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Language, Multimodal Interaction and Transaction
Studies of a Southern Chinese marketplace
by Xuehua Xiang

Language, Multimodal Interaction and Transaction

Studies of a Southern Chinese marketplace

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Preface

This book is concerned with how language and multimodal interaction mediate transactional and non-transactional activities in a Southern Chinese marketplace. The naturalistic data used for the study are recorded from the same marketplace in a rural town in Southern China at various points in time over a span of nearly two decades as rural China undergoes rapid urbanization. The ways that ordinary people carry out their daily market activities in ordinary ways offer extraordinary insights into the adaptations and adaptabilities of language to ever evolving socio-economic living conditions.

The analyses presented in this study focus on functions of the marketplace as simultaneously an economic mechanism and a social place. Focusing on these two macro functions of the marketplace, the analyses proceed with these initial questions:

- What communicative activities routinely occur in the traditional retail marketplace?
- What discursive features are common in goal-oriented interactions vis-à-vis socializing talk? How do these two macro functional orientations of language differ and intertwine?
- Compared to the patterns of social interaction documented in previous research on similar and different marketplaces, what insights does the current study provide for understanding interactional universals in relation to locally specific interactional norms?

To pursue these inquiries, some of the specific questions are:

- How does a transaction start? How does it end? How do sellers and buyers interact in pursuit of their conflictive economic goals?
- How do spatial layouts such an open-air space vs. indoor shops, and the presence of built structures, impact interaction?
- What makes a transactional encounter longer than its functional minimum?
- How do buyers and sellers assess the qualities of merchandise in situ of transactional decision making?
- How do bargaining sequences unfold? What are the persuasive resources that social actors bring to influence each other in their acts of bargaining?

– In the marketplace, people assume temporary activity-based relationships (e.g., sellers and buyers, co-buyers, sellers as peers and competitors). How are these temporary market-based relationships enacted and managed? Do other social relationships (acquaintances, relatives, friends, community insiders vs. outsiders) impact interaction?

Focusing on the mediating functions of language and social interaction in selling and buying activities, I analyze how transactions begin, the variability of transactional talk-in-interaction across business types, how goods are promoted and assessed at different stages of transaction, and the ways that conflicts arise to merit bargaining. Based on the discursive patterns identified, I propose an overarching thesis that language, verbal interaction in particular, is both a "transaction cost" and a powerful tool of information access, control and persuasion. It is this paradoxical, Janus nature of language that guides social actors in free markets to interact and react to each other in the ways they do. Additionally, the traditional marketplace, especially in rural areas, is an egalitarian public, social space where individuals, regardless of social status, prestige and occupation, have a legitimate presence and partake in social encounters not necessarily with a functional agenda. I analyze three small talk genres that bound in the traditional marketplace: greetings, gossip and storytelling. Although these phatic oral genres (Malinowski, 1923) do not fulfill an ostensible economic endpoint, different from other settings without an overlain economic frame (Goffman, 1959), individuals co-present in the marketplace are oriented to the public and economic nature of the immediate setting. The role of language in the marketplace, as both incurring transaction costs and a powerful tool of information access, control and persuasion, continues to influence how phatic talk genres unfold by influencing how information is allowed to flow and topicalize, how storytelling bids for empathy, and how gossip changes from tentative prodding to choruses of laughter.

Thus, by analyzing a spectrum of activities typical of the traditional marketplace and capturing changes of these activities over time in the same marketplace, the study offers unique insights into how language and social interaction emerge from, facilitate and evolve with the changing socioeconomic infrastructures in Southern China.

This research project has benefited from many forms of support and generosity from families, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Foremost, my in-law family have facilitated the various research fieldworks that yielded the current speech corpus. My mother-in-law has been instrumental in connecting me to the local marketplace community. My husband with his remarkable linguistic sensibility has afforded me invaluable insights into the local dialects and culture. I am deeply indebted to the shop owners and market vendors whose language and interaction

have given life to this project. I thank my participants for allowing the recorder to run in the background as they went about their daily businesses. My research is only possible because of their big heart and trust.

My initial fieldwork in the particular market studied in this book began in the summer of 2002 owing to the mentoring and encouragement of my doctoral dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan Strauss. From Susan, I not only learned how to analyze discourse, but also learned the meaning of passion in research. To Susan I'm infinitely indebted. Professor Wang Lin at Hainan University (Hainan Province, China) facilitated my fieldworks between 2016 and 2018. I'm deeply thankful to Professor Wang for her collegiality and intellectual camaraderie. I'm also grateful to the graduate students in the MA-Applied Linguistics program at Hainan University. I thank them for their warm welcome and participation in interviews with me about their marketplace experiences.

I'm profoundly grateful to Professor Hongyin Tao for his kind, wise, and patient professional guidance and to Isja Conen for her warmth, patience, and professionalism. I'm also thankful to Ineke Elskamp for typesetting the manuscript with such helpful attention to detail. An earlier version of the analysis in Chapter 3 was presented at the Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) Speaker Series at the University of California, Los Angeles. I thank the Center for inviting me and the audience there for their questions and feedback. Their input has subsequently influenced the directions of the analysis in Chapter 3. An earlier version of the analysis of the vendor spiel genre analyzed in Chapter 6 was presented at the 2018 Georgetown University Round Table (GURT). The audience shared with me the discourse features of the vendor spiels common in their respective cultures which influenced my analysis.

I am deeply grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of an earlier version of the manuscript. Their constructive, critical feedback has in great measures improved the organization and argumentations of the analytical chapters and the final chapter where I offer reflections on emergent social interactions in e-commerce platforms in relation to the central thesis that language is a transaction cost.

Several of the analytical chapters include sketches of selected marketplace scenes drawn by Chen Hongshu (陈洪庶) based on video stills from the speech data. Mr. Chen is a professional illustrator from China. His skillful pen has captured the visual details that I wish to highlight in my analyses. It was with Professor Hongyin Tao's help that I was able to convert the hand-drawn sketches into their current digital format. I'm very grateful to Mr. Chen for his artistic rendition and to Dr. Tao for his kind help. The maps of Northern Hainan Island presented in Chapter 2 are based on information consolidated from Chen (2017) and Liu (2000). The maps are created by cartographer Heix. To Heix I express my gratitude.

I would also like to thank the support of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the forms of research funds, fieldwork equipment and a sabbatical leave. I thank my colleagues Professor Jessica Williams, Professor Richard Cameron, and Professor Susanne Rott for their encouragements at various stages of this research.

All limitations that remain are solely my own.

CHAPTER 1

Language and social interaction in Southern Chinese marketplace

From ancient agoras to modern day shopping plazas, marketplace is one of the oldest, most widely spread social institutions in human history (McMillan, 2002, p. 9). In the traditional marketplace, language plays an elemental role. Through language, people search for information, establish interest, negotiate price, close deals, all the while growing professional and personal relationships. The ways that people interact in the marketplace provide insights into the roles that language plays in the competitive yet cooperative architecture of human society (Enfield and Levinson, 2006; Levinson, 2006).

As a socioeconomic mechanism, marketplace operates under explicit and implicit social norms. Explicit norms are those codified by laws and government regulations to control selling and buying activities. Implicit norms are manifest in the ways that people interact with each other, requesting information, soliciting interest, giving face, passing judgments, expressing likes and dislikes, among numerous other discursive acts governed by local "rules of conduct" (Goffman, 1963). Compared to other spaces of social encounters such as the home or the school, the marketplace is an open public place where an individual's actions are plainly visible and hearable to other co-present strangers. It is not surprising that the marketplace is a public "stage" where people enact their social roles in norm-governed ways (Goffman, 1959, 1967). Norms of interaction are however not monolithic nor static. Interactional norms are context-specific, activity-based, evolving and changing as social structures and economic systems evolve and change (Hymes, 1986, p. 66; see also: Hymes, 1972). Close analyses of marketplace interactions, with awareness that social norms are in constant flux, help us understand how verbal behaviors reflect people's adaptations to the changes in their immediate physical and socioeconomic environments. Such adaptations are grounded in relatively stable experiential lives where each action, in its own specific time and place, is conducted in ways that are "practically, morally, and aesthetically" responsible (Duranti, 2015, p. 6.).

Although marketplace primarily exists to facilitate economic transactions (McMillan, 2002), different marketplace models facilitate different types of social interactions (Lou, 2017). Economist Ronald Coase, in his theorization of the function of an open market in economic activities, depicts the processes of transactions

such: "in order to carry out a market transaction, it is necessary to discover what it is that one wishes to deal with, to inform people that one wishes to deal and on what terms, to conduct negotiations leading up to a bargain, to draw up the contract, to undertake the inspection needed to make sure that the terms of the contract are being observed, and so on" (1960, p. 15; see also Coase, 1937, 1988). In supermarkets, such transactional processes are increasingly mediated by non-interactive processes of product labeling, standardized pricing as well as machine automation. Consequently, verbal interactions are significantly reduced, relegated to politeness rituals (Lou, 2017). Nevertheless, transactions in the traditional marketplace extensively rely on verbal interactions to ascertain product information, negotiate price, reach agreements, and close deals.

The traditional marketplace is the professional habitus of grocers, butchers, fishmongers, bakers, etc. (the concept of "habitus" follows Bourdieu, 1991/2018; see also Bourdieu, 1991). Service shops, such as tea houses, hair salons, restaurants, also concentrate in the marketplace. In these public spaces, people aggregate, by chance or by design, to chat, tell stories, gossip, joke, laugh, partaking in various "phatic" social needs (Malinowski, 1923). Purpose-driven transactional interactions merge and interlock with interpersonal, social use of language in various units of talk-in-interaction in the marketplace. Earlier ethnolinguistic literature regards goal-oriented, transactional talk as distinct in form and function from "small talk." Greeting, gossip, storytelling, joking and other such small talk genres do not appear to serve real-world ends. These talk genres constitute social actions on their own, keeping social orders, discharging emotions, and enabling people to relish the aesthetic, affective, poetic aspects of language (Bauman, 1984; Benveniste, 1971; Jakobson, 1968; Malinowski, 1923). Recent research on small talk genres however demonstrates that small talk plays a role in the execution of purposeful social activities (e.g. Coupland, 2000, 2003; Lindenfeld, 1990, 1994; Schneider, 1988s). Social talk can, and often does, play an important role in transactional dealings. Through joking, storytelling, boasting, protesting, sellers construct the qualities of their goods, express pride in their trades, and sway the decisions of undecided buyers (Lindenfeld, 1990). A hearty laughter could bring a difficult deal to its successful conclusion. A bargaining attempt could end in ridicule.

Writing on the marketplace motif in François Rabelais' "Gargantua and Pantagruel," Bakhtin (1967/2008) remarks on the "unofficial" spirit of the marketplace. People from all walks of life have a legitimate presence in the marketplace. The activities and ways of interacting in the marketplace are "ruled by a special type of relationship, a free, familiar, marketplace relationship." (p. 154) Recent research on market interactions based on urban cities where immigration histories are intense, such as London, Sydney, Hong Kong, shows that street markets, corner shops and roadside stalls in urban spaces are sites of "superdiversity," acting as nexuses where

people of diverse backgrounds and happenstances are temporarily connected by common daily shopping needs (Zhu et al. 2015). Individuals' routine actions in these urban spaces embody the unifying effects of economic activities transcending linguistic, cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic boundaries (Zhu et al. 2017). Immersed in routine marketplace activities, people use a range of multilingual, multimodal and multisensorial processes to achieve their respective economic ends. In so doing, different meaning systems and social norms come into contact with each other, merging to create new linguistic forms and new social orders (Blackledge et al. 2015; Blackledge and Creese, 2017; Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014; Wessendorf, 2014; Zhu et al. 2015, 2017; among others).

The ways people interact, including the communicative modes, linguistic codes, sensorial preferences, registers and styles, are not free from the power imbalances and social biases in the worlds outside of the market domain. Co-participants of market activities execute these activities with orientation to and perceptions of each other's social identity, social position, status, power, wealth, poverty in and outside of the market frame (French, 2001; Kapchan, 1996; McFadden, 2011; cf. Bourdieu, 1986, 1987, 1991; Goffman, 1959). Kapchan's (1996) study of a Moroccan urban marketplace shows that in the marketplace, "every voice is put into question by the presence and competition of all others." (p. 2) The marketplace provides an economically driven milieu in which one can defy existing social inequalities outside of the marketplace frame. For example, female merchants can assume situational power to speak authoritatively to men (Kapchan, 1996). Speakers of stigmatized indigenous languages can bargain on equal terms with speakers of the dominant language in a diglossic society (French, 2001). Vernacular language varieties carry covert prestige and social capital in a multilingual Chinatown bakery (Leung, 2009). Marketplace is an "equalizing" agent in socioeconomically and socio-politically stratified societies (Bakhtin, 1967/2008).

The interplays of language, social interaction and the marketplace as a socioeconomic institution form the main concerns of the current study. The chief theoretical orientation of the book is its belief in the importance of studying naturalistic interactions in situ of real-world activities in the understanding of human language and communication (Goffman, 1959, 1963, 1967, 1972, 1974, 1981; Gumperz; 1982a, 1982b, 1992; Gumperz and Hymes, 1964; Hymes, 1962, 1964, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1981, 1986, 1995; Ochs and Capps, 2000; Saville-Troike, 1982; Strauss, 2002; Strauss and Feiz, 2014; see also: Enfield, 2011, 2018; Enfield and Levinson, 2006; among others). Through analyzing naturalistic social encounters, researchers situate linguistic structures and interactional variations in their naturalistic complexities. It is these complexities that form "a reality sui generis" (Goffman, 1963, p. 134), allowing researchers to study human communication as "comparative and evolutionary in a sociocultural rather than a biological sense" (Hymes, 1974, p. 203).

The naturalistic interactional data that form the basis of the current study were recorded in a series of ethnographic fieldworks conducted between 2002 and 2018. The building of the marketplace speech corpus originated as early as 2002 as part of my doctoral dissertation project (Xiang, 2006), expanded over the years to include more business types and sites, and to capture changes in communicative norms over time (detailed descriptions are in Chapter 2).

The choice of a retail market as the main site of the fieldwork is intentional. The marketplace as an economic institution is constantly evolving. The retail market is a relatively stable retail model essential to the daily lives of ordinary people, especially in rural areas. In a local marketplace, language plays an instrumental role in all stages and facets of transactions, allowing researchers to explore how language interplays with other meaning-making systems to mediate economic activities.

The data derive from a 70-hours corpus of video- and audio-recordings of naturalistic interactions in-situ of buying and selling activities as well as casual conversations as they arise in the marketplace condition (e.g. people chatting at service shops). Social interactions at the marketplace were recorded with the business owners' consent following the research protocols approved by the Internal Review Boards (IRB) of the researcher's affiliated institutions.

The speech corpus consists of interactional activities captured in the naturalistic "chaos" of the marketplace. As people conduct their everyday businesses in the marketplace, ordering food, purchasing grocery, having clothes tailor-made, getting haircuts, buying lottery tickets, chatting about life's sundries, interactions are rapidly unfolding, unpredictable, noise packed. This type of data differs from traditional sociolinguistic data generated by elicited interviews in noise-controlled homes and recording studios. The traditional one-on-one sociolinguistic interview method favors the monologue, reflective mode of speaking in which talk occurs to produce talk for research (Stokoe, 2010). Marketplace interactions occur in their naturalistic settings outside of the research lab, with real-world material motivations and consequences.

Research on language and interaction in the "chaos" of ordinary activities has grown considerably in the past years, forging the frontier of research on translingual, multimodal social interactions (e.g., Goodwin, C., 1981, 1984, 1986, 1987, 2000, 2003, 2009; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1987, 1996, 2000, 2004; Goodwin, M. 1996; Heath, 1986; Li, 2011, 2014; Li and Ono, 2019; Mayes and Tao, 2019; Mondada, 2009, 2014, 2016, 2018; Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014; Streeck, 2013, 2017; Streeck et al. 2011; Tao, 1999; Zhu et al. 2015; Zhu et al. 2017; among many others). The marketplace is a highly complex environment where language is inseparable from other meaning-making systems such as the body (gaze, posture, pace, gesture), the material conditions of the setting (e.g., furniture and spatial layout), the semiotic potentials of material objects, as well as the linguistic repertoires of speakers and

the communities they belong to (e.g., Kusters, 2017; Lou, 2017; Williams, 2017). Diverse modes of meaning-making fuse together in market activities giving us a front row view of the multimodal and materialistic nature of social interaction.

Previous research in this emerging area however primarily draws on data in cosmopolitan urban spaces deeply affected by globalization (Blommaert, 2010). The current study focuses on the rural setting where globalization has only just begun to show its impact on ordinary everyday lives. In the small rural town studied in this book, populations are considerably homogenous; social mobility, access to social media and widespread literacy are not common. Consequently, multilingual, multisensory and multimodal interactions are manifested in different ways than in urban settings.

Compared to life in the cosmopolitan, urban areas, the rural life is a much more prevalent living condition around the world. Rural lives are however hardly visible in current sociolinguistic research. Studying language and social interactions in the rural setting is important for understanding universal features of human interaction vis-à-vis their local specific characteristics. If research is solely based on the urban cosmopolitan setting, we risk essentializing the speech patterns of urban dwellers. For example, the norms of orderliness and gracious politeness rituals, common in urban marketplaces (e.g. Lindenfeld, 1990, 1994; Mondada, 2018), may be a reflex of standardization and institutionalization common in urban spaces.

In addition, the growing body of literature on multimodal talk-in-interaction tends to draw primarily on the social lives of European and North American middle-class populations (but see diverse research agendas emerging from Li, 2014; Li and Ono, 2019; Luke, 1990; Tao, 1999; Zhu et al. 2015, 2017; among others). The current study contributes to the expanding research on multimodal social interactions conducted in less commonly studied language varieties and speech communities. Through analyzing a wide range of cultural contexts, researchers stand on a firmer position to study how universal markers of social interactional meanings (such as turn-taking mechanisms, grammatical resources for speaker stances, gaze, laughter, silence) are understood and enacted similarly as well as differently across communities. Through broadening and incorporating natural complexities into the empirical bases of research, the research community in turn stand on a more solid ground to theorize the interplay of language and society.

Discourse-oriented ethnographic research on marketplace interactions in the Chinese context has been scarce and exclusively based on Mandarin and Cantonese data (e.g., Leung, 2009; Lou, 2017; Orr, 2007; Pan, 2000a, 2000b). The speech corpus for the current study includes instances of multi-dialectal interactions rarely researched but commonplace in Southern China. The linguistic varieties that naturally occur in the data include the Shishan regional variety of Lingao (临高话 *Língāohuà*), a non-Chinese language of the Tai-Kadai family (Xin, 2011; Xiang,

2006, 2009, 2011, 2012a; Strauss and Xiang, 2009; Zhang et al., 1984), Hainanese (海南话 Hǎinánhuà, a Southern Min variety, Liu, 2000) and Mandarin Chinese (普通话 Pǔtōnghuà). By including code-switching behaviors conducted in Chinese and non-Chinese varieties, we additionally study multilingualism in its natural habitus in Southern China.

The unit of analysis in this study is sequences of interaction in specific speech events and actions, heuristically identified in the data, such as service and sales encounters, storytelling, gossip, and greetings (Hymes, 1972). Activities with goal orientations tend to have their own trajectories and internal organization. Less goal-oriented speech occasions, such as greetings and gossip, also follow certain trajectories where "the initiating and terminating of a conversation …(form) a total unit of communication." (Goffman, 1981, p. 14) The analyses focus on pragmatic meanings and discourse patterns using an eclectic toolbox from discourse analysis, i.e., Conversation Analysis (Sacks, 1992; Sacks et al. 1974), speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986), multimodal interaction analysis (e.g., Goodwin, C. 2000, 2003; Kendon, 1972, 1990, 1997; Li, 2014; Mondada, 2014, 2016; among many others), register and genre analysis (Agha, 2006), interactional sociolinguistics (e.g., Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b, 1992), narrative analysis (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Ochs and Capps, 2000), and the Goffman tradition of micro-sociology. The study also resorts to constructs from economics ("Transaction Cost," Coase, 1937, 1960, 1988; Williamson, 1985) and organization studies (March and Simon, 1958/1993) to the degree that certain concepts shed light on the speech patterns identified.

The study investigates two interrelated issues driven heuristically by the nature of the marketplace as both an institution for economic transactions and as a social space for chance meetings between members in and outside of the local community. Particularly in the analyses of transactional activities, the study focuses on how language interplays with other semiotic systems, as such gaze, gesture, proxemics, posture. This integrated perspective (Kendon, 1972, 1990, 1997; Tao, 1999) provides us views of the capacities of language as well as its limitations in comparison and in collaboration with other semiotic systems.

The analytic lenses used are heuristic throughout the chapters. Each chapter is informed by the theoretical constructs most relevant for the research concerns for that particular chapter. For example, the incipient stage of transactions draws significantly on non-verbal means for communication (such as gesture, gaze, body orientation, posture, mediation of the physical environment and material objects). Consequently, multimodal interaction analysis is adopted as a lens more saliently in Chapter 3 than in other chapters (e.g. Goodwin, 2000, 2003; Kendon, 1972, 1990, 1997; Tao, 1999). Likewise, in the analysis of bargaining as a speech genre (Chapter 5), paralinguistic features, such as prosody, pace and voice quality are

important for deriving contextualized interpretation of utterances as bargaining moves. Thus, analysis of prosody along with discourse and interactional features of utterances is utilized (Li, 2014).

