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Research Paper

'My Husband Always Crosses the Line': Textual Identity and Presentation of 'the Self' in Family Conflict Communication

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Abstract

This paper is a contribution to appraisal-based scholarship concerned with the discursive performance of what is variously termed 'identity' or 'persona'—specifically the scholarship which proposes that key aspects of textual identity/persona can be related to tendencies in speakers'[i] deployment of the resources for conveying evaluative meanings. Our contribution is via an analysis of similarities and differences in the use of meanings which convey attitudinal assessment by couples participating in a Chinese 'reality TV' family dispute resolution program; we formulate identity/persona as involving ways of presenting 'the self,' specifically those aspects of 'the self' associated with what attitudinal meanings the speaker advances and with how those meanings are advanced. We demonstrate a methodology which classifies expressions of positive/negative assessment by reference to the subtype of attitude, its valency (positive or negative), whether the assessment is explicitly or implicitly conveyed, and the type of the assessment target (who or what is being evaluated). Via this methodology, we show how these ways of self-presentation can be characterised, compared, and grouped into subtypes (i.e., ways of self-presentation which, broadly speaking, are repeated across speakers). We report findings that, in their self-presentations, the participants in this programme were broadly similar in their deployment of some options for conveying positive or negative assessment (e.g., in a preference for implicitly rather than explicitly conveying their attitude), but that there were also significant individual differences (e.g., in terms of readiness to report their own experiencing of negative emotions). Also, we offer an exploration of how computational tools for multivariate cluster analysis might be deployed to develop more abstract characterisations and comparisons of ways of self-presentation—characterisations which reference tendencies across multiple options for attitudinal assessment.

***Keywords*:** Appraisal; Textual Persona; Evaluative Language; Conflict Talk; Attitude

1. Introduction

This paper is a contribution to appraisal-based scholarship concerned with the discursive performance of what is variously termed 'identity' or 'persona'—specifically the scholarship which proposes that key aspects of textual identity/persona can be related to tendencies in speakers'[ii] deployment of the resources for conveying evaluative meanings (see Don, 2007a, 2007b, 2017; Martin, 2008, 2010; White, 2008; Zappavigna, 2014; Zappavigna & Martin, 2018). Grounded in Firth's (1950) observations about the individual's use of language and its relation to speech fellowship formation, this body of work offers ways of characterising and comparing discursively performed identities/personae (as fluid, contextually contingent constructs) by reference to tendencies in speakers' use of the options as described in the appraisal literature's three subsystems of evaluative language: attitude, graduation, and engagement. They all draw inspiration in some way from Martin and White's (2005, p. 208) proposal that by identifying 'syndromes of evaluation' (patterns of use and cause of the resources for the expression of positive/negative assessment), it is possible to explore 'the idiolectal reconfigurations of meaning-making potential by which individual authors achieve a recognisable personal style' and that such syndromes function 'to construct particular authorial identities or personas' (p. 161).

In contributing to this prior body of work, the paper reports the findings of an analysis which involved six episodes of a Mandarin Chinese family dispute resolution television programme (*Gold Medal Mediation*), a popular 'reality' TV genre in mainland China. The programme involves couples who have been in long-term family disputes and are contemplating divorce. The study reported here focused on a segment of the episode (the 'Problem Discussion' segment) in which the spouses interact with each other and with a 'host,' in front of five or six family relationship experts, typically criticising and blaming their spouse for the marriage breakdown and defending their own behaviour in the relationship—predictably a source of data rich in evaluative language. At the end of the episode, there is a segment (not considered in the study reported here) in which the relationship experts counsel the couple. The programme (as is the case with other similar programs on mainland Chinese television) is promoted as assisting the disputing spouses to resolve their differences.

In our study, we conceptualised the discursive performance of identity/persona as a matter of the presentation of those aspects of 'the self' which might be thought of as 'attitudinal'—the 'self' enacted as the speaker opts to advance particular attitudinal assessments and to formulate these assessments in particular ways. That is to say, the aspects of 'the self' we were concerned with are those enacted through 'ways of [attitudinal] meaning' (Hasan, 2009). Obviously, such a treatment of the discursively presented 'self' can only be partial—there are numerous other features of 'the self' which may be of interest, and which might have their own linguistic reflexes.

There are several strands in this paper's contribution to this prior scholarship: Firstly, to our knowledge, ours is the first study to consider the discursive' presentation of the 'self' in spontaneous spoken interactions, which involve speakers who are in conflict and who argue over intimate details about their personal lives (related work by Knight, 2013, involved spoken interactions between friends who generally sought to avoid or defuse conflict or disagreement). Also, it is, to our knowledge, the only work which explores 'presentation of self' in Mandarin Chinese texts of this type.

Secondly, we have built on prior work in which the notion of 'syndrome of evaluation' has been extended to include patterns not only concerning the subtypes of attitude being deployed and how these attitudes are being expressed but also patterns regarding who/what is being targeted for attitudinal assessment (cf. Don, 2007a, 2007b, 2017; Zappavigna & Martin, 2018). We demonstrate the findings made possible when the analysis of the type of attitude is systematically integrated with the analysis of attitudinal target types—specifically those findings possible when these targets are organised into a taxonomy so that more general tendencies in a speaker's attitudinal focus can be identified. Our contribution is both with respect to methodology, in demonstrating the workings of such an approach, and also with respect to the insights the approach provided into the discursive presentation of self in these argumentative, family conflict, televised interactions.

Thirdly, our study trialled a novel way by which similarities and differences in speakers' self-presentation might be identified and by which, thereby, new insights might be gained into how different self-presentational styles might be identified and classified—speakers placed in groupings and subgroupings according to patterns of similarity and difference in their use of attitude-associated meanings. As is outlined in more detail below, our methodology involved the tracking of tendencies in the deployment of evaluative meanings by reference to a large number of parameters of variability—more than is usual in the prior literature and more than would be manageable without the use of appropriate computational tools, specifically multivariate cluster analysis methods. It was via the use of these tools that we reached what we hold to be a key conclusion—that it is fruitful to see presentations of 'the self' (discursively enacted identity/persona) as multifaceted and thereby to recognise that presentations of self may be similar with respect to some of these facets and different with respect to others. We may end up grouping together speakers when focussing on a particular subgrouping of these facets but place them in separate categories when focussing on a different subset, thereby gaining insights into the complexities and nuances of discursive self-presentation. In this, then, our contribution to this appraisal-based scholarship was again both with respect to demonstrating a methodology not previously employed in this domain (the use of multivariate cluster analysis computational tools) and with respect to insights we derived into these Chinese 'reality TV' family conflict interactions.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Appraisal-Based Approach to Discursive Presentation of 'the Self'

Our study, then, relied on the account of the language of evaluation offered by the appraisal-framework literature (Iedema et al., 1994; Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005; White, 1998, 2002, 2016) and on the prior scholarship which has sought to apply this in explorations of how textual identities may be characterised, compared and subclassified. In this section, we offer a short overview of the appraisal framework.

In the appraisal framework, the evaluative meaning-making resources are grouped into three subsystems: attitude, engagement, and graduation. The attitude system covers meanings by which positive or negative assessments are conveyed or activated—meanings by which addressees are positioned to favourably or unfavourably view participants, processes or situations. This attitudinal positioning may be attempted via the use of explicitly positive or negative lexis (termed 'inscription') or via implication, suggestion or association (termed 'invocation'). The following subtypes of attitude are recognised—assessment via positive/negative emotional reaction or mood ('**affect**'), positive/negative assessments of human behaviour and character by reference to social norms ('**judgement'**) and positive/negative assessment of the aesthetic qualities or the social value of entities, processes or situations ('**appreciation'**). The engagement subsystem covers options available in English for dialogistic positioning—options by which the speaker adopts a position with respect to prior utterances on the current topic or indicates anticipations of responses to the current proposition. The graduation system covers options by which the force of propositions can be upscaled or downscaled or by which the boundaries of semantic categories can be blurred or sharpened (evaluations of prototypicality/marginality). The analyses being described here made no reference to variation concerning these latter two subcategories, although they were attended to in the larger project, of which the study reported here was one element.

An essential precursor to the appraisal-based approach to the analysis of textual identity was the work of Hasan and Williams (Hasan, 1989, 1996, 2009; Williams, 2005). This work was concerned with patterns of semantic variation and how speakers' 'ways of meaning' might be indicative of their gender, generation or social class. This focus on variation at the level of meaning rather than wording and/or phonology was fundamental to the scholarship to which this paper seeks to contribute.

In our study, we operated with the notion of 'attitudinal disposition' by which we refer to a speaker's observable 'disposition' to use certain types of attitude rather than others, or to use certain types of attitude more often than other types of attitude—where 'type' of attitude can be a matter of whether the assessment is **judgement**, **appreciation**, or **affect**, whether positive or negative, and whether inscribed or invoked. Also, as already indicated, in characterising instances of 'attitudinal disposition,' we took account of tendencies in who/what is more often or less often (or not at all) the target of these assessments. For example, we might contrast the attitudinal disposition being enacted by two speakers. Speaker X directs a relatively larger proportion of their inscribed negative **judgements** at their spouse, whereas speaker Y directs a relatively much smaller proportion of such **judgements** at their spouse, or even refrains from ever offering overt negative **judgments** of their spouse.

