

# Historical Intercultural Sociopragmatics: A Study on Ritualisation

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## Abstract:

This study explores ritualisation in intercultural contact, i.e. it looks into the way in which ritual practices spread across cultures. It examines heckling as a case study, by reconstructing the way in which the British concept of electoral ‘heckling’ has been appropriated in China, as China adopted the parliamentary system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly under British influence. The present research fills two knowledge gaps in historical sociopragmatics: it integrates intercultural pragmatics into historical sociopragmatic research, and also it inquires into the process of ritualisation, which is a long overdue task.

## 1. Introduction

The present paper examines ritualisation (Kádár 2013) in historical intercultural contact, by studying the process through which ritual practices are appropriated (Rogers 2006; Cooks 2011) across historical cultures.<sup>2</sup> The examination of this issue fills two knowledge gaps in historical sociopragmatics (Culpeper 2010). First, integrating intercultural pragmatics into historical sociopragmatics is a long overdue task (cf. Ruhi and Kádár 2011), in particular in light of the interdisciplinary endeavour in the field (Włodarczyk and Taavitsainen 2014). Although historical sociopragmatic (and broader historical pragmatic) inquiries have addressed certain languages and cultures outside of English, as far as I am aware no intercultural research has been previously conducted in the field. As rituals embody and re-enact the beliefs of a society/social group (Schechner 1993), their adoption by a new society represents intercultural appropriation. Studying intercultural appropriation, and the subsequent ritualisation of an interactional practice in its new cultural setting, informs us about cross-cultural differences at the time of intercultural contact, as well as the historical sociopragmatic characteristics of the given ritual practice.

Second, ritualisation is a regrettably neglected topic despite rituals being widely studied. Several historical pragmaticians (see e.g. Jucker and Taavitsainen 2000; Alexander 2004; Bax 2010) have argued that rituals provide a key to understanding language behaviour in certain historical periods. However, no attempt

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2. Appropriating indicates that an interactional practice/form is not necessarily indigenous to the culture in question but that is nonetheless used, albeit in a different way. Following Rogers’ (2006) framework of appropriation, it could be argued that the appropriation studied in this paper can either represent ‘exchange’ or ‘transculturation’, or both; studying this issue is beyond the scope of this paper and it will be studied in a forthcoming project.

has been made to model how ritual interactional practices come into existence. This is an important question because, as this paper illustrates, rituals are not ‘simply there’ in a society, but instead a ritual develops – either through intra-cultural development or intercultural appropriation (or both) – in order to fulfil interactional needs triggered by socio-historical changes.

### 1.1. Basic notions

In order to provide a working definition for ‘ritualisation,’ we first need to define ‘ritual.’ *Ritual*, in my interaction-based second-order understanding (Kádár 2013), is a recurrent action which re-enacts the ideologies of a relational network or broader social group as a performance. Ritual is different from purely conventional behaviour in a number of ways; the following list, drawn from Terkourafi and Kádár (forthcoming), summarises these differences:

- Audience: Convention does not necessarily operate with an audience in mind, while the reason d’être for ritual to operate is an audience; this is why ritual is a performance (Bax 2010), which constitutes one’s face for either a real or imaginary audience.
- Noticedness: Conventional practices tend to be noticed by those who are outside of the group/culture in which a practice operates, whilst rituals are noticed by those who perform them or take part in them as an audience, as well as group-outsiders (Kádár 2013).
- Time and place: A conventional practice can occur in any place and time (anywhere and anytime), while a ritual can only take place in certain times and places.

The border between convention and ritual is nevertheless blurred, as these phenomena have a number of common characteristics, including:

- Recurrence: Both convention and ritual are recurrent acts.
- Normativity: They also count as normative for those who perform/participate in them.
- Formality/sequentiality: Both convention and ritual have certain formal and sequential characteristics, which differentiate them from other practices.

To provide a simple example, singing a national anthem means more to many people than an interactional convention: it has the potential to be a ritual because by singing it the group of performers re-enact their national identities; as with any ritual, this singing event operates with a specific audience, it is noticed,<sup>3</sup> and it occurs in a specific time and space.

Ritual is thus a distinctive interactional practice, which differs from conventional practices, and it comes into existence through the process *ritualisation* instead of conventionalisation.<sup>4</sup> Ritualisation operates via two interrelated steps: 1) metadiscourses about a certain form of interactional behaviour (Kádár and Haugh 2013), and 2) repetitive adoption of the given behaviour in a relational network or

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3. Alternatively, abstaining from signing the national anthem in such context would also be noticeable.

4. On the process of conventionalisation (i.e. the process through which conventional interactional practices come into existence) see Terkourafi (2001), and Culpeper and Demmen (2011).

larger social group. These steps are interrelated because, according to current research (Kádár forthcoming), ritualisation begins as people start to talk about a certain ritual practice; such metadiscourses are followed by what Bell (1992:92) defines as “repetitive adoption,” i.e. “repeating that [ritual] activity at periodic intervals.” The main difference between conventionalisation and ritualisation – both of which presuppose repetition – comes from the different nature of convention and ritual. That is, the importance of metadiscourses decreases after a given phenomenon has been conventionalised – conventionalisation brings a phenomenon into the “realm of [the] unnoticed” (Terkourafi 2001) – but as rituals are meant to be noticed they remain the subject of metadiscussions. This is why, as this article demonstrates, news headlines provide suitable corpora to study ritualisation.