Each of the following chapters is directed toward particular aspects of the social organization of language and interaction in the marketplace context in Southern China. The next chapter presents a sociolinguistic sketch of the marketplace as a setting, building a general context for the various arguments in the rest of the book. It also describes the background of the data. Chapter 3 explores the beginning stage of sales and service encounters focusing on the role of multimodal resources for initiating a focused interaction prerequisite for a transaction. The analysis develops arguments concerning the correlation between conflictive activity goals and patterns of "interactional asymmetry". These themes inform Chapter 4 which focuses on transaction as an oral genre consisting of a continuum of highly formulaic sequences, on the one end, and elaborate interactions on the other end. The patterns across business types show that access to information plays a central role in how transactions proceed interactionally. Information access is in turn affected by the physical, spatial and material specificities of the context. Chapter 5 focuses on bargaining sequences analyzing how bargaining attempts are initiated and managed. The chapter positions bargaining in the broader genre of conflict talk. The findings suggest that when social interactions originate from the interactants' conflictive agendas, the speakers orient to striking a balance between social (sometimes moral) obligations and economic interests. I also illustrate what I call a "negative" interactional style to conduct conflict talk that may be culturally specific. Chapter 6 explores the interactive facets of assessment activities central in the marketplace. Assessing goods prior to, during and post transactions has different purposes, structures, and interpretations. I illustrate that the ways that speakers conduct assessment, interpret assessment, agree/disagree with assessment build upon locally specific systems of knowledge, value, and perceptions of prestige.

The last two analytic chapters turn to "small talk" genres that are pervasive in the traditional marketplace. Three talk genres are analyzed for interpersonal interactions. The reason for selecting these genres is that they are, besides transactional talk-in-interaction, the most common, recurrent interactive activities in the marketplace contributing to its social allure. Chapter 7 focuses on two oral genres that appear to be on the opposite ends of social propriety, i.e., greeting vs. gossip. Both genres facilitate people's need to bond and affirm normative social orders. I illustrate the pivotal importance of information control in both genres. Chapter 8 is titled "Market has a Heart," a tribute to Ochs and Schieffelin (1989), "Language has a heart." The chapter examines the role of affect in conversational storytelling in the marketplace condition. I illustrate that storytelling is spirally built upon empathic responses from the intended audience. These small talk genres do not play

a central role in economic transactions in Shishan marketplace, but their unique features provide us insights into how, in the public, open marketplace, people strike a balance between protecting and pursuing one's own interest while abiding by social norms of face, integrity and morality. The diffusion of information in gossip, never neutral or value-free, additionally shows the power of word-of-the-mouth mechanism in the marketplace.

I share the view expressed in Deborah Cameron (2001) that discourse analysis is analytically descriptive, but it also aims for an explanatory account of why people behave the way they do. Throughout the analytical chapters, incorporating the concept of "Transaction Cost" (Coase, 1937, 1960, 1988; Williamson, 1985), I argue that language, verbal interaction in particular, incurs transaction costs: interactionally mediated transactions cost time, effort and lead to unpredictable outcomes due to the symbolic ambiguities of what one means at the moment-by-moment unraveling of interaction. At the same time, however, language is a powerful tool of information access, control and persuasion. This paradoxical nature of language underlies social agents' orientation to using language in transactions in the marketplace. The central thesis proposed here, language is a transaction cost, is not a purely rationalistic costs vis-à-vis gains position. The processes of interacting with others to partake in humor and laughter, to reveal and mold one's place in the world, to hear stories and tell stories, to align and misalign with each other's experiences, have their own reward, especially in the context of individuals acting as free-willing, micro-agents. Each person acting as their own agent renders each transaction encounter in the marketplace potentially a social encounter where social benefits can transcend costs-effects economic planning.

Therefore, by focusing on universal interactional themes based on a specific speech community over the span of nearly two decades, the chapters here are concerned with two central ideas: how language, particularly talk-in-interaction, mediates socioeconomic activities, and how certain universal principles of social interaction, such as turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974) and participants' co-orientation to focus (Kendon, 1990) take on local and culturally specific characteristics. In addition, by focusing on both the economic, transactional function of the marketplace and the interpersonal, social needs that a local market serves, the chapters depict, through sociolinguistic lenses, the traditional marketplace as lived and experienced. If the book brings about, in its own way, convergence and integration of "scientific and practical need" (Hymes, 1974, p. 194), it has reached its goal.

CHAPTER 2

The research context, methodology and theoretical preliminaries

The research site of this study is the central open-air, retail marketplace of Shishan town (石山镇 *Shíshānzhèn*), a small rural town located in the inland coastal area of Northern Hainan Island, Southern China. Like the numerous small-scale, local-serving markets in contemporary rural China, the central market in Shishan town is an ordinary but essential economic infrastructure that connects local people's domestic lives to wider economy where goods from non-agrarian sources are obtainable (Fei, 2006; Mintz, 1971). In the following sections, I outline the key characteristics of Shishan market as a site of research on language and social interaction. I also describe the data collection process and the key theoretical frameworks and findings from previous research as points of departure for the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Shishan market

With a population of 41,000, Shishan town is located on Northern Hainan Island (海南岛 *Hǎinándǎo*), Southern China, twenty kilometers south of Haikou city (海口市 *Hǎikǒushì*), the capital city of Hainan Province ("Shishan Town," 2019) (see Figure 2.1).

Hainan Province is an island province, China's southernmost province, facing Guangdong Province (广东省 *Guǎngdōngshěng*) and Guangxi Province (广西省 Guǎngxīshěng) on the mainland across the Qiongzhou Strait (琼州海峡 *Qióngzhōu Hǎixiá*). In 1950, Hainan Island was designated Hainan Administrative Region (海南行政区公署 *Hǎinán Xíngzhèngqū Gōngshǔ*) under the administration of Guangdong Province. In 1984, Hainan Island became Hainan Province and China's fifth Special Economic Zone (经济特区 *Jīngjìtèqū*). Hainan's mild winter attracts large populations of vacationers and retirees from mainland China which supports the tourism industry in Hainan. Migration patterns also correlate with waves of real estate booms since the 1990s. Hainan's landscape and culture have been rapidly and radically changing due to influxes of mainland populations and capital investments following touristic and real estate trends. Recently, the Chinese central government has announced plans to develop Hainan into a Free Trade Zone (自由贸易岛

Figure 2.1 Map of Northern Hainan Island. Shishan town is 20 kilometers south of the capital city, Haikou

Zìyóumàoyìdǎo) by 2020, and a Free Trade Port (自由贸易港 *Zìyóumàoyìgǎng*) by 2025 (Xinhuanet.com, April 15, 2018). From a sociolinguistic point of view, these sweeping socioeconomic initiatives will inevitably affect the communicative norms practiced locally and the linguistic diversity on Hainan Island.

Hainan is co-inhabited by more than 30 ethnic groups both aboriginal on the island and due to migrations to the island from mainland Southeast Asia throughout the past millennium (Hainan Nianjian, 2002). Mandarin and other local varieties of Chinese, e.g., Hainanese (海南话 *Hǎinánhuà*), a Southern Min variety, co-exist with non-Chinese varieties, e.g., Lingao (临高话 *Língāohuà*) and Li (黎语 *Líyǔ*) (Ruan et al. 1994). Shishan residents are Han Chinese speaking a regional variety of Lingao, a non-Chinese variety of the Tai-kadai language family, close in genealogy to the Zhuang ethnic group's language (壮语 *Zhuàngyǔ*) spoken in Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces on the mainland (Liang and Zhang, 1997; Liu, 2000; Zhang et al. 1984). Lingao shares grammatical features with other Tai-kadai languages such as Lao and Thai (Hashimoto, 1980, 1982, 1985).

Shishan town formerly was under the administration of Lingao County where Lingao, a Tai-kadai variety, is spoken. In 2002, Shishan was re-designated to be under the administration of Haikou city, the capital city of Hainan Province where Hainanese, a Southern Min variety, is spoken. This shift in administrative governance has expedited the integration of Lingao-speaking Shishan into the Mandarin

and Hainanese-speaking urban areas. Shishan is geographically close to Haikou city, only 20 kilometers away connected by well-maintained highways and regular shuttle buses. Many Shishan residents conduct business or find employment in the urban Haikou city. It is not uncommon that Shishan children attend high schools in Haikou and speak Mandarin and Hainanese primarily. In the past decade, due to the spatial and administrative expansion of Haikou city and the urbanization of the rural areas around Haikou, an entire Shishan family and sometimes an entire village would uproot themselves and relocate to Haikou gradually losing their ties to Shishan (see Figure 2.2).

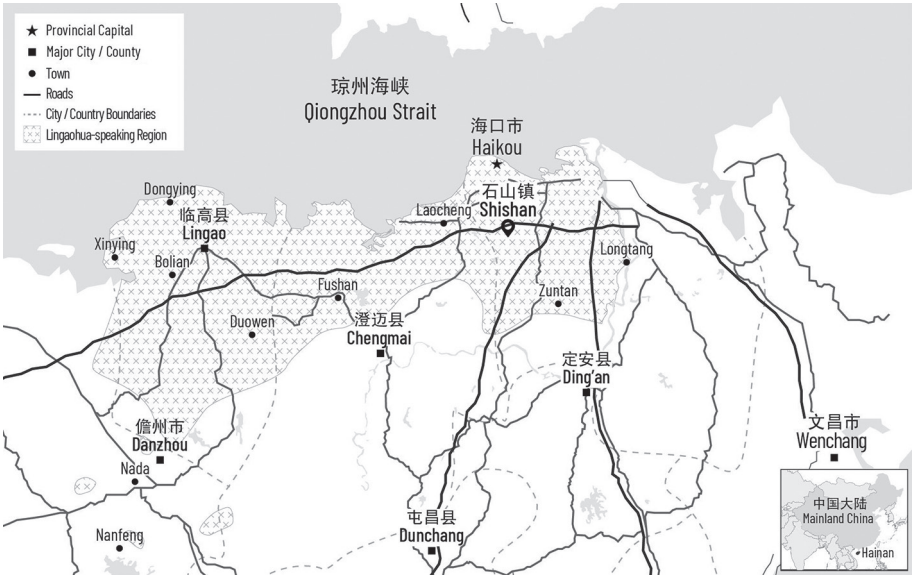

Figure 2.2 The gray area marks the Lingao-speaking region on Northern Hainan Island. Surrounded by Lingao varieties, the dominant languages in Haikou urban area are however two Chinese varieties, Mandarin and Hainanese

Shishan Town is home to a national geopark, officially known as the Hainan Haikou Shishan Volcanic Cluster National Geopark (海南海口石山火山群国家地质公园 *Hǎinán Hǎikǒu Shíshān Huǒshānqún Guójiā Dìzhì Gōngyuán*) (hereafter Volcanic Park). This well-known Volcanic Park is located outside of the municipal center of Shishan town, separated from the town's central area by a mountain range. Tourists coming to the Volcanic Park rarely come to visit Shishan town as the town center itself is not a tourist attraction. The central market of Shishan (hereafter Shishan market), which is the research site of the current project, remains a local market, which the pioneering sociologist Fei Xiaotong (费孝通) would categorize as an "insider market, internal market" (Fei, 2006, pp. 151–161).

The terrains of the Shishan town area are covered in rocks formed from ancient volcanic eruptions some 27,000 to a million years ago (He et al. 1988). The town's name, 石山 'Rock Mountain,' reflects this geological history. Traditional houses in Shishan are built with volcanic stones. The porous, black and greyish exterior of the volcanic rocks adds to Shishan town's unique landscape (see Figure 2.3)

Figure 2.3 An arch that marks the entrance to a village in Shishan town. The arch is built with volcanic rocks. On the two sides of the entrance are shrines for Earth God (土地公 *Tǔdìgōng*)

The large-scale economic plans that the Chinese central government has announced for Hainan Island are yet to exert their full impact on the local economy and social structures of Shishan town. In the past two decades, the northern inland areas of Hainan Island remain rural and agriculturally based. Shishan town's economy consists of traditional farming, tourism and migrant laboring. Local residents work in the tourism industry (e.g., restaurants and landscaping), engage in seasonal migrant work on the mainland, or grow traditional crops such as rice, sugarcane, yam, as well as fruits such as lychee, guava and papaya. Some enterprising farmers also grow tropical plants to supply the landscaping industry or raise live stocks for high-end restaurants especially mountain goats, a nationally known culinary specialty of the region.

The dominant vernacular language in Shishan is the local Shishan dialect of Lingao, which doesn't have a written form. During my initial fieldwork in Shishan in 2002, Mandarin and Hainanese were minimally heard in Shishan except being spoken by schoolteachers and government employees. In the past decade, Shishan town has begun to shift to a multilingual town with inter-generational disparities in primary language choice. The young, especially children, are Mandarin-dominant speakers, receiving formal education in Mandarin and encountering Mandarin in mass media, on the Internet and social media. This dominance of Mandarin is reinforced by parents' perception of the benefits of learning Mandarin for their

children's economic and professional future. Young adults tend to codeswitch in Mandarin, Hainanese and Shishan dialect depending on their personal experiences and social network. Older adults speak Shishan dialect more fluently than other varieties while the elderly remain monolingual speakers of Shishan dialect.

Asymmetrical multilingualism is both at the individual level and at the societal level. Mandarin has prestige as China's national and official language, the medium adopted for government, law, mass media, education, the internet and all other public domains of service. Hainanese is the *de facto* local official language of Hainan Province adopted in provincial government services and heard on radio and television channels. Shishan residents whose vernacular tongue is Shishan dialect need to speak Mandarin or Hainanese in order to communicate with Mandarin and Hainanese speakers. Government employees and schooling staff primarily come from Mainland China or Haikou city speaking Mandarin only or are bilingual in Mandarin and Hainanese.

This evolving multilingual situation is reflected in marketplace activities. From 2002 to the present time, Shishan market has transformed from a roadside makeshift market to a centrally planned, government- administered economic space. Based on field observations and interaction data recorded in 2002, Shishan market then was formed based on "sedimentation" of recurrent peddling activities that settled into a physical as well as social space locally known as *ho* 'the market' (the notion of "sedimentation" follows Streeck, 2013; also see: Fei, 2006). In 2002, the physical space of the market corresponded to the open space alongside the only main road that passed through the town's central area in front of the municipal building. No built structures nor official signage were present to demarcate the market area.

In Shishan dialect, the market is referred to as *ho* with such associated expressions as *bei ho* 'go to the market", *rung ho* "go (down) to the market', *gen ho* "go (up) to the market', *dun ho* 'stroll around in the market', *ven ho* 'Market Day' and the like. In the morning, vendors of freshly butchered meats, seafoods, fish, fruits, vegetables and other merchandise lined the two sides of the main road in front of the municipal building. Sellers found spots to sell their goods based on the traditional norm of first-come-first-choose allocation of rights to space. In the afternoon, around dinnertime, vendors of cooked meats, typically roast duck, pork, and lamb, pitched their make-shift roast-and-serve stations along the main road, creating loud noises of chopping, talking, and laughing (see Figure 2.4, Figure 2.5, Figure 2.6). A row of one-story buildings lined the main road which housed shops for sit-down services such as tea houses, noodle eateries, general stores, photo and copy services, hair salons, dressmaker's shops, and the only bookstore in town. Based on field notes and data recorded in 2002, there were no Mandarin-speaking merchants from outside of the community nor the use of megaphones to blast pre-recorded sales spiels both of which are now common fixtures in Shishan market (see Figure 2.7, Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.4 A view of the main street which served as a make-shift market on Market Day

Figure 2.5 On my initial fieldwork in 2002. The backdrop is a typical Market Day on the main street in front of the municipal building

Figure 2.6 Customers buying baby chickens

Figure 2.7 The front of a general store

Figure 2.8 Along the main street were service shops with residential quarters in the back

Rapid changes took place in the past decade, especially in the past few years. The Chinese central government has initiated a nation-wide "双创" (*Shuāngchuàng*) movement that widely transformed how economic activities are to be conducted across China. The name 双创 (literally, "Dual Innovations") is a shorthand for the nation-wide political and economic campaign known as "大众创业,万众创新" (*Dàzhòng Chuàngyè, Wànzhòng Chuàngxīn*, officially translated in English as "Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation", China.org.cn, March 17, 2015). This wide-spread, centralized campaign impacts local marketplaces by institutionalizing the marketplace as a government-managed public space. Local markets, traditionally sedimentations of individual, recurrent economic activities, are re-organized into modern plaza-style markets with centralized administration, including licensing, sanitation facilities, security and sanitation personnel, and public signage that regulate and standardize marketplace activities. The stated goals of these market renovations are to improve sanitation, facilitate the logistic flows of goods and transactions, as well as deter economic deception and exploitation (Haikou.gov.cn, August 2, 2016).

Shishan market is a concrete instance of the centralized movement to transform public economic spaces. Compared to early 2000s, Shishan market has expanded considerably in the past decade, relocating from its original make-shift roadside location to a built space adjacent to the town's municipal building. A new road now leads pedestrians off the main road toward the market where an iron gate marks the entrance and signals the exclusive economic purpose of the enclosed space. The market is given an official name too. Written in traditional Chinese characters, the name 石山鎮平價菜場 (*Shíshānzhèn Píngjià Càichǎng*) 'Shishan Town Fair Price Grocery Market' is displayed on top of the red iron gate (see Figure 2.9).

Inside the market space are spacious vending stations organized in rows and aisles separating merchandise by categories. The built structure of the market space resembles the Chinese character "回," with an inner rectangle and an outer rectangle. The inner rectangle is the premium section for licensed "wet" goods such as freshly butchered meats, seafoods, and assortments of fish. This premium area is shielded from the weather by a very tall ceiling, open-air on the four sides. Each vending station is built with concrete with a long counter facing the foot traffic. A spacious work area is behind the counter equipped with tap water and drainage (see Figure 2.10).

The outer rectangular area is organized by licensed vending stations for expensive fruits, such as lychees, apples and melons, and household items such as small furniture and electric appliances. The vending stations located in the most interior side of the outer rectangle, away from the entrance, are occupied by vendors for massively manufactured goods imported from mainland China such as packaged meat products, small home furniture and appliances, mass-produced clothing, and non-local snacks such as hot dogs and popcorns, which are signs of "globalization from below" (Mathews et al. 2012). Some of the vendors of these imported goods

Figure 2.9 In 2014, the central market transformed from a make-shift street market to an official, government-administered marketplace. The photograph shows the iron gate demarcating entrance to the market area

Figure 2.10 In the new marketplace, expensive goods such as meats are inside the built structure shaded from the weather with a tall ceiling, equipped with sanitation and drainage facilities. The vending stations bear public signage indicating merchandise types and government regulations

use megaphones to blast pre-recorded promotional spiels in Mandarin on high decibels. Younger vendors are able to reciprocate the customer's language choice with swift codeswitching between Mandarin, Hainanese and the local Shishan dialect of Lingao. Older sellers tend to only speak Shishan dialect and use gestures to communicate to Mandarin-speaking customers.

Between the outer rectangle area and the inner rectangle area are the marginal, transitional spaces where daily peddlers can pitch their sales without a license. These transitional areas allow local farmers to sell small quantities of home-made or home-grown goods such as tofu, fruits, eggs, vegetables and pickles. The peddlers without a license either use baskets to display their goods or spread out a piece of vinyl on the ground to demarcate their business area. These transitional spaces afford farmers an unofficial but legitimate presence in the now institutionalized marketplace, an existence "between formal and informal economies." (Shepeard, 2012, p. 187) (see Figure 2.11)

Figure 2.11 Outside the built structure are transitional spaces for non-licensed daily peddlers

A significant feature of the marketplace as a centralized institutional space is the employment of security and administrative personnel known as 市场管理人员 *(Shìchǎng Guǎnlǐ Rényuán)* 'Market Administrative Personnel' whose main duty is to enforce market regulations. In Shishan market, the enforcers occupy a fenced area at one corner of the market near the entrance, with purview of the entire market space. The market enforcers tend to be local residents, but their official status as enforcers give them institutional power. Non-licensed vendors are not allowed to occupy a premium location, even if the space has not been leased out, and business of the licensed stations is not allowed to be conducted beyond a certain designated spatial boundary. Such regulations are enforced in a bureaucratic manner without flexibility (see Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12 Centralized and institutionalized administration is evidenced not only by the built structure and market-specific signage, but also by the sanitation and security staff and public transportation signage for visitors. The photograph shows a sanitation employee maintaining the cleanliness of the market; a public signage is located at the entrance indicating direction to board the shuttle bus to Haikou city

These infrastructural changes are not random. They reflect local government's policies to transform local markets as part of the larger initiative to urbanize and modernize public spaces in rural townships. The following is excerpted from Hainan government's decrees on the renovation standards of farmer's markets in urban and rural townships.

新建的城镇农贸市场应当符合以下基本要求和本省城镇农贸市场建设标准：

（一） 市场建筑物应为钢筋混凝土结构；
（二） 交易区应当划行归市，合理布局；
（三） 消防、通风、排水、排污等设施完备，具有良好的采光条件；
（四） 对鲜活、易污染变质商品配备符合规定的有效隔离设施；
（五） 设立农产品安全检测室；
（六） 法律、法规、规章规定的其它条件。

Newly built farmer's markets in cities and townships should meet the following basic requirements and standards for the construction of urban farmer's markets in this province:

1. Market buildings should be steel and concrete structures.
2. The trading area should be organized according to the commodities' categories, and with a reasonable layout.
3. Facilities for fire protection, ventilation, drainage, sewage, etc. should be complete and there should be good lighting or light sources.
4. Equipped with effective isolation facilities in compliance with regulations for live commodities and commodities that are easily contaminated and/or deteriorate easily.
5. Agricultural product safety testing rooms should be established.
6. Other conditions as stipulated by laws, regulations and rules.

(Hainan Government Decree #210, translated by researcher)

Apart from these changes that centralize and standardize the local marketplace according to national and international standards, two facets of the local market have remained the same from 2002 to the current time. One is that women are still much more visible than men as vendors in the marketplace (similar gender roles are observed in an urban Guatemalan marketplace, French, 2001). The traditional division of labor along gender groups is common in Shishan. Women run small retail businesses while men either operate behind the scenes, work as migrant workers or farm on family lands. Nevertheless, some trades such as butchers have remained male-dominant.

