Ritualistic self-display: The interruptions in a Chinese academic talk

Ying Tong\textsuperscript{1,2} and Chaoqun Xie\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} College of Foreign Languages, Fujian Normal University, CHINA
\textsuperscript{2} School of Foreign Languages, Nanjing Xiaozhuang University, CHINA

Abstract: This paper engages in a politeness-based investigation of cases when forms of interruption operate as ritualistic self-display. By “ritualistic self-display” we refer to instances of language use in which an interruption is a form of “showing off,” by means of which the interrupting person indicates their skill, power, social status, and so on. We point out that such instances of language use may not merely trigger complex evaluations. Even in hierarchical settings in which ritualistic self-display could be easily condoned, paradoxically it may be utilized by the interrupted person as an interactional resource to boost her or his self-image, i.e., ritualistic self-display is a leeway for a counter-display. As a case study, we examine an incident that took place in a Chinese institutional setting. Chinese data has particular relevance to the study of ritualistic self-display, considering that Chinese is often perceived as a lingua-culture in which interruption is not tolerated due to prevailing social hierarchies.

Keywords: interruption; ritualistic behaviour; self-display; politeness research, scholarly communication

Acknowledgement: The authors wish to express their gratitude to Daniel Z. Kádár for his constructive suggestions on an earlier version of the paper, as well as to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on the paper.
Address for Correspondence: Chaoqun Xie, email: xie_chaoqun@foxmail.com
Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.
Conflict of Interest: The authors declares no conflict of interest.