For the notion of 'attitudinal disposition,' we drew on Don's (2007a, 2007b) studies of textual identity in posts to an e-mail discussion list. Don coined the term 'evaluative disposition' to reference tendencies in the posters' use of the subtypes of attitude and tendencies in who/what was targeted for this attitudinal assessment (e.g., another poster whose post was being responded to, the poster him or herself, the e-mail list community itself, and so on.). This analysis resulted in findings that, for example, one of the posters deployed an 'evaluative disposition' which stood out from that of the other posters in that, unlike other posters, she tended to report her own negative **affectual** responses. Her 'attitudinal disposition' stood out on account of this preponderance of personal negative **affect** in her posts.

Also, we looked back to Martin, Zappavigna, and Dwyer's work on identity in adolescent identity in youth justice conferencing (Zappavigna et al., 2008; Zappavigna & Martin, 2018) for our notion of 'attitudinal disposition' (even though this term was not used in this literature). These scholars analysed the language of young offenders who were taking part in Australia's youth justice conferences—which function as a restorative justice alternative to courtroom-based retributive justice. Of significance for our project were key aspects of the methodology by which these scholars characterised and contrasted the actual or potential textually-performed identities of the young people as they participated in different stages of the conferencing. For one stage, these scholars developed a 4-sector topology. The identities being

performed could be characterised according to the young peoples' readiness to deploy attitudinal assessments, which indicated their remorsefulness (or lack of remorse) and readiness to reveal or not to reveal details of the crime of which they were accused.

3. The Study

3.1. The Dataset

Our dataset consisted of six episodes of the mainland China family conflict resolution television program *Gold Medal Mediation*. The episodes featured six heterosexual couples (12 disputing spouses) who were contemplating divorce, at least, partly because of one spouse's alleged infidelity. We used the term 'wayward husband/wife' to refer to the spouse accused of infidelity and 'aggrieved husband/wife' to refer to the spouse who was making the accusation of infidelity. Three episodes involved a wayward husband (and accordingly an aggrieved wife) and three involved a wayward wife (and accordingly an aggrieved husband).

The video recordings in the dataset are approximately 230 min long, transcribed into Chinese using the ELAN transcription software package (*ELAN*, 2020). We adopted the transcription conventions which have previously been deployed in SFL-based research: Halliday (1989), Eggins and Slade (1997), as well as Zappavigna and Martin (2018). The transcriptions consist of 1,147 turns and 5,282 moves. After exporting the transcriptions into Excel spreadsheets, we manually annotated the instances of the appraisal values in each move. We did not use any existing corpus annotation tools, such as UAM (O'Donnell, 2008), to perform the annotation and the statistical analysis. Instead, we chose to rely on the functionality in the *R* (R Core Team, 2021) environment to perform pattern recognition and multivariate cluster analysis. More details of the annotation (e.g., the treatment of the subtypes of **judgement** and **appreciation**) and data processing methods (e.g., the relevant data mining functions and packages) can be found in Xu (2021).

Our analyses focused on exploring any repeated patterns in the disputants' use of evaluative language, which might be interpreted in terms of their discursive self-presentation. In discussing our analyses, we use the term 'disputant' (in recognition of the disputatious nature of the conversation) to reference the speaker whose contribution to the conversation is currently being considered and 'antagonist' to reference their partner, whom they were conversing with or talking about.

3.2. Analytical Methodology

The analysis involved us identifying all expressions of attitude in the disputants' language, consisting of the following three steps: As a first step, we classified all the instances of attitudinal expressions with respect to (1) subtype of attitude (**judgement**, **appreciation**, or **affect**), (2) valency (positive or negative), (3) explicitness (inscribed or invoked), and (4) with respect to the target or trigger of the attitudinal assessment. For this latter feature, we employed the following taxonomy: (a) assessments of the self; (b) assessments of the antagonist; (c) assessments of other people involved in some way with the marriage; (d) the marriage/family situation itself (elsewhere in the literature, e.g., Hao & Humphrey, 2012; Zappavigna, 2019; Zappavigna et al., 2008), such targets/triggers are treated as the 'ideational' element of an ideation-attitude 'coupling'—that is, a coselection of some experiential element, e.g., the disputant or their antagonist, and the attitudinal value being advanced). These targets/triggers made up a vast majority of all phenomena attitudinally assessed in the dataset. Because we were interested in developing a relatively broad view of the attitudinal orientations of the disputants, we chose to classify only for the broad categories of **judgement**, **affect**, and **appreciation**, and not for any of the more delicate subcategories within these three systems of attitude.

Each attitudinal expression was, thus, treated as what we termed an 'attitudinal complex,' in that all the instances involving attitude were treated as a 'complex' of features—attitude subtype, valency, explicitness, and type of attitudinal target. For example, one attitudinal complex might involve the following coselections: attitude subtype (judgement) + valency (negative) + explicitness (inscribed) + target (antagonist). Underlying this line of analysis was the proposition that, for example, the attitudinal disposition of a disputant whose attitudinal expressions mostly consisted of explicit negative **judgements** of their antagonist would be markedly different from the attitudinal disposition of a disputant whose expressions of attitude mostly consisted of explicit positive **judgements** of self.

An attitudinal complex analysis is illustrated in Table 1—that is, an analysis in which each expression of attitude is classified as a coselection of options from these four axes of variation:

Table 1. *Attitudinal Complex (Example)*

Turn	Speaker	Utterance (Chinese)	Utterance (English Translation)	Attitudinal Axes				Attitudinal Complex
				Type	Valency	Target	Explicitness	
2	Wife_H03	就我老公老是**触犯我的底线**	It's that my husband always **crosses the line**	judgement	-ve	antagonist	inscription	inscribe -ve **judgement** antagonist
		特别**不好受**	I feel extremely **uncomfortable**	affect (trigger: antagonist)	-ve	self	inscription (invoke -ve **judgement** antagonist)	inscribe -ve **affect** self (triggered by the antagonist)
89	Wife_W01_WW	最后是我…追了他三天	In the end, it was me … who chased his friend for three days (and got our money back)	judgement	+ve	self	invocation	invoke +ve **judgement** self

As a second step, we divided the attitudinal complexes into those in which an attitudinal assessment was inscribed and those involving the potential activation of an assessment via implication or association (attitudinal invocations). We placed all the instances where the attitude was only implied (invocations) in a separate bundle. This decision was made on the basis that attitudinal inscriptions and invocations involve different dialogistic positioning mechanisms in the speakers' presentation of self. Specifically, inscriptions have a much higher degree of attitudinal stability than invocations, so an attitudinal assessment advanced via inscription usually conveys the speaker's attitudinal orientation unambiguously—who/what was assessed in what way, leaving little room for alternative interpretations. It is only in cases of inscribed attitude that the speaker directly calls on or challenges the addressee to accept the specific attitudinal assessment. By inscribing an attitudinal assessment, the speaker potentially puts speaker-addressee rapport at risk, should they disagree or view the assessment as unfair or unfounded. In contrast, the attitudinal instances advanced via invocation were grouped as an attitudinal complex bundle because they all involved the speaker choosing not to overtly articulate an attitudinal assessment and choosing not to identify a specific attitudinal target—implying rather than asserting an attitudinal position and hence assuming a like-minded putative audience. For example:

> 最后是我…追了他三天 In the end, it was me…who chased his friend for three days (and got our money back; Wife_W01_WW) *[potentially invoking positive **judgement** of self and, at the same time, positioning the audience to negatively view the antagonist—the speaker's husband—for his failure in collecting a debt]*

In such cases, the speaker presents as simply offering a 'factual' report of some action or event—not as evaluating. The risk to rapport is not deliberate or direct because an assessment has only been suggested or implied rather than overtly asserted. The frequent underspecification of invocation is increased by the immediately interactional and adversarial nature of our data. In these unfolding argumentative interactions, what a disputant says always has the potential to reference or counteract what was proposed by the other interactants in previous turns. There can often be double coding or multiple layer interpretations of an attitudinal assessment activated via invocation—positioning the audience to simultaneously assess the self and the antagonist in particular ways. There can even be situations where the speaker did not specifically articulate whether it is the self, the antagonist, or anyone/anything else that they were assessing. The particular interpretation of the text is reliant upon the particular value positions that the audience brings into the text, rather than being overtly articulated by the speaker (cf. Don, 2016). Therefore, in our analysis, we treated all the implicit attitudinal assessments as an attitudinal complex bundle under the umbrella term of 'invocation.' In this, we foregrounded the fact that for a speaker to invoke rather than to inscribe was a choice not to be attitudinally direct, to rely on the addressee to supply the necessary attitudinal inferences. This, of course, is not to suggest that an analysis which did separate invoked attitudinal expressions into subtypes according to variation in attitude type, valency, and target type would not be entirely valid and able to produce important findings. It was on the basis of the primary purpose of the study—the disputants' self-presentation vis-à-vis their use of attitude-associated resources—that we chose to group the invocations as a bundle in order to capture the disputants' preferences, for example, whether they are relatively more covert in advancing an attitudinal positioning or not, and what kind of positionings they favour overtly articulating.

