The secret recipe of local television

A study into the audience perception of multiple adaptations of the *Bake Off* format

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ABSTRACT

As a result of globalization, people are more connected than ever before. Flows of media products reach far beyond their firstly intended local audience. Moreover, local audiences are increasingly exposed to globalized and dominant cultures. Exposure to those globalized media products may lead to new media consumption practices. To see to what extent audiences still chose television according to their local identity, this research looks into the perception of multiple format adaptations. Furthermore, the study aims to clarify if engagement with foreign content has become such a natural practice to local audiences, that the consumption of foreign television feels as no different to them rather than watching local television. To study the differences in the reception of local and foreign television, formats are an eminently suitable tool. The reason for this is that the formats appear as an almost similar television product, only localized to meet the request and preference of the local audiences. Specifically, this research examines the British version of the format - *The Great British Bake Off*, the Flemish version - *Bake Off Vlaanderen*, and the Dutch version - *Heel Holland Bakt*. And so, the main research question of this study is "how does the Dutch audience perceive foreign versions of the *Bake Off* format in comparison with the Dutch adaptation?". This study focuses on an existing gap in academic research on format studies by taking an audience perspective approach. A qualitative approach has been chosen for this research since this study is interested in the experiences and perspectives of the respondents. More specifically, qualitative interviews were performed as a data gathering tool. Overall, 11 respondents aged 20 to 30 years were interviewed. The analysis of the interviews has resulted in the following conclusion: this research shows that Dutch audiences still perceive their local version as most relevant. Moreover, it has become clear that the relatability of characters, such as the show hosts and jury, are key factors in determining the overall perception of a version. The research findings contribute to the existing relevance of the cultural proximity theory and make the cosmopolitanization of the audience in the case of this specific study less distinct. Moreover, this suggests that the cultural proximity theory is still an important theory for local television producers to determine a production policy.

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1. Introduction

The flow of media products across borders and cultures is nothing new in the world we live in today (Stehling, 2013). In a world that becomes more globalized every day, media products travel across-borders at a high phase. To compete with global media products and to respond to the increasing demand for local television by national audiences, format trade has become a booming business (Esser, 2016). TV formats are program concepts that can be used and replaced to suit a particular local market (Mirrlees, 2013) and offers TV producers a chance to respond to the high demand for culturally relevant television, while reducing many risks (Waisbord, 2004). In other words, TV format trade can be described as intellectual property rights that are sold and tweaked to local taste (Esser, 2010).

An example of a successful format that has crossed many borders is the *Bake Off* format, originally from the United Kingdom. This TV format has been adapted to over 26 countries, among which the Netherlands and the Flemish region of Belgium. *Bake Off* is a talent competition show in which a group of home bakers compete against each other to become the best amateur home baker of their country. During the show, the bakers try to impress famous local judges with their all-round baking skills. In each episode the contestants must face three challenges: a signature bake, a technical bake, and a show-topper. Unlike other competition formats, *Bake Off* focuses on emotional bonds of family, joy and nation instead of focusing on complot, conflict, and cruel judgment of the jury (Lagerwey, 2018). The TV format *Bake Off* celebrates nationality, by using local food recipes to build on nation elements (Bradley, 2016).

It is believed that for a TV format, like *Bake Off* to be successful, it needs to be adapted to local norms, values, beliefs, and other social-cultural aspects. More specifically, it needs to evoke identification and a feeling of belonging in its intended audience (Cuelenaere, 2020), which is believed to be caused by cultural proximate media products. The ability to tweak TV formats to local taste, while reducing many risks, makes TV format very attractive to local producers. The purpose of TV formats is to offer local audiences cultural relevant television. Nevertheless, attention must be paid to the fact that many format adaptations have successfully crossed borders and cultures and reached far beyond their intended local audience (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). For example, US versions of TV formats are available in countries like Japan, Mexico or Brazil and the Flemish and British versions of the *Bake Off* format are available on Dutch television. The availability of foreign format versions on local television seems to oppose the principal of format trade to offer every local market their own cultural adaptation.

Nevertheless, many scholars dismiss the assumption of (dominant) media flows by stressing the agency of the local audience and their preference for culturally relevant media, by using the

cultural proximity theory (Mast, De Ruiter & Kuppens, 2017; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2003). Next to clarifying format studies, the cultural proximity theory can in fact be used to partially explain those transnational flows of media products. Language, as an aspect of cultural proximity, explains the cross-border flow of television among cultural-linguistic markets (La Pastina, & Straubhaar, 2005). Yet, cultural proximity does not explain changed media consumption practices, such as young people who are increasingly engage with globalized media (Esser, 2016). Nor does it explain the success and availability of foreign adaptation in local markets, like the Flemish and British version of *Bake Off* in the Netherlands. Could this be a result of globalization and perhaps the cosmopolitanization of the audiences (Tomlinson, 2007)? Or perhaps the formation of a more globalized identity because of feeling proximate to global media products?

1.1 Research question

To see whether the cultural proximity theory is still relevant for young people who are brought up with the advantages of the internet, this study examines the transnationalization and cosmopolitanization of the Dutch audience. This is done by focusing on the TV formats *The Great British Bake Off* and its Dutch and Flemish adaptations, which are all aired on the Dutch public broadcaster. Insights into the perception of multiple format adaptations will lead to an understanding of the media consumption practices of Dutch audiences and the role of cultural proximities. This will be done by studying the reception of foreign and local television and to see how and if they perceive this similarly or differently and to what extend culture is still a factor in this experience. Therefore, this study introduces the following research question (RQ): How does the Dutch audience perceive foreign versions of the *Bake Off* format in comparison with the Dutch adaptation?

1.2 Scientific and societal relevance

In terms of scientific relevance, this research contributes to the current debate of format studies, by focusing on the reception of internationally adapted formats (Esser, Jensen, Keinonen, & Lemor, 2016). This study aims to see how consumption and reception of television formats have changed because of globalization. Esser et al. (2016) revealed forms of banal nationalism and banal transnationalism in their study of transnational audiences. By focusing on the audience in the reception of different adaptations, this study sheds light on a gap in existing literature. In existing studies many scholars merely focus on theoretical insights and do not pay attention to audiences' perceptions (Stehling, 2013). This has also been stipulated by Esser et al. (2016), who emphasize the lack of research on the consumption of TV formats from an audience perspective. So, this study

focusses on the audience perception of TV formats, by taking an audience perspective to study if Dutch audiences note differences among multiple formats adaptations. Additionally, most studies emphasize the role of cultural proximities as based on local cultures, this provides an opportunity for this study. This research tries to see if cultural proximities could also be based on globalized cultures because of exposure to globalized media and the cosmopolitanization of the audience.

In terms of societal relevance, this study pays attention to the social and cultural role of television. The current assumption about the trade of TV formats is that local audiences hold a strong preference for local television (Esser, 2016). This study investigates whether this assumption is still relevant. Creating insight in the role of cultural proximities in the reception of TV programs gives TV broadcasters the chance to adjust their primetime schedule. This results in better serving the needs and preferences of the audience. Therefore, this study can be of relevance for TV producers and broadcasters. Moreover, this study creates insight in to what extent format adaptations still can be regarded as cultural goods and how they are perceived by the audience. Finally, this study pays attention to the role of globalization in mass media on local Dutch audiences and the significance of the Dutch language in national television.

1.3 Chapter outline

To answer this research question, this study is composed of five chapters, namely (1) introduction, (2) theoretical framework, (3) method, (4) results and (5) conclusion. At first, the second chapter of this thesis discusses the theoretical framework. This chapter presents and reviews concepts that are relevant for understanding the gathered data. Concepts such as globalization, format studies, cultural proximity, transnationalization and cosmopolitanization, audience reception and consumption practices are discussed. The theoretical framework also proposes how these concepts can be used in the specific circumstances of this research. In the third chapter, the method used for this research is presented. This research has taken a qualitative approach and, specifically it uses interviews as a data collection tool. The data was interpreted according to thematic analysis. This chapter elaborates further on the appropriateness of those tools and how those tools can be applied for the purpose of this research. The fourth chapter presents the results of this study. It presents them according to the main findings of this research: *preference for local television*, *disconnection with the foreign versions*, *appreciation of the foreign versions* and *comparison of the foreign versions*. These findings are related and put into perspective with regards to theory presented in chapter two. Lastly, the conclusions are presented. The final chapter summarizes the research findings and presents an answer to the research question. Moreover, this chapter emphasizes theoretical implications, possible limitations and recommendations for further research.

2. Theoretical framework

To answer the research question "how does the Dutch audience perceive foreign versions of the *Bake Off* format in comparison with the Dutch adaptation?", this paragraph reviews existing literature on the concepts of globalization. Then, it presents a description of format studies, cultural proximity and transnationalization and cosmopolitanization. Finally, it discusses the concepts audience perception and consumption practices. These concepts together give different insights, which create a foundation for executing this research. Ultimately, this contributes to answering the research question.

2.1 Globalization

To understand the reception and consumption of multiple TV format adaptations by Dutch audiences, first an understanding of the process of globalization needs to be created. This understanding is necessary since formats are closely related to the process of globalization (Mirrlees, 2013). Moreover, TV formats owe their success to globalization.

Globalization can be understood as the development of networks and interconnections influencing everyday life (Tomlinson, 2007). Additionally, globalization is a multidimensional process that takes place within the spheres of the economy, politics and technological developments and in particularly in media and communications technologies, environmental change and culture. Globalization refers to the flows across international borders, such as the flow of people, capital, knowledge, information, ideas and beliefs and TV programming. Globalization in combination with new technologies are reshaping the media spaces, which leads to the emerge of new practices, products and experiences (Chalaby, & Plunkett, 2020). Common speculations about the process of globalization suggest that it will lead to a global culture (Tomlinson, 2007), in which, globalization functions as a homogenizing force inflicting a dominant culture on local communities. This process is also referred to as cultural imperialism theory, which suggests a one-way flow of media goods by inflicting dominant cultures on other countries. Nevertheless, many scholars dismiss this theory by stressing the agency of the local audience and their preference for culturally relevant television (Mast et al., 2017; La Pastina, & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2003). Within a society culture functions to generate meaning to life. "One major reason why it seems natural to speak of globalization's 'impact' on culture is that global market processes – particularly the distribution of iconic consumer goods – are relatively easy to understand as having a potential influence on people's cultural experience." (Tomlinson, 2007, p.353). The cultural imperialism theory neglects to explore how people interact and attach value to cultural goods. The process of injecting a dominant culture into the consciousness of cultural agents in different cultural contexts misjudges the agency of local

audiences in the process of cultural transmission (Tomlinson, 2007). The presence of dominant cultural goods does not mean that local produced media products become less popular (Banerjee, 2002). On the contrary, locally produced media products tend to become even more popular because of globalization, resulting in popularity of TV formats and format trade.

Nevertheless, it seems natural to talk about the great imbalances in global cultural flows and the world trade of cultural goods, since it is only beneficial for a few countries (Banerjee, 2002). While the global trade is becoming increasingly popular, national cultural industries are systematically declining. The American export of entertainment good has tripled between 1980 and 1991, has only grown ever since and continues to benefit from this world trade. In the debate about the effects of globalization on local television markets, the cultural globalization perspective emphasizes cultural change, interconnection and diversity (Banerjee, 2002). This theory argues that any form of social, political, or cultural life is a result of the formation and interactions of cultural hybridization or more specific, the formation of the nation state. Besides, Banerjee (2002) emphasizes that this theory also forces to see culture as a constantly evolving process, by which practices, processes and identities are constantly evolving based on new beliefs. In other words, culture is an ever-changing process, that will keep changing because of the circulation of people, goods, and beliefs. As long as people travel and interact with other cultures, local cultures will change. With as a result the formation of new identities.

To conclude, globalization is the process of creating interconnections and global networks that influence everyday life. As a result of globalization, local cultures are influenced and changed. Some argue that this will ultimately lead towards a homogenization of cultures. However, others argue that the global culture and local cultures can co-exist or that local cultures can even function as a force countering the influences of globalization.

2.2 Format studies

Now that the concept of globalization has been discussed, the concept of the TV format can be explored. As a result of globalization, borders are fading and media flows are expanding. This ultimately leads to the internationalization of TV networks and the rise of transnational media (Chalaby, & Plunkett, 2020). The international expansion of TV conglomerates increases the cross-border media flows. TV markets are becoming more competitive and the adaptation of existing TV to local markets has become a booming business. Chalaby and Plunkett (2020) argue that TV formats have not only increased the expansion of cross-border flows, but they have also led to the expansion and internationalization of global production companies.