### *1.2. The case study: heckling*

This paper examines heckling as a case study, by looking into the way in which the British concept of ‘heckling’ has been appropriated in China. Heckling proves to be a ritualistic phenomenon, if one approaches it by combining Turner’s (1969; 1982) anthropological framework with my relational ritual theory (e.g. Kádár 2012; 2013). Following Turner (1982), I define heckling as a ‘social drama’, which is evaluated by its watchers as ‘judges’. In the centre of this social drama is the heckled person, who has an institutionalised right to speak or perform on stage, and the heckler, who disturbs the public speaker/performer. In accordance with Kádár (2014) I argue that heckling has a performance value, and it re-enacts claimed social or group values, therefore it is a ritual practice. Note that using such a technical definition for heckling, instead of a popular one, becomes important in a historical intercultural sociopragmatic research, considering that 1) native lexemes for heckling have significantly different meanings, and 2) even the English word ‘heckling’ has undergone considerable semantic and pragmatic changes during its ritualisation (see Section 3). Such a definition also accords with the Performance Theory of Schechner (2003), according to which dramatic acts like heckling should be described within a single framework, in spite of that their popular definitions tend to differ across cultures.

I have chosen this topic for the following reason. After China became a semi-colonial state during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it adopted the parliamentary system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly under British influence (Wu 2011). As one of the key political concepts taken from the Anglo-American context, ‘heckling’ has gained prominence in Chinese political life. Therefore, ‘heckling’ provides a case study (and a very well documented example; see Section 2) for how a ritual phenomenon is appropriated across historical cultures. In addition, in terms of heckling, the relationship between 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century British and Chinese cultures is unidirectional, i.e. it was only Chinese culture that appropriated heckling notions from the other side (see Kádár forthcoming), and this makes it easier for the analyst to examine this phenomenon.

### *1.3. Structure*

Section 2 overviews the data and methodology of this study. In Section 3 I first discuss a problem with modern Chinese metalexemes for heckling (i.e. words which are used to describe the sociopragmatic phenomenon of heckling), which led me to examine the historical sociopragmatic contact between China and Britain. In Section 3.1 I examine the ritualisation of ‘heckling’ in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain. I believe that in order to understand the appropriation of a ritual notion, it is necessary to look

into its ritualisation within its native cultural surrounding, as this helps us to capture its function and meaning at the times when it was appropriated (the plural is necessary because intercultural contact and the subsequent appropriating is not necessarily a one-off event). In Section 3.2 I study the way in which heckling has been ritualised in the Chinese cultural context, in the period spanning early modern texts, through the years preceding WWII, to the present day. Finally, in Section 4, I discuss the implications of this study for future research.

## 2. Data

My data come from two major newspaper archives in Chinese and English. Although newspapers have been thoroughly studied in historical pragmatics (e.g. Brownlee 2006; Conboy 2010), to the best of my knowledge there is no previous intercultural study on the sociopragmatics of historical news articles, in spite of the advantages of such a comparative approach. Choosing newspapers for a study on heckling is a natural choice for several reasons. Heckling events often make their way into newspaper headlines, and, more importantly for this study, newspapers record the date of heckling events, and by reporting on these events, they facilitate the reconstruction of the ritualisation of this phenomenon. Furthermore, they provide a mediated perspective (Silverstein 1985) on the sociocultural import of English ‘heckling’.

Although in late imperial China there were ‘indigenous’ newspapers (Walravens 2006), I examined news items that were published in Western-style Chinese language newspapers<sup>5</sup> because in indigenous newspapers heckling events do not seem to be represented. A large proportion of my data comes from the ‘Old Hong Kong Newspapers Collection’ of the Multimedia Information System, Hong Kong Public Libraries.<sup>6</sup> This is one of the most extensive newspaper archives in the Chinese-speaking world, which includes 7 Chinese and 5 English language digitalised newspapers; all these newspapers were published in Hong Kong (henceforth HK) between 1864 and 1991 (some had significantly shorter ‘lifespans’ than others). This open access archive allows keyword search, although hits are limited to headlines (i.e. they do not involve in-text hits, which have to be manually studied). An advantage of this database, apart from being open access, is that it includes English language newspapers, written by the Western residents of HK, which was a British crown colony between 1842 and 1997. The study of English newspapers helps us to explore when and how was ‘heckling’ first mentioned in the HK-based English media in relation to Chinese culture. A further reason behind focusing on HK is that this area was (and continues to be) a meeting point for Chinese and Western cultures. In addition to the HK database I examined:

- Digitised editions of the *North China Herald*, which was one of the key English language newspapers in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China.
- Articles from *Shenbao* 申報 (Shanghai News), perhaps the most influential newspaper in China before 1949.
- Relevant historical news articles from various historical sources in Chinese, which I found in the course of a Taiwanese field trip.