Finally, as a third step, in analysing the language of each disputant, we determined the total number of attitudinal expressions in their contribution to the interaction (how many attitudinal complexes they advanced—both inscribed and invoked attitude) and, then, calculated ratios for each of the different subtypes of attitudinal complex. For example, should a disputant's contribution to the interaction include a total of 200 attitudinal complexes, and should 50 of these be, for example, instances of inscribed positive self-**judgement,** then the ratio of this subtype of attitudinal complex would be 25% of all this disputant's attitudinal complexes. It should be noted that the purpose of this analysis was not to characterise each disputant on an individual basis by reference to their ratio of use of these complexes. Rather, it was to determine, for each attitudinal complex, how similar or different were the ratios of use across the disputants. This enabled us to determine which of the attitudinal complexes had the highest ratios of use by the disputants (when compared with the ratios of use of the other complexes), which had the lowest ratios of use, and which fell somewhere in between. Likewise, it enabled us to explore the possibilities of identifying groupings of disputant by reference to similarities in their ratios of use of the complexes. For example, it might be found that (1) most disputants had a similar ratio of use of a given attitudinal complex and that this complex had a higher ratio of use than the other complexes, (2) that the disputants might fall into two groupings with respect to a given attitudinal complex, with one grouping with relatively high ratios of use and the other grouping with relatively low ratios of use, or (3) that ratios of use of a given attitudinal complex varied widely across the dataset with the disputants having different ratios of use. Through this, we could identify which of the available attitudinal complexes disputants used relatively more often, which was less often, and whether there were any complexes they did not use at all—and, thereby, develop a description of their attitudinal profile termed their 'attitudinal disposition.'

Our purpose was not to investigate any potential correlations between such patterns of evaluative language use and associations with such sociodemographic categories as age, gender or socioeconomic background. The small size of our dataset (just six 2-person interactions) would have precluded any meaningful findings along these lines (we did note, at an early stage of the study, some correlations between gender and the disputants' rate of speech, but given the dataset issues just mentioned, we did not pursue these). Our concerns were with what the lines of analysis we deployed might reveal as to variations in the deployment of options for attitudinal meaning-making which could be interpreted as idiolectal, as variations reflective of each individual speaker's personhood or, at least, of the 'presentation of the self' they opted to offer in these circumstances. Through such explorations, we would both be able to characterise the attitudinal dispositions of the disputants and then, through observed similarities and differences, discover whether they could meaningfully be organised into a typology of attitudinal dispositions, a set of disposition subtypes and hence repeated ways or styles of self-presentation—perhaps ways of self-presentation which might operate more widely in the culture, particularly in contexts of familial hostility. Also, we might enhance our understanding of the nature and workings of evaluative language more generally, of how the options for conveying and activating attitudinal assessments are deployed in argumentative, accusatory dialogic interactions of this type.

There was, however, one 'external' feature of the disputants to which we did attend in our analyses, although this was by no means a central concern of the study. That was to whether the disputant was a 'wayward' spouse (having been accused of infidelity) or an 'aggrieved' spouse (the one making the accusations of infidelity). We tracked the wayward/aggrieved status of the disputants so as to be able to detect any potential correlations between this status (wayward vs. aggrieved) and disputant's patterns of use of these attitudinal complexes. This was even while recognising that, with only six disputants of each 'type,' our dataset would not permit generalisable conclusions, even while the findings might be interesting and suggestive.

3.3. Available Attitudinal Complexes

As indicated above, for each attitudinal expression, we recorded which subtype of attitude had been chosen, its valency, its target and its explicitness (i.e., inscribed or invoked). As mentioned and explained above, we chose to treat all attitudinal invocations as a single bundle, as a kind of mega attitudinal complex.

Via the recognition/classificatory principles outlined above, 10 types of attitudinal complex were found in the dataset. Six of these were explicit assessments of human behaviour (**judgement**), with the attitudinal targets being the self, the antagonist, or other people involved in some way with the marriage (examples in Table 2). These six are listed here, along with the acronyms used to reference them in the discussion:

Inscribed positive **judgement** of the antagonist (PJA);

Inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist (NJA);
Inscribed positive **judgement** of the self (PJS);
Inscribed negative **judgement** of the self (NJS);
Inscribed positive **judgement** of people outside of the marriage relationship (PJO); and
Inscribed negative **judgement** of people outside of the marriage relationship (NJO).

Table 2. *Six **Judgement**-Oriented Attitudinal Complexes From the Dataset*

	Attitudinal Complex		Attitudinal Axes				Example
	Assessment	Abbr.	Type	Valency	Appraised /Target	Explicitness	
(1)	Inscribed positive **judgement** of the antagonist	PJA	judgement	+ve	antagonist	inscription	他其实是很**好**一个人 He was actually a very **good** person (Wife_H01_AW)
(2)	Inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist	NJA	judgement	-ve	antagonist	inscription	不讲道理 (She) makes trouble without reason (Husband_H01_WH)
(3)	Inscribed positive **judgement** of the self	PJS	judgement	+ve	self	inscription	所以要**替她想**一下 So I was **considerate** of her (Husband_H03_WH)
(4)	Inscribed negative **judgement** of the self	NJS	judgement	-ve	self	inscription	我可能在这个夫妻感情方面..**沟通方面**..是有点**欠缺** I may **not be good** enough in terms of ... couple relationship… in terms of communication (Husband_H03_WH)
(5)	Inscribed positive **judgement** directed at people outside of the marriage relationship	PJO	judgement	+ve	other	inscription	这男同学一**开始**..**开导效果**还比较**好**一点 In the beginning ... this male high schoolmate… **did a** pretty **good job** (Husband_H02_WH)
(6)	Inscribed negative **judgement** directed at people outside of the marriage relationship	NJO	judgement	-ve	other	inscription	对..最后好像..好像有一些就是**挑拨离间**那**种形式了** Yes.. in the end… it seemed that he was sort of **deliberately sowing dissent** between me and my husband (Wife_H02_WH)

Besides attitudinal complexes of **judgement**, there were also complexes involving inscribed **affect**. The emotions, or the appraisal resources of **affect**, were annotated by tracking the origin of the affectual response (examples in Table 3). There were two types of these **affectual** complexes found in the dataset:

Inscribed personal negative **affect**ual response (where the emoter is the speaker) triggered by the antagonist (NATA); and
Inscribed observed other people's **affect**ual response (OAO).

Table 3. *Two **Affect**-Oriented Attitudinal Complexes From the Dataset*

	Attitudinal Complex			Attitudinal Axes			Example
	Assessment	Abbr.	Type	Valency	Appraised /Target	Explicitness	
(7)	Inscribed negative **affect**ual response triggered by the antagonist	NATA	affect	-ve	self (as the emoter; eventually antagonist as the trigger)	inscription of **affect**, invoking a negative **judgement** of the trigger	让我感觉到**没有安全感** (He) made me feel **no sense of security** (Wife_H01_AW; invoke a negative **judgement** of the husband)
(8)	Inscribed observed other people's **affect**ual response	OAO	affect	-ve/+ve	emoter (antagonist /other)	inscription of **affect**, invoking a **judgement** of the emoter/trigger	**她气**得哭得哭得很难受 She was so **angry** that she cried and cried very miserably (Husband_H03_WH; invoke a negative **judgement** of the wife on the basis that the 'anger' is irrational and excessive)

The attitudinal workings of these two uses of **affect** are not entirely straightforward. We, therefore, offer a brief discussion of how they typically operate in this setting of argumentative, hostile dispute between two spouses. Generally speaking, when these disputants reported having had a negative emotion triggered by the antagonist (an instance of NATA), they were attempting to activate a negative assessment of the antagonist—that is, for having caused the speaker to feel bad. (In a sense, they are instances of inscribed **affect** which simultaneously act as tokens of **judgement—**so both inscription and invocation. For the purposes of this analysis, they were treated as inscriptions rather than as invocations.) Likewise, when these disputants reported other peoples' emotions (instances of OAO), there was typically the potential for this to activate an assessment of the emoter, according to whether the observed **affect** is viewed as socially appropriate or inappropriate. For example, reporting that someone was angry potentially invokes a negative **judgement,** on the basis that being angry is often socially deprecated. This potential for observed **affect** to act as a token of **judgement** in this way is, obviously, very much dependent on the context.

Appreciation (APP)

Besides attitudinal complexes of **judgement** and **affect**, there was the attitudinal complex involving assessment of situations, happenings, or objects—**appreciation** (APP). In the dataset, instances of **appreciation** were usually the speakers' assessments of the relationship as an abstract construct:

Table 4. *One **Appreciation**-Oriented Attitudinal Complex From the Dataset*

	Attitudinal Complex		Attitudinal Axes				
	Assessment	Abbr.	Type	Valency	Appraised /Target	Explicitness	Example
(9)	appreciation	APP	appreciate	+ve/-ve	thing	inscription	我诉求..拒绝过那种**表里不一**.. **阳奉阴违**的日子 I request ... I refuse to live a life that is **duplicitous and deceitful** (Wife_H01_AW)

Invocation

The final attitudinal complex type found in the dataset was attitudinal assessment advanced via invocation. As noted and explained above, the attitudinal complex labelled as 'invocation' consists of all the attitudinal expressions where the disputant chose not to inscribe—that is, chose to assume that the addressee shares the same cultural frames and underlying attitudinal assumptions and expectations and accordingly chose not to explicitly articulate the speaker's positioning of the attitudinal target(s) or even not to specify an attitudinal target at all (see Table 5 for examples):

Table 5. *Invocations as an Attitudinal Complex Bundle*

	Attitudinal Complex		Attitudinal Axes				
	Assessment	Abbr.	Type	Valency	Appraised /Target	Explicitness	Example
(10)	Invocation	INVO	judgement	+ve	self	invocation	我诉求..拒绝过那种**表里不一**... **阳奉阴违**的日子 I request ... I refuse to live a life that is **duplicitous and deceitful** (Wife_H01_AW)
			judgement	-ve	antagonist	invocation	一天三顿饭...都是我做 Three meals a day...all cooked by me (Husband_W02_AH; signalled by the upscaling)[iii]
			judgement	-ve	antagonist	invocation	你结果不给我发信息…你结果给人家发信息 It turned out that you didn't send me a message … it turned out that you sent him a message (Husband_W02_AH; signalled by the contrast)

4. Findings Arising When Ratios of Attitudinal Complexes Were Dealt With Independently

Firstly, we explored insights arising when we considered, on a one-by-one basis, ratios of use of all the attitudinal complexes described above. There is not space here to report findings with reference to all the 10 complexes. Accordingly, we have chosen to discuss findings associated with those complexes which occurred more frequently across the dataset

(though not necessarily at high rates in all the disputants' language) or which were connected to the central attitudinal concerns of these exchanges.

