

enjoy ourselves!

(We clinked our glasses and drank, then continued eating and chatting:)

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): So how are things going between you and your girlfriend?

Toasting episode No. 7

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): We're doing great, of course. Our relationship is solid.

I wasn't around for your engagement, so I really need to toast you both now.

Here's to you two, wishing you a lifetime of happiness together!

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): And here's to you and your partner as well, may you both have a long and happy life together. Come on, let's all drink to that!

All four (age 18-35, men and women): **Cheers!**

.....

Time: 00:37:00

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): It's not easy for us to meet up like this. Who knows when the next time will be.

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): Yeah, what can we do? We've all got our own things going on. Once I graduate and come back, we'll definitely hang out properly again.

Toasting episode No. 8

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): Hahaha, sounds good! **Let's have another drink, to our friendship that's stood the test of time!**

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): **Cheers!**

(We clinked glasses and drank)

.....

Time: 00:39:00

Ma (age 18-35, gender: female): Zhu always says you're his best friend. He's always telling me about the things you guys did together in middle school. Your friendship is really something to be admired.

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): Of course! That's how it is with good brothers. Even if we don't get to see each other often, it's always there in the heart. Our bond

doesn't fade.

Deng (age 18-35, gender: female): I agree. True friendship isn't about how often you meet, but about always having each other in your hearts.

Toasting episode No. 9

Zhu (age 18-35, gender: male): *No matter where we are in the future or how long it is between meetups, we'll always be brothers! Let's have one last drink, a toast to enduring friendship and to the next time we meet!*

Me (age 18-35, gender: male): Definitely! Next time, we'll be the ones hosting you.

All four (age 18-35, men and women): **Cheers!**

3. In bars and entertainment venues, young people were drinking and playing games (such as poker, dice, etc.)

Date: 07/15/2023;

Number of participants: 8 people;

Location: Helens bar; Zhengzhou;

Duration of the event: about 4 hour(s)

When they first started playing the game:

Time: 00:00:00

Toasting episode No. 10

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): Zhang, you lost! **Drink!**

Zhang (age 18-35 gender: male): *I lost, I'll go drink first!* **Drink!** (Chugs the drink)

(After several rounds, everyone drank a lot of wine)

Time: 00:22:40

Toasting episode No. 11

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): Zhang, you lost again! **Time to drink!**

Zhang (age 18-35 gender: male): I can't, I really can't drink anymore.

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): Hey, you made a bet, so you've got to follow through!

It's just a little bit of alcohol and you're already giving up? What, are you just sipping like a fish now?

Zhang (age 18-35 gender: male): Seriously, I'm hitting my limit.

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): *Come on, are you really backing out now?*

Chen (age 18-35 gender: female): Didn't you go all out last time? You had all of us knocked out!

Li (age 18-35 gender: female): Yeah, that's right!

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): *Hurry up and drink, stop stalling. We're all waiting for you. Are you still one of the crew or what?*

Zhang (age 18-35 gender: male): Alright, alright, give me a sec. (Chugs more beer)

Time: 00:34:40

Toasting episode No. 12

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): Zhang, you lost again, **time to drink!**

Zhang (age 18-35 gender: male): If I drink more, I'm seriously going to throw up.

Wang (age 18-35 gender: male): What, you're not gonna drink? That's like saying we're not your brothers anymore. Don't worry, if you throw up, we've got your back. *We'll make sure you get home safe, and we'll explain everything to your partner. Just relax and drink!*

Zhang (age 18-35 gender: male): (Chugs the drink) Fine, fine!

4. Classmate A's birthday dinner and drinking session

Date: 09/05/2024;

Number of participants: 10 people;

Location: Tsinghua Restaurant; Peking;

Duration of the event: about 2 hours

Time: 00:00:00

(Everyone sits down and chats, plays games while waiting for the food to be served.)

Time: 00:13:00

(The dishes are served. Those drinking alcohol pour the drinks, and those not drinking alcohol pour non-alcoholic beverages.)

Time: 00:20:00

(After most people have tasted the dishes.)

Toasting episode No. 13

Zhao (age 18-35 gender: male): Everyone, **let's toast to wish Li a happy birthday.**

Others (age 18-35 mixed group): Happy birthday! Happy birthday!

(Everyone raises their glasses and drinks together.)

Time: 00:23:00

Zhao (age 18-35 gender: male): Li, aren't you going to say a few words?

Toasting episode No. 14

Li (age 18-35 gender: male): Well, I'll just say a few words. *Thank you all for remembering my birthday and organizing this dinner for me.*

Others (age 18-35 mixed group): Great! Great!

(They raise their glasses and drink together.)

