

Questions and Answers in Chinese Political Press Conferences

A sub-thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Applied
Linguistics of the Australian National University

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October, 2011

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis represents my own original research unless otherwise acknowledged in the text.

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October, 2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to a multitude of wonderful people who helped me and supported me throughout my study and research at ANU.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Johanna Rendle-Short. With her expertise in CA and sociolinguistics, she made many insightful and useful comments on the drafts of this thesis. More importantly, I have learned from Johanna, to start early and to be more organized, which will continuously benefit me in my future work and life.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, for their unconditional love throughout my life and unfailing support for my study at ANU. A special thank you also goes to my aunt and cousin, who have been very concerned about my life and study in Australia.

I would like to thank my friends, Ran Li, Kun-long Liu, Ruriko Otomo, Eriko Toma and various members of the Discourse Analysis Group (DAG) for their valuable comments and many discussions that helped me develop ideas and march toward the conclusion. Thanks are also due to my friends, Xin Xin, Xiang Li, and Jie Li for their company and encouragement during my thesis writing.

Abstract

Since China's opening up in 1978, there has been increasing interaction between the Chinese government and the domestic and international media. Previous research has shown that journalists from developed countries take an adversarial role when questioning politicians in news interviews and press conferences while journalists from developing countries like China take a role that furthers the agenda of their governments. The literature has also demonstrated that evasiveness is observed in the answers of politicians from both developed and developing countries. Although much attention has been given to politician-media interaction in the western developed countries, there is a scarcity of research on political communication in the Chinese context and on cross-cultural differences in political communication between China and other countries. Using conversation analysis methodology and quantitative analysis, this thesis analyzed questions and answers from political press conferences in China in order to show 1) how adversarialness and evasiveness were encoded in journalists' questions and politicians' answers respectively; 2) whether there was a difference in adversarialness between journalists from different socio-political backgrounds, and 3) the relationship between adversarialness and evasiveness. The analysis revealed that journalists from developed countries displayed a higher level of adversarialness in their questions than Chinese journalist and that a higher level of journalistic adversarialness was more likely to result in a higher level of evasiveness in politicians' answers. While journalists resorted to various strategies to pose adversarial questions, politicians also employed different structural designs and techniques to mitigate their evasive answers.

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