Self-denigration in Doctoral Defense Sessions: Scale Development and Validation

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Abstract : The dissertation defense as a complicated conflict-prone context entails the adoption of elegant interactional strategies, one of which is self-denigration. This study aimed to develop and validate a self-denigration model that fits the context of doctoral defense sessions in applied linguistics. Two focus group discussions provided the basis for developing this conceptual model, which assumed 10 functions for self-denigration, namely good manners, modesty, affability, altruism, assertiveness, diffidence, coercive self-deprecation, evasion, diplomacy, and flamboyance. These functions were used to design a 40-item questionnaire on the attitudes of applied linguists concerning self-denigration in defense sessions. The confirmatory factor analysis of the questionnaire indicated the predictive ability of the measurement model. The findings of this study suggest that self-denigration in doctoral defense sessions is the social representation of the participants' values, ideas and practices adopted as a negotiation strategy and a conflict management policy for the purpose of establishing harmony and maintaining resilience. This study has implications for doctoral students and academics and illuminates further research on self-denigration in other contexts.