For the purpose of this research, the TV format *Bake Off* is used to study the perception of local and foreign television. TV formats are program concepts that can be used and adapted to suit a

particular local market (Mirrlees, 2013). In other words, TV formats can be described as intellectual property rights, sold as production bibles, which can be adapted to another sociocultural environment (Esser, 2010). TV formats are unfinished shows, that need to be produced domestically. "The cross-border flow of TV formats signals the triumph of media globalization even while asserting the continued importance of local or domestic programming" (Mirrlees, 2013, p. 190). Other than that, TV formats have contributed to the formation of cross-border business relationships to smoothen the production and licensing of the TV format (Mirrlees, 2013). In the global TV format trade, local TV networks purchase the license of a TV format and produce their own domestic version. In the case of the *Bake Off* format, the Dutch public broadcaster bought the license for production in the Netherlands. The localization of television formats can be seen as a response to the request and preference of audiences for local relevant television programming (Stehling, 2013). The process of borrowing and exchanging ideas is a common practice in the industry (Waisbord, 2004). It is a way for TV producers to cope with the high demand for cultural proximate TV content. It reduces financial risks, earlier flaws have already been ironed out and, most importantly, the show has already been tested on an audience. All of this positively contributes to the success factor of a television format. Thus, the localization of formats starts with adjusting production and texts to the nation where the concepts are sold (Stehling, 2013). Just like was done with the *Bake Off* format.

Waisbord (2004) introduces the idea that TV formats are an example of McDonaldization, or according to him McTelevision. "Formats represent the global commercialization of an efficient and predictable program that can be tweaked according to local tastes" (Waisbord, 2004, p.378). Local adaptations of formats are thus often produced in close partnership with the original producer (van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014). In this process, the signs of cultural territories are removed, while some elements of the format are fixed. Domestic producers add local colors to the elements that are open for adaptation to the local culture. In other words, even though there are several versions of the same TV format that appear to be remotely similar, there are still differences in terms of local culture. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that local adaptations also celebrate local cultures (Waisbord, 2004). TV formats might be localized, but they do not usher in multiculturalism or stimulate cultural democracy. This concept of McTelevision connects to the idea that TV formats are a form of cultural imperialism (Tomlinson, 2007). In other words, format adaptations are tailored to the taste of local audiences. Just as the Dutch version of the *Bake Off* format is tailored to the taste of Dutch audiences. However, the *Bake Off* format still could appears similar on some levels, and this could lead to an increased level of engagement with the foreign versions.

Nevertheless, some scholars argue in favor of global heterogeneity (Beck, 2007). In this aspect it is believed that cultures influence each other, which is often referred to as glocalization or the karaoke effect (Beck, 2007). In this process, global products, such as TV formats, are adapted to

the local culture, which results in creating new hybrids. Some researchers speak in this aspect of transculturality (Stehling, 2013), which refers to embedding homogenization and heterogenization in the dynamics of globalization. Transculturality covers both the local and the global and places the local in a context with the wider world. ''Translocalization' is not used synonymously to 'universalization,' which may imply that the 'local' has been replaced by the 'global'; rather, 'translocalization' conveys a sense that globalization and localization are integrated processes through which the 'local' is transforming.'' (Stehling, 2013, p.39). According to this theory, formats can be described as hybrid products. They travel as global products, while they are locally adapted to a specific context. Nevertheless, these forms of hybridization can sometimes come close to forms of homogenization (Beck, 2007).

In conclusion, TV formats are intellectual property rights that can be sold and adapted to local markets. This trade of formats has not only resulted in flows of media products across borders but has also resulted in the formation of global production companies. In this partnership, the local and the global are of equal importance. Some scholars argue that TV formats are a form of cultural imperialism. Even though formats might be adapted to local cultures, they still appear to be very similar. Nevertheless, some scholars argue that TV formats are hybrid products, which travel as global products but are adapted to a specific local context. The ability to be adapted to local cultures is a solution for local producers to cope with the high demand for cultural relevant television.

2.3 Cultural proximity theory

In the debate of globalization, the cultural proximity theory is often mentioned. The cultural proximity theory argues that audiences choose for television programs that are close and more relevant to them in terms of language and local or national culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2003). According to Straubhaar (1991), audiences "seem to prefer nationally or locally produced material that is closer to and more reinforcing traditional identities, based in regional, ethnic, dialect/language, religions and other elements" (p. 51).

According to Kuipers and de Kloet (2009), cultural distant TV programs make identification impossible. Cultural proximities are an important factor in the decision making for cultural demand and consumption. This is caused by the feeling of pleasure that audiences derive from recognition, familiarity and identity (Cuelenaere, 2020). People derive pleasure from recognizing themselves, their social values and their collective world in television. The cultural closeness that a TV producer wishes to (re-)build with the local or target audience through the process of localization is a crucial factor in the success of a TV program. In other words, the program has to be in line with the local norms, values, beliefs and other social cultural aspects (Van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014). Thus, the

cultural proximity theory would suggest a strong preference for the local version of a TV format. In this study that version would be *'Heel Holland Bakt'*.

The cultural proximity theory is grounded in cultural capital, identity, and language (Straubhaar, 2003). Cultural capital focuses on the sources of knowledge and education that ultimately drives people to prefer certain media. Identity is concerned with a feeling of belonging as introduced by Morley (2001). Furthermore, Morley (2001) stated that symbolic goods such as media products reinforce identities, which are based on cultural elements and ultimately contribute to a feeling of belonging. Besides, as introduced by La Pastina and Straubhaar (2003), people make sense of media through their identities. These identities are formed and based on the local culture a person is part of. If a media product is not culturally relevant to the viewers, it is argued to become unattractive. The final aspect of cultural proximities is language. According to Waisbord (2004) language can be regarded as the basis for the political exclusion that is at the center of the process of identity formation. "So, even at a time when global television audiences arguably seem to be watching the same or similar show, television programs in vernacular languages continue to anchor a sense of cultural belonging and function as a privileges site for the reproduction of nations" (Waisbord, 2004, p. 373).

Nevertheless, according to Esser (2016), there are multiple nations within any state. Language is strongly connected to cultures but not to borders. So, many languages can be found within one nation, or one language can be shared by various nations (Esser, 2016). Therefore, speaking of national TV format adaptations can be a misunderstanding (Esser, 2016). Multiple cultures and languages can be found within one nation. Language is not limited to nation borders but can spread far beyond borders. Therefore, the cultural proximity theory can be useful for explaining the flow of TV formats between countries who share common languages (Ruiter, & Kuppens, 2017). Commonly, the audiences' first preference would tend to be a media product produced within their own local or national culture (La Pastina, & Straubhaar, 2005). The second choice tends to go towards television content within a similar language. This choice is increasingly based on linguistics. In the case of Dutch audiences, this would explain the wide availability of Flemish programming, due to their shared language and partially shared history (Ruiter, & Kuppens, 2017). According to the cultural proximity theory, Flemish TV programs can be a second-best option for Dutch audiences. This would suggest a positive reception of the Flemish adaptation of the *Bake Off* format.

The growth of the English language fosters cross-border engagement (Esser, 2016). This results in a kind of two-tiered linguistic proximity, which means that English television has the next lowest cultural discount. In essence, cultural discount and cultural proximity explain the same idea (Mast et al., 2017). "A lack in cultural proximity leads to cultural discount. Audiences tend to prefer media products that are like their cultural background (cultural proximity theory) or dislike those that

are not (cultural discount theory)." (Mast et al., 2017, p.2563). However, the cultural proximity theory and the cultural discount theory also explain different phenomena. Cultural discount is regarded from a more globalized viewpoint. It suggests that American media products flow globally due to the absence and relatively low appearance of cultural elements. In other words, they appear very culturally neutral. Thus, it is an attempt to explain the attractiveness of foreign media products to local audiences. The cultural discount theory could be helpful in explaining the wide availability of English television in the Netherlands. More specifically, it would suggest that the British versions of TV formats appear very neutral to Dutch audiences since they are used to watching British television.

Nevertheless, television programs flow to unusual places, which cannot be explained by cultural proximities (Straubhaar, 2003). For example, the flow of telenovelas outside cultural or linguistic borders. To explain those unusual flows, more proximities were defined across both spatial and cultural relationships (Stehling, 2013), such as genre, value or thematic proximity. Genre proximity explains familiarity to a genre; value proximity refers to sharing the same cultural values as portrayed in a TV program; and thematic proximity is about themes and issues that appeal across cultures (La Pastina, & Straubhaar, 2003). As mentioned before, themes that appeal across cultures could be narratives that enforce feelings of otherness. Those additional proximities can help explain the availability of non-local produced programs, such as the wide availability of cooking and baking programs like *Bake Off*, because it is the theme or genre that appeals to the local audience and leads to reinforcing proximities. La Pastina and Straubhaar (2003) found a mutual point in their study of genre proximities. They concluded that genre proximities can reach past cultural differences. The flow of a certain kind of storytelling, such as soap operas, is proximate to the global spread of earlier roots. Applied to this research, it could explain the availability of the foreign adaptations because of genre proximity. Moreover, they concluded that many people desire a sense of modernity from television, which can be evaluated as a form of genre. American cultural products represent global modernity and thus can lead to reinforcing a certain type of desire or aspiration, which can be evaluated as a form of proximity or familiarity. Modernity and aspiration can thus help to explain the availability of foreign versions on local television.

So, the cultural proximity theory is used to explain the preference of audience for local relevant television. Moreover, the cultural proximity theory can be used to explain media flows to places that share culture or language. Nevertheless, the cultural proximity theory does not explain all flows of media. Therefore, more proximities were added such as genre, thematic and value proximity. This is an attempt to explain flows of media goods based on similar interests in storylines, genres and values. Remaining flows can be described according to the cultural discount theory, which is regarded from a more globalized viewpoint. It suggests that global media products are

relatively neutral due to their lack of cultural elements and therefore have the second lowest cultural discount.

2.4 Cosmopolitanization and transnationalization

Since this research is interested in the cosmopolitanization and transnationalization of Dutch audiences, knowledge of these concepts is required. The concepts of transnationalism and cosmopolitism are intertwined. According to Roudometof (1999), transnationalism can be seen as the process and cosmopolitanism can be seen as the outcome. According to Olofsson, and Öhman (2007), transnationalism is a new phenomenon of social life taking place beyond the boundaries of nation-states, whereby the attitudes of people range from local to global. In this new reality, people can choose to either become and develop an open more cosmopolitan attitude or to remain closed or local. "Transnationalism is not affected by individual feelings or attitudes, it is the changed reality in which people live and form their lives." (p. 877). The emerge of transnational audiences is increasingly widespread due to the expansion of migration flows, large migrant communities, and the availability of television via satellite and online streaming services (Chalaby, 2005). In the process of transnationalization, a person can either choose to become a cosmopolitan or to remain local. This would suggest that within a society, both cosmopolitans and locals are represented, which explains the availability of both locally produced television and foreign television programs in the Netherlands. The concept of traveling television shows is related to theories of transnational culture and transnational television (Waade, Revall, & Jensen, 2020). Traveling television shows are a result of transnational audiences (Athique, 2013). This are audiences that are not bounded by any geographical location, nor are they in the pursuit of ideal types. Transnational audiences are still connected on some sort of local or individual level. They often have a national, familial, social, or civilizational relationship. Moreover, transnational audiences and globalization result in flows of media that reaches many 'non-resident' audiences, resulting in traveling television shows.

According to Beck (2002), cosmopolitanization can be seen as both a process and an outcome. He stated that cosmopolitanization can be described as "internal globalization, globalization from within the national societies. This transforms everyday consciousness and identities significantly." (p. 17). Cosmopolitanization can be seen as a process that entails breaking up the national perspective and consequently the adaptation of a more cosmopolitan perspective (Beck, 2007). Tomlinson (1999) referred to cosmopolitanization as a cultural disposition bringing intellectual and aesthetic tendencies of openness towards people, places and experiences influenced by different cultures and nations, resulting in interconnectedness and globalized identities. This suggests that cultural proximities will become less important or will change because of the formation

of globalized identities. Thus, it suggests that identities are increasingly based on a globalized culture, which will make the representation of local cultures less distinct to audiences.

Practices of cosmopolitanization increasingly occur when the significance of the local language disappears (Esser, 2016). In this aspect, the role of the English language and technology are important factors in the fostering of cross-border engagement on a global scale. Besides, Esser (2016) states the following: "young people, who have a strong interest in popular entertainment (much of which is global) and who make much use of the Internet and social networks, seem particular eager and willing to engage with international versions" (p. 26). This same point was found in a research conducted by Esser et al. (2016), who noted that many younger people preferred a mix of banal cosmopolitanism and banal transnationalism. In other words, they preferred daily practices of transnationalization and cosmopolitanization such as watching non-domestic versions. So, watching foreign media products has become a natural practice for this group. Therefore, practices of transnationalization and cosmopolitanization require a rethinking of cultural proximities and the cultural specificity of media products and media audiences. Questioned can be if cultural proximities still apply to this group. And consequently, we can ask if proximities are perhaps more formed towards a globalized culture, which would suggest a preference for the British adaptation, since the English language is more associated with globalized culture (Ruiter, & Kuppens, 2017). Practices of transnationalization and cosmopolitanization could also suggest minimal differences in the reception of the British and national adaptation.

To conclude, cosmopolitanization and transnationalization are concepts related to the shift from local to global identities. Transnationalization entails the construction of new identities because of cross-border activities caused by globalization. Cosmopolitanization refers to the idea that local identities will change towards more global or cosmopolitan identities because of the dominancy of the English language. Consequently, media products will appear culturally neutral. This would suggest that the cultural proximity theory will be based on more globalized cultures. Nevertheless, within the processes of transnationalization and cosmopolitanization, researchers suggest that audiences still have a choice to become cosmopolitans or to remain local.

