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# 机构话语中的 身份维持与建构

——英国导师和中国学生学术交谈的  
多模式话语分析

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## Identity and Style in Intercultural Institutional Interaction:

A Multi-modal Analysis of Supervision  
Sessions between British Academics and  
Chinese Students

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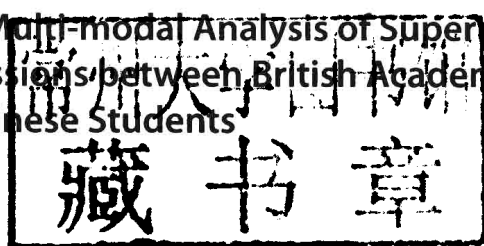
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## Identity and Style in Intercultural Institutional Interaction:

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JIGOU HUAYU ZHONG DE SHENFEN WEICI YU JIANGOU



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**To Mei and Maya**

## **Preface**

**by Dr Barbara A. Fennell**

Considered casually, student-supervisor dissertation discussions might be regarded as constituting fairly routine, straightforward, uncontroversial and even genteel conversational interaction. But once one considers them as an example of institutional discourse that is highly focused on the individuals involved and the task at hand, and adds to this the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective, dissertation supervision sessions become a fascinating site of power struggle and role play that provides insights into how identity is negotiated and performed, how universities work as an institution, how individuals develop and exploit their institutional and interpersonal roles and how language is at the core of the entire process.

In this study, Dong Pingrong investigates the relationship between language use and identity by exploring in detail a number of interactions between supervisors and Master's students in their dissertation supervision sessions at a British university. This is no simple task, as such encounters constitute highly sophisticated negotiations, dependent on characteristics of the institution in question, the individuals involved and the task at hand. The conversational exchanges which lie at the heart of these sessions simultaneously reflect and reinforce the role of individuals as institutional, interactional and socio-cultural entities.

A basic assumption on which this study is constructed is that identity relations are both reflected and constructed in both interactional and conventional discursive practice, giving the interlocutors in an exchange the potential to portray themselves and interpret others in various ways and to influence the conversational outcomes on a variety of levels. Following Michel Foucault, it is assumed that the variable knowledge that lecturers and students display is inextricably linked with the power they possess: "power and knowledge directly imply each other ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of

## Identity and Style in Intercultural Institutional Interaction

knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). At the same time, this study is a perfect illustration of the Foucauldian notion that the behaviour of members of an institution is regulated by the way in which knowledge is harnessed and consequently power wielded through its discourse practices. And another major premise here is that power is "jointly produced" in interaction, that is to say it takes at least two people to form a hierarchy and it also takes their acceptance of dominance (cf. Fairclough, 1995, p. 14). These are potentially highly constraining features of an institution such as a university, and their influence on the behaviour of the faculty and students in Dong's study is clear, particularly when the faculty who have greater knowledge of the subject matter also are native speakers of the language used in the encounter, while the students are relative novices in the field and speakers of English as a second language.

Given these complications, it is not surprising that no single method can furnish the investigator with enough detail to paint a comprehensive picture of lecturer-student interactions, requiring him to harness a variety of methods in answering his research questions. As a result, recordings of authentic interaction between academic supervisors and supervisees are analysed in this study using a sophisticated multi-modal analysis that is founded on Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and ethnographic observation, and is informed by the literature on these subjects, as well as on work in sociolinguistics, social psychology, institutional discourse analysis and, to a more limited extent, the study of English as a Second Language. Indeed the background chapter provides an extensive review of the work in these fields over the past two decades. These major approaches are supplemented by ethnographic observation and the quantification of individual linguistic features, producing a fine-grained and multidimensional description of the interactants, their interaction, and, particularly, their language use.