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5. Western-style journalism appeared in China in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

6. See: < <https://mmis.hkpl.gov.hk/web/guest/old-hk-collection> >

I compared the HK collection and additional Chinese data with data drawn from the British Newspaper Archive of the British Library.<sup>7</sup> This extensive collection currently includes 244 titles, and it allows in-text keyword searching. Whilst both the size and the search options provided by the Chinese and English databases are different, this does not pose a problem for the present research as I do not make any quantitative comparison between the databases studied.

The data search resulted in 3,249 Chinese and 32,271 English hits, broken down into decades (see more on data search in Section 3). Research from the Chinese corpus indicated that English ‘heckling’ was appropriated into Chinese culture during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the Chinese corpus I looked into texts dating from the period spanning the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1980s, in order to trace the ritualisation history of English ‘heckling’ in Chinese. In the English corpus I studied the period from the 1840s to the 1920s, which spans the time when ‘heckling’ started to be ritualised (1840s) to the Chinese appropriating of this notion in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Neither of the corpora allows search refinements, without risking overlooking some important contemporary meanings of these tokens; e.g. a joint search of “heckling” and “interruption” in the British corpus would entirely miss 19<sup>th</sup> century occurrences of ‘heckling’ as a non-interruptive act (see Section 3.1). Thus, I had to ‘manually’ search both corpora, and due to the large number of hits, I had to sample the data by looking into every second hit in the Chinese language corpus and every third hit in the British corpus. I categorised how these notions developed through looking into their evolution across decades. Although quantitative research based on the present sampling method is not reliable, in Section 3 I make references to the frequency of occurrence of certain phenomena in certain decades. These references have an illustrative purpose – they provide insight into the ritualisation of ‘heckling’ in English and Chinese – but I do not claim that they are full-fledged quantitative evidences.

### **3. ‘Heckling’ in historical Sino-British intercultural contact**

This research is part of a broader investigation of rituals across cultures (Kádár forthcoming). In that broader project, I compare metalexemes of the ritual of heckling across languages, including Chinese and English. Research on Chinese has shown that (along with some less frequent items) the Chinese use two major lexemes for heckling: *zhiwen* 質問 lit. ‘interrogating’,<sup>8</sup> and *qihong* 起哄 lit. ‘creating disturbance by jeering’. Furthermore, *zhiwen* is used in Chinese texts to describe heckling as ‘moral and constructive’ public intervention, while *qihong* refers to ‘disruptive and immoral heckling’. The attitudinal stances (Berman 2005) evoked by these lexemes impose constraints on the way in which the Chinese describe heckling events (essentially: there is no such a thing as ‘objective’ report on heckling in Chinese).

Previous research has failed to capture the intriguing relationship between *zhiwen* and *qihong* in its full complexity, due to its lack of historical sociopragmatic focus. If one examines these metalexemes in-depth, it becomes evident that along with the ‘moral & constructive’ and ‘immoral & destructive’ divide they also differ in terms of applicability: *qihong* is used in a wider variety of contexts than *zhiwen*, as Figure 1 illustrates:

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7. See: <<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>>

8. *Zhiwen* has lexical variants, but this issue is not discussed due to space limitation.

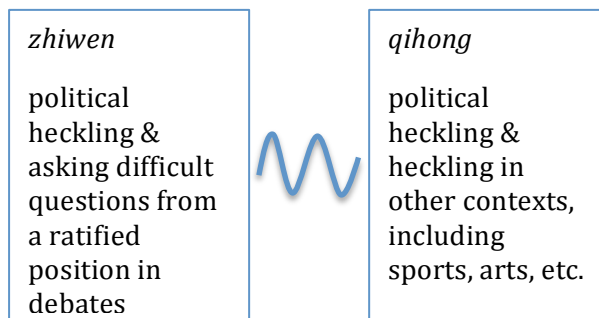


Figure 1: The complex relationship between *zhiwen* and *qihong*

The meaning of *zhiwen* is limited to a) political heckling and b) asking difficult questions from a ratified role in debates. *Qihong* on the other hand is a form used exclusively for heckling in a variety of settings. I argue that this difference between the two lexemes' pragmatic use can only be understood through historical sociopragmatic lenses. A historical sociopragmatic inquiry reveals that *qihong* and *zhiwen* have a number of intriguing properties. Most importantly, in early 20<sup>th</sup> texts *zhiwen* describes political heckling in a different way from its modern meaning: it only refers to the act of asking uninvited and unwelcome questions in parliamentary debates. Furthermore, in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese texts, only *zhiwen* is used to describe political heckling, whilst *qihong*, unlike in modern texts, is limited to the heckling of arts and sport performances. These characteristics of the Chinese heckling metalexems can only be understood if one approaches this phenomenon from a Sino-English intercultural perspective. As a first step, we need to understand how 'heckling' developed in British culture before and at the time when the cultural contact with China and the subsequent Chinese appropriation and ritualisation of this notion took place.