Time: 00:26:00

Toasting episode No. 15

Li (age 18-35 gender: male): *You are all very good friends of mine, and although I'm not very good with words, if you ever need any help in the future, I'll be there without hesitation. I'll drink this glass of wine! It's all in the wine*

Others (age 18-35 mixed group): Great! Great!

(They raise their glasses and drink together.)

Time: 00:29:00

Toasting episode No. 16

Zhao (age 18-35 gender: male): **Then let's toast once more to Li's birthday!**

Everyone (age 18-35 mixed group): *Happy birthday, Li!*

(They raise their glasses and drink together.)

Time: 00:42:00

(After most of the food has been eaten, they continue drinking while chatting.)

Zhao (age 18-35 gender: male): Li, you're drinking a bit too slowly. I've had much more than you.

Li (age 18-35 gender: male): I haven't had any less; you just split yours with Wang.

Toasting episode No. 17

Zhao (age 18-35 gender: male): Come on, **let's finish the rest in one go.**

Li (age 18-35 gender: male): I can't, I can't finish it all. I still have a full glass here.

Toasting episode No. 18

Wang (age 18-35 gender: female): Come on, **let's do it together. I'll finish mine.**

Zhao (age 18-35 gender: male): Not bad, Wang. Li, look at Wang. Come on, **let's finish it.**

Li (age 18-35 gender: male): How about I do it in two goes?

(They clink glasses and drink together.)

5. At Lin Tian and Zhao Rui's Wedding.

(This is a traditional Chinese wedding banquet with family, friends, and colleagues. The event includes toasts to celebrate the couple's union, express gratitude, and extend well wishes for the future.)

Date: 10/08/2023;

Number of participants: about 120 people;

Location: Grand Ballroom, Lotus Garden Hotel; Zhengzhou

Duration of the event: about 4 hour(s)

Time: 00:00:00

Toasting episode No. 19

Father of the Groom (Lin's Father, age 50-70 gender: male): Dear friends and family, thank you all for coming to attend Tian and Rui's wedding. Today is a big day, and I hope everyone enjoys the food and drinks, and has a great time! (Raises glass) *Let's wish the newlyweds a long and happy life together, and may their hearts be united forever!* **I'll finish my drink first to show respect.** (Drinks)

Time: 00:10:15

Toasting episode No. 20

Mother of the Groom (Lin's Mother, age 50-70 gender: female): Yes, thank you all for being here today. If there's anything we haven't done properly, we ask for your understanding. *Please take your time to enjoy the food, and have a wonderful evening!* (Raises glass) *I also wish the newlyweds a lifetime of happiness!* (Drinks)

Time: 00:20:00

Toasting episode No. 21

Lin Tian (Groom, age 18-35 gender: male): Today is incredibly special for us, and we are so grateful that you could all join us to celebrate our wedding. Rui, *thank you for agreeing to marry me, I promise to take care of you for the rest of my life.* (Raises glass) **Here's to our future filled with love and joy!** (Drinks)

Time: 00:20:20

Toasting episode No. 22

Zhao Rui (Bride, age 18-35 gender: female): Today is truly special, and I'm so thankful that you're all here to witness this moment of happiness. *Tian, thank you for your love. I am ready to walk with you through every day of our future.* (Raises glass) *I hope everyone here enjoys this beautiful evening!* (Drinks)

Time: 00:30:45

(At this moment, a friend from afar stands up and says:)

Toasting episode No. 23

Friend A (age 18-35 gender: male): Tian, Rui, congratulations! We shared some great times together at university, and seeing you both so happy today really brings me joy. *I wish you a lifetime of sweetness and happiness!* (Raises glass) **Cheers!** (Drinks)

Lin Tian (Groom, age 18-35 gender: male): Thank you for your blessings, my old friend! You need to hurry up and find your better half too! (Laughs)

Zhao Rui (Bride, age 18-35 gender: female): Yes, we hope you find your happiness soon!

Time: 00:50:00

(A colleague of the bride stands up:)

Toasting episode No. 24

Colleague B (age 18-35 gender: female): Rui, congratulations on finding your true happiness! *I wish for your life ahead to be full of laughter and that you create many more beautiful memories together!* (Raises glass) *Best wishes to both of you!* (Drinks)

Zhao Rui (Bride, age 18-35 gender: female): Thank you! We've worked together for so many years, and you've witnessed a lot of my growth. I hope you also find the right person soon!

Time: 01:10:00

(An elder, the bride's aunt, stands up:)

Toasting episode No. 25

Aunt C (age 50-70 gender: female): Rui, Tian, seeing you both so happy today fills my heart with joy. *I wish you many children and a happy family!* (Raises glass) **Cheers!** (Drinks)

Zhao Rui (Bride, age 18-35 gender: female): Thank you, Auntie, we'll do our best! (Laughs)

6. At a Graduation dinner

(This is a celebratory graduation dinner with students, professors, and senior classmates, marking the completion of their studies. The event includes toasts expressing gratitude, appreciation, and well wishes for the future.)