Another constant feature that has not changed over the years is that Shishan market continues to run on a market calendar, which creates regularity, predictability and festivity on Market Days (Fei, 2006). Market Days occur twice a week in Shishan town known locally as *ven ho* (literally 'Day Market'). On Market Days, Shishan market is particularly hustle-bustle. Villagers come "up" to the market to sell their freshly picked produce and purchase household goods; urban folks from Haikou city come "down" to the market to sample local flavors. The market bursts with noises, people peddling and chatting, crowds gathering around *da be* ("the lottery master") for lottery-purchasing tips, buses, scooters and motor rickshaws

transporting people in and out of town. Near dinnertime, the chopping of roast meats is loud and joyous. These "soundscapes" have not changed.

2.2 The data

The data that form the basis of the current analyses come from a large corpus of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction recorded at privately owned small shops and vending stations in and around Shishan market. The business types range from groceries (e.g. pork, fruit, tofu, vegetables, etc.) to service shops (e.g., dressmaker's shop, noodle eatery, convenience shop, hair salon, etc.). Customer-vendor interactions were recorded via video and audio recording equipment following the IRB protocols under which the research was approved. The participating shop owners and merchants were recruited from family networks as well as through the snowballing technique drawing on suggestions from earlier participants (see Figure 2.13, Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.13 Shishan community liaison and translator Kong standing in the market with his 92-years-old grandfather who loved coming to the marketplace to listen to people talk

Figure 2.14 Rong was my contact with the local marketplace network. This photograph captures Rong preparing *Zongzi* leaves to make *Zongzi* dumplings for Market Day

The types of consent that the participants gave for data recording ranged from allowing the recorder to run in the background at the business location for the entire duration of the business hours for several days on end, to only a few contiguous transactions so as not to inconvenience the business. The video recording device was set in various ways based on the vendor's comfort and consent, with the uniform criterion of recording at least the audio aspect of interactions as they occurred. For example, at service shops with a stable power supply and fairly manageable business traffic, a video camera was set up on a tripod in an inner corner of the shop to capture the entire interior of the shop. At the same time, an audio recorder was attached on the shop owner's body to capture the verbal aspects of the interaction as clearly as possible as the shopkeeper moved about (see Figure 2.15).To reduce the effects of "observer's paradox" (Labov, 1972), that is, the participants would act in a self-conscious manner under the researcher's observation, I let the camera roll in the corner of the shop for as long as I could, typically starting at the beginning of the business hours such that people would soon get used to the presence of the camera. I also walked about, chatted with people in the store as a common member of the setting, which alleviated the observer's paradox.

In the open-air marketplace, as compared to service shops, foot traffic was heavy, especially on Market Days. Using video recording equipment to record interaction tended to cause considerable unease in the community, especially with the surveillance of the market regulations personnel. In these situations, I only used an audio recording device with the audio recorder strapped on the body of the vendor to capture the audio naturalistically in a non-intrusive way. I stayed nearby to observe the interactions and took field notes. Some vendors agreed to be video

Figure 2.15 Video stills from the 2002 corpus showing the recording sites of a hair salon, a convenience store, a noodle restaurant and a dressmaker's shop and how the video recorder was positioned

recorded for short periods of time with the researcher holding the video camera standing next to the station. The resulting speech corpus thus captured a broad variety of interactions with different durations of time, different business types, and a range of merchants and customers in age, gender and language backgrounds.

The data used in the current analysis are extracted from the above larger corpus. Initially a ten-hours subset of the data were fully transcribed using the Conversation Analytic transcription convention (Jefferson, 2004; see Appendix A), featuring approximately equal amounts of time from selected sites based on their business types. Additional data were viewed from which specific transactional events were selected and transcribed. These additional segments were chosen purposefully to include additional examples of target genres or events (e.g., gossip, first-person storytelling, bargain, formulaic versus extensive transactional interactions). I also included in-depth multimodal analyses of certain transactional events where multimodal and multisensorial aspects of the interaction are particularly essential. For these in-depth multimodal analyses, I transcribed the interactions using the Elan transcription program developed by the Max Planck Research Institute (Version 5.2, Sloetjes and Wittenburg, 2008). I used the function of "Tier" in Elan to separately transcribe speech, gesture, gaze, as they simultaneously occur in interactive actions. The Elan-based transcripts allowed in-depth, recursive analysis of the interaction as integrated, multimodal ensembles. The data segments presented have anonymized the data using pseudonyms and substituted personally identifiable information.

While the speech corpus has breath in number of speakers and range of settings, as well as depth due to re-occurrences of similar activities, some of the interactions only have audio recordings. In addition, as Hymes (1986) noted, social encounters have "social interests." That is, social interactions are affected by existing personal relationships (p. 66). It would have been useful to include ethnographic interviews with the participating vendors to better understand their market experience and relationships with specific customers. However, in the context of rural China, merchants in the local market are "street smart," deeply suspicious of formalistic methods. Metalinguistic research methods such as interviews and stimulated recalls would significantly affect the participants' comfort with the research process, and in turn affect ability to recruit additional participants. I relied on trained analysis, field notes, as well as consultation with native speakers whenever interpretative uncertainties arise. The analysis is careful not to extend its arguments beyond what is reliable in the data.

Ancillary to the speech corpus are field notes, artifacts and photographs collected over the years that helped to capture the evanescent, ever shifting local contexts. Additional to the natural speech corpus is a corpus of 10-hours interview data with graduate students at Hainan University (海南大学) which is located in Haikou city, from which Shishan town is 20 kilometers away. The graduate students interviewed are mostly from mainland China except one student who is a native of Haikou city. The interview participants are selected because they both shop locally and have experience in marketplace settings in their respective hometowns in various parts of Mainland China. The interviews are intended to gather insights of marketplace experiences in a wide array of settings and focusing on young people's memories, experiences, and preferences which provide a wider backdrop to the Shishan data. While these meta-reflections gathered from the interview method and based on a different demographic are not the focus of the current study, some of the meta-commentaries are included in the final chapter to contextualize the shifting social norms that govern marketplace interactions and the specific ways that such norms are locally and economically structured.

As the analytic lenses adopted in each chapter are varied and purpose-driven, the transcription conventions used for presenting the data and facilitating data analysis have certain variations too (Ochs, 1979). Excerpts in Shishan dialect and Hainanese are presented using the author's adaptation of the Pinyin System for Mandarin Chinese (see discussion in Xiang [2006] on the correspondence between Mandarin-based Pinyin system and the local vernacular of Shishan which has a wider range of lexical tones and syllable structures). Data excerpts in Mandarin Chinese are presented in both the Chinese orthography and in the Pinyin phonetic system.

Spoken interactions are transcribed using the Conversation Analytic (CA) transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004) and organized based on Intonation Units (IUs). Intonation Unit (hereafter IU) is a prosody-based speech unit identified by a single coherent intonation contour (Chafe, 1980, 1987, 1993, 1994; Du Bois et al. 1993; Tao, 1996). IU is shown to be a relevant and crucial unit of spoken interaction across languages including tonal languages (Tao, 1996; also see: Li, 2014). The only exceptions to organizing a data excerpt using IUs are cases of monologue excerpted from interview data and e-commerce sales spiels which are analyzed for their ideational contents only (Halliday, 1994).

Turn-taking and prosodic characteristics are transcribed following CA conventions visually depicting the paralinguistic features of the delivery of speech, e.g., pauses, restarts, sound stretches, overlapping speech, and laughter. For instance, a colon as in '*ra*::::' indicates sound stretches; a "^" symbol, as in '*ra*^,' indicates pitch peak. The transcription also uses double parentheses to signal extralinguistic information, such as nods, body alignment, and other contextual information (see Appendix A for complete transcription notations). Each IU of the transcribed speech is presented trilinearly. The first line is Pinyin-adapting romanization of the utterance, the second line morpheme-for-morpheme gloss (see Appendix B for a full set of abbreviations used in the morpheme-by-morpheme gloss), and the third line English translation through colloquial English to render the original flavor of the utterance. Transcriptions of Mandarin utterances have an additional line which is the first line rendering the speech in Chinese orthography. The free translations use single parentheses to include words needed to conform to the grammatical structure and the expressiveness of the English translation due to typological differences between English and the original code choice. For instance, pro-drop is a typological feature of Shishan dialect as well as Hainanese and Mandarin. In such a case, in the English translation, dropped pronouns are inserted in single parentheses.

Additionally in Chapter 3 where multimodal interaction is a primary focus, the data excerpts are presented using an adapted version of Goodwin (1984). Goodwin (1984) uses multiple lines for each utterance where each numbered line is the pivotal turn and the line above or below the numbered line indicates simultaneous non-verbal actions. Pairs of left square brackets mark the onsets of the simultaneous verbal and non-verbal actions. Along with the numbered pivotal lines, additional notations are used to indicate changes in the inception, retraction, duration and direction of the speaker and addressee's respective gaze. "X" letters in a pivoted line for non-verbal actions mark the time when the speaker's gaze is raised toward the interlocutor. The solid line "_____" following the "X" symbol indicates the speaker's sustained gaze toward the object of the gaze. The elliptical dots ".." before the "X" symbol indicates the initiation phase of the gaze, the commas ",,," following either

the solid line or the "X" symbol mark the retraction phase of the gaze. The number of repetitions of "," or "." following a marked gaze action indicates the duration of such action. An additional notation, not original in Goodwin (1984), adopted from Mondada (2018), is the "#Figure…" symbol. The "#Figure…" symbol marks the site in the transcribed action where an illustration, either a video still or a sketch for that particular moment, is available at the end of the transcript. For example:

(2.1) Illustrating the multimodal transcription conventions adapted from Goodwin (1984), used in Chapter 3.

```
                ...[X_______,,, #Figure…
1  Speaker A: word [word [word word
   Speaker B:           [X________
```

The interactional actions represented in Example 2.1 is such: Line 1, marking Speaker A's verbal action is the pivotal line which has one line above and one line below it, marking simultaneous non-verbal actions. As speaker A interacts with speaker B, speaker A directs his or her gaze toward speaker B with a brief moment of initiation. The gaze fixes on speaker B at the second word of speaker A's utterance, sustained toward the end of the Intonation Unit and then retracts. At the same time, speaker B directs his or her gaze at speaker A starting at the third word of A's utterance and the gaze continues toward the end of the IU. "#Figure.." in the line above the numbered pivotal line means that a figure illustrating that very action is available at the end of the transcript.

In Chapter 5 on bargaining sequences, the interplay of verbal and non-verbal modes of communication is analyzed without needing to attend to micro-level shifts in gaze as is the case in Chapter 3. Therefore, in Chapter 5, the transcription conventions follow Zhu et al. (2017) using two columns to present concurrent verbal and non-verbal actions at the descriptive level.

As thus described, the transcription provides a concrete basis on which to analyze the multimodal talk-in-interaction through a variety of perspectives, including lexical choices, paralinguistic features, contextual information, and elements of turn design and interplay with multimodal resources.

2.3 Theoretical preliminaries: Avoidance vs. involvement rituals; "ingroup" vs. "outgroup" norms

A considerable body of research has been conducted based on data of sales and service encounters. For example, researchers in the tradition of variationist sociolinguistics have explored pragmatic strategies used in sales encounters (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2015). Researchers in Multimodal Conversation Analysis have analyzed

customer-clerk interactions in restaurants, grocery shops, service shops, ticket counters, etc. (e.g., Fox, 2014; Fox and Heinemann, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021; Heinemann and Fox, 2019; Mondada, 2018; Richardson and Stokoe, 2014; Streeck, 2017; among many others). Researchers in social semiotics, particularly multimodal translanguaging in global contexts, have focused on retail interactions in urban street markets and corner shops (e.g. Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014; Zhu et al. 2015, 2017). Researchers in the tradition of cross-cultural pragmatics have examined politeness practice in sales encounters (e.g. Pan, 2000a, 2000b). Research that exclusively focuses on the sociolinguistics of the marketplace tends to originate in the anthropological and ethnographic traditions such as Lindenfeld (1990) based on an urban Parisian street marketplace, Lindenfeld (1994) based on an urban Southern Californian marketplace, Kapchan (1996) focusing on gender roles in a Moroccan urban marketplace, French (2001) on interethnic interactions in a Guatemalan urban marketplace, and McFadden (2011) on interpersonal relationships in a Bangladeshi urban marketplace. This body of literature gives us kaleidoscopic insights into the ways social interactions are affected by varied marketplace settings. Specific research studies will be reviewed in the subsequent analytic chapters. For the current purpose, I outline two sets of theoretical constructs that are particularly relevant for understanding the characteristics of social interactional norms of the marketplace context in Southern China.

One of the recurrent theoretical thoughts that was incorporated in previous research on social interactions in the marketplace in the Southern Chinese context is "interaction rituals," specifically, Goffman's (1967) notions of "engagement rituals" and "avoidance rituals." "Engagement rituals," creating bonds between the interlocutors, consist of "supportive interchanges" such as greetings and farewells and "remedial interchanges" such as apologizing for intrusion and thanking. "Avoidance rituals" are used by social actors to avoid social interaction so as to avoid influencing or being influenced by others. As will later be discussed in the analytic chapters, a prominent pattern in the current data based on a rural Chinese marketplace, consistent with patterns identified in previous research situated in urban settings, is that customers try not to engage with the seller while the sellers' verbal and non-verbal behaviors manifest different degrees and types of "engagement."

The intention to "avoid" social interaction can be manifested bodily as averting gaze, refraining from body touch, not displaying emotion, being respectful and watchful of other's space; or it can be manifested verbally as avoiding topics that can be sensitive, using deferential address terms and negative politeness strategies to mark social distance. Goffman (1967) theorizes that the central psychological motivation underlying avoidance rituals is a self-protective, survival instinct. Avoidance rituals appear to be typical in collectivist cultures where social agents avoid initiating contact with an outgroup member and remain watchful.

The social meanings of these surface-level behaviors differ from situation to situation, for example, aversion of eye gaze, which Goffman considers to be an avoidance ritual, signals the person's intention to avoid being the first person to initiate a conversation (Kendon, 1990). In a hierarchical society, avoidance rituals are common for displaying deference and indexing status difference (Basso, 1972; Scollon and Scollon, 1995). But in an egalitarian society, "avoidance rituals" may be perceived as "stand-off" (Goffman, 1972). These ritualistic signals, verbally and bodily, act as "contextualization cues" with community-specific interpretations (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b, 1992)

Different tendencies for using these interaction rituals in different degrees and combinations give rise to the impression of a community or individual having certain "communicative style" (Tannen, 1984a, 1984b). For example, Tannen (1984a) shows that Jewish New Yorkers tend to speak to each other with a "high involvement" style, using various engagement rituals such as frequent overlapping turns at talk, "machine-gun like" pace of questioning, expressions of affection, and emotive prosody. These rituals conflict with the preferred communicative style of Californians who prefer a restraint, deferential style. Bailey (1997) studied sales encounters between Korean store clerks and African American customers at convenience stores in multi-ethnic communities in California. Bailey showed that African American shoppers tended to use a high involvement style featuring elaborate greetings, joking and storytelling to connect to the clerk socially. The Korean store clerks however reverted to the "restraint," "distant" style reserved for outgroup members. Such clashes of communicative styles and different orientations to ingroup vs. outgroup membership in public places lead to interpretations of each other's behaviors as unfriendly, disrespectful, even racially motivated. Bailey's analysis suggested that significant misunderstandings could occur in mundane daily activities deepening existing inter-ethnic tensions.

Norms of interactional rituals thus intertwine with perceptions and norms of ingroup vs. outgroup membership in public spaces. Ingroup memberships typically are formed based on relationships at home, at the workplace, with friends and regular acquaintances where the ingroup members' identities are relational to each other such as parents to their children, the elderly to the young, friends and co-workers to each other. Outgroup members are individuals based on "occasional and temporary relationships" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 13). Like Goffman, Hofstede suggests that norms of ingroup vs. outgroup behaviors differ across social structures. In European and North American social settings, demarcating one's ingroup from outgroup is not ritualistically practiced whereas group memberships are ritually observed in hierarchical societies such as many Asian societies. In hierarchical societies, demarcating ingroup vs. outgroup is a fundamental way through which people bond with each other and keep guards against outsiders.

Scollon and Scollon (2003) additionally suggest that ingroup and outgroup relationships are situational (p. 94). In the Chinese cultural context, ingroup members are more broadly defined, encompassing people from the same town, school or workplace. The customer-clerk relationship is however outgroup-based in the Chinese cultural context. As part of her work on the practice of politeness in Chinese face-to-face encounters, Pan (2000a, 2000b) explored the interactional routines in sales encounters in State-owned department stores vs. private small business shops in a Cantonese-speaking urban area in Southern China. At state-owned department stores, the exchanges were notably "abrupt, rude" with no ritual opening or closing nor other politeness exchanges. Overall the encounters featured minimal verbal exchange, all initiated by the customer to the clerk. Speech acts that require the interlocutor's cooperation, such as requests, were stated as imperatives. This pattern contrasted with the interactional norms practiced at privately owned clothing shops, where greetings, leaving taking, small talk, and other such engagement rituals, were plenty. Pan related the two contrasting variations to the Chinese society's "ingroup vs. outgroup" cultural norm interplaying with different economic systems. In the state planned economy, customers and store clerks are outgroup to each other, not necessitating politeness rituals. Thus the encounters were entirely task-oriented without necessity for face concern. To a cultural outsider, this ostensible absence of politeness can be perceived as "rude." In the same state-owned business setting, if the customer is an in-group member such as friends or relatives, involvement rituals were plenty such as small talk, joking, switching to the interlocutor's preferred language of choice, boasting and empathy before and after transactions, similar to the practices in private shops. Pan suggested that in private businesses, sellers had an economic incentive to use "involvement strategies to show friendliness, create an ingroup sense out of temporary contact." (2000a, p. 55) The differences in interactive strategies in state-owned stores vs. private shops reflected the change from state planned economy to free market economy during the time of Pan's research.

Orr (2007) also studied service encounters in Southern China based on audio-recordings of Cantonese retail encounters collected over nine months in 1998. Similar to Pan's findings, the sellers in Orr's study treated sales encounters as between outgroups, reserving involvement rituals, e.g. well-wishing and expression of anticipation of future contact, only for acquainted persons. Different from Pan's findings where sellers are economically motivated to treat outgroups as ingroups in the private business setting, in Orr's study, avoidance rituals dominate the private business setting, practiced by sellers and buyers alike. Goffman (1963) remarked that acquainted persons have privileges not enjoyed by total strangers (p. 119). In Orr's research, acquainted persons can be created out of a successful sale, which accounts for the fact that gratuitous talk did not occur at the beginning of transactions but occurred when a sale successfully concluded.

Politeness practice additionally is influenced by the interactants' perceptions and orientations to power, social distance, and the imposition a particular task at hand (Brown and Levinson, 1983). In the private clothing shops studied in Pan (2000a), personal ties lead to politeness practices, but the topics still tend to be initiated by those holding relative higher social position. In state-run department stores, politeness strategies are not used by clerks who have institutional power (Pan, 2000a). Leung's (2009) study of sales encounters in a bakery shop in Chinatown in the U.S. showed that existing social distance between the Chinese shop owners and non-Chinese shoppers increased the sense of "outgroup" relationship and curtailed the desirability of building ingroup membership from temporary encounters.

Previous research is largely based on analyzing audio recordings. What is invisible in using audio data only is that some communities are "gestural communities," where non-verbal acts, rather than verbal acts, play a prominent role in signaling social and interactional meanings (Goffman, 1981). Involvement and avoidance acts might not be practiced verbally but are enacted through bodily signals as well as through the mediation of material objects. It is to these multimodal meaning-making processes that the next chapter turns.

2.4 Theoretical preliminaries: Transaction cost

In contrast to previous research that resorts to individual vs. hierarchical social structures to account for the variations found in interactional practices at the Chinese marketplace, the current study, based on longitudinal, multimodal data from a rural Chinese marketplace, argues that the market mechanism of transaction cost is a fundamental impetus for verbal and non-verbal behaviors in the marketplace. Transaction cost is a concept initially conceived by economist Ronald Coase more than 80 years ago (Coase, 1937; see also: Coase 1960, 1988). The concept has remained useful and relevant today forming the foundational concept of Transaction Cost Economics (Williamson, 1985). Coase (1988) defined transaction cost as "the cost of carrying out a transaction by means of an exchange on the open market", such as "search and information costs, bargaining and decision costs, policy and enforcement costs." (p. 6) The very market itself is a mechanism invented to reduce transaction costs by bringing customers and sellers together and providing facilities, security, and means of settling disputes (Coase, 1988, p. 8; see also: Coase, 1937; Coase, 1960, pp. 114–116).

The existence of costs in the process of carrying out a transaction is akin to frictions between gears in a machinery. When the frictions are low, the machinery runs smoothly without drawing attention to its frictions (costs) (Coase, 1960).

However, when the costs are high, the frictions are noticeable, even counterproductive. Motivation to reduce transaction costs is always present in market economy driving market decisions (Williamson, 1985).

What is not considered in economists' work on transaction costs is the mediating role of language in conducting transactions. As the subsequent analyses will illustrate, language does not simply occur as a byproduct of marketplace activities. Language and social interaction mediate retail transactions, affecting all stages of transactions from discerning interests, obtaining product information to arriving at mutually agreeable terms of dealing.