### 3.1. The ritualisation of 'heckling': From the 1840s to the 1920s

According to the OED, the earliest meaning of 'heckle' is "[t]o dress (flax or hemp) with a heckle, to split or straighten out the fibres";<sup>9</sup> it was the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when 'heckling' was first used, in a metaphoric way, to describe the "public questioning of parliamentary candidates".<sup>10</sup> In order to reconstruct the ritualisation of 'heckling' I studied the period spanning the 1840s to the 1920s (see Section 2), i.e. ignored the early 1800s. There is a quantitative rationale behind focusing on this period: according to the British Newspaper Archive the use of the word heckling intensified from the 1850s as the following table shows:

1750–1799	306
1800–1849	2,042
1850–1899	15,016
1900–1949	14,907

9. The first occurrence of 'heckle' dates from c. 1440 (*Promptorium Pravorum*).

10. See OED, which dates this development of meaning between 1808 and 1825.

Table 1: Occurrences of ‘heckling’ in the British Newspaper Archive

Whilst this figure also includes ‘heckling’ in its original industrial sense, the significant quantitative increase indicates that the 1850s (and maybe already the late 1840s) count as a turning point in the history of this word. It can be supposed that in this period ‘heckling’ spread in its modern meaning and made its way into headlines. This hypothesis is supported by Google NGram,<sup>11</sup> which indicates that heckling gained unprecedented popularity in materials written during the 1840s and 50s:



Figure 2: ‘Heckling’ in NGram

In what follows, I overview the main features of the ritualisation of ‘heckling.’

*Political v. industrial activity*

‘Heckling’ as a metalexeme derived its meaning from an industrial activity (Chapman 1948), and it occurs in both in its original and derived meanings in the British data. Notably, even in the 1870/80s there are certain cases when a reference to ‘heckling’ in headlines can cause some ambiguity due to the dual meaning of this term. A typical example is ‘heckling meeting’, which can describe both the work meetings of hecklers in factories and the gathering of hecklers in political events; e.g. a headline of the *Aberdeen Journal* (25 April 1884) features a “Heckling Meeting at MacDuff,” and unless one reads the article, the nature of this meeting is unclear. Yet, as Table 2 illustrates, the frequency of ‘heckling’ as an industrial lexeme becomes significantly low by the 1920s, which indicates that due to the ritualisation process the new metaphoric meaning of heckling gained prevalence over the original meaning (and, supposedly, also due to the disappearance of manual industrial heckling due to technological changes):

1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
36%	32%	32%	25%	17%	14%	9%	7%

Table 2: Disappearance of the industrial meaning of ‘heckling’<sup>12</sup>

*‘Heckling’ as a novelty*

11. On the historical pragmatic application of Google NGram see Jucker and Taavitsainen (2014:12).

12. As I use figures, based on sampled data, in order to illustrate tendencies, I avoid using decimals.

The metalexeme ‘heckling’ often occurs in 19<sup>th</sup> century news items in quotation marks (Garber 2003:169). Whilst occasionally this denotation might be due to its then-informal nature, as the following example illustrates, the quotation marks often reflect the novelty of ‘heckling’ as a metalexeme for disruptive behaviour:

(1)

“The Dunfermline Catechist”

Mr Erskine Beveridge, we believe, is a great man in Dunfermline [...] He evidently wish to [...] show the folks of Dunfermline that he was not frightened to encounter even a live Lord. His catechising is described by a learned contemporary as a “heckling”, but to most people it will appear that “the heckler” was the party who suffered most in the process of “heckling”.

*Dunfermline Saturday Press*, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1859

As Table 3 illustrates, the use of quotation marks became infrequent by the 1920s, which, similarly to Table 2, indicates that during the eight decades studied ‘heckling’ has undergone a ritualisation process:

1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
81%	84%	68%	62%	48%	31%	25%	20%

*Table 3: Decrease of the use of quotation marks*

#### *Activity type*

When discussing the ritualisation process of ‘heckling’, it is important to describe the development of the activity type (Levinson 1979; Archer 2002) that this metalexeme describes. In news items dating from the 1840s ‘heckling’ a) is only used in political contexts and b) refers to the act of asking difficult questions *after* a parliamentary candidate finishes his talk. In other words, ‘heckling’ had a certain sequential order and it did not imply the interruption of a speech, as it does in present time. The following extract illustrates these properties:

(2)

The Elections – Heckling the Candidates

Mr Macgregor then delivered his address amidst occasional cheers and disapprobation; and both candidates having finished their speeches in chief, it was intimated that they would be willing to answer any questions addressed to them.

Dr Cunningham of Norfolk Street then mounted a table, and having obtained a hearing, said – I have to ask Mr Macgregor if it is the fact that he travelled by steam on Sabbath eight days; and if, in the face of that, he denied you the privilege of travelling also by the steam on the Sabbath day? (Great applause and disapprobation, which lasted a considerable time.)

Mr. Macgregor – I am perfectly prepared to answer the question, no doubt properly put by the learned Doctor. The learned Doctor wishes to make the impression –



(Here great confusion arose, in which there were loud cries of “Answer the question” – “He is doing it as fast as he can, but you wont let him.” [...])

*Glasgow Herald*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1847

As the article makes clear, although there are “occasional cheers and disapprobation” during Mr Macgregor’s talk, it is only *after* he finishes talking that Dr. Cunningham begins what is described as ‘heckling’ in the title of the article, i.e. ‘heckling’ has a sequential place within a political session.