2.5 Audience reception

One way of understanding the media reception of audiences is according to the encoding/decoding model introduced by Hall (1980). According to Hall (1980), in every media text, the dominant ideology of the local society can be inscribed or encoded. This can also be understood as the preferred reading. However, how the audience interprets this meaning is called decoding. Cultural differences can thus result in different interpretations of a text (Kuipers, & De Kloet, 2009). Moreover, this model stipulates that audiences who share ideologies are more capable of decoding a

certain text. Cuelenaere (2020) concluded that when people were invited to compare different format adaptations many people did this in terms of 'us' and 'them'. This connects to the idea of having an Other in media products as introduced by Said (1978). This means that within media products there is a difference between the I (rational, developed, superior) and the Other (irrational, undeveloped, inferior). These narratives and stereotypes are based on cultural beliefs and strengthen the national identity. This would suggest that the Dutch audience would interpret foreign versions according to national narratives. They could for example decode humor in foreign versions differently since they do not share the same sense of humor. Besides, it would suggest that foreign versions of the *Bake Off* format would be interpreted according to certain local narratives and thus different across nations.

According to Esser (2017), people can only have an idea of what local entails if they have some level of understanding of the global. This does not mean that they have to choose between the local or the global, they can rely on both. Within a national TV market, different audiences are represented. If carefully looked at actual TV consumption, the notion of national audiences becomes questionable (Esser, 2017). Take for example the adaptation of the TV format *Next Top Model* to the German market. The producer of the German version stated that he would have made the show entirely different had he not adapted it for young adults of the media generation (Esser, 2016). In this example, the producer did not view his audience as national, but rather as generation specific. According to Esser (2016), people can feel that they belong to more than one group. Moreover, a study by Nimrod et al. (2015) on cross-cultural differences concluded that there are no significant cross-cultural differences among teenagers. The viewing behavior of teenagers appears to be very similar compared to the viewing behavior of teenagers in other countries. This would suggest that youngsters in the Netherlands enjoy watching the same programs as teenagers in England or Belgium.

Due to globalization and the use of social media, audiences are increasingly confronted with foreign cultural goods (Kuipers, & De Kloet, 2009). New information technology emerged with the digitalization of broadcasting systems, resulting in more flexible and powerful communication networks (Chalaby, 2005). The transnationalization of the media involves new practices of media consumption and flows. People are constantly connected with forms of media, anywhere at any time (Schrøder, 2019). This has not only resulted in a constant connection with media/audience participation, but also with people who are constantly connected and are audiences at any time of the day. This has resulted in a push-pull dynamic between the audience and the producer (Hill, 2016). Audiences have more power to push back through fan practices, disengaging, or illegal viewing. Moreover, the internet has also given audiences the chance to shape their own, more personalized viewing behavior. Audiences are no longer merely exposed to global media products,

but they actively find their way to global media. This also results in TV programs being released across multiple delivery channels (Simons, 2014). Releasing TV programs across multiple delivery channels makes it easier and more accessible for audiences to engage with TV content from other countries, which results in the formation of transnational audiences. On the other hand, the release of media across multiple delivery channels also enlarges the familiarity with TV programs from other cultures and countries. Athique (2013) found in his research of the reception of foreign non-American films in Asia that foreign media is often regarded by local audiences as something exotic. This means that sometimes, culturally distant media are the thing that makes the media content appealing. It mobilizes an aesthetics of exotism. This could suggest why people consciously choose to engage with foreign media content.

Moreover, a transcultural perspective may help to explain the preference and appeal of a certain genre without falling back on the unproven assumption that audiences prefer every format that is nationalized (Esser et al, 2016). The concept of transcultural or translocalization pays attention to which are transnational, and which are cultural differences within a country. Some scholars argue that in audience perception studies it is more logical to place audiences in a genre rather than a national context. This leads to avoiding generalizations based on national audiences. This also explains the audience's consciousness of other international adaptations of that genre or shows and could even help to explain the availability of those adaptations on local television. In other words, this would suggest the availability of multiple versions of the same format on local television.

To conclude, in the debate of audience reception, TV producers have indicated that especially the reception of young people is becoming more similar cross-cultures, resulting in the production of programs that are generation-specific rather than aimed at local cultures. This is also a result of globalization, which has confronted young people with more global cultures due to social media. Moreover, social media have also given audiences the chance to shape their viewing behavior and consciously find their way to foreign media content. In the debate about audience reception, the importance of genre emphasizes the emerging habit of transnational audiences.

2.6 Consumption practices

Over the last years, a significant relationship between television and the Internet has emerged (Ross, 2008). Until very recently, it was not possible to watch live television from a computer (Barkhuus, 2009). For a long time, television and the computer were regarded as two separate forms of media. More specifically, for a long time, the Internet was not regarded as a practice that was as relaxing as watching television. This has also made watching television a less social activity. Now that every screen can be turned into a television, consumption practices can be tailored to individual taste. Transnational media has become central in the consumption of media in

the digital era (Christiansen, 2004). As a result of globalization, not only media moves across the border, increasing numbers of people take residence in countries that is not their home country (Christiansen, 2004). Consequently, migration rates have gone up. A study of transnationalism and diaspora populations has shown that migrants still actively connect with media from their home country. Media consumption is a social activity in which cultural-geographical orientation often remains central. However, the same study also noted that the consumption of local media grows the longer a migrant resides in a certain country.

A common practice on the Internet is viewing internet entertainment services such as Netflix (Lotz, 2020). Although media have a long history of transcending national boundaries, streaming services enforce a different mechanism of internationalization. Streaming services circulate global media content to multinational audiences. One finding is that countries with the highest subscription and consumption rates are countries where the English language is dominant. However, Netflix also has incorporated local productions in their strategy, to answer the demand for local content. Still, Netflix has changed national markets by contributing to internationalization and globalization. The example of Netflix could be used to explain the wide availability and consumption of English television in the Netherlands.

In research into consumption practices of post-millennials in multiple countries, it has become clear that technologies do drive global homogeneity (Podara, Matsiola, Maniou & Kalliris, 2019). Millennials are the first generation born and raised with the advantages of the Internet. The adaptations of new infrastructures because of the digital era have resulted in new ways of consuming television. While new habits such as binge-watching, second screening, content sharing, and video-on-demand emerge, the importance of relevant content remains. However, the cross-border partners and attitudes of post-Millennials are increasingly emerging similar. Web 2.0 has led to the creation of a global television audience. This could suggest that people between the age 20 and 30 years old are remotely watching the same, which would point towards the consumption of English programming.

In conclusion, the rise of Web 2.0 and online streaming services has had a great impact on the consumption practices of audiences. Transnational media have become central in daily consumption practices. One way of explaining this is the fast-growing dominance of the English language. Especially for Millennials, who were born and raised with the advantages of the Internet, consuming globalized media is a daily practice.

2.7 Conclusion

To conclude this theoretical exploration, this paragraph will shortly present a summary of the main concepts discussed above and how this can be related to the scope of this thesis. As a result of

globalization, societies have changed and more specifically the media landscape. Formats owe their success to globalization, by offering an easy and efficient production option for local television producers. Local TV networks purchase the license of a TV format and produce their local version, this is also the case with the *Bake Off* format. One way for understanding the success of formats is according to the cultural proximity theory. The cultural proximity stipulates the agency of local audiences, in their preference for locally produced media products. The cultural proximity theory consists of language, identity, and cultural capital. This would suggest that audiences prefer their local version, applied to this research *Heel Holland Bakt.* Moreover, according to the cultural proximity theory if there is no culturally relevant television available the second choice is often based on language, which would suggest that the Flemish version also evokes a certain level of proximity. Additionally, the Flemish and Dutch cultures are often believed to have partially shared history, which could suggest a better reception of the Flemish version.

Nevertheless, cultural proximities do not pay attention to the many cultures and languages that exist within one sole country, being transnationalization. Nor do they explain the flow of television programs outside of cultural or linguistic borders. With regards to language, because of cosmopolitanization people and especially young adults are increasingly exposed to the English language. The dominance of the English language fosters cross-border engagement and evokes a kind of two-tiered linguistic proximity. According to the cultural discount theory, English television appears very culturally neutral due to the absence and relatively low appearance of cultural elements. People are getting used to globalized media and as a result, a globalized identity can be formed. More importantly, due to interconnectedness caused by cosmopolitanization people can tailor their television consumption upon their wishes. This increasing exposure to globalized media could suggest an increased engagement with the English version. As a result of cosmopolitanization, the relevance of cultural proximities is challenged. To explain the flow of media to unusual places scholars introduced more forms of proximities, such as genre, value, or thematic proximities. Those proximities can help to explain the flow of media products to unusual places. In this aspect, genre proximity can explain flows based on genres. For example, the TV format *Bake Off* can be placed in the reality and cooking genre. When audiences are interested in this genre, they are more likely to also watch foreign versions. This could help to explain the availability of different versions of the same format, such as the Flemish and British versions of *Bake Off* in the Netherlands.

So, not only cosmopolitanization, but also the decreased relevance for local language suggests that there could be a change in cultural proximities among audiences. This could perhaps suggest that cultural proximities can also be based on a globalized culture. Studying multiple format adaptations among which a foreign and a local version, can bring insight into how cultural proximities play a role work and have possibly changed as a result of globalization.

3. Method

This thesis aims to create insight in the role of cultural proximities and the cosmopolitanization of the audience by studying the audience reception of multiple versions of the British reality TV format *The Great British Bake Off*. In this chapter, the method that was used to conduct this research is introduced and explained. This method ultimately helps to answer the research question as introduced before (RQ): how does the Dutch audience perceive foreign versions of the *Bake Off* format in comparison with the Dutch adaptation?

3.1 Research design

In this section, the research method is presented. This study aims to clarify the differences in the reception of local and foreign television by studying multiple adaptations of the *Bake Off* format. Formats are very useful for studying differences in the reception of local and foreign television. The reason for the usefulness of formats is that the television program appears similar, only localized to meet the request and preference of audiences for local relevant television programming (Stehling, 2013). Thus, TV formats are an appropriate tool to create insight in the reception of global and local television, which is the goal of this research. This research qualifies best for a qualitative approach. According to Marying (2004) a qualitative research method studies a phenomenon 'from the inside out', by taking a participation perspective. This allows a better understanding of the process of meaning making patterns and to understand social relations. Moreover, qualitative research is especially useful for drawing and highlighting meaningful relationships in the data (Kvale, 1996). For the purpose of this research interviews were chosen as tool for data collection and consequently to gain insight into the meaning-making process of Dutch audiences. This insight helps to understand the relevance of culturally proximate television and the cosmopolitanization of the audience. So, the qualitative method enables the researcher to report the respondent's understanding of their experience with the phenomenon under study, to provide meaningful explanations, and more importantly, to draw comprehension of the process (Brown, 2010). Besides, a qualitative research allows the researcher more room for reflexivity, which is especially useful to maintain evolution in the research process which leads to more a valuable and richer process of data collection.

3.2 Sampling method

As mentioned in chapter 2.4 of the literature review, younger people engage more regularly with dominant global cultures and are more likely to engage with cosmopolitized media products (Esser et al., 2016; Esser, 2016). This makes young adults an interesting group for studying the influences of cosmopolitanization and to see if cultural proximities are still relevant to them in the

reception of television. The unit of analysis of this study is therefore young adults aged between 20 to 30. This age group is based on the expectation that younger audiences are more familiar with and exposed to a globalized culture (Stein, 2013; Esser, 2016). Consequently, it is expected that this exposure might have resulted in the way young adults receive the three versions of the *Bake Off* format.

For the purpose of this research the respondents have to meet certain requirements, such as an age criterion and a basic understanding of *the Bake Off* format. Therefore, the sample used in this research was collected purposively (Babbie, 2011). To ensure those criteria, all participants were asked to watch at least one episode per version of the most recent season. This was ensured by providing them with links where they could watch the shows. They were allowed to choose an episode within the season themselves. This was based on the expectation that this would not have any potential influence on different interpretations, because it was still the same show, with the same characters and the same contestants. However, it was important that the respondents watched the same season because throughout the different seasons show hosts and jury members change. This could potentially lead to different interpretations. In short, this research used purposive sampling to carefully compose a sample, based on age and familiarity with the *Bake Off* format.

For the purpose of this research, the sample included both self-identified fans as well as people that have occasionally watched the show on NPO (since all three versions are aired on the NPO) and people that have never seen the show before. This sample was chosen to gain insight into different perspectives. None of the respondents were aware of the exact research purpose to allow insight into the meaning making process of the respondents.

3.3 Ethical consideration

Since this study uses people for the collection of data, it is very important to consider the ethical aspects of the research in the execution. According to Cohen, Manion and Morison (2007) interviews can be considered as intrusion into the personal lives. Therefore, ethical issues need to be carefully considered. To ensure willingness of the respondents, all respondents were asked to sign a consent form before participating in the interview. Before the start of the data collection, all respondents were informed of the purpose of this interview. Moreover, the respondents were aware that participation in this research is voluntarily and that they could withdraw at any time. Furthermore, strictly confidentially and anonymity was ensured to all the participants in this research.