CHAPTER 3

Initiating transactions

Interactional asymmetry in competitive cooperation

> The movements, looks, and vocal sounds we make as an unintended by-product of speaking and listening never seem to remain innocent. Within the lifetime of each of us these acts in varying degrees acquire a specialized communicative role in the stream of our behavior, looked to and provided for in connection with the displaying of our alignment to current events. We look simply to see, see others looking, see we are seen looking, and soon become knowing and skilled in regard to the evidential uses made of the appearance of looking.
>
> (Goffman, 1981, p. 2)

When we enter the marketplace, regardless of our private intentions (Bhatia, 1993), we take on relational identities – sellers to sell and buyers to buy. The marketplace is an "interpretive frame" (Goffman, 1974), overlaying activity-specific intentionality onto the individuals co-present in the shared physical space. This chapter analyzes how transactions begin when individuals shift from merely co-present in the same space to co-participants of focused encounters to carry out transactions. I demonstrate that the establishment of a one-on-one interactional focus is crucial at the beginning stage of a transactional encounter, but such focus is pursued differently between the seller and the buyer. The seller pursues one-on-one interactional focus with the buyer, whereas the buyer diffuses such bid for attention with the mediation of material goods. The resulting interactional structure is one of asymmetry, arguably due to the conflictive economic goals of the co-participants. I further show that this asymmetry in interactional structure arises from verbal interaction incurring transaction costs.

3.1 "Focus" in face-to-face encounters

"Focus" is a notion posited in Goffman (1959) to categorize types of social situations. In an unfocused situation, people are merely co-present in the same space, such as waiting for the bus at the bus stop, sharing the waiting room at the doctor's office, or, in the current study, walking about in a market space. A social situation becomes "focused" when individuals enter a joint activity, such as playing card

games, ballroom coupling, surgical teams in operation, to name a few of the examples that Goffman originally used.

A focused situation requires the co-participants' joint orientation to the activity at hand (Goffman, 1963). Not only language but also the body (face, gaze, posture, movement) construct the presence vs. absence of the participants' mutual "visual and cognitive attention" (Goffman, ibid, pp. 88–89). Nonverbally, the co-participants' focal orientation to the joint activity is signaled primarily by their face and the upper front body with which the participants form "an ecological huddle" (Goffman, ibid, p. 95). Kendon's (1990) video analysis of everyday interactions demonstrates that co-participants of an activity jointly establish and maintain the focal space in a socially obligated way which Kendon calls an "F-Formation." An intent gaze indexes the person's interest to engage the object of the gaze; a body torqued away from the current activity suggests the person's temporary disengagement (Schegloff, 1998) or simultaneous participation in a byplay (Goodwin, M. 1996; Goffman, 1963). These embodied interactional signs not only mark the target of the co-participants' interactional interest, they also signal and negotiate the participants' intention to change a current activity (Goffman, 1963, pp. 88–89 and p. 135; see also: Heath, 1986; Kendon, 1990; Sidnell, 2005, 2009). For example, at the beginning stage of a collaborative event, participants shift their gaze and posture to signal readiness to enter a joint activity (Goffman, 1981, p. 130). Heath's (1986) study of medical consultation meetings shows that, before a medical consultation session begins, the doctor reads the patient's medical records as an individual activity. The patient orients to this pre-beginning stage by waiting quietly and disengaging eye contact. To move the waiting phase to the medical consultation proper, the patient and the doctor shift their gaze and posture to signal their intention and right to speak and enter a collaborative, focal activity. Similarly, Mondada (2009) shows that when people give route directions to strangers on the street, their first move is to shift in pace and posture and re-direct their gaze such as to establish a mutually oriented space before the first verbal inquiry takes place. Empirical research thus suggests that creating and maintaining a mutually oriented focal space is crucial for the initiation and progression of collaborative social activities.

Previous research on social encounters primarily draws from Anglo-European, middle-class communities where cooperative sociability, such as reciprocal verbal politeness, is normatively practiced. In addition, previous research tends to focus on collaborative, professional activities giving the overall impression of social interactions being convivial and cooperative; participants aptly interpret each other's intentions and act in agreeable ways (e.g., medical consultations, Heath, 1986; birthday parties, Kendon, 1990; route directions in public place, Mondada, 2009; food

tasting in gourmet shops, Mondada, 2018; food ordering at restaurants, Richardson and Stokoe, 2014). However, in a competitive marketplace where buyers and sellers are strangers with conflictive economic interests, it is reasonable to predict that the ways that the co-participants establish and maintain their joint focus are organized differently.

In the following sections, I illustrate that in Shishan market, buyers habitually delay entering into a face-to-face focus structure with the seller. In contrast, the seller uses a range of involvement strategies to bring a potential buyer into a focused interaction. In this asymmetrical interactional structure, the material object (the merchandise) constitutes a third entity forming a "buyer-goods-seller" tripartite participation framework (Goffman, 1974).

3.2 Buyers: Diffusing interactional focus

Language works in tandem with gesture, gaze, facial expressions, posture, body movement forming integrated, embodied multimodal ensembles (Goffman, 1981; Goodwin, 2000, 2003; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1996, 2000, 2004; Heath, 1986; Kendon, 1990; Li, 2014; Li and Ono, 2019; Mondada, 2016, 2018; Streeck, 2013; Streeck, et al. 2011; Stivers and Sidnell, 2005; Stukenbrock, 2012, 2014; Tao, 1999; among many others). The multimodal nature of everyday interaction is clearly manifested in the marketplace. A gaze or a stretched hand is rich with meaning, intended so, understood so, and acted upon according to each person's agenda. Such context-bound intentions influence how individuals react to bodily movements as meaningful signals. Here I illustrate three patterns common across Shishan shoppers. The underlying communicative function of these patterns, I argue, is to delay entering into a one-on-one "huddle" with the seller (Goffman, 1963).

3.2.1 Body torque

When walking about in the market space in search of target goods, buyers in Shishan, especially older residents, often pause in their forward-moving trajectory, rotate their upper body to examine certain goods of interest from a distance. This "body torque" (Schegloff, 1998) could last as long as 30 seconds until it terminates with the person resuming walking or turning to approach the merchant's station.

The following pairs of sketches illustrate this dynamic torque posture based on the video data.

3.1A Person pauses, rotating upper body to examine a vendor's station from a distance

3.1B Person moves toward the vendor's station

3.2A Person walks, rotating upper body to gaze at a vending station

3.2B Person terminates torque posture

3.3A Person stands next to a station, rotating upper body to inspect merchandise on the ground

3.3B Person squats down to inspect the merchandise

This dynamic torque posture, combined with physiological distance (Hall, 1959, 1966), help to frame the buyer's interest in a vendor's merchandise as a temporary digression from his or her current engagement. Previous research on multimodal interaction shows that the lower body is the principal indicator of the person's current engagement in an activity (Kendon, 1990). The degree of the torque of the upper body indexes the speaker's attention and intention toward the object of his or her temporary gaze (Schegloff, 1998). If the person's intention changes from a temporary interest to a more stable interest, the body torque terminates, shifting to a more stable posture. As seen in the above three pairs of images, the torque posture shields the person from entering a sales encounter prematurely. In Figure 3.3B, the shopper changes her body posture from torque to squatting to join the huddle of buyers inspecting the goods on the ground. In this transitional process, there is no verbal exchange nor mutual gaze between the buyer and the seller. Such direct access to goods without the mediation of language such as seeking permissions and being granted permission is common in Shishan market. In the following section, I'll illustrate that the materiality of the goods enables the buyer to instigate a transaction without entering into a face-to-face focused encounter.

3.2.2 A tripartite participation structure

When a potential buyer approaches a vendor's station, the space between the seller and the buyer is framed by the countertop, the goods and an assortment of service tools. This space constitutes the "transactional space" between the buyer and the

merchant (Kendon, 1990: 210; see also: "F-Formation," Kendon, 1990; "interaction territory," Lyman and Scott, 1967). The goods, ready to be purchased, have unique semiotic potential. Kusters (2017) illustrated that goods "are not fleeting and evanescent". A product's availability to be purchased and change ownership renders it the proper object of focus, to be "noticed, appreciated, assessed, imagined, created and made sense of, …given and received, shared or distributed, shown and demonstrated, described and explained or disputed." (p. 396) Consequently, the goods in the marketplace function as a salient participant forming a tripartite, customer-goods-seller participation structure.

Figure 3.4 below visually represents this tripartite participation structure, unstable, negotiated and shifting, significant at the beginning stage of transactions. The arrows indicate the direction of the person's gaze (seller toward buyer; buyer toward goods); the dotted lines indicate each individual's deictic sphere. The two overlapping squares formulate the tripartite [seller-goods-buyer] participation structure. The solid rectangle represents the transactional space between the seller and buyer where goods are displayed. In this tripartite participation structure, the seller pursues a one-on-one focal interaction with the buyer while the buyer focuses their attention primarily on the goods which effectively deflects the seller's bid for a one-on-one huddle.

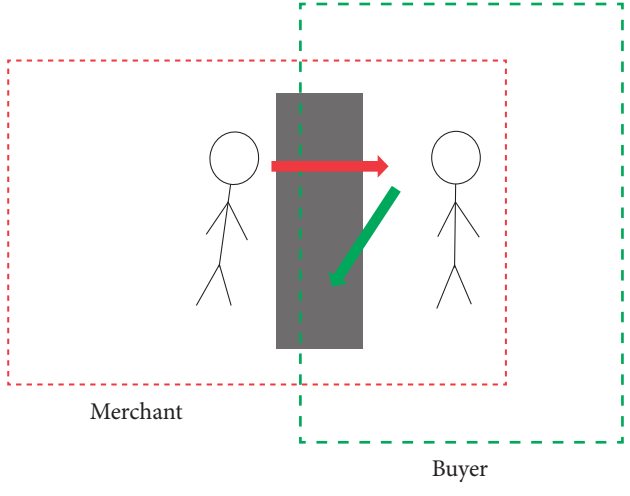

Figure 3.4 A tripartite participation structure

The customer may simply walk over to a vendor's station, aligning his or her body to the station, examining the goods, reaching out for a sample, all the while not having to utter a word nor directly interacting with the seller. The sellers tend to

accommodate this product focus while actively attempting to involve the buyer in verbal exchange, inquiring, persuasively praising their products, observing the reactions of the buyer.

The following example illustrates this tripartite participation structure. The seller sells loofah gourds (丝瓜 *sīguā*) in the non-licensed transitional space between the two premium, licensed vending areas. Two baskets full of loofahs are located on the seller's left. Several customers are picking gourds from the baskets. The seller frequently looks sideway to the customers' direction while seated facing the front to monitor the pedestrians passing by her spot. Example 3.1 occurs when a new customer begins to take notice of the gourds.

(3.1) Selling loofah gourds in Shishan dialect

```
      Seller: [X_____________________________________________ ((gaze
              follows buyer))
      Buyer:  [((approaches seller, looking at goods))[ ..X,((bends to
              reach for loofah, quick glance at seller))
1 →   Buyer:                                            [O    guiliao?
                                                         Money Q
                                                        'How much?'

      Seller: [_____________________________ ((gaze follows buyer))
2     Seller: [Dum  mo.
              Three CLS
              'Three dollars.'
      Buyer:  [((takes a loofah from the nearest basket, torques away
              to examine it. #Figure 3.5))

3     Buyer:  [((with the gourd in hand, steps away from the seller))
      Seller: [___,, (gaze retracts to monitor other buyers as the new
              buyer steps away)]

4     (4.0) ((buyer is torqued away with distance from seller;
              inspects the gourd through manual handling; seller
              monitors other buyers))

5     Buyer:  [((re-approaches seller, puts the gourd back in the basket))
      Seller: [..X, ((quickly looks up toward buyer, then returns to
              monitor other buyers))

                 ……[X___((holding up three fingers gesturing the price))
6 →   Buyer:       [dum  mo  a?
                   three CLS PRT
                  '(Did you say) three dollars?'

7     Seller: ((nods without looking up; monitoring other customers))

8     [((2.0))
      [((buyer stares into air reflectively; seller serves other customers))
```

9 Buyer: ((torques away, talks to her older companion))

Seller: [X_____ ((leans forward and gazes at the buyer's older companion, hand forcefully moving up and down))

10 Seller: [*RA ^:::NG LAO^^::::*
NEG old
'(It's) NOT OLD!'

Seller: [_____((picks up a gourd, holds it with both hands bending it demonstratively. #Figure 3.6))

11 Seller: [*digui na en guan cui roh,*
Loofah DEM PL eat tender at
'These loofah gourds taste so tenderly,

[_____

12 Seller: [*mo de gang lao!*
2SG COP say old
'and you say (they are) old! (what nonsense)'

Seller: [_____

13 Buyer's companion: [((takes the gourd offered, examines it perfunctorily, hands it back to seller))

14 Seller: ((receives the gourd; gaze following buyer's companion))

15 Buyer's companion: ((looks down at the baskets of gourds, reaches for a gourd, examines it, puts it back; repeats this sequence three times without looking at seller. Then she steps away to converse with her young companion, torqued away from the seller and looking around at other stations.)

16 ((seller disengages from the buyer and her companion, interacts with other customers.))

Figure 3.5 Buyer examines loofah torqued away from seller

Figure 3.6 Seller bends loofah to demonstrate its quality to buyer

Previous research shows that the intensity, direction and duration of the co-participants' gaze play prominently in social interactions (Heath, 1986; Kendon, 1990; Mondada, 2009). In the above segment, the seller's gaze follows the buyer, monitoring and anticipating the buyer's action. The timing of the seller's gaze toward the buyer follows the buyer's shifting body orientation throughout the duration of the customer's contemplation. The seller removes her gaze when the buyer visibly steps away and torques away to assess the loofah as a private activity (Mondada, 2018). In contrast, the buyer's gaze almost exclusively focuses on the gourds with two brief occasions of darting gaze toward the seller to accompany brief inquiries (line 1 and line 6). Mondada's (2009) study of strangers asking for route directions in public streets shows that establishing mutual gaze is the first form of recognizing the other person's intention and signals willingness to assist. Once the gaze becomes mutual, the two ends of the gaze enter a direct relationship. The customer's gaze as primarily fixed on the goods aligns with previous research on the Southern Chinese marketplace regarding using "avoidance" strategies, here averting gaze, restraining from interaction and torquing away. As Goffman (1963) suggests, avoidance rituals signal to others that one's act is one's own, not "mutually relevant." (p. 92) The absence of forming mutual gaze on the part of the buyer signals the buyer's epistemic stance as an independent decision maker. Such epistemic independence is additionally evidenced in the ways that the buyer and her companion examine the gourds in a torqued away manner, discuss privately with each other and opt to inspect a gourd of their own choice than the one offered by the seller (line 13 and line 15).

The following example further illustrates Shishan buyers' preference to focus on goods framing the purchase as an independent activity.

(3.2) Selling wampee (黄皮 *Huángpí*) in Shishan dialect.
((A basket of wampee is on the ground in front of the seller.
A new buyer approaches.))

```
1   Buyer:   ((approaches seller's backet, gaze on goods))
    Seller:  ((serving a current customer; upper body torquing toward
             the approaching buyer.))

             [X___________,,,
2   →Seller: [Dum  mo.
             Three CLS
             '(These are) three dollars (per pound).'

3   Buyer:   ((gaze continues to focus on the goods; picks one wampee
             from its stem, bites it, and chews contemplatively while
             looking around to other stations.))

4   Buyer:   ((departs))
```

In Example 3.2, the buyer does not engage at all with the seller. The process of her approaching the station, sampling, and subsequently departing is a continuous unit of an individual activity. The seller's price announcement with intent gaze (line 2) didn't interrupt this continuity. The way that the verbal interaction is initiated by the seller, but ignored by the buyer without incurring sanction, suggests that the buyer's exclusive focus on goods is an ordinary practice. What appears to be an avoidance ritual on the part of the buyer may indeed originate from self-preservation as Goffman suggested. However, rather than intentionally "avoiding" the interlocutor, the non-reflective, normalized focus on goods suggests that transactions are treated primarily as a goal-oriented activity than as a social encounter in the local community.

3.2.3 Delays in activity progression

"Forward design" is a principle governing social interactions (Schegloff, 1979, 2007a; Stivers and Robinson, 2006). Social interactions progress through time; each turn-at-talk responds to its previous turn as well as anticipates the preferred next action, moving the interaction forward. Such forward-moving momentum of turns-at-talk is particularly salient in goal-oriented activities. When each next turn affiliates with its previous turn's preference design and complies with its intention (Stivers, 2011), the interaction proceeds smoothly without delay, efficiently accomplishing the end goal. Delays in the interactional progression, in the form of silence, pause, repair sequences, side sequences etc. hinder the forward flow of the interaction; thus they are carefully monitored and necessarily repaired so that the interaction can move forward. In the marketplace, understandably it is to the seller's advantage to expedite the progression of the transaction to preserve time for other transactions, whereas it is to the buyer's interest to slow down the pace to lower the chance of premature decisions. These misaligned activity goals are manifested in distinctive interactional rhythms across buyers and sellers. Based on the current data, using the sellers' rhythm as a baseline, the buyers' rhythms delay the seller's transactional pace through misaligning moves.

The following example is from a butcher's station. The customer is a Hainanese-speaking middle-aged woman from Haikou city. The butcher is a young energetic male from Shishan. The segment is excerpted from a five-minutes transaction which is considerably long given how fast-paced market interactions typically are. Prior to this excerpt, the butcher has given a long spiel to the customer, praising his pork while the buyer glances around to other stations in a diffused manner, body torqued away and hands touching various pieces on the countertop in a non-committal manner. Finally, the butcher concludes his spiel (line 1) and initiates an explicit order request (line 2).

(3.3) Selling pork in Mandarin and Hainanese.

1 Butcher: 知道 啵? [This utterance concludes a long spiel.]
zhīdào bo?
know PRT
'(You) know?'

2 要 多少 斤? [An explicit request for order]
yào duōshǎo jīn?
want QUAN pound
'How many pounds (would you like)?'

3 Buyer: 让 我 看 一下.
ràng wǒ kàn yīxià.
let 1SG look QUAN
'Let me take a look (first).'

4 Butcher: 随便 你 看.
suíbiàn nǐ kàn.
let 2SG look
'Look as you like.'

5 这 猪 好吃 咧,
zhè zhū hǎochī lie,
DEM pork delicious PRT
'This pork is delicious,'

6 你看 这 皮,
nǐ kàn zhè pí,
2SG look DEM skin
'Look at this skin.'

7 Buyer: 这个太肥了.
zhège tài féi-le.
DEM CLS too fat PRT
'This is too fatty.'

8 Butcher: 喔!
Ō!
INT
'Wow!'

9 肥猪 才 好吃 啦.
féizhū cái hǎochī la.
fat pork ADV delicious PRT
'fatty pork is delicious (contrary to what you think).'

10 Buyer: 啊?
A?
INT
'What (did you say)?'

11 Butcher: 肥猪才好吃!
féizhū cái hǎochī!
fat pork ADV delicious
'Fatty pork is delicious! (contrary to what your think).'

12 这 个肉 好,
Zhè-gè ròu hǎo,
DEM CLS meat good
'This meat is good,'

13 那个皮 好 硬哦,
Nà-gè pí hǎo yìng o,
DEM CLS skin really hard PRT
'The skin is so solid,'

14 很香哦，
hěn xiāng o,
very tasty PRT
'(It's) really tasty.'

15 一年半了.
yī nián bàn-le.
one year half PRT
'(This pig is raised for) one and half years,'

16 我不骗你的.
wǒ bù piàn nǐ de.
1SG NEG deceive 2SG PRT
'I'm not lying to you.'

17 我那个 猪 都- 三百 斤 我 都卖完了，
Wǒ nà-gè zhū dōu sānbǎi jīn wǒ dū mài wán-le,
1SG DEM CLS pig already three hundred pound 1SG already sell finish PRT
'That pig of mine, I've already sold three hundred pounds of it,'

18 你-
nǐ-
2SG
'You- '

<Code switching site #1: Buyer Switches to Hainanese>

19 Buyer: *da bie gian ah?*
three hundred pound PRT
'Three hundred pounds?'

20 Butcher: *da bie gian la.*
three hundred pound PRT
'300 pounds of course.'

21 *da bie leng di gian eylah.*
three hundred extra four pound PRT
'304 pounds actually.'

<Code switching site #2: Butcher Switches to Mandarin>

22 看那个皮，
kàn nà -gè pí,
look DEM CLS skin
'Look at the skin,'

23 看那个皮啊，
kàn nà-gè pí a,
look DEM CLS skin
'Look at that skin,'

24 你要吃，
nǐ yào chī,
2SG M eat
'If you eat (it),'

25 像野猪一样，
xiàng yězhū yīyàng,
like wild boar same
'(It's) like (eating) wild boar.'

26 不是我吹牛，
bùshì wǒ chuīniú,
NEG COP 1SG brag
'I'm not bragging,'

27 明天 还 有 一 条 猪.
míngtiān hái yǒu yī tiáo zhū.
tomorrow yet EXIS one CLS pig
'Tomorrow (I'm) gonna have another pig.'

<Code switching site #3: Buyer switches to Hainanese>

28 Buyer: *bui digia wu.*
fat little PRT
'Just a little too fatty.'

29 Butcher *vo,*
NEG
'No,'

30 *vo di bui ah,*
NEG COP fat PRT
'It's not fatty,'

31 *zhelai pei gao ah.*
here skin thick PRT
'the skin here is thick.'

32 Buyer: *Jie jie di,*
DEM DEM COP
'This, this is, which,

33 *die- die di ah?*
where where COP PRT
'which part is this?'

34 Butcher: *mo qian yo odie lo,*
that shoulder meat there PRT
'It's shoulder meat,'

35 *mo qian,*
that shoulder
'the shoulder,'

36 *mo dlu ka odie lo. ((pointing to his own shoulder))*
that pig leg there PRT
'the front leg part.'

37 Buyer: 啊?
A?
INT
'What? (=What did you say?)'

38 *Dlu ka odie?*
Pig leg there
'The front leg?'

<Code switching site #4: Butcher switches to Hainanese>

39 Butcher: 这个猪好吃的,
zhè-ge zhū hǎochī de.
DEM CLS pork delicious PRT
'This pork is delicious.'

40 这个猪好吃.
zhè-ge zhū hǎochī.
DEM CLS pork delicious
'This pork is delicious.'