As part of the ritualisation process, heckling has become an expected element in electoral meetings, as example (3) shows:

(3)

That gentleman himself assigned as a reason – perhaps his sole reason – for non-attendance, his disapprobation of the process of badgering and heckling that takes places at electoral meetings, and gave his opinion that the apprehension of going through such an ordeal deterred many useful and respectable men from presenting themselves before the electors.

*Sterling Observer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1864

It is only in the 1880s when one can observe the use of ‘heckling’ beyond the political arena, such as during religious debates, as illustrated by example (4):

(4)

Heckling the Mormons

The disciples of Joseph Smith do not appear to have been aptly represented by the “Elders” who on Tuesday evening undertook missionary work at St. George’s Hall among the Gentiles of London. If all that these missionaries said approximates to all that can be said, there is less to be said for the “Mormon standpoint” than is even popularly supposed.

*Huddersfield Chronicle*, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1886

Furthermore, it was only in the 1880s when ‘heckling’ first occurred as an act of interruption, and this use only intensified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

(5)

Heckling Mr Churchill

Mr Winston Churchill’s triumphant series of meetings [...] was marked yesterday by the rather violent interruptions of a gentleman in the audience assembled at St James’s School. At a critical point in a free trade argument the independent elector [...] interjected the remark, “That’s lies.” “That might be a strong expression of opinion,” said Mr Churchill, “but it is hardly political argument.”

*Edinburgh Evening News*, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1904

Even in texts dating from the early 1900s this interruptive use seems to be rare: I could only observe it in 4% of the sampled examples. It can be supposed that the broadening of the contexts in which ‘heckling’ could be used also triggered the use of this metalexeme in the context of interruption; the following example shows a case when ‘heckling’ is used in a non-political context as a form of interruption:

(6)

#### Heckling a Hypnotist

On Friday night the defendant went to the performance. He was sitting in the stalls, and Mr. Taylor noticed he was noisy, and had to warn him against creating any disturbance. Mr. Taylor told him that if he would leave the building his admission money would be returned to him.

*Derby Daily Telegraph*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1905

The following table illustrates the changes in the ‘sequentiality’ of ‘heckling’ and the activity type it describes:

1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
post-debate	post-debate	post-debate	post-debate	post-debate (97%) interruptive (3%)	post-debate (95%) interruptive (5%)	post-debate (93%) interruptive (7%)	post-debate (91%) interruptive (9%)
political arena	political arena	political arena	political arena	political arena (96%) and religious debates (3%)	political arena (93%) and other contexts (7%)	political arena (91%) and other contexts (9%)	political arena (88%) and other contexts (12%)

*Table 4: Development of ‘heckling’ as an activity type*

#### Regionality

The phenomenon of ‘heckling’ originates in Scotland (Chapman 1948), and it preserved its regional character until the late 1860s. Example (7) illustrates this regional characteristic:

(7)

[...] in this town of Stirling [...] many gentlemen are extremely well skilled in questioning candidates – a process, I believe, technically called ‘heckling.’

*Stirling Observer*, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1857

In the 1860s, ‘heckling’ started to be used in a broader British context, even though as late as the 1870s authors continued to emphasise the Scottish origin of this phenomenon, as example (8) illustrates:

(8)

Mr Edgar himself had got (to use a Scotch phrase) as severe a “heckling” on the floor as [...]

*Shields Daily Gazette*, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1879

Furthermore, it was in the 1880s when ‘heckling’ started to spread beyond British contexts, i.e. it occurred in reference to foreign events, as example (9) shows:

(9)

#### Heckling French Female Politicians

One of the most amusing incidents connected with the electoral campaign in France has been a meeting at which Mdme. Saint Hilaire, and several other

ladies, much annoyed because their declarations of candidature were not seriously accepted by the authorities, held forth on the subject of women's rights. It must, however, be confessed that the representatives of the fair sex, who mustered rather strongly to hear their self-constituted champions expound their views, were much more inclined to ridicule than to applaud. Cries of "Old Madcap!", greeted the Citoyenne Saint Hilaire when she appeared on the platform and began to speak [...]

*Edinburgh Evening News*, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1898

To sum up, heckling as part of the ritualisation process has gradually lost its regional character; Table 5 illustrates this process:

1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
regional (100%)	regional (100%)	regional (87%) British (13%)	regional (53%) British (47%)	regional (37%) British (56%) foreign (7%)	regional (24%) British (63%) foreign (13%)	regional (14%) British (69%) foreign (17%)	regional (9%) British (71%) foreign (20%)

*Table 5: The disappearance of the regional character of 'heckling'*

#### *Definedness*

Finally, we should refer to an important step in the ritualisation of 'heckling', namely the definedness of this phenomenon (on metadefinitions see e.g. Simons 1994). It was as late as the 1860s when the first attempts to define this phenomenon were made by newspaper authors. The following example is a fragment of the most elaborate definition in the data studied:

(10)

The privilege of hearing candidates is common to all parts of the United Kingdom, but "heckling" appears to be an initiation particular to Scotland. It originated, we daresay, in a laudable desire to elicit additional information from politicians [...]