Date: 06/15/2024;

Number of participants: about 10 people;

Location: Private dining room, Greenfield Restaurant; Peking

Duration of the event: about 1.5 hour

Time: 00:00:00

Toasting episode No. 26

A (age 18-35 gender: male): Today, I'd like to thank everyone for coming to our graduation dinner. It's truly a joy to celebrate with our teachers, senior classmates, and mentors. **First, let me toast to everyone.** (Raises glass, drinks)
We've prepared a sumptuous meal for today, so after everyone is full and satisfied, *I hope we can enjoy the food, chat, and reminisce about the wonderful times we've shared together.*

Time: 00:08:35

Toasting episode No. 27

B (age 18-35 gender: male): **Professor, I'd like to toast to you.** Thank you for your dedicated teaching over the years. You've not only helped us improve academically, but you've also given us many invaluable lessons in life. No matter where we go in the future, we'll always remember your guidance. *Wishing you good health and many successful students!* (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:16:50

Toasting episode No. 28

C (age 18-35 gender: female): **Professor, I also want to toast to you.** Thank you for

your patience and care for each one of us. No matter what challenges we faced, you were always there to help us find solutions. Today, as we are about to graduate, your teachings will stay with us for life. *I wish you all the best, and a life filled with happiness!* (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:27:40

Toasting episode No. 29

Professor (age 35-65 gender: male): Thank you for your kind words. Seeing the three of you grow into who you are today fills me with pride and joy. Though you'll soon leave the campus, I believe that you will go far in your future endeavors and achieve even greater success. **This toast is for you all—***may your future be bright, and may you achieve great things in your careers!* (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:35:15

(Everyone is nearly done drinking.)

Professor (age over 35, gender: male): Everyone! If you ever need anything, feel free to reach out to me. My guidance is not just limited to your time in school; I hope you will continue to strive for success in the future and create your own extraordinary chapters in life!

Toasting episode No. 30

All students (age 18-35 ,men and women):Thank you, Professor! **Let us all toast to you!**

Time: 00:42:25

Toasting episode No. 31

A (age 18-35 gender: male): **Let me toast to everyone once again.** Thank you for your companionship and support throughout this time. Today's dinner isn't just a celebration of our graduation, but also a tribute to the friendship and bond we've built over the years. *I hope we stay in touch and that our friendship lasts forever!* (Raises glass, drinks)

7. At a Business banquet.

(This is a formal business banquet where executives and regular employees from two collaborating companies gather to celebrate their project's success and strengthen business relationships.)

Date: 09/22/2023;

Number of participants: 12 people;

Location: VIP dining room, Pearl River Hotel; Sanmenxia;

Duration of the event: about 2 hours

Scene: At a high-end restaurant, the business banquet has reached the main course. Executives and a few regular employees from both Company A and Company B are seated together at the table, enjoying a spread of exquisite dishes. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly.

Time: 00:00:15

Toasting episode No. 32

General Manager Zhao (age over 35, gender: male) of Company A (Host): (Stands up)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to host this dinner with our colleagues from Company B. First of all, I'd like to thank everyone for your support throughout our collaboration. Our project has been progressing smoothly, and this success would not have been possible without everyone's hard work. (Raises glass) **This toast is for all of you** — *thank you for your contributions, and I wish for long-lasting, successful cooperation in the future!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Everyone stands up, clinks glasses, drinks, then sits down

Time: 00:02:30

Toasting episode No. 33

Marketing Director Li (age over 35, gender: male) of Company B (Guest): (Smiling

and standing up) Thank you to General Manager Zhao for the warm hospitality. We highly value our collaboration with your company, and we are confident that our future together will be even brighter. (Raises glass) **This toast is on behalf of Company B**, *wishing for even more fruitful results and a win-win partnership!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:05:40

Toasting episode No. 34

Regular Employee Zhang (age 18-35, gender: male) of Company A: (Stands up, slightly nervous) Well, as a regular employee, I feel very honored to be part of this banquet. (Raises glass) *Thank you to our leaders for their trust and support, and to our colleagues at Company B for the great collaboration.* **Here's to continued success and working together in the future!** **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks quickly, sits down)

Time: 00:09:00

Toasting episode No. 35

Regular Employee Wang (age 18-35, gender: female) of Company B: (Standing up, smiling) **I'd also like to propose a toast.** Although we are all busy with our work, it is our teamwork that has brought us to where we are today. (Raises glass) **This toast is for everyone who works hard**—*let's strive for an even better future!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:12:20