By applying these methods to 11 conversational dyads in a detailed iterative process Dong has been able to recognize both his subjects'

routine and their spontaneous and individual linguistic and institutional practices, enabling him to identify the individual participation styles of both supervisors and student supervisees, and revealing that the supervision session is the site of negotiation and performance of both collective identities and individual, personal styles. What emerges are the conversational features characterizing such roles as the “shy young Chinese woman”, the “assertive female academic”, the “friendly male supervisor” and the “clever, but lazy young male student”.

While the main aim of the current study has been to inform our understanding of the relationship between language and identity, and the nature of institutional discourse, it has produced some interesting incidental insights into what kind of preparation Chinese students who wish to study abroad would need to have in order to derive the maximum benefit from their academic sojourn. It is all too easy for international students to see themselves as passive consumers of education, who are unable to influence their interaction with professors and other institutional representatives, and who are “at the mercy of” the academic systems they encounter. But Dong Pingrong’s research makes it clear that students need to acquire the conversational competence to shape their interaction with more powerful lecturers and professors, to intervene and interrupt politely in order to get their own point of view across and to influence the outcomes of such conversations, rather than to assume “defeat” and leave such encounters feeling linguistically, socially or academically inadequate or frustrated. A practical application of this research would be to use it as a basis from which to develop research preparation materials that deliver the necessary discourse management skills in the academic institutional context.

The qualitative analysis of complex interactions in such fine detail in English is beyond the ability of most non-native speakers, but in this study Dong Pingrong displays both impressive linguistic proficiency and sensitive interpretation of the data. My frequent visits to China over the past five years have allowed me to develop a sense of the kind of research that is prevalent in English studies, and while it has become

“trendy” to do large scale surveys and quantitative analysis, I believe this also partly betrays a lack of confidence on the part of young Chinese academics in their ability to interpret and use the English language with the same sophistication as native speakers. The current study is an exception to this, and I hope it encourages others and heralds the beginning of a new era of English language study at Chinese universities, one which shows true intercultural understanding and appreciation of the language, ultimately producing original, world class discourse analyses.



# 序

——姜望琪

董平荣博士的论文即将出版，嘱我作序，不胜荣幸。

记得大概是五六年前，董平荣跟我有过邮件来往。当时他刚在重庆大学外国语学院获得硕士学位，希望有机会进一步深造。邮件的具体内容已想不起来，但是，他的认真、执着给我留下了深刻的印象。

今年7月在武汉举行的第11届全国语用学研讨会上，英国阿伯丁大学的Barbara Fennell博士在其主旨发言中提到了中国的Pingrong Dong的博士论文，赞赏他研究中国学生在英语学习中碰到的实际问题。此时，我丝毫没有意识到这位Dong博士跟我会有什么关系。会间休息时，一位年轻人找到我，自我介绍是“董平荣”。听到这个名字，我的脑海里立刻浮现出当年他跟我联络时的情景，可见当年的印象之深。

后来，平荣博士给我发来了论文。我看了很满意，于是接下了为其写序这个任务。

平荣博士的论文值得推荐，首先是因为他研究的是现实生活中的语言应用问题。语言学研究可以有不同的思路，不必强求统一。不过，根据我的观察、研究，当代语言学正面临方向性转变。从研究内容上讲是从注重形式转变到注重意义，从研究方法上讲是从注重抽象思辨转变到注重实例分析，从研究单位上讲是从注重句子（成分分析）转变到注重语篇（分析）。（具体论证请看拙稿“当代语言学的发展趋势”（《外国语言文学》2003年第3期）、“再论当代语言学的发展趋势”（《外国语言文学》即将刊出）。）平荣博士的论文的研究思路是符合这个大方向的。

通过问卷调查、深度访谈、现场录音等方式，平荣博士收集了在英国某大学法学院攻读硕士学位的中国学生学习和使用英语的大量第一手资料。根据这些资料，他专门研究了导师与学生会话中表现出来的身份问题。这种通过观察收集资料，并对资料进行归纳分析的研究方法值得肯定。《语用学杂志》2008年第8期以“经验数据与语用学理论”为题出了一期专刊。编者指出，语用学是研究语言运用的学科，对这一点语用学家都没有异议。但是，有些人却认为，语用学理论只能来自演绎，没有必要收集语料。编者不同意这种观点，他认为，研究语言运用却不关注语言运用的实际，是一个方法性错误（2008，p. 1354）。我站在该编者一边，倡导收集语料，开展实例分析。