4.1. Being Attitudinally Indirect (Relying on Addressee/Audience to Reach Attitudinal Conclusions)

The complex which was the most frequently deployed by all the disputants was the bundled 'mega' complex—invoking attitudinal expressions. All the 12 disputants deployed this option, at a ratio, on average, of around 80% across the dataset. That is to say, on average, around 4 out of 5 attitudinal expressions were invoked rather than inscribed. The ratio for the disputant with the highest rate of deployment was around 92% (fewer than 1 in 10 of their attitudinal expressions were inscribed), and the ratio for the disputant with the lowest rate of invocation was around 66% (around 1 in 3 attitudinal expressions were inscribed). This tells us that all the disputants chose much more often not to inscribe than to inscribe. In other words, they 'preferred' to invoke and hence to be attitudinally indirect, to rely on the addressee to supply the specific attitudinal assessment rather than to be direct and overt in their attitudinal positioning. Being attitudinally indirect, therefore, was a common feature of the attitudinal dispositions of all the disputants involved in this televised marital conflict communication. Whereas this attitudinal indirectness can be seen to be a common feature of all the disputant's presentation of self, the variability in ratios, as recorded above, still needs to be noted. The disputant with the highest rate of invoked attitude was 'indirect' markedly more often than the disputant with the lowest rate.

4.2. Criticising and Blaming the Antagonist

Perhaps unsurprising, given that these were interactions between couples in conflict, the most frequently occurring of the inscribed attitudinal complexes was that which involved inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist. All disputants deployed this option, with an average ratio of deployment across the dataset being around 11% (i.e., around 1 in 10 of all attitudinal expressions). Again, substantial variation in ratios of use across the dataset was observed—with a ratio of around 17% (almost 1 in 5) of all his attitudinal complexes for the disputant with the highest rate (Husband_H02_WH, a wayward husband) and around 5% (1 in 20 of all his attitudinal expressions) for the disputant with the lowest rate of deployment (Husband_H01_WH, a wayward husband). Whereas hostility towards the antagonist is, thus, obviously a consistent feature, there is considerable variation in the degree of this hostility (at least, in terms of ratios of use of this option), with the ratio of use for Husband_H02_WH more than three times the ratio of use for Husband_H01_WH.

Variation in the ratios of use inscribed negative judgement of the antagonist across the dataset is tabulated in Figure 1:

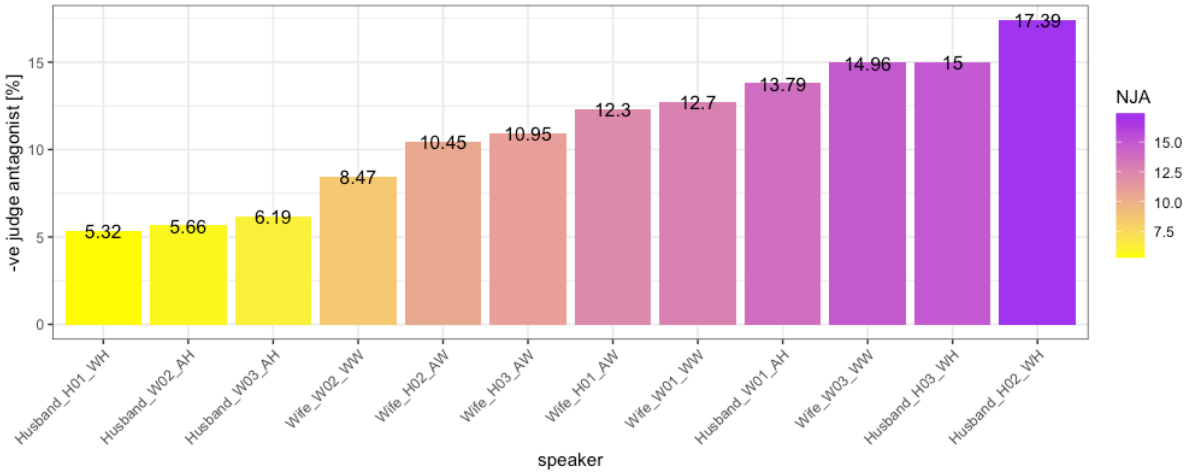


Figure 1. Ratio of Inscribed Negative **Judgement** of the Antagonist

We observe that there is no indication here that the disputants might be organised into distinct subcategories based on these ratios because the variation is along a cline. Variation in terms of attitudinal disposition was, thus, a matter of quantitative relativity rather than qualitative difference.

Also, we note that the ratios do not seem to point to any simple correlation between waywardness (having been accused of infidelity) and ratios of use because the husband with the highest ratio and the husband with the lowest ratio are both wayward. Nevertheless, there is a suggestion of a weaker correlation—the spouses with the three highest ratios are all wayward, and 2 of the 3 spouses with the lowest ratios are aggrieved. This is illustrated in Figure 2 (wayward spouses in cyan, aggrieved in coral):

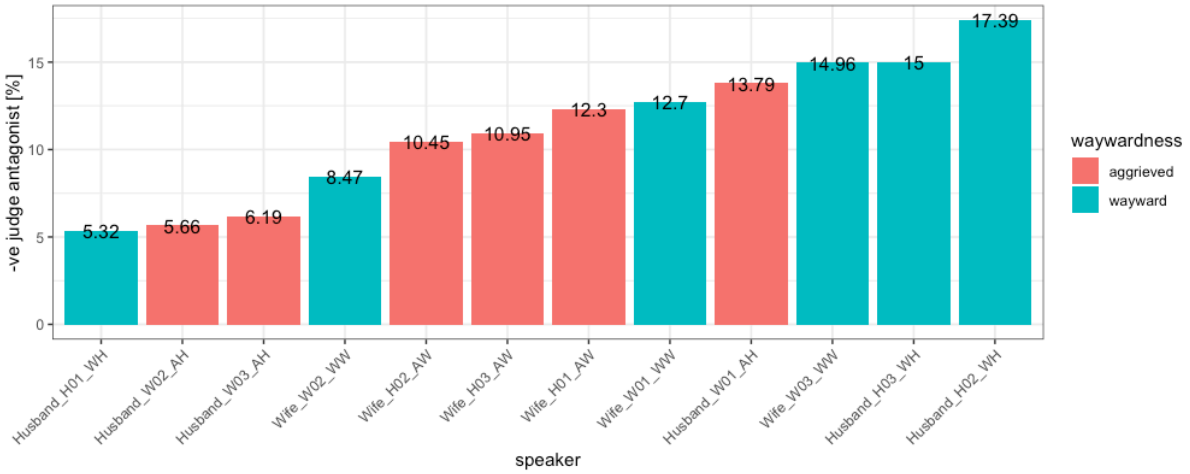


Figure 2. Ratio of Inscribed Negative **Judgement** of the Antagonist (Wayward vs. Aggrieved)

Perhaps, it is counterexpected that attacking one's spouse so vigorously would be a favoured strategy by wayward spouses. Perhaps attacking was seen as the best form of self-defence.

4.3. Blaming the Antagonist for One's Own Negative Feelings

The attitudinal complex with the next highest average across the dataset was that in which the disputant reports their own negative affectual responses, as triggered by some adverse behaviour by the antagonist—reports of unhappiness, insecurity etc., purportedly caused by the antagonist. The average dataset ratio of occurrence was around 6%: 12% for the disputant with the highest ratio of use and around 4% for the disputant with the lowest ratio of use. It is to be noted, however, that two of the disputants did not make any use of this option.

Tellingly, there was no correlation between the disputants' preference for reporting their negative triggered **affect**ual responses with tendencies regarding the use of inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist. One of the two disputants who did not report such emotions had one of the lowest ratios of use of inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist across the dataset, and the other 'outlier' had the second-highest ratio of use of this option. These two attitudinal complexes were, thus, independent variables. A disputant refraining from reporting their own negative feelings was not a predictor of whether they explicitly criticised their spouse at higher or lower rates. This suggests subcategorization of attitudinal dispositions (and associated presentations of the self), which divides those who report their own negative feelings by way of positioning the addressees to view the antagonist negatively (10 of the 12 disputants) from those whose discourse is not 'emotional' in this way (2 of the 12 disputants).

4.4. Praising Oneself

Perhaps not so predictable was the finding that the next most frequently deployed inscribed attitudinal complex across the data set was positive self-**judgement**. Eleven of the 12 disputants deployed this option, with an average dataset ratio of around 3% (highest ratio of around 12%, lowest ratio of just under 1%). Praising oneself or presenting oneself in a positive light is, thus, revealed as a feature which is common to the attitudinal dispositions of almost all the disputants, even while there was obviously significant variation in the frequency of deployment across these disputants. Also, interestingly, the analysis reveals one of the disputants as an outlier in this case—the one disputant who never explicitly engaged in praising him or herself. Again, this suggests a subclassification: disputants who refrain from actively presenting themselves in a positive light (just one disputant) vs. those who explicitly present themselves a laudable or virtuous (11 disputants).