41 你买回去,
nǐ mǎi huíqù,
2SG buy return
'You buy it,'

42 你就认我起来.
mǐ jiù rèn wǒ qǐlái.
2SG ADV recognize 1SG RES
'you will remember me (=you will be a return customer.)'
43 Buyer: 等一下,
děng yīxià,
wait QUAN
'Wait a bit,'
44 我看下.
wǒ kàn xià.
1SG look QUAN
'Let me take a look.'
45 Butcher: 你买回去,
nǐ mǎi huíqù,
2SG buy back
'You buy it,'
46 你就认我起来.
nǐ jiù rèn wǒ qǐlái.
2SG ADV recognize 1SG RES
'you will remember me (=you'd be a return customer.)'
47 Buyer: 认- 认, 我也 很难 来- 来这里买.
rèn rèn wǒ yě hěnnán lái lái zhèlǐ mǎi.
recognize recognize 1SG ADV difficult come come here buy
'(Even if I) remember you, it'd be hard for me to come here, to come here to
buy (from you).'
48 @@ 认 也 很难 来 这里.
rèn yě hěnnán lái zhèlǐ.
recognize ADV difficult come here
'(Even if I) remember you, it'd be hard for me to come here.'

This segment consists of considerable disaffiliative and misaligning responses from the buyer (Stivers, 2011). Figure 3.7 summarizes the main sequences in this segment.

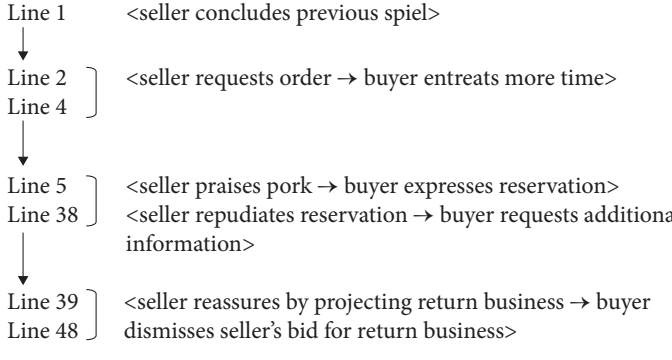

Figure 3.7 Main sequences in excerpt 3.2

The buyer's responses delay the progressive rhythm established by the seller initially. In line 2, the seller inquires of the specific amount of pork the buyer intends to purchase. The narrow-focus *wh-* question (e.g., "how many pounds…?") grammatically presupposes that a desire to make an order has already been established. What is in focus instead is the specific amount desired. Rather than complying with the request, the buyer requests for more time (line 3). The response in line 3 is a "type mismatch" (Stivers, 2011), an implicit rejection of the butcher's order request, resetting the transactional pace to the buyer's own preference. Various other delays instigated by the buyer include repair initiations (lines 10 and 37), confirmation requests (line 19, line 38), and an additional product inquiry which initiates a side sequence (lines 32 to 38). These acts jointly lead to more time and effort on the part of the seller.

Further, the buyer's assessments of the product disagree with the seller's positive assessment (line 7 and line 28; 'second assessments," Pomerantz, 1984, p. 59). These disagreeing second assessments result in the butcher launching additional persuasive spiels (lines 8–27, lines 29–31). The buyer's disagreeing second assessment in line 28 is literally the same as uttered earlier in line 7, rendering the butcher's lengthy spiel in-between lackluster. Finally, the seller terminates his spiel with a summative statement (lines 39–40), asserting confidence in the customer's return business (lines 41–42). The buyer yet requests more time (line 43–44) and dismisses the ground for the seller's prediction of her returning for more purchase (lines 47–48).

This interaction is swiftly translingual containing four sites of code switching between Mandarin and Hainanese (Li, 2011). Despite the butcher's effort to stay in Mandarin, the buyer switches to Hainanese forming an echo (line 19) and a negative product assessment (line 28), both initiated within the butcher's multi-TCU (multiple Turn-Construction Units) turns in Mandarin. Such initiated switches in dispreferred sequential positions, without apparent communication barriers, arguably reflect the buyer's stance of epistemic autonomy and situational power in the local market (Scollon and Scollon, 2003).

The butcher accommodates the buyer's codeswitching, but utilizes various verbal means to exert control over the direction of the encounter. He reverts to Mandarin as soon as the immediate adjacency pair is complete (line 22). He also treats the buyer's repair initiation (line 38) as merely an echo and switches to Mandarin again in a summative manner, disregarding the buyer's initiation for a side sequence (line 39). The butcher's switching back to Mandarin retreats to a wider reach inclusive of other potential buyers in earshot (Goffman, 1981, p. 134) while maintaining the current face-to-face huddle with the customer (see the immediate addressee pronoun 你 'you'), an economic, strategic use of the delays in transactional time.

The buyer's various acts that delay transactional progression (rejecting, requesting, disagreeing, dismissing, code switching) are mitigated, suggesting that the buyer is aware of her moves as dispreferred by her interlocutor. She uses various mitigation strategies, e.g., diminutive quantifiers when requesting more time (lines 3 and 43 to 44), switching from unmitigated negative assessment to mitigated negative assessment (line 7 vs. line 28), accepting the buyer's projection for return business as a logical premise before rejecting it (lines 47 and 48).

These turn-taking characteristics suggest that transactions in Shishan market normalize an asymmetric interactional structure where the buyer is given the green light to focus on goods rather than entering a face-to-face verbal huddle with the seller. Such behaviors align with the "avoidance ritual" observation made in earlier research in the southern Chinese marketplace context. However, I additionally illustrated that avoidance is executed by the buyer only. Rather than intentionally "avoiding" social contact with an outgroup member and remaining watchful, the cognitive and social motivations for avoidance in the free marketplace is a reflection of the buyer's epistemic position as an independent shopper coupling with their situational power.

In the following sections I turn to the other side of the counter, the seller, to further illustrate the asymmetrical interactional structure. In contrast to the buyer's delaying entering a "face huddle" with the seller, the seller uses various strategies to create the face huddle, thus exerting influence over the pace and the outcome of the encounter.

3.3 Sellers: Pursuing interactional focus; "fast-forward" strategies

The most salient aspect of a focused interaction, from outside looking in, is that the participants form an "ecological huddle" (Goffman, 1963, p. 95). This interactional "togetherness" is pursued and maintained through body orientation, gaze and verbal interaction. Previously I illustrated that at the initial stage of transactions, the buyer focuses on goods, framing the transactional encounter as an individual activity with independent decision-making. With the buyer's free will to stay or depart, not surprisingly the seller monitors the buyer's actions and uses various interactive strategies to exert control over the course of action. The following sections outline three strategies commonly practiced by different sellers across Shishan market based on observed behaviors in the data: (1) pursuing interactional "togetherness," (2) utilizing linguistic and turn-taking resources to force "chain of events," and (3) using tools as symbolic emblems.

3.3.1 Pursuing interactional togetherness

Based on micro video analysis of dyadic conversations, Kendon (1990) demonstrates that the interlocutors' gaze, including its direction and duration, is both a reflex of how the participants orient to the ongoing interactional activity and a resource used to signal one's interactional intention. The direction, intensity, duration and shift in one's gaze provide clues of the specific interactional actions unfolding. Kendon shows that shifting in the direction of one's gaze tends to occur at Transition Relevant Places (Sacks et al. 1974). The speaker shifts to gaze in the hearer/interlocutor's direction to signal that the speaker wishes to transfer the speaking floor to the interlocutor; similarly, when the interlocutor/hearer wishes to speak, their gaze shifts to focus on the current speaker suggesting that a transfer of the speaking floor is desired. Thus, using gaze, the interlocutors monitor each other's attentiveness and signal their intention to hand over or take over the conversational floor. Before a focused conversation occurs, gaze into the addressee can be interpreted as indexical of the person's "social accessibility," "willing to begin social encounter" (Kendon, ibid) and if the gaze is mutual, the two ends of the mutual gaze are ready to enter "a direct relationship" (Kendon, ibid). Such patterns of using gaze to manage interactional actions are also manifest in Mandarin conversation data. Based on video analysis of Mandarin casual conversations between friends, Tao (1999) shows that gaze is used along with lexico-grammatical choices to signal subtle alliances with one interlocutor and disaffiliation with another interlocutor or actively alienate the non-gazed party.

This interactional function of gaze, not only signaling one's interactional intentions but also performing affiliative and non-affiliative actions, plays an important role at the beginning stage of marketplace interactions. Shishan data show that customers do not simply "avoid" the seller's gaze toward them. The materiality of the merchandise mediates the focus requirement of the social situation. The seller however actively pursues the buyer's gaze, along with language (inquiries, spiels), posture (leaning forward, moving to synchronize with the buyer's body movements and shifting gaze), hand movements (gesture, material handling) to create a one-on-one huddle with the buyer.

In Example 3.3 previously analyzed, the seller gives lengthy spiels about his pork; while doing so, he leans forward toward the customer across the countertop, monitoring where her gaze falls to then follow up with additional product demonstrations and spiel, constantly re-aligning his body to create "interactional withness" (Mondada, 2009, p. 403; Goffman, 1963). The seller also repeatedly entreats the customer's focal gaze to various parts of his merchandise, using such deictic forms as "this skin," "here you look," "this pork," and the immediate addressee pronoun 'you,' all indexical of the "pickup" synchronizing movements to engage the interlocutor and exert control (Kendon, 1990, p. 171).

3.3.2 Instigating "chain of events"

In the competitive marketplace, sellers have a very limited window of time and opportunity to attract the attention of the buyers before they walk to the next adjacent station. Verbal interaction is an effective way to create a one-on-one huddle with the interlocutor, as utterances accomplish actions and actions come in "pairs" (Sacks et el., 1974). Studying social interactions in a Parisian urban marketplace, Lindenfeld (1990) observed that sellers use verbal interactions to force a "chain of events" such that a question forces an answer, a request forces a compliance, or dispreferably, a rejection. Different communities possess locally normalized strategies for instigating such "chain of events." Based on the current Shishan data, when potential buyers walk about in the competitive market space, a glance toward a station would often invite a sales beckon from the seller. Example 3.4 is a sales beckon uttered by a butcher who frequently scans the foot traffic approaching or passing by his station, attempting to arrest an eye contact.

(3.4) BT #2=butcher #2

```
1   BT #2: ((serving a current customer, looking up to monitor the
           foot traffic.))

    BT #2: [X_____ ((gaze at an approaching customer, pointing to meats
           on the counter))
2   BT #2: [黑猪!
            hēi zhū!
            Black pork
            '(This is) black pork!'

    [BT #2: ________,,,
3   [(2.0) ((BT #2 waits for a response, sees no sign of reciprocation,
           retracts gaze and returns to the current customer))
```

The Mandarin phrase 黑猪 'black pork' (line 2) is a common sales beckon used by butchers to identify their pork as the domestic black-haired breed highly sought after for its quality and taste. This beckon contrasts with generic inquiries on intentionality such as "Would you like something?", "Can I help you?" etc. Generic inquiries on intention might seem more logical at the beginning phase of a transaction if one prioritizes the transaction as a courteous social encounter between two individuals. In Schiffrin's (1994) discussion on the "offering" genre, an offer starts with the seller's assumption of uncertainty of desire on the part of the buyer; the initial verbal inquiry is to verify if the customer has desire for the product which reduces uncertainty and leads to commitment (also see Pan, 2000b, p. 110). In contrast, the beckon in Example 3.4 (line 2) prioritizes specific product information as the most relevant information for the potential buyer, i.e., focusing on the most

salient information about the goods than focusing on the interlocutor's desire. Loudly naming the prized goods reflects the goal-oriented nature of transactional talk in the competitive marketplace where opportunities are fleeting.

Lindenfeld (1990, 1994) showed that sales encounters do not always follow routines guided by schematic knowledge. As interactions unfold in a moment-by-moment manner, individuals in a social activity deal with the force of verbal actions grounded in each other's knowledge of how language and turn-taking work in a community, such as using deixis to draw attention to here and now, using question-answer sequences to force customers to talk and respond. Example 3.5 is a collection of the contact-initial hearable utterances across different sellers in the Shishan corpus. These utterances, similar to the sales beckon seen in Example 3.4, instigate their respective "chain of events" by forcing a specific type of response from the hearer.

(3.5) A collection of initial beckons.

a. <Shishan dialect>
O guiu mo?
Money QUAN CLS
'How much (would you like)?'

b. <Mandarin>
来*!*
lái!
come
'Come!'
要多少?
yào duōshǎo?
want Q
'How much (would you like)?'

c. <Hainanese>
Jia mi ne?
eat what PRT
'What do you (like to) eat?'

d. <Shishan dialect>
Ao toufu mi?
bring tofu PRT
'So you want to buy tofu?'

e. <Shishan dialect>
((uttered by a pork vendor adjacent to a tofu vendor))
Ao tofu mi?
bring tofu PRT
'(So you) want tofu,
Ao tofu n ao nan mi?
bring tofu NEG bring meat PRT
'(you) want tofu, you don't want meat?'

e. <Shishan dialect>
Nianmei ah,
sister VOC
'Sister,'
ao danggei chi ang?
Bring what little Q
'what would you like?"

f. <Shishan dialect>
Ao danggei, nong?
Bring what lad
'What would you like, young man?'

g. <Mandarin>
阿姨， 要什么？
Āyí, yào shénme?
Auntie want what
'What would you like, auntie?'

h. <Mandarin>
要不?
Yào bù?
Want NEG
'Do (you) want these?
五块钱给你.
Wǔ kuài qián gěi nǐ
five CLS money to 2SG
'Five dollars and it's yours.'

In these instances, the sellers choose a language variety (e.g., Mandarin, Hainanese, Shishan dialect) in conjunction with specific address terms. These forms of beckon work as involvement strategies as they index the speaker's awareness of the buyer's social identity while elevating their status or showing social solidarity (*nong* 'lad, young man,' *nianmei* 'little sister,' 阿姨 'auntie'). These address terms, especially kin terms, are stylistic resources (McFadden, 2011, pp. 158–159) based on shared knowledge of appropriateness in the local culture (Hanks, 1990; Silverstein, 2003). Address terms and vocatives in these initial beckons, seemingly automatic and non-remarkable, reflect the participants' alert orientation to each other's identities and relational social positioning.

Even though the utterances occur at the initial phase of any hearable verbal contact, some of the questions are narrow-focus *wh*-questions or polar questions that grammatically presuppose the shopper's desire to order (cf. Huang, 2015 on presupposition). We have seen this strategy practiced earlier in Example 3.3 (line 2) and Example 3.4 (line 2). These questions, designed to highlight specific information of the context, not only put the hearer in a position to respond (a chain of events), but also frame the current interaction as en route of an actual transaction with the customer's purchase desire presupposed and backgrounded. These verbal acts together create an expedited rhythm in contrast with the rhythm of recursive contemplation and delay on the part of the buyer.

3.3.3 Tools as emblems

Focus and involvement can be signaled through attentive turns-at-talk, as well as tool using. Tools serve concrete materialistic functions at specific stages of market transactions such as knives to cut meats, ladles to scoop sea goods from water tanks, or baskets to weigh selected fruits. In Shishan market, merchants often resort to their service tools symbolically. For example, at the fishmonger's station, when a customer approaches, without needing any verbal exchange, the fishmonger typically hands over a ladle and a basket to the customer. The social force is thus upon the customer to either take the tools, which enters him or her into the transactional frame, or not reciprocate the tool-using gesture. Similarly, at the fruit vendor's stand, the scissors and the weighing tray are functionally relevant for the stage where fresh fruits are to be cut off their stems and weighed on the scale. However, the fruit vendors also use these tools symbolically to signal readiness to serve. Figure 3.8 depicts a fruit vendor's standing posture as a customer approaches her stand. Without exchanging gaze nor verbal inquiries, the seller simply stands up, picks up the weighing tray and scissors in a ready-to-serve posture. Most of the fruits she sells, such as apples and papayas, do not need scissors. Her holding the scissors regardless of the pending order supports interpretation of this gesture as symbolic than purely functional.

Similarly, at the very beginning stage of trying to persuade a sale, the sellers often turn around to reach for a wrapping bag which symbolically marks the transaction arriving at its completion. The butchers also frequently sharpen their knives as they talk to potential customers, creating rhythmic metallic sounds (see Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.8 Fruit vendor in serving posture

Figure 3.9 Butcher sharpening knife

Seemingly mundane, the symbolic nature of these tool-using gestures is remarkable. Kendon (1982) identified a continuum of gestural signs one of which is "emblems." An example of an emblematic sign is the hand gesture for expressing "Okay" where the tips of one's thumb and the index finger touch to form a circle and the rest of the fingers on the hand point outward. This sign is not just an iconic sign based on its physical resemblance to the letter "O" in "Okay." Rather, the sign expresses various conventionalized meanings of the expression "Okay" (see also: McNeill, 1992, p. 2). Thus, the meaning of an emblem is conventionalized and socially determined similar to linguistic signs to some extent (McNeill, ibid, p. 4). The meaning of an emblematic sign is also holistic ("synthetic," McNeill, ibid, p. 6), expressing an entire proposition. In Shishan market, the various tool-using emblems, sharpening knives, holding tray and scissors, pushing forward fish ladles, handling wrapping bags, are emblematic to signal service readiness. Levinson (1992) remarks that transactions proceed by the "force" of social actors expecting for a routine next action, e.g., goods selecting is a pre-buying activity, followed logically by the actual purchase and then rendering payment (pp. 73–74). These tool emblems in Shishan market, functionally relevant for later stages of a transaction, occur initially and symbolically. They arguably create subtle psychological pressure on the buyer to "fast-forward" the transaction.

3.4 At service shops: Embodied forward design and overlapping activity frames

The previous sections have focused on how transactions begin at retail stations revealing an asymmetrical focus structure where buyers focus on goods as an independent decision maker while sellers pursue a one-on-one face huddle with their customers in order to exert control over the course of action. Initial interactions at service shops, such as convenience stores and hair salons, exhibit a similar goal orientation on the part of the customer. One key difference between the service shops and the retail stations is that the service shops lack competitions nearby. In addition, while the intention of someone present in the open-air market space is ambiguous, to be ascertained and pursued through verbal beckons and tool-using emblematic gestures, the purpose of someone, especially strangers, walking into a service shop, is self-evident as requesting service. Consequently, beckoning, hawking, spieling and other such oral genres of forceful engagement in the open marketplace are not common in service shops.

Service shops in Shishan serve as communal spaces for the local people; most shops are furnished with long benches along the walls for customers and passers-by to loiter and chat. Multi-party casual conversations co-occur with service-rendering

activities. Overlapping activity frames are common. Example 3.6 illustrates the beginning of a service encounter at a hair salon. The hairdresser and owner of the salon, H, is sitting on a bench inside the salon chatting with M. M is H's visiting senior relative. The customer who is about to arrive at the salon is a young man not acquainted with anyone in the salon. Viewed through the lens of verbal interaction only, the interaction between the hairdresser and the arriving customer does not go beyond the pragmatic minimum consisting of a brief service request from the customer, "*Guiu hao*." ('Cut hair'). Without saying anything to the customer, H continues with her heated gossip with M while proceeding to start the haircutting service as requested.

(3.6) YM=young man; H=hairdresser and salon owner; M=H's older relative

```
1 YM: [((Approaches the salon on a scooter))
  H:  [((Sitting and chatting with M. Spotting the customer
      approaching the salon, H stands up, walks toward one of the
      salon chairs while torquing around to continue talking to M.))
2YM:  [((parks his scooter, walks in the salon without looking at anyone))
  H:  [((swerves the salon chair to face the mirror on the wall,
      straightens the mat on the chair.))
3YM:  ((walks toward the prepared chair; as his body passes H, he
      utters the following))
       Guiu hao.
       Cut  head
      '(I'll have) a haircut.'
4YM:  [ ((sits down))
  H:  [((walks to the mirror, reaches for an apron; continues to talk
      to M with her body torqued in M's direction))
5H:   [((continues to torque away from the customer to talk to M;
      spreading the apron around the customer's neck))
YM:   [((straightens his posture as H puts the apron around his neck))
6H:   ((straightens the apron around the customer's neck, upper body
      torqued to talk to H))
```

The fixed prices of haircutting services and the apparent service intention of customers entering the salon leave little necessity for verbal interaction. However, when we look beyond the verbal mode of communication, the functions of the body for maintaining conviviality and service-alertness are apparent. Despite the lack of verbal interaction beyond the customer's brief service request, the hairdresser's bodily actions are professionally sequenced to anticipate and prepare for the service, even before the customer enters the shop and makes his intention known. When we move away from focusing on language as the primary source for sociality, the non-verbal mode of communication is evidently another means of "engagement." The separation of the body and verbal communication facilitates overlapping activity frames in service shops. H's two activity frames (chatting with M and serving the customer) are comfortably nestled, one utilizing the body, and one utilizing verbal interaction.

3.5 Discussion and conclusions

As social beings, we are oriented to and act upon each other's social wants leading to universal interactional patterns. Candidates for universal interactional patterns include, for example, gaze to register and signal focus, and reversely, aversion of gaze to signal disengagement; turn-taking mechanisms to instigate chain of events such as a question to elicit an answer and a request to elicit a compliance. However, the specific ways that interactions unfold, and the specific ways that certain universal behaviors (verbal and nonverbal) are interpreted as meaningful "cues" (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b) differ from community to community, aggregating to become the community's "communicative style."

As demonstrated in the current chapter, interactional patterns may manifest differently in competitive marketplaces where the interactants maintain conflictive economic goals. In Shishan market, vendor-buyer communication follows an asymmetrical interactional structure: the seller pursues a one-on-one face huddle with the buyer whereas the buyer deflects and diffuses such focal pursuits. This asymmetry in interactional focus intertwines with a tripartite participation framework, that is, the materiality of the merchandise, with its purchasable ownership, plays an active role in sustaining the focus requirement of the situation shielding the buyer from entering a one-on-one focal encounter.