We know by experience, however, that the most commendable customs may be carried to absurd length by self-conceited mortals and fools. [...]

Glasgow and other places in the West of Scotland have become famous or notorious for "hecklers" at election times. [...] They can be divided into two classes, viz. – the professional hecklers and the amateurs. The professionals, as a general rule, have their questions written out on slips of paper, and the candidate gets them wholesale. The amateur, on the other hand, scrambles upon the platform in the state of excitement, and fires of queries at random on any given subject in social or political science. He may be unwashed, unkempt, and dilapidated in appearance – a person whom the working men of a great city such as Glasgow would scorn to regard as a representative of their class [...]

*Glasgow Herald*, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1868

It is pertinent to note that, as this definition illustrates, 'heckling' in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain was regarded as a working class phenomenon.

This section has reconstructed the ritualisation process of ‘heckling’ in Britain. In what follows, let us examine the way in which this phenomenon was appropriated in the course of Sino-British intercultural contact.

### 3.2. ‘Heckling’ in Sino-British intercultural contact

As it was discussed previously, the two Chinese heckling metalexemes have various intriguing properties:

- In early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese texts *zhiwen* describes political heckling in a different way from its modern meaning.
- In these texts only *zhiwen* describes political heckling, whilst *qihong* is limited to arts and sports heckling.
- In modern times, when it comes to the political arena, *zhiwen* and *qihong* have a ‘moral and constructive’ v. ‘immoral and destructive’ use.

I approach these peculiarities through the following hypothesis:

- Zhiwen* as a metalexeme for heckling is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese adoption of the English political ‘heckling;’ the meaning of this metalexeme in contemporary texts reflects the meaning of its English counterpart.
- Qihong* is a native metalexeme for heckling, which came into existence before the Chinese adopted Western political concepts; this is why until relatively recently it was not used in political contexts.
- Zhiwen* and *qihong* developed their modern im/moral meanings as 1) *zhiwen* has changed its meaning, and 2) *qihong* has been adopted in the political arena.

This section aims to prove this hypothesis.

Let us begin this by looking into the meaning development of *qihong*, which is illustrated by Table 6. Note that in the Chinese data, amongst the 3,249 Chinese samples 909 represent *qihong* and 2,135 represent *zhiwen*. The larger number of *zhiwen* occurrences are supposedly due to newspapers mentioning political heckling more often (represented by *zhiwen* until relatively recently) than other heckling forms.

Period of occurrence	Number of occurrences	Meaning
1864–1910	47	performance heckling (100%)
1911–1940	361	performance heckling (100%)
1941–1950	144	performance heckling (72%) political heckling (28%)
1951–1991	357	performance heckling (61%) political heckling (49%)

Table 6: Development of the meaning of *qihong*

Until the 1940s *qihong* was used outside of the realm of politics. It is pertinent to refer here to an ongoing study (Kádár forthcoming), which has shown that in 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese literature *qihong* is the *only* heckling metalexeme. This fact – and that *zhiwen* only appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of debates in the newly established Chinese parliament (see Table 7 below) – proves that *qihong* is a metalexeme of native origin. The fact that the native *qihong* had no political meaning before the 1940s is understandable, if one considers that in China parliamentary representation

was an unknown concept until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The late 1940s seem to be an important era to look into because, as Table 6 suggests, it represents a change in the meaning of *qihong*. I revisit this issue at the end of this section; as a next step, however, let us look into the development of *zhiwen*.

Table 7 illustrates the meaning development of *zhiwen*:

Period of occurrence	Number of occurrences	meaning
1864–1910	224	no heckling meaning
1910–1940	815	political heckling (100%)
1941–1951	308	political heckling (100%)
1951–1991	788	political heckling (100%)

Table 7: Development of *zhiwen* as a metalexeme for political heckling

As Table 7 indicates, *zhiwen* occurred as a metalexeme for political heckling in the 1910s. This timeframe accords with the adoption of the parliamentary system after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911.

It is pertinent here to note that the English word ‘heckling’ has occurred in HK-based English newspapers since the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in an article “Heckle the Candidates” (28<sup>th</sup> July 1900) a British columnist of *The China Mail* discussed ‘heckling’ in reference to British political debates. The presence of ‘heckling’ in HK-based English newspapers seems to be relevant to the intercultural appropriating of this notion: supposedly, these metadiscourses on ‘heckling’ became accessible to an increasing number of Chinese who could read English (Adamson 2004). This accessibility was key for native metadiscourses – the first stage in the ritualisation process (see Section 1) – to come into existence.

The first English references to ‘heckling’ in the context of Chinese politics date from the 1910s, a period when British newspapers already used this notion in foreign contexts (see Section 3.1). The following example from the *North China Herald* illustrates this use:

(11)

*Heckling the Premier on the Envoy to Japan*

[...] Premier Tuan arrived at the House at 2.35 p.m. He was beset with questions from several members, all of whom he succeeded in vanquishing by his short but clear answers.