3.4 Method of data collection

The data are collected by the means of in-depth interviews using a semi-structured approach. Semi-structured interviews are more fitted to the purpose of this study, since they are more flexible and iterative (Babbie, 2011). This allows the researcher to maintain more flexibility during the interviews. The interviews were guided by an interview guide which includes pre-defined questions, please see appendix A. This technique is used to guide the conversation, but still leaves room for flexibility and interactivity. The method of in-depth interviews is commonly used to gain profound information and knowledge, which is usually deeper and more insightful information than is acquired via for example surveys (Johnson, 2011). The data are collected through naturalistic observation to explore the multiple meanings and perspectives the respondents have on a certain event or setting, in the case of this study, the perception of the three versions of the *Bake Off* format. The research question of this study is appropriate for in-depth interviews since it is interested in both personal narratives and learning how identities are used in the reception of foreign and local television. Utilizing in-depth interviews enables the formation of a deep understanding. Moreover, in-depth interviews reveal how commonsense assumptions, practices, and ways of talking partly form interests and how these are understood (Babbie, 2011).

In total, 11 in-depth interviews of approximately 50 minutes were performed (please see appendix B for a detailed overview of the respondents). After this number of interviews, the point of data saturation was reached (Babbie, 2011). This means that after 11 interviews, a pattern appeared in the answers provided by the respondents. In other words, at this point no new information was discovered from the interviews. Each interview was recorded with a recording device and processed into verbatim transcripts. Due to the current situation caused by Covid-19, the interviews were held via online meetings, such as Skype or Zoom, to ensure safety for both the respondent and interviewer. In general, the online interviews were very successful and provided rich data. However, occasionally there were some problems with the internet connection. This caused the connection to break down in the middle of an answer, which could potentially have led to missing valuable information because some respondents were not able to exactly reproduce the sentences missed.

3.5 Operationalization

To analyze the concepts related to the reception of television formats among the Dutch audience, the most important concept related to this research are conceptualized and operationalized. According to Babbie (2011) this step is necessary to make the concepts useable. By looking into audience reception, this research is specifically interested in the role of cultural proximity and the cosmopolitanization of the Dutch audience. This becomes visible by comparing the reception of the multiple adaptations of the *Bake Off* format, since it will show according to what

audiences interpret and perceive those versions. Therefore, the concepts cultural proximity and cosmopolitanization are conceptualized and operationalized and used for guiding the data analysis and for structuring the topic list (please see appendix A). The concepts of cultural proximities and the cosmopolitanization together form the sensitizing concepts of this research. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that using established methods to interpret data also creates awareness of new ideas that were not discussed in previous studies.

The first concept is cultural proximity. This concept suggests that audiences tend to choose television programs that are close or more relevant to them in terms of own language and local or national culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2003). This would mean that audience members would prefer the Dutch adaptation, since this version is more proximate to their local culture. According to Straubhaar (2003) cultural proximities are grounded in cultural capital, identity and language. Cultural capital explains sources of knowledge and education; identity is formed based on local cultures and stories; and language reinforce cultural belongings and function as the reproduction of nations. During the data analysis, specific attention was paid to the way the respondents talked about their experiences with storyline, characters, location, recipes, and audio-visual aspects to get more insight into cultural proximities. Questions from the topic-list applied to this specific concept are among others: what do you think of the humor in version X, which version would you recommend to a friend and why and in which version did you recognize yourself or your neighbor in the contestants?

Later, La Pastina and Straubhaar (2003) defined more proximities across both spatial and cultural relationships (Stehling, 2013), such as genre, value or thematic proximity. Genre proximity explains familiarity to a genre; value proximity refers to sharing the same cultural values as portrayed in the tv program; and thematic proximity is about themes and issues that appeal across cultures (La Pastina, & Straubhaar, 2003). Questions from the topic-list applied to this specific concept are among others: what did you like in version X, what did you dislike in version X and which version that is not the Dutch version did you understand best?

The second concept is the cosmopolitanization of the audience. This concept suggests breaking up the national perspective and consequently the formation of a more cosmopolitan perspective (Beck, 2007). In other words, it poses cultural disposition that brings intellectual and aesthetic tendencies of openness towards people, places and experiences influenced by different cultures and nations (Tomlinson, 1999). According to Tomlinson (1999), cosmopolitanization results in interconnectedness and the formation of globalized identities. Interconnectedness explains flows across international borders, such as the flow of people, capital, knowledge, information, ideas and beliefs and many more things. Moreover, the significance of the English language contributes to interconnectedness. Global identities refer to the process of globalization as a homogenizing force

inflicting a dominant culture on local communities (Banerjee, 2002), by which practices, processes and identities are constantly evolving and based on global beliefs. Questions from the topic-list that aim to explore this concept among others are: to what extent does language play a role for you in television, when would you engage with a foreign version of a tv format and which version that was not Dutch, did you understand best?

The goal of the interview was gaining insight into the reception of the different versions of *Bake Off* format and how and according to what the respondents compare and interpret those versions. After getting some insight in their cultural backgrounds and daily media consumption practices, the same questions were asked for all three versions. First, the same eleven questions were asked for the Dutch versions, then for the British version and finally for the Flemish version. The questions were focused on the different interpretations of humor, presentation, characters, storyline, location, recipes and audio and visual elements among those three versions. Asking the same question three times allowed exploration of how the respondents formed different opinions. Then, questions were asked that allowed the respondents to compare the three versions themselves. These questions focused on the same topics and explored how the respondents interpreted them differently among the three versions. Finally, questions specifically focused on the relevance of language were asked, particularly the relevance of their native language in comparison to English language. This was done because language is an important aspect for cultural proximities but also in the cosmopolitanization of the audience. This allowed more insight in their interpretations and process of making sense and the use of global or local identities in this process. To make sure all the question on the topic list were understandable and provided with in-depth answers, two test interviews were performed to determine the effectiveness of the topic list. After those two test interviews it was noticed that it was important to explicitly emphasize that the same question was repeated for all three versions and that a comparison was not asked yet. Otherwise, interviewees would start comparing in the first set of questions which resulted in less valuable answers.

3.6 Data analysis

After the interviews were conducted, they were processed and transcribed into verbatims transcriptions. Subsequently, these data were analyzed and interpreted according to thematic analysis. The method of analysis consists of the segmentation of the data and to resemble it to transform the data into findings (Boeije, 2010). In other words, this method helps to find patterns emerging from the data and underlying theory by the process of constant comparison (Brennen, 2017). This is done according to the process of coding. Thus, the codes represent either theoretical or analytical concepts or they could be practical or descriptive (Boeije, 2010). Three steps of coding can be distinguished: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Braun & Clark, 2006). In the first

step, open coding, the data is labeled by using a coding software being Atlas.ti. This round of coding provided a clear overview of all the information that was usable for answering the research question. This step resulted in 429 codes that were derived from the data. The next step is axial coding. This round searched for relations between the open codes and consequently categorized those codes. This round resulted in 17 sub-themes. In the final step, being selective coding, the sub-themes were reviewed and then bundled and placed under overarching themes. In this step, sensitizing concepts were used to guide the process and to see how the themes overlap with the theory. This means that a deductive and inductive approach were combined, allowing both to see the overlap with theory as the construction of new concepts. Particularly, the themes were derived from the data and later reflected on with concepts from the theory. Please see appendix C for the code system.

3.7 Validity and reliability

For the credibility of this research, it is important to evaluate the validity and reliability. According to Babbie (2011) validity is concerned with measuring what is intended to measure. Of course, this is harder to ensure in the case of qualitative methods since it uses interpretive data. However, according to Silverman (2011) there are some strategies that are concerned with ensuring validity in qualitative research, such as the use of test interviews. As described previously, two test interviews were performed to test the topic list and to determine whether the questions provided useful data for answering the research question. Besides, during the thematic analysis, constant comparison of the procedure was done to allow appropriateness and fittingness of the themes and sub-themes. Secondly, the reliability of this research is considered. Reliability suggests that the same data were derived each time if the study was repeated (Babbie, 2011). One way of ensuring this is by allowing method transparency. All the steps taken in this research and the framework in which it was analyzed are described in detail in the method section, therefore in theory it should be possible since all the steps are discussed. However, attention must be paid to the fact that this research used semi-structured approach. This means that even though the research used a topic list to guide the research, some level of flexibility and interactivity was allowed during the interviews. As a result, some answers and questions are a reaction to the specific circumstances of that interview and therefore same interactions cannot be ensured.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested four criteria for the purpose of assessing qualitative research. As an addition on the previous discussed validity and reliability those criterium are briefly discussed and applied to the circumstances of this research. The first criterium, credibility, discusses to what extend this research is believable and trustworthy. Since this research used interviews as data collection method, the data is interpreted and analyzed according to the researcher's subjectivity. This could have an impact on how the research is interpreted, because both processes

are human process and can be influenced by the subjectivity of the interviewer. Nevertheless, this research provides a clear description of all the steps taken. Secondly, transferability. This criterium is about the correctness of the description of the situation under research. The situation under research is clearly described and reported in both theoretical framework and the method section. The third criterium is dependability. This discusses, among others, the consistency of data and whether or not the findings are consistent and if the same findings would be derived when repeated. This research used semi-structured interviews. The interviews were guided by the means of a topic list. This method allowed the researcher some freedom to continue a dialogue with the respondent. Therefore, the dependability could be ensured partially. The researcher repeated this process consistently. However, if repeated by someone else, different results could be derived because of different interactions. Lastly, confirmability, which is concerned with the degree of neutrality. Since this research uses interviews, the data were collected through the meaning making process of both the interviewer and the respondent. Therefore, the data are to some extend shaped by both the respondents and the researcher's meaning making process. Also, since they were both Dutch assumptions were easily made.

4. Results

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis are discussed. This is done by reviewing the overarching themes derived from the thematic analysis. The main themes that were found are *preference for the local version, disconnection with the foreign versions, appreciation for the foreign version* and *comparison of the versions*. Every theme is constructed by several sub-themes, which are discussed in the sections. The themes are used for structuring the result section and together describe the perception of the three versions of the *Bake Off* format. An important element of qualitative research is the interpretations of participant. Therefore, every theme presents quotes originating from the interviews, to support the research findings.

4.1 Preference for the local version

Starting with the first theme, nine of the total eleven interviews clearly expressed a preference for the Dutch version, being their local version. This is a significant amount. The preference for the local version is expressed by the respondents on various elements. Those elements together form the sub-themes belonging to this theme and are *familiarities, cultural closeness, relatable humor, relatable characters, and preference for native language*.

The first sub-theme that indicates a preference for the local versions is *familiarity*. Many respondents expressed some level of predeveloped bonds with the Dutch version. This feeling of familiarity could be the result of recognizing characters or aspects of the show self, such as recipes. In other words, the respondents indicated that they were already familiar with certain elements of the show. Moreover, the feeling of familiarity suggests some level of recognizability on a cultural or personal level. In the executed interviews a moderate number of respondents (five respondents) described that they experienced familiarities while watching the show. As Gwen explained:

> "I prefer the Dutch version a lot more, for a large part because Robert van Bekhoven is part of the show and I know him personally. Well not personally but sort of personality, but he is also from Oisterwijk just like I am. I enjoy watching someone familiar on television."

Gwen is of course a rarer example since she and one of the jury members grew up in the same town and is not familiar with one of the characters because of a predeveloped bond, like other respondents. However, this example shows how close the characters on the show physically can feel. A more common example was like Esther explained: "I know Robert from other programs on the Dutch television, just like Jannie she was part of *'het perfecte plaatje'*, I think it is funny seeing them in different settings". Both Gwen and Esther indicated that if you have never watched *Heel Holland*

Bakt before, there is already some level of engagement with the program because of a predeveloped bond with the show hosts. So, even though familiarity was found moderately as an indicator for the preference for the local version, it signifies the role of a predeveloped bond with key figures in television programs and how this can increase engagement.