Previous research on marketplace interactions in Southern China depicted a task-oriented communicative style where socializing talk, such as politeness rituals, is kept to a minimum (e.g., Orr, 2007; Pan, 2000). Researchers correlated this terse communicative style with the Chinese cultural norm of differentiating one's "in-group" from "out-group" common in hierarchical societies (Hofstede, 1980). Buyers and sellers view each other as outgroup members, necessitating no verbal interaction beyond accomplishing the immediate transactional goal; "avoidance rituals" are more predominant than "engagement rituals."

In the current study, the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the shoppers, such as non-reciprocation of gaze and refrained verbal exchange, appear to echo these findings, particularly Orr's observation that aversion of gaze and absence of politeness rituals help the shopper to deny "encounter-in-progress" (p. 94). However, the term "avoidance" implies watchfulness and intentional "cut off," which essentializes "mutual engagement" as an interactional norm. Previous research on multimodal interactions based on European and North American contexts in particular portray social interactions as acts of "co-orientation, co-ordination, co-operation" (Stukenbrock, 2014; see also Goffman, 1974; Kendon, 1990; Mondada, 2009). In ordinary conversations people maintain sociability, reciprocating each other's bid for attention, interpreting each other's intentions aptly, and acting upon them in sociable ways.

However, as the current analysis illustrates, the buyer's non-engagement appears to be due to orienting to the transactional activity as an individual (rather than social) activity. Instead of observing an outgroup vs. ingroup boundary, verbal behavior is information central. That is, if information pertaining to the product or service is entirely accessible either by mutual understanding (such as a stranger walking into a hair salon) or sampling (such as low-priced goods free for sampling), the information is entirely accessible leading to no need for interaction.

In addition, manifestations of "avoidance" only occur on the part of the buyer. In the competitive open market, the behaviors of the sellers are the opposite of "avoiding," pursuant of focal interaction with the buyer to influence and control at the initial stage of the encounter. With strategic spiels and beckons, the sellers treat their goods as an integral part of their professional identity. In contrast, the buyers treat the goods as separate from the seller's social person, accessible for independent assessment. Even though the sellers use various symbolic means (verbal, gestural and tool emblems) to instigate and expedite the transactional process, the buyer's fixation on the merchandise protects him or her from making rash decisions and legitimately sets the transactional pace on the buyer's own terms. The notion of transaction costs accounts for the customer's restraining from entering a face-to-face huddle initially. Should a customer elicit abundance of talk from the seller without making a purchase, such lengthy verbal interactions incur cost of time and opportunity for the seller. Thus, Shishan buyers' habitual diffusing of interactional focus and delaying entering into a focused encounter are reasonably motivated by self-preservation, to not be responsible for incurring transaction costs for the seller. By not reciprocating the vendor's pursuit of an interpersonal "togetherness," and by conducting the transaction as an individual act, the buyer also frames the seller's pursuant effort as out of their own volition.

Moving away from a logocentric analytic orientation, the analysis in this chapter additionally shows that in service shops, while the body prepares for and executes service tasks with readiness and professionalism, social interactions simultaneously occur in another activity frame, such as engaging in gossip with other co-present members. This verbal vs. non-verbal division of labor is arguably important for service shops as service-based businesses thrive on good relationships in the community. In addition, pleasurable small talk at service shops provides emotional releases from the long, repetitive business hours. As I will argue toward the end of the book, such division of labor of the body vs. verbal interaction, in executing marketplace activities, is a cost-saving process. The nestled transactional and non-transactional frames are made possible by the absence of an externally imposed, institutional social order, allowing micro-agents to carry out their own moment-by-moment judgements of costs and gains, economically as well as socially.

CHAPTER 4

The many shades and shapes of transaction

Transactions as an oral genre

> The search for information – laborious, uncertain, complex, and irregular – is the central experience of life in the bazaar…information search thus, is the really advanced art in the bazaar. (Geertz, 1978, p. 30)

In the marketplace, buying and selling activities are so commonplace and recurrent that their interactional routines become recognizable as marketplace genres ("oral genres," Bakhtin, 1986). This chapter uses "genre" as an overarching lens to explore the shades and shapes of transactional interactions. The analysis expands previous knowledge of marketplace oral genres by incorporating multimodal resources. In particular, I illustrate that spatial layout interplays with local interactional norms, affecting transactional features by affecting how information can and should be accessed.

4.1 Oral genres in the marketplace

Genre is an abstract theoretical concept as well as a practical resource with which people carry out routine activities in efficient and socially appropriate ways. Strauss and Feiz (2014) define genre as "culturally recognizable discursive and grammatical patterns to convey essential content to some form of audience or hearer, within a particular context, and with a view to accomplish a particular communicative purpose." (p. 52) Various other writings on genre highlight genre as "patterned complexity" (Hymes, 1974, p. 3), "abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (Hyland, 2002, p. 114), regularity in interaction (Hasan, 1996, p. 53; Ventola, 1987, p. 3), routinized, typified strategies for "responding to a recurring type of rhetorical situation" (Coe and Freedman, 1998, p. 137), "effects of the action of individual social agents acting both within the bounds of their history and the constraints of particular contexts, and with a knowledge of existing genric types" (Kress, 1989, p. 49).

Genre not only pertains to the written mode of communication; it is an organizing principle of everyday spoken communication (Bakhtin, 1986). When a speech situation is recurrent, speakers build "an image and a definition" of the speech

situation (Goffman, 1961), an "internal image, map or model of the environment, …abstracted to determine future action" (Kendon, 1990, p. 83). Subsequently, participants form assumptions of how they and others should interact in these recurrent situations. Such schematic orientations, realized in social interactions, become oral genres (Bakhtin, ibid).

Based on naturally occurring interactions at a Bangladeshi marketplace, McFadden (2011) suggests that typical marketplace genres are those essential for the economic purpose of the marketplace, such as vendor cries, spiels, bargaining, service, selling and buying, as well as those peripheral to the economic function of the marketplace but central to the marketplace as a social space, such as jokes, insults, storytelling, and casual conversation. Lindenfeld's (1990) fieldwork in a Parisian urban marketplace finds a similar range of oral genres, suggesting that seller-buyer communication to execute a sale is the most common genre, which resembles ordinary conversation with market-specific moves (p. 90; "move" is in the sense of Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; also see Goffman, 1961, p. 35; 1972, pp. 138ff). Lindenfeld identifies two types of moves: moves that are essential for the economic transaction (e.g., price inquiry, order requesting), and "gratuitous speech" inside the transactional interaction (e.g., small talk and jokes) (p. 91). Lindenfeld suggests that both types of moves are strategy-based guided by the interactants' respective final goal. Moves then constitute larger units in temporally unfolding "stages."

Lindenfeld (1990; also 1994) suggests that previous research on transactional encounters is based on two approaches, neither approach satisfactory on their own, needing integration and reconciliation. One approach is cognitive, where social actors use knowledge (pre-existing schemata) to interpret new situations. In this approach, generalized, schematic knowledge guides transactional conducts. This approach was used in earlier genre-based research on sales encounters (e.g. Hasan, 1989) focusing on identifying lexico-grammatical features of core vs. peripheral moves with an overall aim of yielding a universal schema. For example, Hasan (1989) identifies "sale compliance," "sale," "purchase," and "purchase closure" as essential moves. Departures from these essential moves, such as the inclusion of greetings and farewell exchanges, reflect variations in register. The other approach, opposite to the cognitive approach, is a social constructionist approach where each transaction is created anew in specific social contexts. Genre patterns result from the on-going interaction, not generalizable beyond the particular time, place and social actors.

Lindenfeld (1990) reconciles these two approaches by drawing on Schank and Abelson's (1977) dialectic model where schematic knowledge determines the strategies adopted in concrete verbal and communicative choices, but such schematic knowledge, stereotyped and normalized, has to be carried out through symbolic

tools mobilized in interaction. In situations where routines are not available, speakers resort to interactional norms to elicit routines. Turn-taking mechanisms, such as questions requiring answers (Sacks et al. 1974), provide social actors an agentive space to follow or digress from schematic prescriptions. Thus, Lindenfeld reconciles the cognitive model with the constructionist model.

Below is an illustration of the moves Lindenfeld identified through this dialectic cognitive-constructionist approach. The tendency of each move for favoring the verbal vs. non-verbal mode of communication, as outlined in Lindenfeld, is also included.

1. vendor's offer of service (verbal or non-verbal).
2. customer's request for goods (necessarily verbal).
3. vendor's compliance with the customer's request for goods (non-verbal, often accompanied by speech which may include a declaration of cost).
4. customer's acceptance of goods (most often only gestural).
5. vendor's request for payment (necessarily verbal).
6. customer's compliance with the vendor' request for payment (very often only gestural).
7. vendor's acceptance of payment and, if applicable, return of overpayment (non-verbal behaviors almost always accompanied by speech).
8. (if applicable) customer's acceptance of overpayment (non-verbal behavior may be accompanied by speech). This move concludes the transaction. (Additional services may be offered, which leads to more sequences).

(adapted from Lindenfeld, 1990, p. 92)

Outlining such a schema gives the illusion of orderly interactions while in reality transactional interactions are partially unpredictable and partially guided by pre-existing schemata (Lindenfeld, ibid, p. 97). The moves vary in their linguistic forms as well. As Lindenfeld describes, service and goods can be offered in the structure of an interrogative or a statement, and customers can request information by a question or an imperative. Turns-at-talk may occur in any particular form, subsequently moving the interaction in any direction.

Based on an interactional constructivist approach, Orr (2007) similarly critiqued early textually oriented research such as Hasan for its bias toward structural-functional features of interaction, overlooking the social interactional aspects of transactions. Building upon Kress (1989) and Swales (1990), Orr favors a sociolinguistic, sociocultural understanding of genre prioritizing the participants' perspective, which helps analysts to move beyond the "what" to fathom the "why" of marketplace interactions. What defines genre thus is not *a priori* formal features but the intention and purpose of communication manifesting as "member texts" (Swales, 1990). It is not textual features but the shared activities in the community

that define and substantiate one's mental orientation to bounded units known as "genre." The transaction frame is heavily "interpretive" where each utterance requires online interpretation of its intention and purpose. For example, the act of price naming can function as soliciting an order, making an offer or rejecting an initial offer, based on their sequential position in the interaction.

Previous research, insightful and dynamic, nevertheless focused on verbal interactions only. Lindenfeld's thoroughly contextualized research offered insights on multimodal means of interaction, which was based on ethnographic field notes than video analysis. As shown in Chapter 3, the seller's product offer can take on the form of a one-word utterance naming the product; it may also be non-verbal with the seller's body shifting to a serving posture or extending service tools to potential customers. Reliance on audio data obscures the fact that speech occurs in tandem with other semiotic resources and that social interactions are naturally multimodal.

In addition, previous research with genre-oriented approaches tend to construct the seller and the buyer as perfectly skilled communicators who are goal-directed rational thinkers with logical judgments and skillful deployments of strategies. Nevertheless, in the current data, the linguistic repertoires of the vendors are varied. Variability also correlates with the layouts of the setting that facilitate or limit certain types of interaction (Kusters, 2017). By examining a range of business types and incorporating multimodal variation in our analysis, we allow a wider range of factors to shed light on marketplace genres beyond the interplay of pre-existing mental models and interactional norms.

4.2 Fluidity and variability: The role of information access in transaction

The materiality of the situation, especially the layout of the market and the layout of the specific retail stations, interplays with interactional norms and the participants' existing and evolving mental model of the transactional genre. In the following sections, I illustrate that access to information, including product information and purchase intention, is central to genre features of transactions.

4.2.1 Speech in transactional activities

An economic transaction is the exchange of money and goods, a task that sellers and customers jointly accomplish, not necessarily involving speech. Goffman (1981) distinguishes transactional "contact" from transactional "encounter:" the latter goes beyond accomplishing the transactional task. Goffman observed, "words

can be fitted to [transactional] sequence; but the sequencing is not conversational." (pp. 38–39). Goffman described a mere "contact" thus: "a customer who comes before a checkout clerk and places goods on the counter has made what can be glossed as a first checkout move, for this positioning itself elicits a second phase of action, the server's obligation to weigh, ring up and bag. The third move could be said to be jointly accomplished, the giving of money and the getting of change. Presumably the final move is one the shopper makes in carrying the bag away. Simultaneously with this last move, the server will (when busy) begin the second move of the next service contact" (p. 38). Such automated processes are common at supermarkets and online shopping.

The functions of speech in transactions, Goffman conjectures, are to signal friendliness (e.g., greeting and leave-taking rituals, expressions of gratitude) and remedy misunderstanding. Nevertheless, Goffman overlooked the role of information in the marketplace. In the marketplace, information is essential (Geertz, 1978; McMillian, 2002; see also Coase, 1937, 1960, 1988; Williamson, 1985). Geetz (ibid) remarked that searching for information is the "advanced art of the bazaar." The centrality of information may easily be obscured if one's baseline model of a marketplace is the automated supermarket where information on goods is made standard and transparent, and the intentions of the customers are rendered non-matter through open-access and automation. However, in rural markets where written signage and transactional automation are not common, the specifics of a product such as its quality, price, means of consumption, as well as the buyer and seller's respective intentions, are communicated through social interaction with verbal and nonverbal means. In such contexts, more fundamental than marking courtesy and remedying misunderstanding is the ability of language to communicate information and ascertain intention, both crucial for a successful transaction.

To illustrate, Example 4.1 is an exchange between a convenience store owner and a customer. Speech is used conveniently to establish the customer's intention.

(4.1) B=store owner; C=customer

```
1 B:    ao    nan   mi?
        bring water PRT
        'So (you) want water?'
2 C:    ao    nan ummm dum   gi   no.
        bring water    three QUAN  PRT
        '(I'd) want ummm three bottles (of water).'
3 B:    Ao   du^m  gi   pa::^^h?
        Want three QUAN  cease
        'Three bottles only (and nothing else)?'
```

Utterances, as soon as they are said, evince the speaker's stance toward the situation and the addressee (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989). In the above example, service

conviviality is evidenced in the seller's language (Wessendorf, 2014). For example, in line 1, the question marker *mi* indicates the shopkeeper's active imputation of the customer's intention based on the immediate context (Xiang, 2012a on *mi*). The shopkeeper also treats the customer's answer in line 2 as an opportunity for more sale, leading to line 3 which is both a confirmation request and an implicit invitation for more purchase (e.g., the adverb *pah* 'only"). Thus, verbal interaction, as soon as it starts, constitutes a social encounter, albeit brief in this case.

The following example from the hair salon further illustrates the polyfunction of language serving both pragmatic ends and enacting the interactants' social and affective orientation to the unfolding activity.

(4.2) H=hairdresser and salon owner; C=customer

```
1  H:    giu so   mi  ranggei?
         cut hair PRT  what
         '(Are you coming to) cut hair or something else?'
2  C:    giu so   lah.
         cut hair PRT
         '(To) cut hair, of course.'
3        so   luei luei lo   dlong he   de  nge  giu so   ey  lah er.
         Hair long long come reach here COP  must cut hair PRT PRT PRT
         '(My) hair has grown so long that it must be cut, you know.'
4  H:    dli dlang ang?
         M   wash  PRT
         '(Do you) want to have it washed (too)?'
5  C:    n   rung
         NEG use
         'No need.'
```

In the above example, ascertaining the customer's intention drives the interaction. The interaction, as it unfolds, also creates an interactional space where the interlocutors can display social courtesy. For example, instead of a plain confirmation, the customer expresses her affective orientation to the requested service, i.e., her long hair has become unbearable to her.

In both Examples 4.1 and 4.2, the interaction proceeds linearly with matched adjacency pairs (Sacks et al. 1974). Each second pair-part of the adjacency pair provides a new piece of information pivoting the subsequent adjacency pair ("post-" expansion sequences, Schegloff, 2007a). Information as requested and provided is central to the progression of the interaction.

Instead of a linear progression of paired exchanges, Example 4.3. is a more elaborate interaction between a roast duck vendor and a customer. The transaction starts with the vendor's inquiry of the type of roast meat the customer desires. Different from the linear progression of the previous examples, Example 4.3 includes an "insert" expansion sequence (Schegloff, 2007a), where a price inquiry is embedded within the request-order-compliance sequence.

(4.3) V=duck vendor; C=customer.

1 V: *Mo ao danggei?*
2SG bring what
'What would you like?'

2 C: *Diu ah di gon o giuliao?*
roast duck each pound money QUAN
'How much is the roast duck per pound?'

3 V: *Diu ah bie mo.*
roast duck eight CLS
'The roast duck is 8 dollars (a pound).'

4 C: *Sheng gon nia eii lah.*
cut pound come PRT PRT
'(Then just) cut one pound for me.'

5 S: *Heh.*
okay
'Okay.'

Inquiring price

Naming price

Order

Order request

Order compliance

Conversational mechanisms help the interactants to ascertain informational specifics before an order is to take place. Despite their structural differences, Examples 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 develop into specific turn shapes exactly because each turn provides the requested information, which may or may not be sufficient for the final goal, leading to such sequential as well as inserted expansion sequences.

4.2.2 Spatial layouts and information access

Spaces are action-shaped and action-shaping (Goffman 1983; Mondada, 2011; Stukenbrock, 2014; see also: Bourdieu, 1991/2018). Members of a community "emplace" themselves by making use of perceived and built spaces. The marketplace is an organized public space. The central government's effort to centralize and standardize local markets has transformed Shishan market from a roadside make-shift market to a designed and built official space (see Chapter 2). The layout of a space as a built structure influences how transactions can and are expected to proceed physically and socially.

Kendon's (1990) video analysis of social interactions illustrates that, while the human body is the only barrier between individuals in open spaces, physical settings such as the existence of walls and furniture can take over the framing function of the body. A piece of furniture frames how humans can and should interact with each other (Kendon, 1993). As described earlier in Chapter 2, there are two main types of spatial layout in Shishan market: license-based retail stations that occupy the premium built spaces of the market and the non-built transitional spaces

between the premium sections where daily peddlers without a vending license can legitimately pitch their business. The licensed stations are built with concrete, appearing spacious and permanent. The merchants work behind the counter with the interior of the station visible to the customers but restricted for access. Due to the organization of these vending stations into rows, the customers walk by the stations in a linear procession. The stations are organized where the same type of merchandise is in the same area (i.e. butchers' area, fishmongers' area, green grocers' area). Figure 4.1 is a representation of the built space of the license-based retail stations.

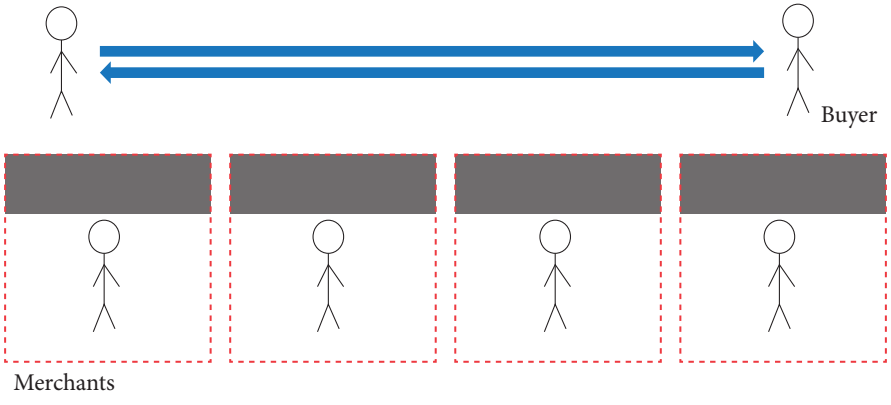

Figure 4.1 License-based retail stations are in rows and semi-enclosed

This layout is purposed for efficiency and sanitation, but the layout also influences how interactions can and are expected to proceed. Analyzing the designed space of a shopping plaza, Streeck et al. (2011) suggest that the built and furnished features of a space provide "spatial usability cues" which, in turn, are culturally perceived. In Shishan market, serving as a functional space, the spacious counterspace between the seller and the buyer makes it possible for the customer to touch, smell, and see the goods, but the elevated status of the goods adds social restriction, making it necessary to engage, each time, verbally if information is needed. The linear flow of the foot traffic through the aisles between the vending stations is the only window of opportunity spatially and temporally for the vendors to capture business, resulting in the vendors' frequent scanning of the incoming traffic and using verbal beckons to attract potential buyers. Using verbal interactions to influence the customer is prominent in this setting.

In contrast, Figure 4.2 is a sketch of the non-licensed, "huddle" space utilized by daily peddlers. The space has a temporary layout framed by the peddler's body and the tools she uses. Because furniture and permanently built barriers are absent around the peddler's body and her goods, this layout draws customers to form a

"huddle" around the goods. The goods-central focus that we examined earlier in Chapter 3 is prominent in this huddle layout. The customers can approach the seller from various directions to independently inspect the goods without conversing with the seller. Such a layout, coupled with the low economic status of the goods, invites and allows access to the goods without verbal interaction. Technically, sale moves at all stages could be done through non-verbal gestures, considerably different from the verbal vs. non-verbal demarcations described in Lindenfeld based on urban Parisian and California marketplaces.

Figure 4.2 A daily peddler's temporary "huddle" space; the person on the left is the peddler; the person on the right is a customer

These two types of "spatial zones" (Goffman, 1963) in Shishan market provide different cues for social interaction. The following example shows two contrasting cases of using nonverbal means for interaction at the "huddle" transactional space. One goes smoothly, and one is sanctioned for violating social normalcy. In the first example, a peddler of a variety of home-made goods (e.g., tofu, pickles and leafy greens) sits on a concrete step next to a premium vending station with two baskets of goods in front of her. Customers approach the peddler from various directions. The peddler competently multi-tasks to cater to multiple customers. In the following excerpt, the peddler is serving three customers at the same time, one buying leafy greens, one buying tofu and one buying pickles. Similar to what's illustrated in Chapter 3, treating transactional encounters as a goal-oriented individual activity than a social encounter is normalized in the local community. This norm enables the

division of labor of the body versus verbal interaction in different activity frames. The seller, illustrated in the example below, is busy spieling, persuading, answering inquiries from customers while completing several transactions nonverbally. The excerpt in Example 4.4 occurs at the moment when a new customer approaches the seller's spot with gaze directed at the leafy greens.