平荣博士的论文值得推荐，更重要的是因为他研究得出的结论是经得起检验的。

身份问题是当代语言学研究的热点之一。但是，在一段时间里身份被简单地与某种语言变体挂钩，一个人使用的语言变体被看作他的身份的直接标志。随着研究的深入，人们逐渐认识到身份是动态可变的，是在社会实践和语言实践中构建起来的。然而影响身份的因素很多，构建机制非常复杂。其中，到底哪些因素是主要的，哪些是次要的，又如何互相影响？对这些问题，一直众说纷纭，莫衷一是。

平荣博士在借鉴前人研究成果的基础上，提议把身份分作三个层次。第一个层次是微观交际层面的身份关系（interactional），如话题组织者与跟随者、提问者与回答者、评价者与受评者等。第二个层次是行业层面的身份关系（institutional），如导师与学生、医生与病人、法官与被告等。第三个层次是宏观社会文化层面的身份关系（sociocultural），如英国人与中国人、操本族语者与二语习得者、男性与女性等。并采用会话分析、批评性话语分析、民族志调查等不同的方法分析不同层面的身份关系。

这种多层次、多方法的研究保证了平荣博士对身份问题有一个比较全面的把握。他既看到了社会文化身份、行业身份、交际身份赋予说话人的某种较固定的特质，又看到每个说话人都是特定的个体，他们各自的个性必然使他们在说话时表现出不同的风格，凸现固定类别基础上的个体差异，从而揭示了语言使用和身份之间存在的多角度、多层面的复杂关系。

平荣博士的论文还有很多其他优点。如，他发现中国学生在说英语时不太习惯使用well这样的表达语气之类的小词（有人称为discourse marker），这虽然不像语法错误那样引人注目，但同样会造成严重的后果，有时甚至比语法错误还要严重。限于篇幅，我不可能在此一一列举，感兴趣的读者可以自己去细细体会、从容欣赏。

当然，平荣博士的研究也还有一些缺陷、不足。但是，我相信只要他坚持努力，这些问题都是不难解决的。假以时日，平荣博士一定会更加成熟。

北京大学燕北园  
2009年11月

## Introduction

This book analyses face-to-face and one-to-one supervision sessions between British academics and Chinese students at a British university. It argues that identity relations can be reproduced and transformed in discursive practices. Three levels of identity relations – interactional, institutional, and sociocultural – are identified to investigate both collective identities and individual styles in intercultural institutional discourse.

Chapter 1 presents a review of the literature covering the major contributions to our understanding of the relationship between discourse and identity, and, based on these, Chapter 2 argues for a multi-modal analysis of intercultural institutional interaction, combining three complementary approaches: conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis; ethnographic analysis and discourse analysis; and qualitative and quantitative analysis. Chapter 3 introduces the specific context of the study and process of data collection, and presents the research focus on the reproductive and transformative attribute of identity relations in discursive practice.

The institutional identity dyad supervisor-student is taken as a focal point around which interactional and sociocultural identity relations pivot. Taking supervisors and students as two separate but related homogeneous groups, Chapter 4 investigates their shared discursive practices to demonstrate the nature of the collective identities reproduced by the relevant social structures. Chapter 5 complements this analysis by highlighting the contrasts and differences amongst individual supervisors and students, and examining the ways in which identity relations are transformed. In order to enrich our understanding of these collective identities and personal styles, the qualitative discourse analysis is supplemented by word frequency statistics, and ethnographic accounts of participants' orientations and routine linguistic and institutional practices.