The preference for the Dutch version is also expressed by *cultural closeness,* which is the second sub-theme. Feelings of cultural closeness are triggered by a perceived feeling of culturally relevant television content. From the interviews, it seems clear that cultural closeness is still an important factor for respondents in the reception of television programs. Many respondents suggested that the program represents their take on Dutch culture. Besides, they indicated they enjoyed how the show contributes to the Dutch culture. An increased feeling of cultural closeness was perceived in comparison to the foreign version and caused the respondents to receive *Heel Holland Bakt* as more authentic. As Brett explained: "The program shows signs of typical Dutch elements, the portrayal of those typical Dutch elements feels authentic and engaging to me". Or as Esther explained: "Well, I think the Dutch version wanted to emphasize the 'Dutchness' or the authentic 'Dutchness' in the show and I think that is something that should be done with such a show". Both examples demonstrate how the show is relevant to them in terms of culture by emphasizing how they perceive elements of the show as typical Dutch. For the respondents, those elements lead to an increased preference and feeling of engagement for the Dutch version. The preference for the Dutch adaptation also leads a few respondents to compare the other version to the Dutch one. Making statements such as Lauren did: "Well, I think that that [talking about the show hosts in British *Bake Off*] is something we would never do in our show. Just like, in our show everyone is just normal and looks so normal, just looks Dutch, you know". This example shows how some respondents idealize the Dutch version and use it as a point of reference for comparison. Furthermore, one of the respondents, Rosalie, was not able to explain where her preference for the Dutch version came from, but that it was just something she strongly felt. Considering that the British version was the original version, which according to Cuelenaere (2021) results in romanticizing original content, this assumption of the respondent is even more interesting. The fact that the respondent is not aware of the originality of the British version can imply how strong her preference for the local version is. It can also indicate that, in this case, the preference for proximate television is greater than romanticizing originality. Besides, combining the respondent that was not able to explain her preference and the respondents seeing the Dutch version as point of reference could indicate that watching Dutch television is still a natural and common practice for them. So, the importance of experiencing cultural closeness for some respondents signifies that cultural relevancy is still an important factor in the reception of television. Cultural closeness seems to appeal to the respondents and can be an important factor to determine engagement.

Thirdly, preference for the Dutch version is also triggered by the dominance of *relatable humor* and *relatable characters,* both being sub-themes*.* In the executed interviews these sub-themes were found moderately. Like the sub-theme *relatable humor*, a significant number of respondents (nine of the eleven respondents) expressed that they felt closer to the humor portrayed in *Heel Holland Bakt*. They explained that the humor used in the Dutch version is closer to their personal taste in humor. Furthermore, they argued that the jokes made in the show could have been made by the respondents themselves. Like Lauren explained:

"I prefer the humor in the Dutch version, I also enjoyed the humor in the British version, but I do prefer the Dutch humor, which is closer to my style of humor. You could see that they were themselves and yes, that was clear from the interaction with one and another and how, well by the way they made jokes and how naturally this all seemed. I enjoyed it. I think it is because the humor comes closer to mine. Humor is of course something personal, what I think is funny and jokes I would make myself."

The above-stated example clearly explains how feelings of relatability are constructed. Even though the respondent also suggested to enjoy the humor in the British version, she feels more attracted to the humor in the Dutch version. As the humor in the Dutch version feels more natural to her. Humor is of course closely related to people. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *relatable characters* are an important element in the positive perception of the Dutch version. A significant number of respondents (nine of the eleven respondents) indicated they perceived the characters portrayed in *Heel Holland Bakt* as relatable. In the executed interviews an often-given statement was like Sijmen stated:

"The characters in *Heel Holland Bakt* are more people from whom I consider, yeah you are a normal person, to put it differently, whom I can identify myself with. Who could be me if would have been on the show. It is engaging to look at normal people, that is what I also really enjoy about this show."

In this statement, Sijmen describes how he feels connected to the characters in *Heel Holland Bakt* because of perceiving them as relatable. Normality, in this example, strongly implies that he can relate the characters in the show with his reality, which in this case is constructed by his local life, being the Netherlands. In general, the positive reception of the program seems to be highly based on the key characters in the show, such as show hosts and jury and their humor. In particular, it seems clear that the respondents can relate to the characters and their humor. Which leads to a positive

reception of the program *Heel Holland Bakt.* So, this dominance of this sub-theme signifies the perceived relevance of relatable characters in the show.

The last sub-theme that demonstrates *a preference for the local version* is *a preference for the native language*. Overall, a moderate number of respondents (six of the eleven respondents) indicated a strong preference for Dutch-spoken television and in particular, the relevance of the native language. Other respondents pointed out that the Dutch language makes it is easier to watch but is not specifically wished for. For instance, like Onno mentioned: "Language leads to identification". Meaning that the Dutch language, in the case of *Heel Holland Bakt,* makes identification easier which results in a higher level of engagement with the characters on the show. A striking point made by a few respondents is that language plays a significant role when watching television based on real, normal/local life, such as the *Bake Off* format, where normal people are the point of focus in the program. Such as Onno explained:

> "Well, I think when I am choosing a fictive series to watch, I would say: No, language does not play a role for me. I think that in most cases I consider English to be a more fitting language for series. But, when I am watching a program based on reality or real-life, where humor is an important factor, I prefer Dutch. Because otherwise so many important things get lost in translation."

The example given by Onno could explain why many respondents express a strong preference for the Dutch adaptation. Besides, from the interviews, it seems clear that humor and language are closely related. Many respondents pointed out like Sijmen did: "Well you miss important parts of the humor. I think language is mainly related to humor in this case". In this example, Sijmen explained that due to the language barrier important parts for engagement are missed, which will influence the overall perception of the show. So, overall, the importance of language is mixed among the respondents. However, when language is closely related to humor and real-life events it becomes more significant. Even though many respondents suggested that language does not play a role, when related to humor it becomes more significant for how the show is perceived.

Concerning the theory, it was expected that *preference for the local version* would be a dominant finding in this research. More specifically, regarding the cultural proximity theory. The cultural proximity theory argues that audiences will choose television programs that are closer or more relevant to them in terms of language and local or national culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2003). From the interviews, it has become clear that locality still is an important factor in terms of the reception of television shows. Apart from the availability of foreign versions, watching local television is a more natural or common practice for the respondents since it appeals to their local

reality. As Cuelenaere (2020) explained, people derive pleasure from recognizing themselves, their social values, and their collective world in television. This explanation could be used to clarify why the respondents prefer the Dutch version. Moreover, it signifies the indicated importance of relatable characters, which was found dominantly in the interviews. The respondents derive pleasure from perceiving the characters as relatable. Besides, this perceived pleasure could even explain why Rosalie was not able to explain her preference for the Dutch version but still felt it so strongly. The explanation could be that watching local television is such a natural practice for her that when it is not proximate, she does not derive this same feeling of pleasure. Overall, the respondents showed a preference for Dutch television, based on among others language. According to Waisbord (2004) language functions within a country to evoke a sense of cultural belonging and functions as a tool to reproduce nations. In fact, many respondents indicated that the native Dutch language makes it easier to watch but is not especially wished for. However, some respondents explained that language only matters when watching television based on reality. As in these programs' identification and recognizability is an important factor to determine engagement. The respondents implied that if a reality-based program, like *Heel Holland Bakt*, is not in the local language, it is harder to identify themselves with the people on the show. This decreases the engagement with the overall television show. Besides, when it comes to scripted television such as series and movies, language does not play a role and they prefer to watch series and movies in English. This would suggest a two-tiered proximity. When it comes to television based on real-life it needs to evoke a feeling of cultural proximity. Just as, when it comes to scripted and more fictional series and movies, they prefer content in English. This could suggest why people consciously choose to engage with both local and foreign content. Overall, it seems from the relevance of the Dutch version that the impact of cosmopolitanization is not as strong when it comes to television formats like *Bake Off*.

4.2 Disconnection with foreign versions

The second theme is *a disconnection with the foreign version.* This theme was found dominantly and was expressed in terms of feeling disconnected from the foreign versions, being *Great British Bake Off* and *Bake Off Vlaanderen.* This theme can be seen as the criticism the respondents had on the foreign versions. This perceived disconnection was expressed in various sub-themes, which are *disconnecting with characters, disconnecting with humor, disconnecting with the vibe, disconnection with language,* and *lack of realism.* In this paragraph, those elements are further explained.

Starting with the first sub-theme, being *disconnecting with characters*. A significant number of respondents (nine of the eleven) indicated to be less engaged with the foreign show because they

were not able to relate to the characters in the foreign shows. This feeling was expressed on a more general note as Sijmen did:

> "Yeah, just overall but specifically based on personality, I just connected less with them, and I think with the British culture overall, you know. You just have less engagement with that kind of people, than you have with Dutch people."

Or on a more specific note, as Onno explained:

> "I did not feel a connection with the show hosts, they just did not appeal to me. No, I thought they were a bit weird. One was a bold person, who stood there like yeah, I thought he was very childish with the candidates and stuff. But that is also because he does not have, I just did not get his humor. [..] And the other one is a sort of Rockstar kind of person, who is stuck in the 80s, with long hair. And he is just a person that I would never have a connection with. No, I just think he is very odd."

But some respondents also compared the characters to the Dutch adaptation, as Ole did:

> "Well, I think the jury is a bit stricter, but I think that is also something typical for Belgian people, they are stricter in general and more willing to give their unfiltered opinion. We all think Belgian are sweet people, but they can be very harsh. Well, I am just a big fan of Jannie and Robert, I think they are very cute together and the Flemish jury was just less, because yeah well, they were not like the British, but they just made statements that the Dutch jury would never do."

This perceived disconnection as suggested by the respondents is a result of comparing the Dutch version with the foreign versions. As seen in the previous paragraph some respondents see the Dutch version as a point of reference and compare the other versions accordingly. This comparison is sometimes on a more general note and sometimes more specific, for instance on character levels such as the appearance or the behavior of the characters on the show. Additionally, Cuelenaere (2021) suggested that when people were invited to compare different format adaptations many people did this in terms of 'us' and 'them'. This same is shown in the way the respondents compare the perceived normality of the Dutch people with a perceived weirdness of the foreign characters. Moreover, the perceived disconnection seems to be increasingly based on those key characters. This could mean that the candidates on a general note are less distinct and appear more neutral. The

respondents that expressed disconnection not specifically directed towards the jury or the show hosts, made comments like the first example, more in general. This is also not specifically directed at the contestants. However, the fact that the jury and show hosts are judged by the respondents could also be a result of their central role in the show. Their role is to be in the center of attention. This could make it easier to form an opinion based on their appearances. Considering the dominance of the perceived disconnection with foreign characters among the respondents signifies the importance of relatable characters for overall engagement with the show. Besides, it shows that the role of the character is important for engagement. If someone is more in the center of attention it is easier to develop an opinion based on their appearance.

The next sub-theme that illustrates the perceived disconnection between the *British Bake off* and *Bake Off Vlaanderen* is *disconnecting with the vibe*. This sub-theme includes disconnection with the vibe in general, such as respondents experiencing the vibe in the show as uncomfortable or other elements that were perceived as less appealing. Overall, this was expressed moderately by the respondents, quotes that prove this feeling are: "The Flemish version was just too personal [..] it just made me feel super uncomfortable" (Brett), "The people [*British Bake Off*] were just so super stiff. In comparison to the Dutch, we are just fun people" (Fabienne), "It is just harder to feel the same connection as you have with the Dutch version, due to the overall vibe" (Ole), or "Well, it was just so uncomfortable. He tried to make all sort of jokes and the only thing I thought was like please don't" (Gwen). From the interviews, it becomes clear that the respondents feel disconnected from the overall vibe. Again, most remarks indicated by the respondents emphasize that the vibe is a result of the behavior of the characters. This contributes to the earlier stated disconnection with the characters. Therefore, seeing the dominance of the overall disconnection with characters it is not surprising that the vibe is also perceived as disconnecting. So, the overall perception of the characters can suggest the perception of the vibe.

Thirdly, another sub-theme playing a role in feeling disconnected from the foreign version is *a disconnection with humor*. As stated previously humor and characters are closely related. When disliking a person or feeling no connection, it is assumingly that this will lead to disliking their humor as well. Many respondents revealed to feel disconnected from the humor in both *Bake Off Vlaanderen* and *The Great British Bake Off*. As Rosalie stated:

> "Well, I think I just did not understand the humor. I noticed that they tried to make it funny or that they tried to make a joke and I just thought huh. But for example, when the show host tried to make a joke, well then, I thought, well yeah now I think you are a bit annoying because you just want all this attention."

Or like Fabienne mentioned:

> "Well, mostly the show hosts, the two show hosts, the Jannie and Robert from the *British Bake Off.* Well, they were so stiff and super serious. While the program is more like, you know, it should be a little bit funny. But those two guys just stood there and tried to be funny. But it was not funny, the worst jokes I have ever heard. They tried to be extra funny. But I was watching and thought like what??"

Both respondents explain feeling disconnected from the humor in the foreign versions because of the comparison performed by the respondents. Moreover, the perceived humor in the foreign versions does not appeal to their reality. This could suggest that they perceive the foreign versions according to their local standards and therefore perceive the humor as forced and unauthentic. Comparing this to the encoding/decoding theory of Hall (1980), this could mean that the respondents were not able to decode the intended meaning to their local context. In other words, as a result of the respondents not being able to relate themselves to the jokes or the people who made the jokes, they perceived it as not funny and unauthentic. So, forced and unauthentic humor in the foreign version indicates partial feelings of disconnection with the show.