(4.4) NC=new customer; S=seller

1 NC: ((Walks past the seller's spot, upper body torqued in the seller's direction and eyes looking toward the greens in the basket; continues walking in the torqued posture; after a few additional strides, NC turns around and walks back toward the seller.))
2 S: ((Stretches her hand toward the new customer calling the customer's attention to her baskets of goods; the front of her body is oriented toward existing customers while her head is turned to look at the new customer; seeing no return gaze, she retracts her gaze and turns to monitor other buyers.))
3 NC: ((As the seller beckons to her with a hand gesture, NC reaches down and picks up a bundle of leafy greens from the seller's basket.))
4 S: ((Again torques toward the new customer and gaze directed at her))
Na en weng weng en-eey gai dlou bangding lah.
DEM PL tender tender these-type let 2PL satisfy PRT.
'These (greens) are really tender, these types, you'd be pleased.'
((returns to monitor other customers who surround her in a semi-circle))
5 *guan n meng danggei.*
eat NEG have what
'There's not much (left for you to eat).'
6 *go en n dle liao.*
DEM PL NEG get much
'There are not a lot of these left.'
7 *chuk gi ga lou*
thing several already PRT
'(There are) just a few bundles left.'
<Switching to Hainanese>
8 *lah gai*
six dollar
'It's six dollars.'
((NC hands the bundle of leafy greens she's been inspecting to the seller; the seller wraps it in a bag and hands it back to NC. NC takes the wrapped greens, pays, receives her change, and leaves, without exchanging gaze or verbal utterances in the entire process.))

These utterances are initially directed at the new customer. Seeing no reciprocation of her gaze, S continues to speak, but terminates the torque posture to face the rest of the customers huddled around her baskets. Concurrently she takes payments from two customers and frequently looks up in the new customer's direction to monitor her action.

The transaction between the new customer and the seller is conducted as a by-play without a single word from the buyer (Goffman, 1974). The seller's skill in multi-tasking is not only evident in the swift adjustments of her gaze and body orientation, but also her ability to simultaneously execute multiple transactions within their respective sequences. Her skills as a seller are also evident in her subtle

shifts in framing the direct addressee of her verbal spiel as the new customer vs. the generic clientele. The smooth operation of these multiple frames in the same space is made possible by the members' shared goal orientation, the seller's verbal and non-verbal skills, and, significantly, the customers' direct access to the goods, manually handling them for quality assessment. The low-price of the goods renders bargaining unnecessary. The price either has been made clear by the seller's generic spiel or is a non-matter. This type of reduced need for verbal communication is analogous to the automated supermarket transactions that Goffman conceptualized, except that the reduced need for product inquiry at supermarkets is due to machine automation and information standardization. In Shishan market, the reduced need for interaction for information is due to the open-access layout of the transactional space and shared material knowledge in the community, which are arguably typical in small-scale rural marketplaces.

The following example occurs in a similar "huddle" layout at a gourd peddler's spot. In this case, a buyer's non-verbal approach to requesting service is sanctioned verbally by the seller. The peddler spreads out her gourds on a vinyl cloth on the ground behind her. She sits facing the foot traffic. At the beginning of the following segment, the seller is looking at the digital scale on the ground in front of her, interacting with a customer whose bag of gourds is being weighed. A number of customers are picking gourds from the pile behind the seller. At this time, an elderly woman has picked her gourds, ready to make a purchase. Standing behind the seller with her hands full of gourds, the elderly woman nudges the seller on the shoulder with the wrist of her hand. This gestural approach fails to elicit a response. The customer nudges the seller on the shoulder again. The two nudging acts are done without speaking. At this point, the seller snaps; without turning back to look at the customer, the seller "scolds" the customer for not waiting for her turn, illustrated below:

(4.5) Requesting service by nudging gesture

```
((The customer nudges the seller a second time on the shoulder))
1 Seller:    chi  eii lou.
             wait PRT  PRT
             'Wait a bit.'
2            Mo  suang danggei? ((with an annoyed facial expression))
             2SG  rush  what
             'What's the rush for you?'
3 Customer:  ao    del nia  pang lo   ey  eii lor.
             bring bag come put  into PRT  PRT PRT
             'Just give me a bag to put (the gourds) in, alright?'
```

The buyer answers with an explicit request which ends in a string of three interactional particles enhancing the plea overtone (line 3). In a few seconds, without

changing her posture, the seller throws a wrapping bag behind her, constituting a rather annoyed delayed compliance to the customer's request.

Two factors contribute to these gestural moves: (1) the spatial layout, which enables the customer to access the goods independently and approach the seller from any direction; and (2) the competition from other customers, which encourages proceeding with a transaction as a byplay. However, the non-verbal conduct for service in Example 4.5 is sanctioned for being rude. It is possible that the lack of face contact in the nudging gesture makes it less legitimate as a request for service despite the overall goal-orientation norm in the local marketplace. Goffman's notion of a transactional "contact," which he contrasts with a transaction "encounter," may in fact have a certain degree of sociality-a transaction doesn't have to be verbal, but has to be based minimally on a form of mutual social recognition. Kusters (2017) is a multimodal study of how interactional focus is established in sales encounters between a deaf-blind customer and sighted, hearing vendors in a Mumbai street market. Kusters' analyses demonstrate that the deaf-blind shopper establishes contact with the sighted, hearing sellers by first connecting his hand with the seller's hands; the connected hands help the shopper ensure as well as communicate to the seller that service is needed. In Shishan market, sighted hearing individuals proceeding to request service without establishing some form of mutual contact would depart from normalcy and register as rude and sanctionable.

The social cues provided by the spatial layouts also "emplace" the co-participants (Stukenbrock, 2014). The following example takes place at a convenience store. The customer is a young man coming to buy a pack of cigarettes. The shopkeeper is the son of the store owner and a friend of the customer. The young shopkeeper does not keep the store often, thus he has insufficient knowledge as to where the wanted cigarette brand is stored. Throughout this sales encounter, the familiar relationship of the interlocutors is evident in the customer's teasing tone regarding the shopkeeper's ignorance of his own merchandise and the shopkeeper's hopeless self-defense. Yet, throughout this transactional encounter, the merchandise counter in the shop that divides the customer's and the shopkeeper's respective area restricts the customer's access to the merchandise, despite his epistemic authority on the matter. The counter imposes strong "cues" on how the two young friends are to act in their customer-buyer relationship along with their friends relationship. The information regarding the merchandise, including its brand, location and price, is all negotiated through verbal means respecting the spatial boundary between the buyer and the seller in their transaction-based social roles.

(4.6) ((The young storekeeper sits outside the shop looking out to the street; his friend walks straight into the shop and stands facing the counter; the shopkeeper greets him by name, follows him into the store, walks inside the space behind the counter. C=customer; YS=young storekeeper))

1C: *Ao yangia bao nia.*
bring cigarette pack come
'Give me a pack of cigarettes.'
2YS: *Danggei chung?* ((walks inside the space behind the counter))
what kind
'Which brand?'
3C: *Ao yangia weigia lah* ((chuckling))
bring cigarette Weigia PRT
'Give me Weigia of course.'
4YS: *Weigia?* ((looking in customer's direction))
Weigia
'Weigia?"
5C: ((slapping cash bills on the counter))
Ao go de n dun ying en meng gang leh.
give thing COP NEG permit sell PL have say PRT
"It's only worth the trouble to buy banned stuff.'
6YS: ((bending to look around the interior of the counter)
N dun ying?
not permit sell
'Banned stuff?'
7 *Danggei chung*?
what kind
'What kind?'
8 ((looking up at C))
N dle ey lah.
NEG get PRT PRT
'(we) don't have it anymore.'
9C hm?
10YS: *N dle ey lah.*
NEG have PRT PRT
'(we) don't have it anymore.'
11C: *Lu ma n meng?*
just smoke NEG have
"I was just smoking it, and you don't have it?'
12YS: *eh?*
13C: *Lu ma n meng?*
just smoke NEG have
"I was just smoking it, and you don't have it?'
14YS: *Ma dlou gang ying roh?*
Mother 1PL say sell at
'My mom says it's sold here?'
15C: *Venva ra lu ao beng bao ma.*
yesterday 1SG just bring two pack smoke
"Just yesterday I bought two packs to smoke.'
16YS: *Ao dui ne wu?*
Bring from where out
"Where did (she) take it out from?'

17C: *Ao dui po.*
bring from back
"She got it from the backroom.'
18YS: *Ao dui po wu o?* ((walks into the backroom))
bring from back out PRT
'She got it from the backroom, really?'
((Buyer waits in various acts of idling, yarning, counting bills of cash, stretching.))
((Seller returns, coming inside the space behind the counter, showing the buyer the pack of requested cigarettes.))
19YS: *Li bao o guiliao ni?*
each pack money QUAN Q
'How much is one pack?'
20C: *Li bao o di mo o.*
Each pack money four CLS five
"Each pack is 4.5 dollars.'
21 *Ra ho pah lah,*
1SG know cease PRT
'It's enough that I know.'
22 *Mo ho?*
1SG know
'You know? (=What's the point of you knowing it?)'
23 *Mo ying go,*
2SG sell thing
'You sell things,'
24 *mo lung ho*
2SG NEG know
"You have no idea (about your goods)."
25 *gang rong.*
say people
'(What would) people say.'
26YS: *go ge na en ho roh,*
Thing 3SG DEM PL know at
'She (my mom) knows where things are,'
27 *ra lung ho ge ying roh.*
1SG NEG know 3SG sell at
'I have no idea she sells this brand.'

Straddling across lines 20 to 27, the customer hands over payment, the storekeeper takes it, gives change and the customer takes the change))

An enclosed built space entails different interactional patterns than an open area due to socially constructed and perceived right and access. The physical layout of this convenience shop is organized around a large "L" shaped glass counter that separates the customer's area from the shopkeeper's area. This layout "cues" the customer and the shopkeeper's respective social roles. In this case where the buyer turns out to have more knowledge than the shopkeeper about the merchandise, the spatial layout along with the authorities associated with the market-based relational social roles keep the interaction flow linearly, through verbal means, pivoting on information exchange in adjacency pairs. Joint handling of goods and shared means of assessment, as seen in the "huddle" layout, are not practiced likely due to the salient presence of the counter dividing the co-participants along their activity-based normative social roles.

In this case, verbal interactions help to manage the incongruity between the two interactants' respective social roles and their respective knowledge. While the two friends bodily conform to the social roles assigned to being a buyer and a shopkeeper, the buyer's knowing more and the seller's knowing less are explicitly addressed by the buyer's playful and teasing language, asserting himself as the *de facto* expert (lines 21–25).

4.3 Emergent sociality

In Lindenfeld's (1990) effort to reconcile the cognitive approach and the social constructionist approach to analyzing transactional genres, socializing talk, such as politeness routines, greeting and departing rituals, small talk, joking and other playful interactions, are treated as communicative strategies guided by the interlocutors' respective goals (p. 100). Pan (2000a, 2000b) showed that in a hierarchical society such as the Chinese society, social interactions proceed differently between ingroup vs. outgroup members. Social talk is absent for outgroup members in state-planned economy but is used as a strategy to elicit business from strangers in a private business setting. However, Orr's (2007) research, also situated in a marketplace in Southern China, shows that explicit politeness routines are largely absent in private shops reflecting an overwhelming outgroup orientation between shoppers and sellers despite the private business setting. Politeness sequences do however occur in moments of need to strategically mask and mitigate delays of service (p. 101).

In Shishan market, similarly, verbal politeness rituals do not occur for outgroup shoppers. Nevertheless, as illustrated earlier, service conviviality does not necessarily occur as genrized politeness rituals nor does it have to be executed verbally. Kádár and Pan (2011) demonstrated that politeness in Chinese culture tends not to be explicitly codified in ritualized acts; they can be realized in a variety of discursive activities, such as small talk, codeswitching, and topic choice. In Shishan market, it is common to hear socializing talk that manages face wants forming moments that I call "emergent sociality".

To illustrate, the following example is from a butcher's station. A customer has just purchased a slab of ribs. The butcher has cut off the slab ready to pack it. He throws down his cleaver turning around to fetch a wrapping bag. As the butcher is halfway turning for the wrapping bag, the customer requests further chopping.

(4.7) C=customer; BT#2=butcher #2.

```
1  C:    Tsa  duei chi.
         chop more little
         'Chop (it) a bit more.'
2        ((BT#2 turns back, picks up his cleaver again without any
         facial expression nor eye gaze in the customer's direction.
         Slight hesitation is shown in his body pause as he turns back
         #Figure 4.3A))
3 C:     tsa  duei chi    guan duoduo ey  na   bei   ziaopong.
         chop more little eat  many    PRT  only go    comfy
         'Chop it a bit smaller (so I can) eat many pieces and get
         really pleased.'
4 BT#2: =(((pauses his chopping motion, looks up at C, heartily
         laughs; #Figure 4.3B))
         @@@@@@ ((resumes chopping with a smiling face))
```

Figure 4.3A Pausing when hearing additional request

Figure 4.3B Laughing upon customer's self-mocking

Chopping the purchased meat into bite-size pieces changes the interaction from a "transactional frame" to a "valet frame" that goes beyond mere transaction (Orr, 2007). Requesting additional chopping threatens the seller's negative face, namely, the need to not be inconvenienced and imposed upon (Brown and Levinson, 1983). To mitigate the imposition of the requested assistance, the buyer expresses his anticipation of gluttonous joy, which, given the context, expresses gratitude toward the butcher, that is, the customer would enjoy the ribs with enhanced satisfaction just by having more, albeit smaller, pieces (line 3). The buyer thus mocks himself which creates a humorous moment and softens the imposition of the request. The butcher breaks into a hearty laughter, pausing his chopping motion and looking up at the customer while he laughs (line 4; see Figure 4.3B). Spontaneous humor of this type helps to distract social actors from the task-oriented nature of the activity

creating moments of verbal enjoyment (Goffman's [1981] notions of "remedy," "relief," "display of gratitude"). Goffman (ibid) suggests that such acts of sociality facilitate "an easy shift to another conversational matter." (p. 16)

Universally, language is a tool to "remedy" face-threatening acts. Unlike dealings in bureaucratic corporate economy, in a local marketplace occupied by small private businesses, sellers and buyers act as micro-agents for their own interests and making their own decisions (Shohamy, 2006). Thus, within a transactional frame, speakers can break frames and change footing of their own volition (Goffman, 1981). The interaction between the butcher and the buyer, in the above example, is akin to an ordinary conversation despite its overall goal-orientation (Lindenfeld, 1990). Conversations are "responsive to the immediate, local contingencies of interaction" (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997, pp. 69), based on individual's "ad hoc productivity of adaptation to an event" (Hymes, 1964, p. 20). Such sociality as emerges from individuals acting on their own volition to respond to the immediate context differs from the ritualized politeness routines codified into greeting and leave-taking sequences.

4.4 Dissolving "focus" at the finish move

Based on the current corpus, in Shishan market, regardless of whether the merchandise is expensive or lowly-priced, and regardless of whether the vending space is enclosed or open for direct access, a common feature across retail transactions is the absence of a "finish" verbal move, namely, a move that verbally concludes the sale including announcing change and gratuitous talk to bid farewell and anticipate further business (see Hasan, 1989). This final move is said to always appear in the form of verbal interaction in Lindenfeld and Hasan's research. In the current data, such final move is no longer part of the transactional frame. The seller often dissolves his or her interpersonal focus at the very moment when interest to purchase has been confirmed and price accepted.

Example 4.8 represents a typical encounter extracted from an audio recording without access to the visual aspect of the transactional occasion. The transaction takes place at the roast meat vendor's stand. The transaction does not have a "finish" move in terms of a move that verbally concludes the sale and bids farewell.

(4.8) V=Roast duck vendor; C=customer; A=assistant

((The vendor and her granddaughter/assistant cater to a young customer))
1 A: *Ao danggei nong*? [offer]
want what lad
'What would you like, lad?'
2 C: *Biang- ao nan boh chen dum liang.* [request]
buy want meat duck roast three CLS
'(I want to) buy- (I) want three liang roast duck.'
3 V: *[Heh::.* [compliance]
yes
'Okay.'
4 A: [*Heh::.* [compliance]
yes
'Okay.'
5 C: *Ao bah meng en.* [elaborating on request]
want DEM good PL
'Give me the good part.'
6 V: *Heh::.* [consent]
Okay.
'Okay.'

On the audio recording, no further interaction occurs after line 6. Although this transaction appears to not have a "finish" move, transactions captured via video recording reveal that such lack of a payment movement via verbal means to close the transactional frame is common in the local market. Figure 4.4 illustrates a scene at the payment stage at a fruit vendor's stand. At this stage of the transaction, the vendor is already disengaged bodily from the customer. She turns and looks toward passersby who are eyeing her station. This disengaged body posture at the payment stage is not incidental, as it occurs at other stations, ordinarily practiced. The act is also reciprocated by the buyer who simply takes the change and departs.

Figure 4.4 The finish move, dissolving interactional focus

In Orr's (2007) research of Cantonese-speaking marketplace in an urban city in Southern China, closing remarks are also rare (p. 93). Orr attributes the absence of closing remarks to the interactants' orientation to the sales encounter as between outgroup members who do not engage in politeness rituals, part of the overall "avoidance style." Orr does not differentiate the payment move from the other ritualistic acts of farewell and bidding for return business. I argue that the overall norm of the Shishan marketplace treats purchases as an individual activity, goal-oriented than necessarily interpersonal. This norm renders verbal interaction to function pragmatically, to seek information, regulate behaviors, and sway indecisions. To pay, receive change, package goods and depart with the goods are all self-evident steps without having to be assisted by verbal interaction. With no further information or intention to be ascertained, the focused transaction easily dissolves into an unfocused situation. The absence of verbal engagement toward the end of a transaction is also made possible by the absence of a superimposed requirement for explicit social courtesy and facework, typically in rural marketplaces. To be discussed in the final chapter, explicit social courtesy via verbal means as a "finish move" is not universally practiced and is a reflex of how social interactional behaviors are codified in different market models.

4.5 Discussion and conclusions

Transactions can actualize in many shapes and sizes. A transaction can be as minimal as a few bodily moves with or without the accompany of speech. It may develop into elaborate sequences of requests, complaints, politeness, negotiation, and consultation. In this chapter, I demonstrated that information, as pertains to the goods and the co-participants' intentions, is essential for how the genre features of transactions actualize in specific settings. At the most fundamental materialistic level, speech is but one tool for accessing, soliciting and sharing the needed information, along with visual, olfactory, haptic, tactile means and a range of other multimodal means of information access.

Historically situated and individually specific, oral genres build upon ever shifting "inferential schemata" that social actors bring to social activities (Levinson, 1992, p. 72). In the marketplace, spatial layout plays an important role in affecting how information is (to be) accessed. Specific spatial layouts, formed by the human body and by built structures, physically and socially "cue" and normalize certain modes of accessing information. Such "cues," interpreted and enacted, become part of the "interaction order" of the local marketplace (Goffman, 1974).

Shishan market sees the co-existence of the huddle-based peddler space and the standardized, built space of vending stations. These co-existing layouts laminate several interaction orders in one shared physical space. This type of hybrid space is likely not unusual in rural areas near urban centers undergoing urbanization. As public spaces become urbanized, centralized, transformed, the interaction orders that govern day-to-day social behaviors undergo hybrid and transitional stages too.

Although vendors use various symbolic means (verbal, gestural and tool emblems) to involve the buyer at the beginning stage of transactions (Chapter 3), such focal pursuits however dissolve at the payment stage. This tapering interactional contour is explainable with the transaction cost framework. That is, verbal interaction, which incurs costs by costing time, effort and opportunity, theoretically would only occur when the need for ascertaining information arises. Once a purchase decision has been mutually agreed upon and selection of goods completed, the remaining moves (exchange goods and payments, receiving change, taking leave) require neither persuasion nor information, thus leading to no need for focal interaction.

Oral genres indeed comprise of "member texts" (Swales, 1990). The analyses in this chapter show that Shishan buyers and sellers are oriented to striking a balance between the social requirement of the situation and the market-specific self-interest of the co-participants. How these two needs are balanced is culturally specific. Different from machine-automated transactions in the supermarket, in the traditional retail market, buyers and sellers act as their own micro-agents with decision-making freedom to treat each transaction as efficiently run toward its economic purpose while also responding to emergent social needs such as facework.

CHAPTER 5

Making deals, blocking sales

Conflict talk in the marketplace

In conflict, be fair and generous. (Lao Tzu)

Conflicts are inherent in the marketplace as buyers should wish to buy goods with the highest quality at the lowest price and sellers should wish to sell for maximum profit with the least amount of time and effort. These conflictive goals are however leveled by a series of other socioeconomic and contextual factors such as pre-existing business, personal relationships, intention to establish return business, competitions from other vendors, limited opportunity and time, lack of full information on the target merchandise vis-à-vis its competitions, limitations and unpredictability of demand and supply, external regulations, perceptions of prestige and value, etc. Consequently, despite the inherent goal conflicts of buyers and sellers, transactions in the marketplace tend to proceed in routine, uneventfully sequences. Conflicts, in earnest or in jest, do occasionally arise to the surface in forms of bargaining attempts, deceptions, rejections of sale advances, coupled with various face-threatening acts such as mockery and ridicule.