Mr. Li Shih-ying: –Is it true that Tsao Ju-ling has been appointed Special Envoy to Japan?

General Tuan–Yes, it is true.

Mr. Li–Why do we need to send a man of the monarchial party?

General Tuan–Because he is a member of the Chungyiyuan [House of Commons], representing our citizens.

Mr. Wang Shih-kung–Is he going as an ambassador or a minister?

General Tuan–As neither, he is going as a Special Envoy.

Mr. Chang Wo-hua–Is he entrusted with any political mission?

General Tuan–No.

9<sup>th</sup> December 1916

This is a report on a debate in the newly established parliament of the Republic of China. It is the same period when *zhiwen* begins to be used as a heckling metalexeme, as example (12) shows:

(12)

段祺瑞二十三號出席眾議院鄒魯質問龍濟光出示謂內閣贛閩派兵往廣東此說是否

When Premier Duan Qirui appeared at the Parliament on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Zhou Lu [1885–1954] of the House of Commons heckled him, asking whether Long Jiguang's [1867–1925] claim that the Cabinet has dispatched troops to Jiangxi and Fujian Provinces is true.

香港華字日報 *The Chinese Newspaper of Hong Kong*, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1916

In example (12), *zhiwen* describes political heckling in a different way from its modern meaning. This meaning seems to accord with that of contemporary ‘heckling’ in example (11), i.e. asking politicians difficult questions (see Section 3.1). However, there is a cross-cultural difference in the use of these terms: unlike in the British setting, in which ‘heckling’ mostly took place between a politician and the electors, in the Chinese case *zhiwen* was practically always used in reference to asking difficult questions from fellow politicians in the parliament. This supposedly reflects the difference between political practices in Britain and China at the time: in the civil war-ridden China electoral meetings had little practical role (O’Brian and Li 2000).

*Zhiwen* was used in a similar way until the late 1950s. There are, however, occasional cases from the late 1930s when it occurs beyond the context of parliament. The first of such uses that I could find dates from a 1938 news article, which reports on a case when foreign journalists stormed the Japanese authorities with questions. The Japanese, after conquering Shanghai, extended their rights and attempted to exert control over this then-neutral foreign colony (Japan in 1938 was still not at war with Britain and the United States). On 4<sup>th</sup> May 1938 the Japanese held a press conference to announce this decision. However, foreign journalists upset the agenda of the conference, as they started to interrogate the authorities about a different incident, as illustrated by example (13):

(13)

外記者質問日檢查郵件事：中央社三日漢口電 [...]

日方招待外報記者時，芝加哥每日新聞訪員提出質問謂有紳士外國記者一人，口啣烟斗行徑外白渡橋，日本步哨因其未行敬禮，將其烟斗擲之於地，未知行使何種權力。日方發言人答，此君若是紳士，必向日本步哨行敬禮。或問日本善通人見有英美哨兵，是否行使敬禮，據答稱，此一日人如係紳士，自當行禮。

某記者又問，檢查郵件事何日實行，檢查員已到邊否，外人函件是否檢查。 [...]

Foreign journalists heckle as the Japanese announce a customs search of postal materials: Central News Agency reports from the city of Hankou [...]

As the Japanese held a press conference for foreign journalists, the reporter from the *Chicago Daily News* heckled the Japanese by inquiring about the matter of a foreign aristocrat journalist. That person walked through Waibaidu Bridge [in Shanghai] and, as he failed to salute to the Japanese sentry, they confiscated his pipe and threw it to the ground. [The reporter inquired] as to whether the Japanese were aware of their rights. The Japanese spokesperson

answered by saying that if this gentleman was really an aristocrat, he should know how to properly salute to the Japanese sentry. Someone in turn inquired as to whether a Japanese civilian should salute when he meets an English or American sentry. The spokesperson answered that if this person is a Japanese aristocrat he will certainly salute.

Another journalist inquired as to when the Japanese plan of searching postal materials is due to come into effect, whether the custom officers have arrived already, and whether they will search the parcels of foreign nationals.

[...]

香港華字日報 *The Chinese Newspaper of Hong Kong*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1938

Along with the context of press conference, an innovative usage of *zhiwen* here is that it describes an action that upsets the expected flow of events – the reporter of the *Chicago Daily News* inquires about the sentry’s attack on a foreign citizen, instead of following the agreed agenda. Such broadening of the use of *zhiwen* can be observed in texts dating from the 1940/50s.

In the 1950/60s *zhiwen* gained its modern meaning as a moral and constructive act; as Table 6 shows, this is also the period when *qihong* has started to be used in its modern sense, as an immoral and disorderly action. The following examples illustrate these uses of *zhiwen* and *qihong*:

(14)

郭德華尷尬收檔「外特署」蝗蟲起哄

Guo Dehua is being heckled (*qihong*) by the mob upon his awkward appointment as ‘special representative’

大公報 *Ta Kung Pao*, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1950

(15)

沈昌煥遭猛烈質問

Shen Changhuan was subjected to active heckling (*zhiwen*)

大公報 *Ta Kung Pao*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1964

Example (15) represents the heckling of Guo Dehua, a representative of the Taiwanese government in Hong Kong, as an improper act by “the mob,” whilst the second news item represents the heckling of a Taiwanese politician as a rightful act.