4.5. Admitting Fault or Personal Failings

Six of the disputants indicated a willingness to admit fault or take some responsibility for the breakdown of the relationship by offering overt negative **judgement**s of themselves. There was a wide variation in rates—a ratio of 5% of total attitudinal assessments for the disputant with the highest rate and just under 1% for the disputant with the lowest rate. Again, a potential subcategorisation is suggested—between those disputants who are conciliatory in this way (to greater and lesser degrees) and those who are never negatively critical of their own behaviour.

4.6. Conclusion to the Section on Complexes Considered Independently

We conclude, therefore, that this line of analysis has provided key insights into the styles of 'self-presentation' observable among the disputants—for example, that they all have a preference for being attitudinally indirect; that whereas they all seek to cast their spouse in a negative light, there is notable variation in the rates at which this is done through explicitly attitudinal expressions, that while some report their own negative feelings so as to gain their audience's sympathy, some refrain from this, and so on. Also, we have demonstrated that this methodology does provide for classificatory groupings of the disputants' attitudinal dispositions, not for one system of grouping but multiple groupings—grouping by reference to each attitudinal complex. These groupings are sometimes more topological than typological. That is, they involve variation in ratios along a gradual cline, as was the case with rates of deployment of assessments via invocation or with rates of deployment of inscribed negative **judgements** of the antagonist. In other cases, the grouping was more typological, as was the case with a grouping which separated disputants who did report their own negative feelings from those who did not.

5. Characterising and Categorising Attitudinal Dispositions via Reference to Patterns of Use of All Attitudinal Complexes

Another way to characterise and compare attitudinal dispositions is via an analysis which considers patterns of use of all the attitudinal complexes. That is to say, we determine, out of all the 10 complexes, which individual complex or bundle of complexes disputants use at higher rates (relative to their ratios of use of other complexes), whether there is one complex or a bundle of complexes they use at relatively lower rates, and whether there is one complex or a bundle of complexes they do not use at all. This would provide us with the possibility of characterising disputants' attitudinal dispositions by reference to their relative level of use of each of the complexes. Also, it would provide a basis for grouping attitudinal dispositions. Should it be found that some disputants had similar ratios of use of a particular bundle of attitudinal complexes, then they could be grouped together. The more similar the ratios of these disputants for these complexes, the more closely they would be associated. Should there be other disputants who had similar ratios of use of a different bundle of complexes, they could also be grouped together. Of course, the question would remain as to how such groupings might be meaningfully interpreted with reference to variability in styles of self-presentation.

Any such analysis would be of great statistical complexity, given that we need to determine similarities and differences in all 12 disputants' ratios of use in all the 10 attitudinal complexes. There is the added complication of how 'similar' ratios of use need to be for us to use this 'similarity' as the basis for grouping together attitudinal dispositions. In order to undertake such determinations, we needed to turn to the statistical analysis functionalities of the multivariate cluster analysis computational tools we mentioned briefly above, specifically a 4-step cluster analysis routine.

In what follows, we describe the outputs of these routines and, then, discuss our interpretations of the clusters of attitudinal disposition thereby identified. As a first step, the number of clusters was determined. We used the 'average silhouette method' (Batool & Hennig, 2021; Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 1990) to determine the optimal number of clusters in the dataset—which was 2 (visualised in Figure 3), indicating that two clusters can best represent the clustering in the dataset when similarities and difference in the ratios of use of all the complexes were referenced:

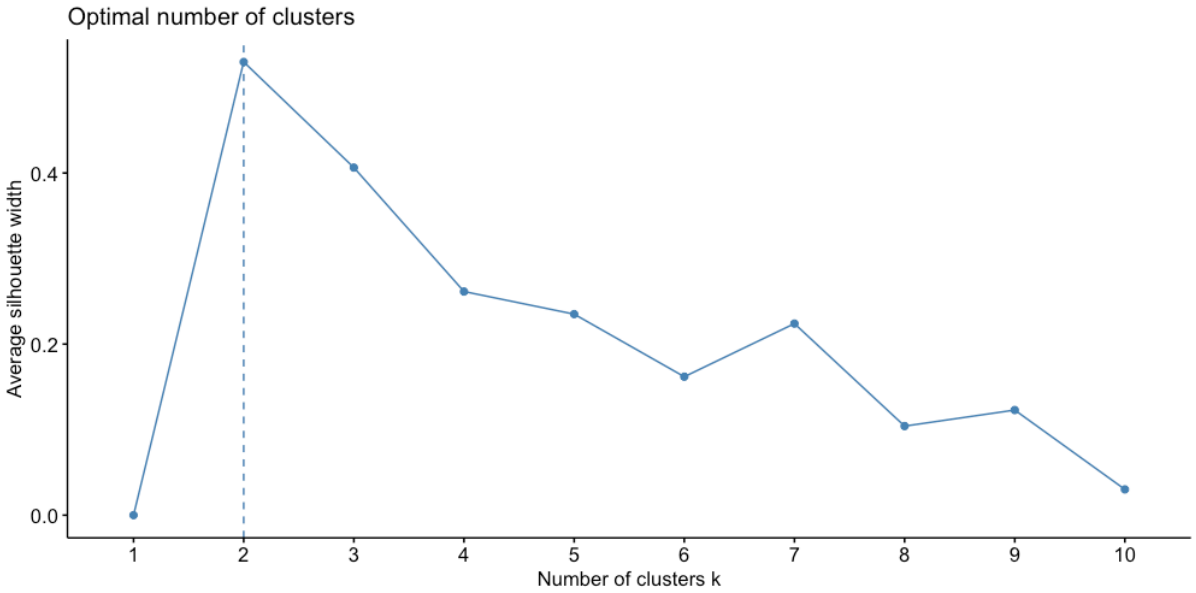


Figure 3. 'Ratio' Analysis: Optimal Number of Clusters (Coselection of Multiple Attitudinal Complexes)

In the second step, we used the principal component analysis (PCA) method (Jolliffe, 2002; Mardia et al., 1979) to summarise the underlying variance of the data. According to the data mining literature (Hayden, 2018; Jolliffe & Cadima, 2016; Metsalu & Vilo, 2015), the PCA method is particularly helpful in 'wide' datasets or multivariate analysis, where there are multiple continuous variables for each sample. The 'ratios' of use of the attitudinal complexes—the percentage of instances of a designated attitudinal complex in the total number of attitudinal instances in a person's speech—are continuous variables. The PCA method identifies the combinations of highly correlated variables, which together account for the most variance in the data. These combinations of variables are called 'principal components' (PCs), with the total number of PCs being equal to the original number of variables. It means that, in our dataset of 10 attitudinal complex types, there would be, in theory, 10 PCs. Usually, the first few PCs contribute to the majority of the possible variance in the dataset. The first PC accounts for the most significant possible variance in the dataset, followed by the second PC. Therefore, the findings of the PCA were not to identify the variations in the disputants' use of one particular attitudinal complex option, but a combination of correlated attitudinal complex options which account for the most significant possible variance among the disputants. Notably, in her seminal 'semantic variation' studies, Hasan (1989, 2009) used PCA as a statistical method, although she used it to explore the correlations between the social factors of class and gender on the one hand and the orientation towards certain patterns of semantic choice on the other, rather than to identify hidden clustering patterns in the dataset. In our analysis, we used the first two PCs as the basis for identifying individual and variable clusters. These two PCs captured a total of 58.3% of the variation in the dataset of 12 speakers and 10 variables[iv].

In the third step, we used the 'kmeans' and the 'fviz_pca_biplot' functions from the 'FactoMineR' (v 2.4; Husson et al., 2020; Lê et al., 2008) and 'factoextra' package (v 1.0.7; Kassambara & Mundt, 2020) in R to identify and visualise the two clusters and their boundaries (similar data mining process can be found in Kassambara, 2017).

As a final step, we contextualised the clustering with the disputants' deployment of the attitudinal complexes and explored the insights the clustering might bring to light. Specifically, we turned to consider the make-up of the two attitudinal dispositions associated with the two clusters identified by the routines just described. Cluster 1 brings together the attitudinal dispositions of just two of the disputants. These two disputants were similar in both having relatively high ratios of inscribed negative **judgements** of the antagonist and inscribed positive self-**judgement**. Cluster 2 brought together the remaining 10 disputants. What they shared was (1) a lower rate of use of inscribed **judgement** of the antagonist (relative to rates of use of this option by the two disputants in cluster 1), (2) lower rates of inscribed positive self-**judgement** and (3) higher ratios for complexes which, while involving attitudinal inscription, did not directly target the antagonist—for example, via reporting their own negative emotions as presumably caused by the antagonist, or negatively appreciating the situation of the marriage and thereby only indirectly blaming the antagonist.

With respect to styles of self-presentation, we interpreted the differences between the two clusters in the following way. Cluster 1 disputants are forthright in the assessments, which are arguably most central to these discussions cum arguments around marital breakdown—explicitly laying the blame on one's spouse (via accusations of wrong-doing) and presenting oneself as the innocent party (through positive evaluations of one's own behaviour). The attitudinal positioning of these two disputants is, thus, maximally direct and forthright with respect to what is most central to the marital breakdown. In contrast, the disputants in cluster 2 are much less direct and forthright, preferring a more circumspect and tangential approach to what is central to the marriage breakdown—the rights and wrongs of their own their spouse's behaviour. We chose to use the label 'more expressive' for the attitudinal orientation of cluster 1 and the label 'less expressive' for the attitudinal orientation of cluster 2.