In this aspect, it must be emphasized that humor is closely related to language and therefore, language can be used to explain the level of engagement with humor. The next sub-theme discussed is *a disconnection with language*. A moderate number of respondents expressed feeling disconnected because they were not able to clearly understand the language. Comments that indicated a perceived feeling of disconnection due to the language are:

> "I don't know if I really understand English that well and it is also the way you are watching the program. Because I watch it on a Sunday evening after I spent the whole day studying and I just want to watch some easy television, to relax. And then you don't want to spend any effort trying to understand the language." (Ole)

> "Well, in the Belgium version they had some Flemish words, that I was like, what does this mean? But from the context, I could derive the meaning. And with the British version, some candidates just had such accents and they talked so fast, yeah then I miss a lot of contexts." (Gwen)

Overall, those examples suggest a disconnection with the language based on missing parts of the context of the show. Moreover, as Ole suggested, a foreign language requires more concentration,

which is not the purpose of such a program. Moreover, this lack of concentration could suggest that the engagement level when watching a foreign show is lower in general. The indicated importance of the local language and the perceived disconnection based on the English language contradicts the expectation that language would no longer play a significant role because of globalization. One of the results of globalization is increased exposure to the English language, which leads to an overall better knowledge of the English language. However, from the interviews it seems that this is not the case yet, especially when it comes to reality television. Overall, disconnection with the language is perceived when missing context, understandable pronunciations, and lack of concentration. Together this leads to feeling disconnected while watching the show.

Moving on to the last sub-theme that implies feelings of disconnection, *lack of realism*. A significant number of respondents indicated that they were not able to relate to the characters in the foreign versions. They implied to perceive the show as (too) scripted or unauthentic. They had the idea that the humor was scripted. Example of comments that illustrate this feeling are: "It is the scripted what I did not like" (Sijmen), "It seemed like some things were staged, like acting funny to be funny" (Esther) or "It was so very unreal, it was just scripted" (Maja). Some respondents perceived the foreign versions as too scripted. This could be a result of not being able to relate with the characters or with the humor, like Esther pointed out. So, when characters and humor are not perceived as natural the respondents perceive it as scripted. Moreover, it could also indicate that the overall show does not appeal to their local reality, and therefore is non-relatable according to their expectation which leads to perceiving it as unreal or scripted. Especially considering the previously discussed elements that all revealed levels of a received feeling of unauthenticity of both *Bake Off Vlaanderen* and *The Great British Bake Off*.

Now the results will be compared to the theory as presented in the theoretical framework. A significant number of respondents perceived the characters and humor in the foreign versions as unrelatable. In general, it can be assumed that audiences value characters as a very valuable element that indicates overall engagement with a series or show. If the characters are not perceived as appealing an overall feeling of disconnection with the show is developed. This feeling is based on humor, overall vibe, and more. Besides, it also connects to the cultural proximity theory, which suggests that local audiences will dislike anything that is not culturally relevant to them. This would explain why the respondents were not able to identify with the characters in the foreign versions or their humor.

4.3 Appreciation for the foreign version

The third finding is a perceived appreciation for the foreign versions. Those findings point towards an indicated appreciation for the foreign versions. From the interviews, it seems that this

feeling of disconnection can be seen apart from the appreciation for specific elements. This means that disconnection and appreciation can co-exist. The appreciation for the foreign versions is expressed in the following sub-themes, *appreciation for cultural context, appreciation in general, appreciation for characters,* and *more competitive*.

Starting with the first sub-theme, being an *appreciation for cultural context*. Within the interviews, this was found dominantly. This means that the contestants were able to see the foreign versions in the cultural context of the version and appreciated this. A small number of respondents indicated this, as Lauren explained:

"For example, the British version yes, we do know quite a lot about the British culture, of course, it is also nice that we can see like hey, that's typically British. I had that with the English or the British no, the Belgian a little less, because I had the idea that they did not do very typical Belgian things, but that is not surprising and yes, their culture is a bit closer to our culture. I think that's nice when you recognize it, that makes it more fun to watch. So, on the one hand, I find it enriching that you think oh nice. However, I do prefer the Dutch version a lot more because for me it is very relatable."

Lauren clearly showed how she perceived the foreign version according to the program's cultural context, and how that contributed to engagement with the show. Or as Esther explained: "Well because it contributes to my take on the British culture, it makes sense that they bake scones for example". A striking point that was found in the interviews was an indicated awareness of the local role and how this could change the reception of the Flemish and British versions. An example of this is like Ole stated: "Well maybe they are the same people as in the Dutch program and maybe I just romanticize the Dutch version, which might influence my interpretation". This example shows that he is aware of his prejudices because of his locality, unlink the other examples, which show signs of awareness of the cultural context in was produced, but do not indicate anything about their local role or how this might affect their engagement with the show. So, being able to perceive foreign shows in the intended cultural context implies certain levels of appreciation for those versions. Besides, it can lead to an increased positive reception of the foreign versions. Being able to point out the awareness of one's local role shows signs of the process of cosmopolitanization. In the process of cosmopolitanization a person can either chose to become global or to remain local. (Chalaby, 2005). When a person consciously chooses to remain local, he or she accepts the global culture but chooses locality. This could explain why the respondents still express a preference for their local version even though they are aware of their local role and more importantly can see the show in the intended

cultural context. This shows signs of awareness of other cultures, but consciously choosing to remain local in the process.

Moving on to the next sub-themes that indicates appreciation for the foreign version namely *appreciation in general* and *appreciation for characters*. Those elements demonstrate appreciation on a general note and appreciation for the characters in specific. Besides, linking appreciation in general to appreciation for the cultural context, this feeling of appreciation could be a result of being able to see the foreign shows in the intended cultural context. This sub-theme includes appreciation that can be derived and seen as a perceived appreciation or appreciation based on overall performances of for example the contestants. Examples of quotes that stipulated appreciation in general or of the characters are: "Well, I liked seeing that they copied the British version, so it took also place in a tent with natural surroundings. I liked that" (Lauren), "Well, they made typical British things, which was fun to see" (Rosalie), "Well sometimes in the British version things were so odd and weird, which made it quite funny" (Lauren), "They focused more on the contestants, which was nice" (Onno), "It was more professional [British version]" (Fabienne) or "It was just a typical fun show host in the Flemish version" (Rosalie). Regarding those quotes, it can be assumed that appreciation is more based on general things, like interaction, or that the show host was appropriate given the program context. However, it is less concerned with personal preferences. Comparing to how detailed the respondents could express their dislike for the foreign version or their preference for the Dutch version, it can be assumed that this is more general. Besides, appreciation for the English version such as perceiving it as more professional can also indicate a desire for modernity as indicated by La Pastina and Straubhaar (2003). A desire for modernity can be evaluated as evoking a sort of genre proximity. English language represents global modernity and can lead to reinforcing a certain type of desire or aspiration, which can be evaluated as a form of proximity or desire.

Moving on to the last sub-theme. Many respondents (eight) indicated that the foreign versions, especially the British version, was perceived as *more competitive*, which is the last sub-theme belonging to this theme. The perceived competitiveness is also a means for expressing appreciation for the foreign versions. They noted for example: "It [*British Bake Off*] is more competitive" (Rosalie), "There is a bit more competition in the other versions" (Onno), or "I enjoyed the competition vibe and how were teasing each other" (Ole). Those elements point out that the respondents do not overall perceive the foreign versions as negative or dislike them. In this aspect, they perceive the increased level of competition in the foreign versions as something positive and fitting to the show. The positive evaluation of the increased level of competition implies that this is something that they dislike or like less about their native version.

Connecting this to the theory, appreciation of the foreign versions shows a certain level of openness to other cultures. This slightly hints towards interconnectedness, which is an important

aspect in the process of cosmopolitanization. Interconnectedness is the process that is concerned with the flows across international borders, such as the flow of people, capital, knowledge, information, ideas, beliefs, and many more things. This indicates and explains an increased awareness of other cultures by local audiences. Besides appreciation for foreign television could also be related to the point found by Athique (2013) in his research to the reception of foreign non-American films in Asia. He found that foreign media is often regarded by local audiences as something exotic. This means that sometimes culturally distant media is the thing that makes the media content appealing. It mobilizes an aesthetics of exotism. This could suggest why respondents appreciate the foreign versions since it offers something new, something exotic.

4.4 Comparison of the versions

In the last part of the interview, the respondents were asked to compare the three versions themselves. This comparison gave insight into how the respondents relate the version to one and other. Two important findings were expressed in this comparison, being a perceived *sameness among the versions* and expressed *feelings of closeness* to the Belgium version.

The first finding of this comparison was a perceived *sameness among the three versions*, which also formed the first sub-theme. This sub-theme includes statements that point towards perceived cultural neutrality or sameness among the three versions. An often-found statement in the interviews is like those respondents mentioned: "Besides, some small cultural adaptations it still was the same vibe. It was again jovial, cozy, fun, the vibe was just the same, making you, making it fun to watch." (Gwen). Or like Esther explained:

> "So indeed, the rest of the concept was almost the same in my opinion. Indeed, it felt like you were watching almost the same show as the Dutch one. I do see the cultural differences but also see how the concept is the same in all three versions."

Moreover, a significant number of respondents pointed out that the sameness of the concepts leads to a better understanding of the other versions. They specified that even though certain elements of the show get lost in translation the essence can still be followed because of the similarities. So, the perceived cultural neutrality of the three versions can result in increased levels of engagement with the foreign versions.

Moving on to the next sub-theme, this element illustrates how the respondents compared the Flemish and Dutch version specifically. So, this element is more a result of the comparison of *Bake Off Vlaanderen* and *Heel Holland Bakt.* This resulted in the sub-theme *closeness to the Belgian version*. Overall, the respondents implied on a moderate note to feel resemblance with the Flemish

version based on cultural elements. This feeling of closeness to the Belgian version was expressed in two ways. First, in feelings of cultural closeness and second, in the strengthening of certain local prejudices. In the executed interviews a few respondents indicated a kind of prejudices towards the Flemish version and the Flemish culture, respondents stated the following:

> "Well, I am a little biased towards Flemish people, because per definition I think they are very cute partly because their language just sounds very funny and a little bit stupid. I just think they are so cute because of how they talk and who they are. When I see a Flemish person, I always think: agh gossie you are so cute." (Ole)

Other statements are like: "It is something Dutch to look in a certain way a Belgian television" (Fabienne) and "Because of the Belgian language, everything becomes less serious" (Rosalie). So, those examples show signs of prejudices in the reception of Flemish television as a result of their locality. This could be because of Dutch cultural narratives. Moreover, this can be related to the theory by Said (1978) of having an Other in media products. This means that within media products there is a difference between the I (rational, developed, superior) and the Other (irrational, undeveloped, inferior). These narratives and stereotypes are based on cultural beliefs and strengthen the national identity. Since a few respondents expressed the same prejudices, this could indicate perceiving Flemish people as Others according to Dutch narratives. However, many respondents also pointed out the similarities between the Flemish and the Dutch version and indicated this in terms of feeling cultural proximities. Such as the following respondents: "I was surprised how related I felt to the Belgian version" (Esther), "If they said that the Belgian version was the Dutch version, I would have believed it" (Ole), or "The Flemish version was just the same as the Dutch version" (Rosalie). In the above-stated quotes, the respondents indicate feelings of closeness to the Belgian version based on similarities with the Dutch version and their shared language. So, this feeling of closeness because of shared language and similarities with the Dutch version could explain increased levels of positive reception of the Flemish version. The expressed closeness or sameness of the Belgium version can be connected to the theory by Ruiters and Kuppens (2017), who found that Flemish programming can cause a feeling of proximities due to their shared language and partially shared history (Ruiter, & Kuppens, 2017). This contradicts the example that Flemish people are perceived as Others according to local Dutch narratives. However, the Flemish version could also be interpreted according to the cultural discount theory. Just as the British version, if stipulated that it appears like the Dutch version. Cultural discount is explained from a more global viewpoint (Mast et al., 2017). This concept suggests the dominance of American media products flows globally due to the absence or relatively low appearance of cultural elements. And thus, cultural discount can be

used as an attempt to explain the attractiveness of the foreign versions in the Netherlands in terms of receiving it as similar.

5. Conclusion

The final chapter aims to present the main findings of this research. Additionally, this conclusion is also meant as a contribution to the current debate in the academic world about the impact of globalization on local audiences and the relevance of cultural proximities in the reception of multiple format adaptations. In this chapter, a final answer to the research question of the thesis is presented, namely: *how does the Dutch audience perceive foreign versions of the Bake Off format in comparison with the Dutch adaptation*? Lastly, this chapter will present an overview of the outcomes of this research, followed by theoretical and societal implications and a brief discussion of the possible limitations this study faced and finally, implications for further research are made.

5.1 Answer to the research question

In this paragraph, the main findings of this research are presented. Firstly, from the research it has become evident that the Dutch version is still perceived as most preferable by the Dutch audience. This preference is based on an overall familiarity with elements of the show, such as the famous Dutchmen. Other elements that contributed to the perceived preference for the Dutch version were feelings of relatability with the characters and the humor on the show. Other than that, for many respondents' cultural closeness and native language played a significant role in the positive reception of the Dutch version. A second dominant finding is feeling disconnected from the foreign versions. This feeling of disconnection is largely based on the characters, the vibe, and the humor. Furthermore, feeling of disconnection was caused by a perceived scriptedness or lack of realism of the foreign versions. This was caused by the fact that the respondent were not able to relate to the humor and characters of the show. Given the fact that a few respondents related the other versions to the Dutch version, only contributed to this feeling of disconnection with the foreign versions. Thirdly, other than feeling disconnected from the foreign version there was also an appreciation for *The Great British Bake Off* and *Bake Off* Vlaanderen. This appreciation was for a large part based on the ability to place the versions in the intended cultural context. This resulted in a better reception of the foreign versions in general. Besides, many respondents perceived more competition in the foreign versions and evaluated this as something positive. Fourthly, as a result of the comparison of the three versions, the respondents pointed out a perceived uniformity among the versions. This perceived sameness also led to a better reception of the foreign versions. Moreover, many respondents indicated to perceive feelings of relatedness to the Belgian version based on similarities or local prejudges. To conclude, considering the above-stated conclusion it has become clear that characters, such as the show hosts and jury, are key factors to determine the overall perception of a

version. The perception of the characters among the different versions has led the respondents to overall perceive the Dutch version as most relatable.