Toasting episode No. 36

Project Manager Chen (age over 35, gender: male) of Company A: (Smiling and raising glass) Well said by our colleagues! Today, we are not only here to express our gratitude but also to hope that we can stay united in our future collaborations. (Raises glass) **This toast is for teamwork**—*may we continue to progress and achieve great things together!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:17:45

Toasting episode No. 37

Technical Director Liu (age over 35, gender: male) of Company B: (Standing up and smiling) **I'd like to raise a toast as well**, especially to the technical team at Company A. It's been a pleasure working with such an efficient and professional team. (Raises glass) *May we continue to achieve breakthroughs in innovation and enjoy even more successful collaborations in the future!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:22:10

Toasting episode No. 38

Regular Employee Li (age 18-35, gender: female) of Company A: (Standing up, smiling slightly nervously) *I also want to say thank you to our leaders and colleagues for all the help and guidance. I've learned so much and will continue to do my best to contribute to the company.* (Raises glass) **This toast is for our team! Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:32:30

Toasting episode No. 39

General Manager Zhao (age over 35, gender: male) of Company A: (Smiling and standing up) The atmosphere tonight is wonderful, and I hope everyone relaxes. Whether you're an executive or a regular employee, everyone's effort is key to our success. (Raises glass) **This final toast is for all of you**—*may our future be even brighter, and may your work and personal lives be filled with happiness and success!* **Cheers!** (Everyone stands up, raises glasses, drinks)

(After several rounds of toasts, the atmosphere becomes more relaxed, and people start casually chatting, sharing stories about work and life.)

8. At the Company annual party.

(This is an annual celebration in Chinese companies where both executives and regular employees gather to reflect on the past year and set a positive tone for the upcoming year. The event often includes performances, raffles, and toasts to boost team morale and unity.)

Date: 12/15/2023;

Number of participants: about 80 people;

Location: Grand Ballroom, Royal Garden Hotel; Guangzhou;

Duration of the event: about 4 hours

Scene: At the company's annual party dinner, the beautifully decorated banquet hall is filled with employees seated around the tables. The lighting is soft, and the atmosphere is light and joyful. The tables are full of delicious food and drinks, and the host has just announced the official start of the dinner.

Time: 00:00:10

Host (from the Administration Department, age 18-35, gender: male): (Smiling on stage) Dear colleagues, welcome to our company's annual party dinner! Today, we're not only celebrating the hard work and achievements of the past year, but it's also a great chance for everyone to relax and have fun! So, enjoy the food and drinks, and feel free to prepare for some talent performances later! (Laughter from the audience)

Time: 00:01:20

Toasting episode No. 40

General Manager (age over 35, gender: male): (Stands up and raises his glass) Good evening, everyone! I know you're all excited about the raffle and performances, but before that, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of our employees for your hard work this year. Without your efforts, the company wouldn't be where it is

today. (Raises glass) **This toast is for all of you**—*I wish us an even more brilliant new year!* **Cheers!** (Everyone raises their glasses, drinks)¹⁰

Time: 00:03:40

Toasting episode No. 41

Sales Department Manager (age over 35, gender: male): (Standing up with a grin)

This year, our sales department has been on fire, with incredible results! (The sales team cheers) But achievements are in the past, and we need to work even harder in the future! **This toast is for my team in the sales department and all the supporting departments**—*you've all worked hard!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:06:00

Toasting episode No. 42

HR Manager (age over 35, gender: female): (Stands up, smiling while raising her

glass) Since it's the annual party, we in HR won't talk about the rules today! (Laughter) **This toast is for every single one of our colleagues.** *Thank you all for supporting the company's culture and values this year. In the coming year, let's continue to build an even warmer and more united work environment.* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks)

Time: 00:08:15

Toasting episode No. 43

Employee A (age 18-35, gender: male): (Stands up, smiling mischievously) As a

regular employee, I can't miss this chance to toast! This year, our department never missed a single overtime shift, and we hit every KPI! (Laughter from the table) **This toast is for our leaders**—*I hope we get a pay raise in the new year!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, drinks amidst laughter)

¹⁰ When people are ready to clink glasses, even if they have already raised their glasses, they will still make a slight upward movement, even if it is very small, to show respect and politeness.

Time: 00:11:30

Toasting episode No. 44

Employee B (age 18-35, gender: male): (Stands up, dramatically raising his glass)

This toast is for all my colleagues, especially HR and Finance—please be kind when issuing bonuses! (Everyone cheers) *In the new year, I hope we all get promotions and raises!* **Cheers!** (Raises glass, laughter, and drinks)