We, then, took a closer look at the make-up of the attitudinal disposition of cluster 2. We observed that it was possible to divide this 'less expressive' cluster into a further two subclusters. Specifically, we noted that four disputants had similarly high ratios in the attitudinal bundle of 'invocation,' suggesting that these disputants stood out in that they relied to such a high degree on invocation—on very largely relying on 'factual' reports of what had happened in the marriage (experiential meanings) to activate attitudinal assessments from the audience rather than inscribing the assessments. The other six disputants in this cluster opted at higher rates for attitudinal inscriptions, such as negative **affectual** responses triggered by the antagonist and **appreciations**, to activate particular attitudinal assessments from the audience. In other words, the two subgroups, both being 'less expressive,' favoured different meaning-making mechanisms when advancing their assessments and in positioning those addressed to share their view of the marriage. We chose the label 'least expressive' for the cluster, which made the greatest use of invocations, and the label 'less expressive' for the group, which made more use of values of **affect** and **appreciation** to cast the antagonist in a negative light indirectly. These three groupings are discussed and exemplified in what follows. The visualisation of the clustering can be found later in Figure 4.

5.1. Attitudinal Disposition Type 1: More Expressive

As just indicated, the two disputants in the 'more expressive' grouping had high ratios of inscriptions, which means, compared with speakers of the 'less expressive' and 'least expressive' groups, they preferred to articulate their attitudinal assessments explicitly. Specifically, these 'more expressive' disputants had an average of 35% of their total attitudinal instances being inscriptions, twice the rate of the 'less expressive' group and three times the rate of the 'least expressive' group. They had noticeably higher ratios of the inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist (average of 16.20% of all attitudinal expressions), inscribed positive self-**judgement** (average of 8.68%) and reports of the emotional responses of the antagonist, which potentially cast the antagonist in a negative light (7.52%). At the same time, they made substantially less use of invocations than disputants in the other two groups. The ratios of the attitudinal complexes that made the 'more expressive' disputants distinct from other disputants are summarised in Table 6. Both 'more expressive' disputants were wayward husbands.

Table *6. Ratios Making the 'More Expressive' Disposition Different From the Other Groups*

Disposition	Speaker	Waywardness	Ratio of Attitudinal Complex (%)					
			Inscribe -ve **judgement** antagonist	Inscribe +ve **judgement** self	Inscribe -ve/+ve **affect** (observed)	Inscribe +ve **judgement** others	Inscribe -ve **judgement** self	Invocation
			NJA	PJS	OAO	PJO	NJS	INVO
'More expressive'	Husband_H02_WH	Wayward	17.39	6.52	10.87	3.26	1.09	66.30
	Husband_H03_WH	Wayward	15.02	10.83	4.17	0.80	5.05	66.67
	Group average		**16.20**	**8.68**	**7.52**	**2.05**	**3.05**	**66.49**
'Less expressive' group average			12.11	1.74	1.17	1.00	0.84	79.48
'Least expressive' group average			7.05	2.35	0.75	0.24	0.22	89.01

(Key: NJA = inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist; PJS = inscribed positive **judgement** of the self; OAO = inscribed observed other people's **affect**ual response; PJO = inscribed positive **judgement** of others; NJS = inscribed negative **judgement** of the self; INVO = invocation)

A typical example from the dataset is the attitudinal arrangements of Husband_H03_WH, a wayward husband. He never shied away from explicitly blaming the wife in the dispute exchanges, positioning the mediators to negatively assess the wife accordingly. Excerpt 1 provides an example illustrating the husband's use of negative inscribed **judgement** directed at the wife. In one turn, he advanced six instances of negative **judgement** of the wife via inscription, criticising

the wife for having a bad temper. Similarly, as illustrated in the following excerpt (Excerpt 2), the husband explicitly positively judged his own behaviour and that of others:

Excerpt 1. *Example of the 'More Expressive' Attitudinal Disposition (Husband_H03_WH's Utterances in Turn 103)*

Turn	Speaker	Move	Utterance (Chinese)	Utterance (English Translation)	Attitude Signal	Attitudinal Complex Assessment	Abbr.
102	Hostess_H03	1	所以这个事在柯先生看来也无伤大雅	So this thing is also innocuous in Mr Ke's opinion			
103	Husband_H03_WH	1	那肯定的喽	That's for sure			
		2	她要**自己找自己难受**	She wants to **find troubles for herself**	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	NJA
		3	我跟她无法沟通..你知道吗	I can't communicate with her … you know	denial	invoke inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	INVO
		4	我跟她说了几句话她就**犟**起来..吱吱吱	If I say a few words to her she will **pick an argument with me** ... blah blah blah	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	NJA
		5	还发脾气了	Also she will even **lose her temper**	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	NJA
		6	**骂**我...骂死你	She will **curse at** me... cursing at me to death	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	NJA
		7	她祖宗十八代都**骂**	She will **curse at** all my ancestors ... ancestors of eighteen generations	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	NJA
		8	她**骂**你一个人都不算	She doesn't **curse at** me alone	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge antagonist	NJA

Excerpt 2. *Example of the 'More Expressive' Attitudinal Disposition (Husband_H03_WH's Utterances in Turns 207-209*)

Turn	Speaker	Move	Utterance (Chinese)	Utterance (English Translation)	Attitude Signal	Attitudinal Complex Assessment	Abbr.
207	Husband_H03_WH	1	对我这么..对我**照顾得**这么**好**	Of me so... she takes care of me so well	inscription	inscribe +ve judge antagonist	PJA
		2	来…拥抱一下	Come on … let's hug			
208	Wife_H03_AW	1	嗯	Mhm			
209	Husband_H03_WH	1	起来	Stand up			
		2	我..我是个**追求浪漫**..**追求**那个**激情**的人	I … I am a person who **pursues romance … pursues** that kind of **passion**	inscription	inscribe +ve Judge self	PJS
		3	**不**是那**种死板**的人	I am **not** the kind of **rigid** person	inscription	inscribe +ve Judge self	PJS
		4	**你看...她一点都不热情**	You see ... she is **not enthusiastic** at all	inscription	inscribe -ve **affect** antagonist	OAO
		5	**怎么回事啊**	What's the matter	rhetorical question	invoke -ve Judge antagonist	INVO
		6	不接受...是**吧**	You are not accepting me ... right	denial	invoke -ve Judge antagonist	INVO
		7	再来一次	Let me try again			

5.2. Attitudinal Disposition Type 2: Less Expressive

The second attitudinal disposition type is what we termed 'less expressive.' Compared with speakers of the 'more expressive' type, the six 'less expressive' speakers favoured invocation over inscription. Whereas they may activate

negative assessments of their spouse or positive assessments of themselves, this is substantially more often via invocation than via inscription.

Specifically, the six 'less expressive' disputants had an average of 80% of their total attitudinal instances being invocations, 15% higher than of the 'more expressive' group. Among the inscriptions, they had a particular preference for inscribing negative **affectual** responses triggered by the antagonist, with an average ratio of 8.49% (compared to 0.55% of the 'more expressive' group; Standard Deviation = 2.21, highest = 11.48, lowest = 5.93). Although they also had an average of 12.11% inscriptions of negative **judgement** of the antagonist (Standard Deviation = 2.34, highest = 14.96, lowest = 8.47), the explicit condemnations were relatively lower than the 'more expressive' group (average = 16.20%). These ratios indicated that the 'less expressive' disputants were comparatively restrained in the explicit articulation of their criticisms of the antagonist. Although the instances of inscribed negative **affect** might activate other types of attitude, such as negative **judgement** of the antagonist or positive self-**judgement**, the disputants do not make the ultimate target of their attitudinal positioning explicit. The eventual communicative outcome of their attitudinal positioning heavily relied on the reading positions held by the coparticipants and the mediators. The speakers and their attitudinal arrangements of this group are summarised in Table 7. Among the 'less expressive' disputants, three were wayward spouses and three were aggrieved spouses:

Table 7. *Ratios Making the 'Less Expressive' Disposition Different From the Other Groups*

Disposition	Speaker	Waywardness	Ratio of Attitudinal Complex (%)				
			Inscribe -ve **affect** (triggered by the antagonist)	Inscribe +ve **judgement** antagonist	Inscribe -ve **appreciate** relationship	Inscribe -ve **judgement** antagonist	Invocation
			NATA	PJA	APP	NJA	INVO
'Less expressive'	Husband_W01_AH	Aggrieved	8.05	0	0	13.8	75.86
	Wife_H01_AW	Aggrieved	11.48	4.92	1.64	12.3	77.05
	Wife_H02_AW	Aggrieved	10.45	0	1.49	10.5	80.6
	Wife_W01_WW	Wayward	8.73	0	3.17	12.7	80.95
	Wife_W02_WW	Wayward	5.93	0.85	2.54	8.5	80.51
	Wife_W03_WW	Wayward	6.3	0	1.57	15.0	81.89
	Group average		**8.49**	**0.96**	**1.74**	**12.11**	**79.48**
'More expressive' group average			0.55	0.42	0.84	16.20	66.49
'Least expressive' group average			5.37	0	0.42	7.05	89.01

(Key: NATA = inscribed negative **affect**ual response triggered by the antagonist or antagonist's behaviour; PJA = inscribed positive **judgemen**t of the antagonist; APP = **appreciation**; NJA = inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist; INVO = invocation)