5.2 Theoretical and societal implications

This research aimed to create insight into the role of cultural proximities and the cosmopolitanization of audiences by studying the perception of multiple format adaptations. Additionally, this study contributes to the current debate of format studies by focusing on an existing gap in previous research, namely by adopting an audience perspective in the execution of this research. Overall, regarding the specific circumstances of this research, it has become evident that the cultural proximity theory can be regarded as a relevant theory in the reception of television formats and specific reality television. From this study, it has become clear that audiences perceive their local version as more relevant. The respondents indicated this by emphasizing the importance of relatable characters on the show. More importantly, they perceived their local version as significantly more relevant and, in some cases, even used this as a point of reference for the perception of the foreign versions. This finding connected to an earlier statement by Cuelenaere (2020), she found that when people were invited to compare different format adaptations many people did this in terms of 'us' and 'them'. Besides, the cultural proximity theory can also be used to explain the perceived disconnection with the foreign versions, emphasizing the relevance of the theory in terms of this research. Like Kuipers and de Kloet (2009) explained, culturally distant TV programs make identification impossible. However, regarding the level of appreciation for the foreign version, the respondents did perceive the foreign versions in general as disconnecting. They preferred the Dutch versions, but when placing the foreign versions in the intended cultural context they could appreciate cultural related elements such as humor and characters. More specifically, it has become evident that formats can travel and be adapted to many local cultures. However, when it comes to the reception of characters and more importantly their appeal to local identities, it appears that characters still play a vital role in the overall reception of a format. This finding strongly connects to an earlier finding by Cuelenaere (2020), she explained that people derive pleasure from recognizing themselves, their social values, and their collective world in television. Seeing the results of this study, it seems assumable that the audience understudy experienced a notable pleasure from watching "*Heel Holland Bakt*", the Dutch version.

This research also has investigated the cosmopolitanization and transnationalization of local audiences. The result of this research has made clear that when it comes to the reception of internationally adapted formats, the audience understudy still expresses a preference for the local version. This makes the theory of cosmopolitanization and transnationalization less distinct regarding from the circumstances of this specific study. However, this research shows that locality is especially

important when real-life elements and characters must evoke feelings of identification. The respondents indicated that locality is less important when watching scripted television. Moreover, when watching scripted television, the role of the local language becomes less distinct. Since this was not the purpose of this research, no further investigation into this finding was done. However, according to Esser (2016), the growth of the English language should result in increased levels of engagement with English television. Nevertheless, this was not the case in this specific study. Many respondents indicated to value their native language in terms of understandability. Moreover, the English language is often associated by audiences with a globalized culture (Ruiter, & Kuppens, 2017). Considering the indicated preference for the local language, this study suggests that the local identity of the Dutch audience is still stronger than a globalized identity.

Finally, regarding societal implications, in the current assumption for the trade of TV formats, it is believed that local audiences hold a strong preference for local television. Based on the results of this study this assumption is still relevant. Overall, according to the conclusion of this study, it can be assumed that the cultural proximity theory is still relevant for local television producers to determine a production policy. Making the process of cosmopolitanization and transnationalization of the audience less distinct when it comes to format studies. For this specific format, audiences still regard cultural adaptations as valuable. This finding could imply that the production of format adaptations is still a valuable tool for television producers to provide an answer to the demand for culturally relevant television. Moreover, format adaptations can still be regarded as cultural goods and eminently tool for the reinforcement of local identities. According to the results of this study national audiences still regard formats as culturally relevant. This emphasizes the importance of locally relevant television.

5.3 Limitations and future research

There are some limitations in this thesis that should be addressed. During the research new insights resulted in new questions that require further research. First, the main finding of this research is that relatable characters are key in a positive reception of reality television. Since this research used a qualitative method, this finding is not quantifiable. Therefore, a recommendation for further research could be to validate findings by the means of qualitative research. A suggestion could be to investigate the relation between characters and the positive reception of television.

Secondly, this research has shown that cosmopolitanization and transnationalization of the audiences seem to be less relevant in the specific case of the formats under study. However, the respondents did indicate that languages and locality are less distinct when it comes to television that is not based on reality. However, this was not the purpose of this research but is an interesting finding that could be examined further in future research. A recommendation for future research

could be to study if there is a difference in the perception of television based on real-life and based on scripted television in terms of cultural proximity and the cosmopolitanization of the audience.

Thirdly, the unit of analysis of this research consisted of young adults aged between 20 to 30 years old. Due to the limited time available in combination with the qualitative method of this study findings of this research cannot be made generalizable. Consequently, this means that the findings of this research cannot be used to make a statement about the Dutch audience. Besides, regarding this specific age group, the result of this research cannot be used to generalize the same age group in other countries. Because Dutch people are not comparable to people in other countries. Therefore, a suggestion for further research is to opt for a qualitative approach to make a statement about either the Dutch audience as a whole or about the specific age group. A possible suggestion could be to study what the effects of cosmopolitanization would be on the Dutch society.

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Appendix A: Topic List interviews

Introductie
Kan je jezelf kort introduceren?
Wat doe je in je dagelijks leven?
Hoe ziet jouw dagelijkse televisie gebruik eruit?
Wat voor programma's kijk je in het dagelijkse leven?
Kijk je vaker kookprogramma's?
Kijk je vaker reality-tv?
Hoelang kijk je al naar HHB?

Bake off NL
Wat vind je van de Nederlandse versie?
Wat spreekt je aan van de NL-versie en kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven?
Wat vond je raar aan de NL-versie en kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven?
Wat vind je van de jury?
Wat vind je van de presentator?
Wat vind je van de deelnemers?
Wat vind je van de humor?
Wat vind je van de recepten?
Wat vind je van de aankleding van de tent?
Wat vind je van de audio-effecten?
Wat is je algemene indruk over hoe het gefilmd en geproduceerd is?

Bake off UK
Wat vind je van de Britse versie?
Wat sprak je aan en kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven?
Wat vond je raar en kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven?
Wat vind je van de jury?
Wat vind je van de presentatoren?
Wat vind je van de deelnemers?
Wat vind je van de humor?
Wat vind je van de recepten?
Wat vind je van de aankleding van de tent?
Wat vind je van de audio-effecten?
Wat is je algemene indruk over hoe het gefilmd en geproduceerd is?

Bake off Vlaanderen
Wat vind je van de Vlaamse versie?
Wat sprak je aan en kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven?
Wat vond je raar en kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven?
Wat vind je van de jury?
Wat vind je van de presentator?
Wat vind je van de deelnemers?
Wat vind je van de humor?
Wat vind je van de recepten?
Wat vind je van de aankleding van de tent?
Wat vind je van de audio-effecten?
Wat is je algemene indruk over hoe het gefilmd en geproduceerd is?

Culture

In hoeverre herkende je de recepten die gebakken werden?
In hoeverre speelt de herkenbaarheid van bijv. recepten een rol voor jou?
Zijn er typische culture aspecten die jij herkende in de drie versies?
Zijn deze aspecten wel of niet een aanleiding voor jou om vaker te kijken?

Identity
In welke versie sprak de humor jou het meeste aan?
Herkende je in deze versie ook de grapjes het beste terug?
In welke versie spraken de presentatoren/ meesterbakkers jou het meeste aan?
In welke versie voelde jij je het meest aangetrokken tot de verhaallijn?
In welke versie kon jij jezelf of bijvoorbeeld je buurvrouw het meest herkennen in de deelnemers?
Vind je dat belangrijk dat je jezelf/buurvrouw herkent?
Aan welke versie zou jij het snelste meedoen en waarom?

Language
Hoe denk jij over de beschikbaarheid van de Belgische en Engelse versies op de NL-televisie?
In hoeverre speelt taal voor jou een rol in de keuze van televisie?
Welke versie die niet Nederlands is, begreep je het beste?
Als je de taal minder goed begreep, vond je het dan minder leuk om naar te kijken?
Had je daardoor het idee dat je dingen miste?
Welke versie vond jij het minst verschillen van de Nederlandse?
Wanneer jij een bepaald genre of televisieprogramma leuk vindt, zou je dan sneller een buitenlandse versie ervan bekijken? Hoe komt dit?

Afsluiten
Welke versie zou jij aanraden aan je vrienden om te kijken en waarom?
Zou je het missen als dit soort programma's niet meer in het Nederlands zijn?
Zijn er nog dingen die jij heel opvallend vond en graag wilt delen?

Appendix B: Sample overview

	Name	Gender	Age
Respondent 1	Maja	Female	21
Respondent 2	Esther	Female	25
Respondent 3	Gwen	Female	26
Respondent 4	Lauren	Female	22
Respondent 5	Rosalie	Female	28
Respondent 6	Brett	Female	23
Respondent 7	Anne	Female	24
Respondent 8	Fabienne	Female	23
Respondent 9	Ole	Male	22
Respondent 10	Sijmen	Male	24
Respondent 11	Onno	Male	25

Appendix C: Theme, sub-themes and codes

ATLAS.ti Report

Master Thesis

Code groups

Report created by Geerte v Rooyen on 25 May 2021

Theme: Preference for local version

Sub-theme: Native language

Codes:
○ Actuality based program language very important ○ Annoyed by British accent ○ Dutch language makes it more understandable ○ Dutch version makes it easy to watch ○ Easy and understandable humor in HHB ○ English less understandable due to accents ○ If not in Dutch, it is less appealing ○ In television language more important than in series ○ language and stiffness less appealing in FBO ○ language causes identification ○ Language important for understanding jokes ○ Language plays a big role in television ○ language plays a role in reality tv ○ Language plays an important role ○ Not really good in English ○ Prefers Dutch version and Dutch language ○ Preference for Dutch television ○ Prefers Dutch spoken tv ○ Would choose NL or BE based on the language

Sub-theme: Relatable characters

Codes:
○ A lot of diversity in HHB ○ Able to compare to people in HHB ○ Able to live with the process of the contestants in HHB ○ Already had a bond with Dutch show host ○ Already knows Dutch show hosts and jury from other things ○ Andre van Duijn as a sincere person ○ Andre van Duijn is great match with the show ○ Andre van Duijn really good fit with the program HHB ○ Broad representation of society HHB ○ broad variety of contestants HHB ○ Can be friends with the bakers in HHB ○ Can recognize herself in the contestant of HHB ○ Closeness aspect important in programs based on daily life ○ Contestant were comparable ○ contestants are really authentic ○ Contestants really similar ○ Dutch jury a bit soft but positive ○ Dutch show host adds value to the lightness ○ Dutch show host comes natural ○ Dutch show host more natural than BBO ○ Engages with the jury of HHB ○ Enjoys the chemistry in HHB ○ Enjoys the coziness of HHB ○ enjoys the cuddliness HHB ○ Enjoys watching familiar people ○ Enjoys watching show hosts HHB ○ Evaluates jury as experts HHB ○ Good dynamics between HHB show hosts ○ Good dynamics in HHB ○ HHB shows normal people ○ Identification with persons in HHB ○ Important to recognize herself in television ○ Is big fan of HHB show host ○ Is fan from Andre van Duijn ○ Jury in HHB are sympathetic ○ Jury matches with the authenticity HHB ○ Liked show hosts and characters in Dutch version best ○ Likes Andre van Duijn ○ Likes the choice for Andre van Duijn and his role ○ Likes the way of feedback in HHB ○ Needs to represent normal life - best in Dutch ○ Normal people in HHB ○ People as you and me in HHB ○ People in HHB are very likeable ○ personalities in HHB closer ○ recognized self-best back in Dutch version ○ Recognized himself best in HHB ○ Recognizes herself in HHB ○ Strong preference for HHb ○ Thinks it is important to have a connection with contestants ○ Thinks it is important to recognize oneself in TV (HHB) ○ Very recognizable contestant HHB

Sub-theme: Relatable humor

Codes:
○ Dutch humor closer to own humor ○ Dutch humor is specifically fitting to this show ○ Dutch show host makes really natural jokes ○ Dutch version slightly more humor FBO ○ Easy and understandable humor in HHB ○ Easy humor in HHB ○ Easy understandable humor HHB ○ Even though enjoys British humor, prefers Dutch humor ○ HHB can be funny ○ HHB can place jokes in cultural context ○ HHB very funny and humor ○ Humor is an important element in HHB ○ Humor is fitting to HHB ○ Jury from HBB very funny ○ Preferred humor in Dutch version ○ Prefers Dutch humor ○ Prefers humor in Dutch ○ very accessible humor in HHB ○ very polite humor in HHB