The conclusion to this study in Chapter 6 reinforces its contribution to the research of discourse and identity, that is, the introduction of a rich, multi-modal approach to the investigation of collective identities

and personal styles. With supervision sessions taken as a specific type of institutional discourse, the routine and individual practices of British academics and Chinese students are analysed to provide insights into intercultural talk-in-interaction in the institutional context, supervision styles of local supervisors and participation styles of international students at a British university. As a result, the book concludes with a discussion of the implications for spoken-English teaching in China and proposals for future research.

## Acknowledgements

This book is largely based on my PhD thesis completed at the University of Aberdeen in 2009.

First of all I must thank my supervisor, Dr Barbara Fennell, who has given me invaluable suggestions and help with her patience, generosity, humour, and astuteness during my PhD study at the University of Aberdeen. I owe her deep gratitude for her encouragement and faith in my work.

My sincere thanks go to Dr Mark Garner, who made the initial stages of my research unforgettable.

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I would like to thank current and former staff members in the School of Language and Literature at the University of Aberdeen for their assistance: Dr Carmen Llamas, Dr Dominic Watt, Dr Robert Millar, and Mrs Maureen Wilkie.

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This study would not have been possible without the informed consent of the five British supervisors and nine Chinese students whom I cannot make known in the interests of privacy. I extend my thanks to them here.

My entire family helped me get through this study, and I am sorry that my mum did not live to share the moment. The one person I shall never be able to thank enough is my wife, Mei. Without her love and support I could not have gone this far. Last but not least, the person I must mention is my daughter, Maya, to whom I dedicate this book.

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# Transcription Notation

The Jefferson transcription system is used to transcribe the verbal data with some minor modifications. The notations are taken largely from Jefferson (2004) and Gardner (2001).

[	<i>A left square bracket</i> marks the point at which two overlapping utterances start.
]	<i>A right square bracket</i> marks the point at which two overlapping utterances end.
==	<i>A pair of equal signs</i> mark the point at which there is no gap or no overlap in the continuous stretches of talk by one speaker or between two different speakers.
(0.0)	<i>Numbers in round brackets</i> mark pauses within a turn or gaps between turns in tenths of a second.
(.)	<i>A full-stop in round brackets</i> marks pauses or gaps of less than 0.2 seconds.
↑loud↑	<i>A pair of single up arrows</i> bracket an utterance that is louder than its surrounding utterance.
↑↑shout↑↑	<i>A pair of double up arrows</i> bracket an utterance that is much louder than its surrounding utterance.
↓quiet↓	<i>A pair of single down arrows</i> bracket an utterance that is softer than its surrounding utterances.
↓↓whisper↓↓	<i>A pair of double down arrows</i> bracket an utterance that is barely audible.
><	<i>A pair of right/left carets</i> bracket an utterance that is faster than its surrounding ones.

## Identity and Style in Intercultural Institutional Interaction

< >	<i>A pair of left/right carets</i> bracket the utterance that is slower than its surrounding ones.
?	<i>A question mark</i> indicates a rising terminal contour.
.hh	<i>A dot-prefixed row of "h"s</i> mark an audible inhalation. The more "h"s, the longer the inhalation.
hh	<i>A row of "h"s</i> mark an audible exhalation. The more "h"s, the longer the exhalation.
-	<i>A single dash</i> marks an abrupt cutoff.
word(hh)	<i>The "h"s in round brackets after a word</i> mark plosiveness associated with laughter while the word is being uttered.
(talk)	<i>The word(s) in round brackets</i> marks an utterance which is not clear and thus dubious.
()	<i>A pair of empty brackets</i> mark the unintelligible utterance and speaker.
(( ))	<i>A pair of double empty brackets</i> indicate the descriptions of interactional contexts.
.shih	Sniff
kn/KN	Throat clearing (weak/loud)
*	<i>An asterisk</i> marks percussive non-speech sounds, e.g. tapping a table or a book with a hand or pen.
&	Tutting



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