The dual use of *zhiwen* and *qihong* as im/moral heckling metalexemes comes from their pre-1950 roots. *Zhiwen* originates in the orderly arena of Chinese politics in which the ‘heckler’ has right to ask difficult questions. The native *qihong* on the other hand, originates in performance heckling, and it has supposedly gained its negative meaning as it has been adopted in the political context. Note that the development of these terms does not end here: e.g. in the 1980s the notion of *zuqiu-qihong* 足球起哄 (‘football heckling’) appeared in Chinese, as a foreign appropriating. However, the examination of these developments should be the subject of another study.

#### 4. Conclusion

This article has examined ritualisation in intercultural contact by looking into the case study of heckling. Along with exploring a key issue in ritual research, I hope to have

drawn attention to the importance of merging historical sociopragmatic and intercultural pragmatic inquiries.

The paper has illustrated that rituals are not ‘simply there’ in a society, but instead a ritual develops – either through intra-cultural development or intercultural appropriating – in order to fulfil interactional needs triggered by socio-historical changes. In the Chinese case, this need came into existence at a time when political changes triggered the adoption of new interactional practices. After the intercultural appropriating of political ‘heckling’ took place in China through the adoption of *zhiwen*, these metalexemes have been ritualised in different ways, as their modern meanings indicate. Figure 3 illustrates the intercultural historical sociopragmatic contact observed:

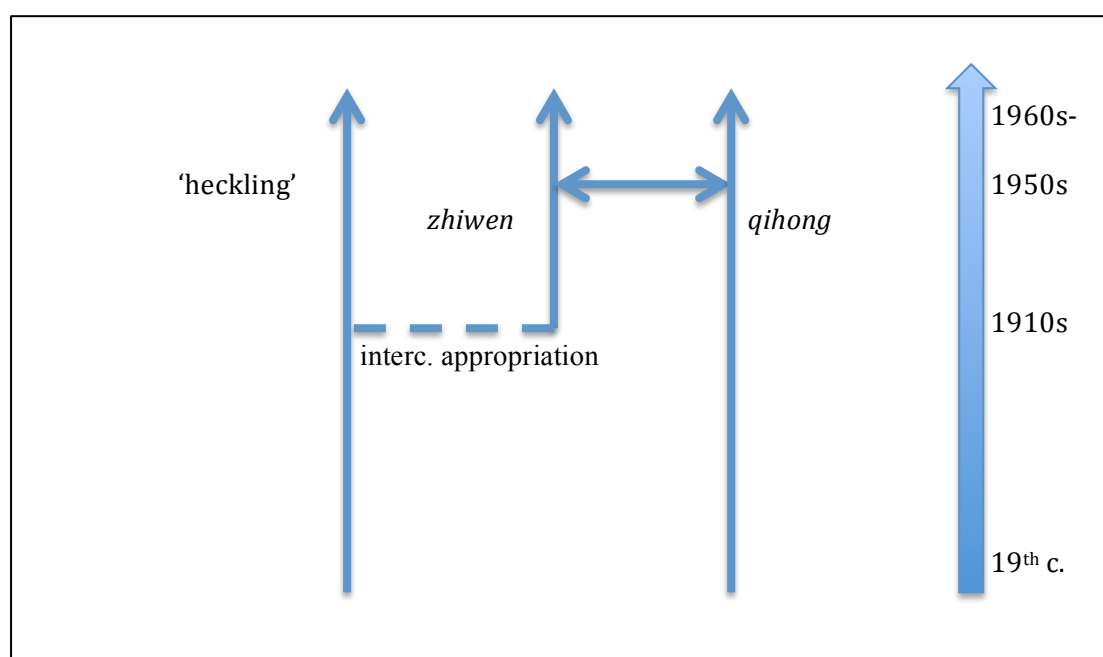


Figure 3: ‘Heckling’ in Sino-British intercultural contact

The arrows shapes of ‘heckling,’ *zhiwen* and *qihong* indicate that ritualisation has no end result, i.e. these metalexemes are subject to further development. The dashed line symbolises the temporary Sino-British intercultural contact, during which *zhiwen* adopted its heckling function. The two-headed arrow between *zhiwen* and the native *qihong*, illustrates the post-appropriation interaction between these lexemes within Chinese culture, as a result of which they gained their modern dual im/moral function.

The present paper has addressed a number of topics that should be examined in future inquiries; I regard the following three topics as particularly important:

- Ritualisation has to be explored both intra-culturally and intercultural across various languages and cultures, in order to obtain a broader view of this phenomenon.
- Examining more data is also important because it would allow us to understand more about the timeframe of ritual appropriation(s). The present study indicated that ritual appropriations can take place within a short time frame; the question remains, however, of whether the time of appropriating can be significantly longer, or whether ritual appropriating tends to be a short process.



- The types of ritual development should further examined. The present research has indicated that ritual phenomena come into existence both by themselves and via intercultural contact; historical sociopragmatic research should delve into the characteristics of these development types.

These questions illustrate that ritualisation is a fascinating topic to explore.

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