Sub-theme: Cultural closeness

Codes:
○ Cannot explain preference for Dutch version ○ Compares as if Dutch is standard ○ compares everything to HHB ○ Dutch used more (national) famous recipes ○ Dutch version close to Dutch culture ○ Dutch version was really Dutch and cute ○ Feeling that HHB blended more in ○ HHB celebrates the Netherlands ○ HHB feels really close ○ HHB is easier to watch ○ HHB is really typical Dutch ○ Most engagement with Dutch recipes ○ Overall evaluates HHB as authentic ○ Program is very fitting to the Dutch culture ○ Really Dutch HHB ○ Recipes in Dutch are most engaging ○ Recipes in FBO and HHB are more relatable ○ Recipes in HHB are relatable and informative ○ Recognizes strongly the Dutch culture ○ Recognized Dutch flags as something positive in the series ○ Recognizes daily life in HHB ○ recognizes Dutch food in the recipes ○ Recognizes most recipes in HHB ○ recognizes NPO influence ○ The whole program vibe is typical Dutch ○ Vibe of HHB is typical Dutch cozy

Sub-theme: Familiarities

Codes:
○ 5 years of watching HHB with parents ○ Aware that he might romanticizes the Dutch version ○ Cannot see it apart from Andre van Duijn ○ Enjoys watching Dutch programming ○ Enjoys watching HHB ○ Had seen both BBO and HHB ○ Knows Jury personal HHB ○ Knows show hosts HHB from different programs ○ Only knew HHB ○ Recognized one of the juries more engaging ○ Views the program because of Andre van Duijn ○ Was familiar with Dutch version only

Theme: Disconnection foreign version

Sub-theme: Disconnection characters

Codes:
○ BBO did not vibe with the coziness of the show ○ BBO show host odd compared to Dutch version ○ Belgian show host bit more extravagant ○ British jury were to strict ○ Cannot relate with show host HHB ○ Cannot relate to jury BBO ○ compared to HHB jury FBO jury was boring ○ Contestant less recognizable FBO ○ Did not like Flemish show host ○ Did not like the vibe of the jury FBO ○ Did not vibe with contestants FBO ○ Does not want to recognize herself ○ Feels less connection with BBO show hosts ○ Female jury less credible FBO ○ female jury member was very annoying FBO ○ Flemish jury to eccentric ○ Flemish people took less risks ○ Jury in BBO more reserved ○ Jury more serious in BBO ○ Jury was not really exciting in

FBO ○ Jury were very forced FBO ○ Less bond with Flemish people ○ Less engagement with Belgian people ○ Less professional jury FBO ○ More reserved jury FBO ○ People in FBO were less appealing ○ Personalities did not match the show BBO ○ Presentation BBO less entertaining ○ Presentation BBO made everything less entertaining ○ show host FBO to much attention seeker ○ Show host forced a bond with the bakers FBO ○ Show host in FBO was really distracting ○ Show host was very childish BBO ○ Show hosts BBO were nothing compare to HHB ○ the interaction in BBO is not fitting ○ The jury was in the center FBO ○ Thinks jury is bit deviating BBO ○ Two show hosts were very distracting BBO

Sub-theme: Disconnection humor

Codes:
○ Andre van Duijn is not my type of humor ○ BBO not her type of humor ○ BBO tried to be really funny ○ Did not get humor in BBO ○ Did not understand humor in BBO ○ Does not understand English or their humor ○ Dutch version less funny ○ emphasis was on humor BBO ○ Forced humor in BBO ○ forced humor in TGBBO ○ Forced jokes HHB by show host ○ Humor BBO was a bit award ○ Humor did not come natural BBO ○ Humor is a big aspect of BBO ○ Humor not spontaneous in Flemish version ○ Humor was not attracting in TGBBO ○ Jokes in FBO were not funny ○ Jokes of show host were to obvious BBo ○ Less humor in FBO ○ Non relatable humor caused irritation BBO ○ Out of context jokes in FBO ○ TGBBO less fun ○ TGBBO less spontaneous ○ Was not able to interpret the humor in BBO

Sub-theme: Disconnection with language

Codes:
○ BBO is different due to language ○ Did not fully get humor due to language ○ Did not had the idea that the British jury gave feedback ○ Does not understand English or their humor ○ English less understandable due to accents ○ Flemish language less understandable ○ Less entertaining due to language BBO ○ Less successful in interpreting English jokes ○ Lost in translation BBO ○ Miss the deeper meanings BBO ○ Produced series language less important ○ Traditional English recipes not relatable BBO

Sub-theme: Disconnection with the vibe

Codes:
○ Are not up to date of local news and things BBO ○ BBO is very stiff ○ BBO less cute and easy going ○ BBO less friendly vibe ○ Biased toward food BBO ○ British version more distant ○ Confused by food culture BBO ○ Cultural elements in British version lead to less engagement ○ Different way of filming FBO ○ Does necessarily has to recognize the recipes ○ FBO missed the vibe like HHB and BBO ○ FBO most different due to dynamic, vibe and program ○ Flemish version different from BBO and HHB ○ Flemish version was to personal ○ Flemish was not clearly Flemish could also be Dutch ○ Harder to get the same connection ○ Is not able to name a positive aspect of BBO ○ Just like anything other, the tent was also a bit more over the top ○ Less recognizable recipes BBO ○ Less tasteful English recipes ○ Liked the Flemish version least ○ Muddles vibe FBO ○ Negatively evaluating recipes in FBO ○ Not able to level with American reality ○ Really award vibe in FBO ○ Recipes BBO out of context ○ Recipes less appealing BBo ○ Visual effects are less notable in Dutch version because it is more natural ○ Watch BFO and BBO more critically ○ Whole impression of FBO was less entertaining

Sub-theme: Lack of realism

Codes:

○ BBO very scripted ○ BBo were too much in scene ○ Choice based on script not on personalities ○ Did not like emphasize on the entertainment part BBO ○ Dutch and Flemish version more scripted ○ English version is more scripted ○ Forced humor in BBO ○ forced humor in TGBBO ○ In scripted television language less important ○ Less spontaneous people in FBO ○ Mainly watches Netflix series ○ Prefers scripted television in English ○ Scripted humor in BBO ○ Scripted vibe FBO

Theme: Appreciation for foreign versions

Sub-theme: Appreciation for cultural context

Codes:
○ Accents give the program an extra touch ○ Aware of local role ○ BBO celebrated nationality ○ BBO more classic which fits with British culture ○ BBO really represented British version ○ British version was really British ○ British elements were normal in the British version ○ British jury was very fitting ○ But also multi-cultural touch in recipes which is good ○ Concept really close to the British culture ○ Contestant represented my take on the British society ○ curious to different cultures ○ Enjoys every country bakes national recipes ○ English dressed jury ○ English is often more suited for the program ○ Enjoyed background info for the recipes BBO ○ Enjoyed recognizing the English food culture in BBO ○ Enjoined learning about the British food culture ○ Enjoined seeing her view on the British culture in BBO ○ Enjoys different recipes in different versions ○ Enjoys Dutch recipes just as much as English ○ Enjoys learning new recipes BBO ○ Enjoys seeing new things ○ Enjoys seeing typical local recipes ○ Enjoys watching English culture ○ Enjoys watching series in different languages ○ Humor language and culture related BBO ○ Inspiration for baking herself ○ International orientated ○ Kind jury in BBO very English polite ○ Learns a lot about the local culture ○ Like learning and recognizing cultures ○ Likes recognizing cultural aspects ○ Likes that countries use national recipes ○ Likes to see it in cultural context ○ More Native English recipes ○ Nationalism typical British ○ Program really represents its country ○ Really enjoys British culture ○ Really liked the cultural differences ○ Recopies in Dutch and Flemish more engaging ○ Thinks recognizability of recipes is important ○ Typical British humor ○ Typical British recipes ○ Typical British recipes which was fun ○ Typical Dutch recipes ○ Usually watches UK / USA programs ○ Watches mostly American and British media content

Sub-theme: Appreciation in general

Codes:
○ Compares to the BBO ○ Concept is based on BBo ○ Enjoyed humor in BBO ○ Followed BBO ○ Further from home is added value ○ Good vibe in FBO ○ Likes the dynamic in BBO ○ Likes the humor in BBO cause it is so odd ○ More humor in BBO ○ More interaction BBO ○ More jokes in BBO ○ Preference for English spoken television ○ Prefers American media content ○ Prefers British humor ○ Prefers British humor ○ Prefers English television ○ Recognizes her humor in BBO ○ Thought the overdoing in BBO was funny ○ Understood English version second best ○ values English television as better ○ Would recommend English version

Sub-theme: Appreciation for characters

Codes:
○ BBO contestant more relatable ○ BBo contestant were really friendly ○ BBo is more professional ○ BBO jury more professional and experienced ○ BBO more attuned to each

other ○ British people are very funny ○ British version a bit more exciting ○ British version more professional ○ Broad selection of normal people BBO ○ Broad variety of people BBO ○ clear gender roles but not specific cultural aspects ○ Contestant FBO were really cute and friendly ○ contestants BBO were really authentic ○ Divers contestants FBO ○ Emphasize for French roots BBO ○ English contestants more divers ○ Enjoyed show hosts in FBO ○ Enjoyed seeing different contestant mentalities ○ Enjoys interaction in FBO ○ Flemish contestants were really broad ○ good jury dynamic BBO ○ Like the vibe and people in BBO ○ More focus on candidates in FBO ○ Normal people in TGBBO ○ Show host FBO really fitted the program ○ Show host fitting to the program FBO ○ Recognized Belgian mentality in FBO ○ Relatable contestant BBO ○ Thinks that BBO jury more professional and experienced

Sub-theme: More competitive

Codes:
○ BBO more competitive ○ BBO more focused on game less on joy ○ Dutch version not really a game show ○ Game element makes it more engaging BBO ○ Liked the competition element in BBO ○ Linked competition to French contestant FBO ○ Misses game mentality like other countries do ○ More attracted to British story line due to competition

Theme: comparison of the versions

Sub-theme: Closeness to Belgium version

Codes:
○ A lot of knowledge of Belgian humor ○ Also felt close to the Belgian version ○ Belgian and Dutch version really similar ○ Belgian contestant were portrayed dumb ○ Belgian language gives it more humor ○ Belgian version appeared with lots of stupidities ○ Better knowledge of Flemish language and culture ○ Biased because he thinks all Belgian people are cute and sweet ○ Biased towards Flemish jokes ○ Cannot chose between NL and BE ○ Could not name a bad thing about Flemish version ○ Could not really recognize typical Belgian aspects ○ diminutive for Flemish language ○ does not think Belgians have humor ○ Due to Belgian language everything becomes less serious ○ Due to Flemish accent everything less serious ○ Due to language better understandable FBO ○ Enjoyed humor in Belgian version best ○ Expected Flemish to be more fun ○ FBO and HHB as fun and entertainable ○ FBO and HHB were replaceable ○ FBO second best understandable ○ FBO was overdone which made it fun ○ Flemish closer to the Dutch ○ Flemish cultural closeness ○ Flemish is really close to the Dutch version ○ Flemish just as entertaining as the Dutch one ○ Flemish most similar to Dutch ○ Flemish version feels really close ○ Flemish was fun due because it was Flemish ○ Humor and jokes were really understandable FBO ○ Jury was kind like the Dutch jury was in FBO ○ More able to identification with the Flemish version ○ Recognized Flemish humor ○ Sometimes less engaging due to Belgian humor ○ Vibe was different because Flemish people are less entertaining ○ You can recognize yourself in FBO

Sub-theme: Sameness within the versions

Codes:
○ Audio effects are the same ○ BBO and HHB were really similar ○ BBO jury same as Dutch jury ○ Besides similarities everything is different in BBO ○ British vibe, dynamic and show hosts were similar HHB ○ Can identify better with BBO than FBO due to similarities ○ concept was strong in all three versions ○ Did not recognize differences in recipes per country ○ Did not

recognize English recipes ○ Did recognize culture elements in FBO and HHB ○ Dutch and English version more similar ○ English and Dutch program are very relatable ○ felt like watching the same show ○ HHB and BBO seemed similar ○ HHB more close to BBO ○ Liked recognizing the concept in all the versions ○ Likes that concept is very similar ○ No difference in audio effects ○ No difference in production ○ No difference in recipes FBO ○ No difference in styling ○ No differences in audio effects or concept ○ No differences in audio or visual aspects ○ No weird or odd things in FBO ○ Show host had the same role e ○ Production very similar Dutch and English ○ Program vibe same everywhere ○ same audio effects ○ Same contestants as NL ○ Same jury idea in all three versions ○ Same kind of contestants as in the NL ○ Same kind of people in HHB and FBO ○ Same old sound effects ○ Same vibe ○ Same way of filming HHB and BBO ○ Similar concept in all versions ○ There are a lot of similarities HHB and BBO ○ Vibe in all three the same which makes it fun to watch ○ Vibe really similar in all three versions ○ Was surprised about the sameness of FBO and HHB