A typical example is the attitudinal arrangement of Wife_H01_AW, an aggrieved wife. She had the highest ratio of negative **affectual** response triggered by the antagonist in the dataset. Excerpt 3 provides an example illustrating the wife's attitudinal disposition. In this excerpt, the wife recounted a past event when she suspected that the husband had a flirtatious relationship with a female neighbour. Instead of explicitly accusing the husband of cheating with the woman, the wife reported her negative emotions—anger, unsettledness, and insecurity—all triggered by the husband's behaviour:

Excerpt 3. *Example of the 'Less Expressive' Attitudinal Disposition (Wife_H01_AW's Utterances in Turn 98)*

Turn	Speaker	Move	Utterance (Chinese)	Utterance (English Translation)	Attitude Signal	Attitudinal Complex	
						Assessment	Abbr.
96	Wife_H01_AW	1	我打过那个女人的电话	I called the woman on the phone			
97	Hostess_H01	1	你求证到了什么结果没有	Did you prove something			
98	Wife_H01_AW	1	没有..他们双方都不承认	No... neither of them admitted it			
		2	都认为这只是一个玩笑而已	Both of them thought this was just for fun			

	3	我打那个女人电话是因为出于心头很**气愤**	I called the woman because I was extremely **angry**	attitudinal instance of inscribed **affect** (potential invocation of -ve **judgement**)	inscribe -ve **affect** self (triggered by the antagonist) (invoke -ve Judge antagonist)	NATA
	4	打过去**骂她的**	I called her **to curse at** her	evoke	invoke -ve **affect** self (triggered by the antagonist)	INVO
	5	当时她和我**对骂**	She **cursed back at** me on the phone	inscription	inscribe -ve Judge other	NJO
	6	所以我更相信他们之间更**不正常**	So I believed more firmly that there was something **abnormal** between them	inscription	Inscribe -ve **appreciate** relationship b/t the husband and the woman (invoke -ve Judge antagonist)	APP
	7	让我感觉很**不踏实**	they made me **feel** very **unsettled**	attitudinal instance of inscribed **affect** (potential invocation of -ve **judgement**)	inscribe –ve **affect** self (triggered by the antagonist; invoke -ve Judge antagonist)	NATA
	8	很没安全感	Very insecure	attitudinal instance of inscribed **affect** (potential invocation of -ve **judgement**)	inscribe –ve **affect** self (triggered by the antagonist; invoke -ve Judge antagonist)	NATA

5.3. Attitudinal Disposition Type 3: Least Expressive

The final attitudinal disposition cluster is 'least expressive.' As noted above, the disputants in this group overwhelmingly favoured the attitudinal complex bundle of 'invocation.' The four disputants had an average ratio of 89.03% (Standard Deviation = 1.70, highest = 91.49%, lowest = 87.61%) of their individual total attitudinal instances being advanced via indirect signalling attitude or pure ideational meanings rather than inscribing them. Comparatively, for the attitudinal complex of inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist, this 'least expressive' group had a low average ratio of 7.05% (Standard Deviation = 2.64, highest = 10.95, lowest = 5.32), much less than that of the 'less expressive' group (average ratio 12.11%) and the 'more expressive' group (average ratio 16.20%). The 'least expressive' disputants' high degree of preference for invocations indicated they were assuming a 'like-minded' audience. More precisely, they were indicating confidence that the mediators were sharing the same cultural norms and value positions with them so that a mere attitudinal signal (e.g., upscaling or counterexpectancy) or pure ideational meanings (e.g., a description of a past event) would be sufficient to activate an intended attitudinal assessment from the mediators. The ratios featuring the 'least expressive' group are summarised in Table 8. For the four disputants enacting a 'least expressive' disposition, one was a wayward spouse, and three were aggrieved spouses:

Table 8. *Ratios Making the 'Least Expressive' Disposition Different From the Other Groups*

Disposition	Speaker	Waywardness	Invocation	Ratio of Attitudinal Complex (%) Inscribe -ve **judgement** antagonist	Inscribe -ve **affect** (triggered by the antagonist)
			INVO	NJA	NATA
'Least expressive'	Husband_H01_WH	Wayward	91.49	5.32	0.0
	Husband_W02_AH	Aggrieved	88.68	5.66	6.6
	Husband_W03_AH	Aggrieved	87.61	6.19	5.31
	Wife_H03_AW	Aggrieved	88.24	10.95	9.56
	Group average		**89.03**	**7.05**	**5.37**
'More expressive' group average			66.49	16.20	0.55
'Less expressive' group average			79.48	12.11	8.49

(Key: INVO = invocation; NJA = inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist; NATA = inscribed negative **affect**ual response triggered by the antagonist or antagonist's behaviour)

Husband_H01_WH's attitudinal orientation in Excerpt 4 illustrates a typical 'least expressive' disposition. He had the highest ratio of invocation in the dataset, with 91.49% of his total attitudinal instances being invocations. That is, more than nine out of 10 attitudinal instances in his speech did not involve an explicit attitudinally stable linguistic item. He extensively relied on the mediators to infer from his utterances the attitudinal propositions he aimed to present. Before this excerpt, the wife accused the husband of having flirtatious WeChat messages with a female neighbour. In this excerpt, Husband_H01_WH defended himself against the wife's accusation:

Excerpt 4. *Example of the 'Least Expressive' Attitudinal Disposition (Husband_H01_WH's Utterances in Turns 28-30)*

Turn	Speaker	Move	Utterance (Chinese)	Utterance (English Translation)	Attitude Signal	Attitudinal Complex	
						Assessment	Abbr.
28	Husband_H01_WH	1	当时对我来说.. 才**开始**玩这个微信	At that time ... for me … I was a new user of WeChat	evoke	counteract -ve **judgement** wife[v]	INVO
		2	很多==都不== **懂**	There were many things I == didn't == understand	denial	invoke -ve **judgement** self; counteract -ve **judgement** wife[vi]	INVO
29	Hostess_H01	1	==嗯==	== Mhm ==			
30	Husband_H01_WH	1	感觉好奇嘛	I simply felt curious	attitudinal token	counteract -ve **judgement** wife[vii]	INVO
		2	然后**无聊**的情况下..就加**她微信**	Then, when I **felt bored …** I added her to my WeChat	attitudinal token	inscribe -ve **affect**, self; counteract -ve **judgement** of wife[viii]	INVO
		3	然后就这样聊下天	Then, we chatted briefly	evoke	counteract -ve **judgement** of wife[ix]	INVO
		4	实际上这个女人都不在重庆	In fact ... this woman was not even in Chongqing	denial	counteract -ve **judgement** of wife[x]	INVO
		5	外面做生意	She did business elsewhere	evoke	counteract -ve **judgement** of wife[xi]	INVO
		6	我怎**么**解释她都**不**相信	No matter how hard I explained that to her ... she would not believe it	denial	invoke +ve **judgement** of self; invoke -ve **judgement** of antagonist[xii]	INVO
		7	快一年了**她都**说我继续跟那个女的在保持联系	Almost a year has passed ... she is still saying that I continue to keep in touch with that woman	up-scaling	invoke -ve **judgement** of antagonist[xiii]	INVO
		8	我可以说.. 现在根本就没有记对方的那个电话号码	I can say ... now I don't have that woman's phone number at all	denial	invoke +ve Judge self; counteract -ve Judge wife[xiv]	INVO

In this excerpt, the husband's counteraccusation relied entirely on invocations of attitude. He recounted the background of his contact with the woman and the woman's current situation without any instance of inscriptions in his self-defence. He activated several inferences, which, if taken up by the moderator or the counsellors, might result in them rejecting the wife's accusation or even negatively assessing the wife. However, whether the mediators eventually assessed the targets accordingly could obviously not be definitely stated, being subject to the mediators' reading position.

The clustering of the aforementioned three groups of disputants and their ratios of using the 10 attitudinal complexes is visualised in Figure 4, a PCA biplot (see Jolliffe & Cadima, 2016, for more details of PCA biplot):

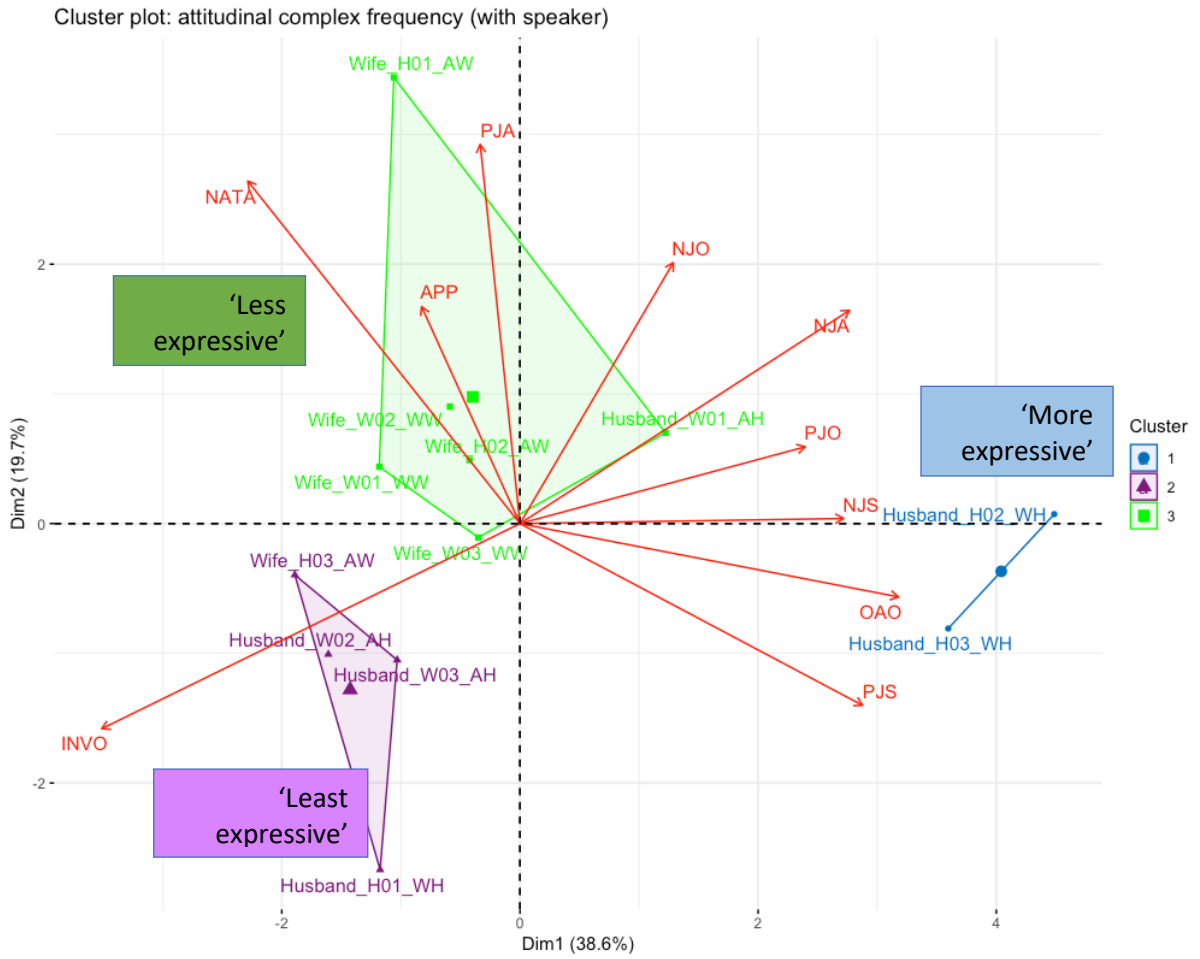


Figure 4. Disputant Clustering as to the Ratios of the 10 Attitudinal Complex Types

(Key: Clockwise starting from the bottom left quadrant: INVO = invocation; NATA = inscribed negative **affect**ual response triggered by the antagonist or antagonist's behaviour; APP = **Appreciation**; PJA = inscribed positive **judgement** of the antagonist; PJO = inscribed positive **judgement** of others; NJA = inscribed negative **judgement** of the antagonist; PJO = inscribed positive **judgement** of others; NJS = inscribed negative **judgement** of the self; OAO = inscribed observed other people's **affectual** response; PJS = inscribed positive **judgement** of the self)

By way of conclusion to this section, it should be noted that there are no clear-cut boundaries between these clusters of attitudinal dispositions. Whether a disputant's manner of self-presentation should be viewed as 'more expressive,' 'less expressive,' or even 'least expressive' is a matter of quantitative relativity rather than qualitative absoluteness. There are borderline speakers in all disposition types. It is better to treat the three proposed groupings as different vantage points on a cline, a cline of expressiveness, where the totality of a disputant's attitudinal positioning is viewed holistically.

6. Conclusion

We hope that, through our paper, we have offered some valuable insights into how the couples involved in these televised family conflict resolution interactions positioned themselves and their spouses attitudinally. We have shown that broadly they all tended to prefer to invoke attitudinal assessments indirectly, and when they chose, instead, to inscribe such assessments, they were most often negatively evaluating their spouse's behaviour. We also showed there were differences with respect to individual disputant's use of these complexes - with respect to the rates at which disputants chose to invoke attitude and the rates at which they negatively assessed their spouses. There were also more clear-cut differences between the disputants re their use of these complexes. For example, a subset chose to never offer reports of their own negative feelings by inviting sympathy from their audience, and another subset chose never to admit fault through negative assessments of their own behaviour.

In developing these findings, we first demonstrated how discursive performances of the self could be characterised, compared, and categorised through analyses in which attitudinal complexes are dealt with individually, on a one-by-one basis. This complex-by-complex analysis can provide useful insights into the attitudinal orientations of speakers, even while only a partial account of discursive performance is provided. Any such characterisation or comparison is only with respect to, for example, a disputant's tendency to more frequently or less frequently negatively assess the antagonist's behaviour, or to positively assess their own behaviour, and so on.

In the final section, we demonstrated an analysis which takes account of patterns of use across all the 10 attitudinal complexes—where the disputants' attitudinal dispositions are characterised by reference to those bundles of complexes which, for example, they use more often or those bundles which they use less often, or not at all. Such characterisations (and associated groupings) are necessarily more abstract in that they generalise across multiple attitudinal complexes, resulting, in our case, in characterisation with respect to the degree of 'expressiveness.' We believe that such more abstract characterisations offer valuable insights into similarities and differences in how people may present themselves in such circumstances. We note that it was only through our novel use of computational tools that these could be identified.

Notes

[i]The term 'speaker' is used as a generic term in this study to reference both speakers and writers.

[ii]The term 'speaker' is used as a generic term in this study to reference both speakers and writers.

[iii]This utterance potentially invoked two layers of attitudinal positioning. In previous turns, the speaker's wife accused the husband of not contributing to the family business. In this utterance, the husband argued that he cooked three meals a day. By deploying an upscaling device—'three meals' a day, the speaker invoked a positive self-judgement, referencing a value position that 'Cooking three meals a day for your spouse is praiseworthy.' If this attitudinal positioning was successful, the utterance would potentially activate another layer of attitudinal positioning, which was to counteract the antagonist's previous accusation. This example illustrates the indeterminacy of invocations, on the basis of which the attitudinal expressions advanced via invocations were grouped into one bundle in the current analysis.

[iv]There have been extensive discussions in the existing literature concerning 'the minimal sample and variable size for PCA.' A recent consensus is that there is no simple rule of thumb for a preferred observation number or observation-to-variable ratio. Our study drew on the practice described in Kaufman and Rousseeuw's (1990) book—*Finding Groups in Data: An Introduction to Cluster Analysis*, where one case study was to conduct PCA in a dataset of 12 countries with 3 variables. The authors identified 4 fussy clusters of those 12 countries from the first two PCs.

[v]In previous turns, the wife reported that the husband befriended the female neighbour on WeChat and initiated some chats. Subsequently, the wife positioned the mediators to negatively assess the husband for his having an active relationship with the opposite sex. In this turn, the husband explained that he was a 'new user of WeChat.' For an audience holding the position that 'It is common for a new user to try all the functions on an APP' or 'It is okay for a new user to make some mistakes,' the husband's explanation counteracts the wife's negative positioning directed at him.

[vi]In this turn, the husband explained that he did not know the functions or practices of using WeChat. For an audience holding the position that 'It is common for a person to make mistakes if they did not know about the rules,' the husband's negative judgement of capacity directed at the self could function as an attitudinal token to counteract the wife's negative positioning directed at him.

[vii]Curiosity as 'a feeling of deprivation reflects feelings of uncertainty and tension' (Litman & Jimerson, 2004, p. 147). In this utterance, the husband argued that he added the female neighbour as a friend and chatted with her because of curiosity, rather than doing this intentionally. In appraisal terms, the husband used curiosity as an affectual token to counteract the wife's negative positioning directed at him.

[viii]In this utterance, feeling 'boring' can be interpreted as an instance of affect (dissatisfaction), with the trigger unknown. For an audience holding the position that 'if you feel bored,' it is natural for you to initiate a chat with someone,' the husband's report of having felt bored served as an attitudinal token to counteract the wife's negative positioning directed at him.

[ix]By the downscaling device—'briefly,' the husband rejected the underlying message in the wife's account that there was an abnormal relationship between him and the female neighbour. For an audience holding a position that 'It is normal for one to have a brief chat with an opposite-sex' or 'Nothing can happen in a brief chat,' the downscaling counteracted the wife's negative positioning directed at the husband.

[x]By this utterance, the husband reported that he and the female neighbour were not in the same city. This information countered the expectation of the mediators who might assume that neighbours lived in the same neighbourhood. By the counterexpectancy formulation—'not even,' the husband indicated that an intimate relationship between him and the female neighbour was physically impossible. Therefore, the wife's accusation of him was groundless.

[xi]In this utterance, a contrast was made between Chongqing—the husband's residence city, and 'elsewhere'—the city where the female neighbour resided. By this contrast, the husband positioned the mediators to infer that nothing intimate was geographically possible between the husband and the female neighbour.

[xii]This utterance can potentially invoke two attitudinal positionings. One was directed at the husband. For an audience holding that 'It is a good personal trait to patiently explain what has happened to your partner if there is a misunderstanding,' the husband's behaviour of explaining could invoke a positive assessment directed at the self. The other attitudinal positioning was directed at the wife. By the counterexpectancy formulation—'no matter how …, she would not …,' the husband positioned the mediators to negatively assess the wife for her lack of understanding.

[xiii]In this utterance, the husband used an upscaling to negatively position the wife on account of her overreaction.

[xiv]In this utterance, the husband used upscaling and disclamation to positively assess himself for keeping a proper boundary with the opposite sex and to counteract the wife's previous accusation against him.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest**.**

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