Departing from the uneventful, agreeable transactions analyzed in Chapter 4, this chapter focuses on sales and service encounters where some degree of explicit conflict is verbalized. Specifically, I focus on verbal sequences where the buyer bargains for a better deal, or the seller advances an unwanted sale. In these processes, a prominent communicative style, which I call a "negative style," emerges. I define "negative style" as a communicative style where the speaker's strategies to manage conflict threaten his or her own positive face (e.g., self-mockery, confession to weaknesses) or the interlocutor's positive face (such as "dissing," mocking, ridicule) (Brown and Levinson, 1983). This predominance of "negativity" in resolving conflicts is ordinarily practiced, situational, and appeals to local constructs of "obviousness," "fairness," morality and empathy.

5.1 Managing conflicts

Conflict management is extensively studied in the field of organizational management. It however has not been sufficiently researched with linguistic and sociolinguistic lenses. In organizational management literature, conflicts are deemed

inevitable between rational human beings who desire different goals while possessing sufficient means to implement actions toward these differing goals (March and Simon, 1958/1993). Theoretically, conflicts should not arise if actions are always and amply guided by reasoning. However, the extent of one's rational reasoning is "bounded" by each participant's limited knowledge of the specific circumstances including each other's intentions and available resources. Thus, despite humans' capacity for rational reasoning that should hypothetically preempt any conflicts from arising, humans' capacity for reasoning falls short of calculating all possible causes-and-effects to arrive at no-conflicts resolutions (March and Simon, ibid). Conflicts thus are inevitable.

Conflicts are typically resolved through these four mechanisms both at the individual level and at the organizational level, according to March and Simon.

- **Problem-solving**. This route to conflict resolution is based on the assumption that the parties in conflict agree on the set of objective criteria to assess the situation. Thus, both parties can reach a resolution by seeking more information to gain a better analysis of the situation and reach a new, mutually satisfactory alternative.
- **Persuasion**. This route assumes that the parties' conflictive goals are not fixed; interaction can be brokered to bring one party to agree with the agenda of the other party, on the basis of newly found common goals.
- **Bargaining**. This route assumes that conflictive goals are fixed; both sides need to agree despite their differences. The basis for reaching an agreement with fixed conflicts is to acknowledge that conflicts exist and are fixed, but both parties need to appeal to fairness and obviousness (such as based on shared values) and strategically relinquish parts of one's goal to reach a middle ground. Elements of deception may be part of the process as well as threats, falsification of position, insincere promises. In these processes, gamesmanship and verbal skills become both expected and important.
- **Resorting to politics.** In this route, a concerned party expands itself to include more allies to bring about collective action such as unionizing and/or leveraging mass sympathy.

March and Simon (ibid) remarked that these maneuvers and their effects are never context free. Social actors act according to context-specific psychological and sociological assumptions to generate conflict resolutions (p. 152). Among these four routes, bargaining best resembles the acts of bargain in the marketplace. In market-driven economy, bargaining follows "implicit arbitration with the norms of society serving as the enforcing mechanisms for fairness" (March and Simon, ibid, p. 154). However, absent in March and Simon's classic writing, which is focused on organizational management, is that "fairness" to a large degree is

culturally constructed through symbolic means, primarily language. In a bargaining sequence, from verbalizing the conflict, framing the cause of the conflict, to negotiating positions and reaching a resolution, the two sides of the bargaining table evoke notions of fairness, contest each other's evidence of fairness, and appeal to contextual factors to construct the obviousness of certain resolution over other alternatives.

Conflict talk has not received sufficient attention in sociolinguistic research with the exception of the edited volume of Grimshaw (1990). Based on naturalistic data and focusing on arguments and disputes in both institutional settings and everyday conversations, the authors in the edited volume analyzed a diverse range of conflict talk types, for example, children's arguments over play, teenagers' verbal conflicts in school canteens, family disputes, adults playing competitive games, courtroom interactions, etc. The collected works show that the interactional characteristics of conflicts differ by context. In family disputes, conflicts do not end in resolution; they tend to terminate with standoff to save face for all parties involved. Two insights from this volume were particularly interesting: First, disputes are not always competitive. Surface discursive manifestations of conflict may in fact be cooperative. Second, the social categories that the speakers embody and the power structures therein affect the result of conflicts. For example, rule-based reasoning is regarded to be more impactful than relationship-based reasoning in winning cases at small claims court. The communicative style of the professional, educated class is favored in these courtrooms. This bias toward the educated, professional class is further exasperated by structural inequalities across gender groups and ethnicities.

In this chapter, I focus on conflicts and their solutions in the marketplace setting. I broadly define conflicts in the marketplace as overt verbal or non-verbal discordances that stall the flow of transactions and/or explicitly undermine the public image of the interlocutor, such as bargaining, rejection of sale advances and ostensible negative product evaluations simply for the purpose of "dissing."

5.2 Bargaining in the marketplace

A bargaining sequence arises at the moment when the price, quantity or other aspect of the transaction is not satisfactory to one side of the transaction so that interactive means are used to exert influence on the trajectory of the transaction. The analysis here focuses on how a bargaining attempt is verbally initiated, registered, negotiated, and resolved.

Economic and social conditions influence the degree and type of bargaining in the marketplace. Sociologist Fei Xiaotong noted that non-perishable goods, such as cigarettes, matches, cooking condiments, paper, candles, incenses, are of a

predictable price range, not open for bargain. McFadden's (2011) sociolinguistic study of a Bangladeshi market also showed that bargaining is less common for dry foods and canned foods which have fixed prices. On the other hand, fresh produce tends to not have a fixed price. The seller's price range is flexible, intuitively based on experience of local market norms. Sellers thus would consider a buyer's bargaining attempts to bring about faster sales albeit with smaller profit. Another incentive for considering bargaining is to grow return business and build long-term business relationships. However, the bargained price shouldn't be too low as to affect profit and influence profitability of future sales.

French's (2001) research based in a Guatemalan marketplace observes that bargaining sequences are highly orderly, comprised of neatly staged pre-bargaining talk, actual bargaining, and closing. Compared to ordinary conversations, the orderliness of bargaining sequences, according to French, is due to the bargaining parties' mutual orientation to the significance of each turn in contributing to the overall purpose of the bidding. Thus, the bargaining turns-at-talk are consciously collaborative, resulting in "regularized turn-taking, very little overlap or interruption." (p. 162) The speakers establish the upper and lower limits of the price and negotiate the price within the range in manners civil and cordial. The bargaining sequences proceed along cycles of offer-rejection pairs with blocking and redirecting strategies to assume control of the interaction, pressing the customer to make an offer. The buyer may block an attempt with silence. French shows that co-participants utilize indirect speech acts to downplay the degree of their agency in decision-making. The bargaining processes thus depict the co-participants' communicative competence as well as psychological alertness in executing the bargaining task.

Orr's (2007) analysis of Cantonese retail encounters discovered a similar pattern of orderliness when bargaining. Ritual speech acts mark the initial and final boundaries of bargaining; the overall interaction is impersonal, governed by "a tightly circumscribed communicative goal of negotiating commercial exchange and not relationship." (p. 100) The turn-taking mechanism of interaction provides chained bargaining moves such as an offer leads to acceptance, rejection, counter-offer or further solicitation. Orr identified two types of talk that occurred in the bargaining genre: price talk and product talk. Price talk is the most frequent type occurring in question-and-answer adjacency pairs, constituting a minimal bargaining move. One may ask about price, complain about price, and justify one's price offer in return. It is important to note that quoting a price by the vendor is an offer move, but quoting a price by the customer is regarded as an offer to purchase. Orr observes that the customer may ask about the price even when there is a price tag which supports the analysis that a price inquiry is not a request for information but is treated as a contingent slot for initiating a bargaining sequence.

Previous research, such as French (2001) and Orr (2007), reveals that bargaining has become an oral genre, ritualistically executed. Each turn-at-talk becomes

significant in the light of an overall genre expectation, interpreted as strategically deployed within the activity of bargaining. Negative evaluation of a price-statement (offer) could trigger a "side sequence" (Jefferson, 1972). At this point, the vendor may counteroffer or restate the offer. With a negatively received answer, the actor may remain silent (than challenging the offer). Silence of 10-secends is heard as a rejection, which may instigate a new offer. In this context, silence and departure are bargaining moves as well. The entire bargain may be quite complex and elaborate, a competition of gamesmanship and a "tug-of-war."

5.3 Bargaining as emergent conflict talk

Pervious research on the bargaining genre such as French (2001) and Orr (2007) is based on retail markets in urban areas. In the marketplace of a small rural town such as Shishan market, bargaining doesn't occur often. When it does occur, it rarely occurs in a formalistic tug of war on prices. Instead of a strategic tug-of-war, conflicts are managed through moves of persuasion and acquiescence. Schiffrin's (1984) model of a three-stage conflict talk is more fitting for the Shishan data: assertion, challenge, defense. The three-stages form a rhetorical structure than genric rituals. Below is an illustration of bargaining moves reflecting a persuasive rhetoric than a "tug-of-war."

(5.1) Roast duck's stand, V=vendor; C40=customer #40

1C40: *Nan bok o giuliao?* [Price inquiry]
meat duck money QUAN
'How much is the duck meat?'

2V: *Nan bok bie mo.* [Price declaration] [Assertion]
meat duck eight CLS
'The duck meat is eight dollars (a pound).'

3C40: *Bie mo?* [Echo]
eight CLS
'Eight dollars?'

4V: *Heh.* [Confirmation]
yes
'Yes.'

5C40: *Sop mo(indistinct)?* [Bargain] [Challenge]
seven CLS
'… seven dollars?'

6V: *n gang de bok Diuying,* [Persuasion] [Defense]
NEG say COP duck Placename
'This is not Diuying duck.

7 *bok dlou na gei de cheng ru ru en eey gai.*
duck 1PL DEM type COP roast crisp crisp PL PRT PRT
'Our ducks are roasted very crispy you know.'
((At this point, another customer speaks and C40 is no longer heard on the audio recording, who likely acquiesced or walked away.))

The price is announced upon inquiry in line 2, which is an "assertion" move that leads to a challenge. The challenge move is foreshadowed by an echo and followed by a counteroffer (lines 3 and 5). The seller immediately launches her defense (lines 6 and 7). The seller's self-defense consists of skillful uses of description, identification and categorization, namely, her roast duck is not the lesser duck from Diuying town nearby, and her duck is absolutely crispy. Thus, the vendor appeals to locally shared knowledge to construct the quality of her goods as above bargain. Her self-defense uses possessive plural first person pronoun *bok dlou* 'our (duck)," the high-focus category reference *na gei* "this type" (Strauss, 2002), and the repeated adjective *ru ru* "very crispy." No ritualistic moves are used to establish the upper and lower limit to establish a mutually agreed range for negotiation. In contrast to the predominance of price talk shown in Orr's data, focusing on the quality of the product is a persuasive move appealing to shared notions of "obviousness" and "fairness."

The following example exemplifies a similar process of assertion, challenge and defense through product talk. With the accompany of video data, we are able to see that bargaining is done through a price echo and a subsequent assertion of a lower price, very similar to the structure of the previous example. Also similarly, the seller, instead of rejecting the lower price, reasons with the buyer through product talk. Acquiescence is the final outcome in both cases, not escalating to an explicit price war.

Example 5.2 is taken from the gourd seller we observed earlier. The seller is weighing a customer's purchase on the digital scale. She announces the weight of the purchase, while pointing to the digits on the scale for the customer. The buyer and the seller sit side by side, both facing the scale.

(5.2) Bargaining at a gourd seller's spot; S=seller; C=customer.

		VERBAL	EMBODIED
1	S:	*Gong der le.*	Puts the customer's
		pound four little	bag of gourds on the
		'A bit more than 1.4 pounds.'	scale, looks at the
2		*Gong da dlong lah no*	scale, points to the
		pound half reach PRT PRT	scale. C also looks
		'It's almost one and half pounds.'	at the scale.
3	C:	*ye mo ba::::::t*	Looks upward and
		two CLS eight	sideway into the air
		'(So it's gonna be) 2.8 (dollars).'	
4		*ye mo o LA:::H DER*	
		two CLS five PRT PRT	
		'(Make it) 2.5!'	
5		*Nia.*	Stretches left hand
		come	in an inward
		'Come on.'	beckoning motion

6	S:	*Mo lo ey o dum mo ne.* CLS into PRT money three CLS PRT '(I'll give you) one more and (make it) three (dollars).'	Looks down, picks up a gourd right next to her, hands it over to C
7	C	*Na mo lao ang?* DEM CLS old Q 'Is this one old?'	Stretches arm to reach for the extra gourd
8		*na mo lao ang di no?* DEM CLS old Q PRT PRT 'Is this one old after all?'	
9	S:	*N lao!* not old '(It's) not old!'	
10	C:	*Weilo!* Wow 'Wow!'	Holds gourd in hand, bends it in manner of inspecting
11		*Na mo dli lao ey di no!* DEM CLS M old PRT PRT PRT 'This one is turning old!'	
12	S:	*Ra aop mo liu.* 1SG break 2SG see. 'Let me break it so you can see the inside.'	Looks sideway at the gourd she offered to C, swiftly reaches for it and takes it back; cuts one end off, hands it back to C
13		*nang mo lao ey bei ne?* how CLS old PRT go where 'How is it old at all?'	
14	C:		Inspects the gourd by manual handling, hands it back to S but takes it back again, licks and bites the cut surface, hands it back to S, all the while looking to her front without looking in S's direction.
15	S:		Takes the returned gourd, puts it in the bag of gourds on the scale.

Line 3 and line 4 are almost identical in their lexico-grammatical contents, each a quantificational phrase, 2.8 dollars (line 3) vs. 2.5 dollars (line 4). Their difference in prosodic features and sequential placement indicate that line 3 is the speaker's online mental processing, while line 4 is intended to assert a bargain for a lower price, doing so with some persuasion (line 5). Because the gourds are two dollars a

pound, the customer verbalizes her mental calculation arriving at the price of 2.8 dollars (line 3). Immediately, she utters 2.5 dollars, which in context, is a request for lower pricing, an emergent bargaining move.

Li's (2016) work on Mandarin conversation, using the Praat phonetic analysis program (Boersma and Weenink, 2018), showed that prosodic changes are connected to interactional pragmatic moves. Applying a similar analytic process using prosodic variation as evidence of interactional actions, the bargaining move here (lines 4 and 5), instead of being pre-calculated and adhering to a prescribed bargaining genre, is "touched off" by the the speaker's online mental processing. The customer's turn (lines 3 to 5) has three intonation units each of its own coherent intonation contour (Li, 2014; Tao, 1996), serving different functions consecutively formulating the shifting purposes of the speech from mental processing (line 3), to launching a bargaining (line 4)) to adding persuasion to the bargain (line 5). Figures 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate the distinct voice qualities of the three adjacent intonation units of lines 3 to 5.

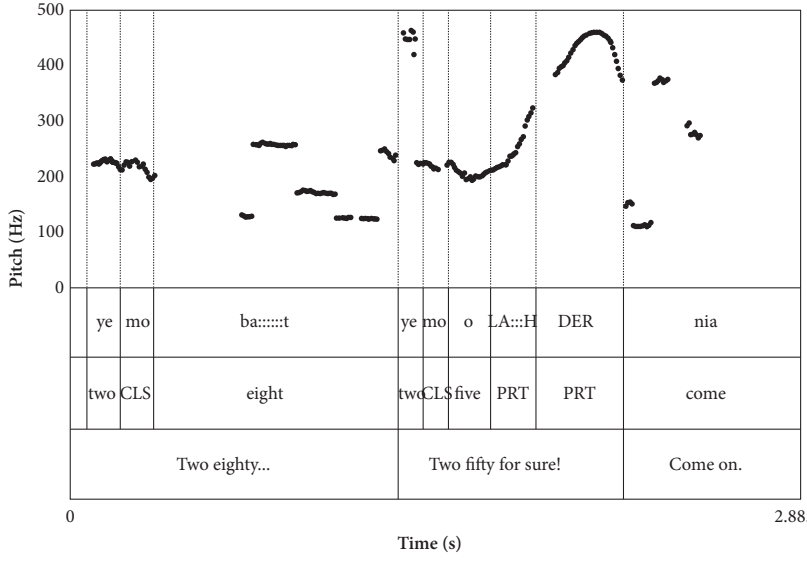

Figure 5.1 Pitch plot of the three IUs in lines 3, 4, 5

Figure 5.1 shows the pitch contour of the three adjacent utterances. I argue that the first utterance (line 3) is a reflex of the speaker's mental arithmetic calculation. The utterance starts mid in the pitch range at approximately 255 Hz. It drops to 130 Hz at the morpheme "eight" registering "eighty cents"; the utterance protracts to almost a whole second sustaining a flat mid-range pitch contour.

The initial pitch of the second utterance in line 4, offering the bargain price, drastically spikes up to 455 Hz, registering the utterance as a new move worthy of attention. The pitch drops down to 200Hz at the contrastive price "o', which has an inherent falling lexical tone and spikes up high to 500Hz at the site of the two utterance-final interactional particles *lah der* with the highest pitch sustained for almost half a second. The buyer's third contiguous utterance is a one-word directive *nia* 'come (e.g. come on!),' said with a low pitch starting at 110 Hz rising up to 277 Hz. The mid-low pitch range registers a nonchalant attitude as if the requested price is beyond argument, further evidenced by the buyer's stretched hand with a "give it to me" gesture. Worth noting too is that the argued price is said with fast tempo. The initial utterance of a similar lexicogrammatical structure (line 3) lingers on for 1.28 seconds, while the same amount of lexico-grammatical material in line 4 is delivered in 0.38 seconds. The two interactional particles, carrying persuasion of "obviousness" (Xiang, 2011), lasts longer for 0.52 seconds.

The intensity contour of the continuous utterances further supports the analysis, as illustrated in Figure 5.2 below.

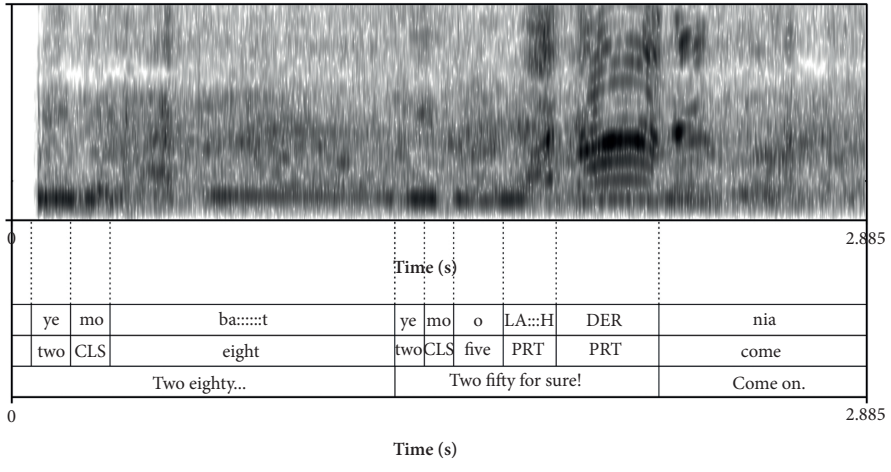

Figure 5.2 Spectrogram of the three IUs in lines 3, 4, 5

As Figure 5.2 illustrates, the overall amplitude contour of the three IUs, giving rise to perception of how loud the speech is, is much more intensified in the second and third IUs. This intensification is not surprising as these two utterances, different from mental processing, are intended to persuade, needing to be loud and be "heard."

Indeed, the customer's utterances are heard and reacted to as a bargaining move. In line 6, to counter the customer's bargaining move, the seller offers an additional gourd to compensate for the gap between the current price and the

requested price, rounding the price higher while also creating an overall impression of a good deal for the buyer.

The seller's counter-bargain triggers a product assessment sequence (lines 7 to 14). The buyer questions the quality of the gourd proffered suspecting a poor quality or a deteriorating condition. Such act of "product-dissing" is a typical product talk (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). Both parties subsequently engage in collaborative, fast-paced product inspection. The "dissing" act is to some degree performed (Orr, 2007) as the buyer's negative assessment is delivered in a dramatic intonation coupled with a response cry as soon as she takes hold of the proffered gourd without even having time to inspect it (line 10).

Here bargaining occurs as a touched off reaction to price; it doesn't escalate to a tug of war nor are the participants oriented to a larger verbal genre of "bidding." Product talk takes precedence over price talk. The conflict swiftly resolves by the offering of additional goods to round up the price to which the buyer acquiesces.

5.4 Freebies, upselling moves, and win-win resolutions

Another implicit aspect of bargaining is that bargaining intentions can be pre-empted before they have reasons to surface. Across different vendors in Shishan market, a common strategy is to offer small pieces of free goods to customers at the end of a successful transaction, such as several pieces of dried tofu, a small soup bone, etc. This behavior arguably creates a "feel good" moment and is accepted without question. However, when the additional goods are offered before weighing and pricing to offset a bargaining attempt (e.g., Example 5.2), suspicion of the quality of the additional merchandise is often voiced by the buyer. Example 5.3 below from the duck vendor's station illustrates.

(5.3) The "freebie and upsell" strategy; V=vendor; C18=customer #18

```
1   C18:  Sheng go    ha^ng  ha^ng ge  ga^r?
          weigh thing all    tall  PRT  PRT
          'How about weighing it high? (=Give me a fair amount for the
          worth of my money)'
2   V:    He::h,
          yes
          'Okay,'
3         He::h.
          yes
          'Okay,'
4         Chi    eii^,
          little PRT
          '(Wait) a little,'
```

```
5          Chi    eii^,
           little PRT
           '(Wait) a little.'
6          na  tu^p lo^h.
           ADV  chop PRT
           'I'll chop some for you in a jiffy.'
7          (7.0)
8   C18:   O     giuliao?
           Money QUAN
           "How much?'
9   V:     Dum   mo  nia^,
           Three CLS come
           'Give me three dollars, '
10         ra  ao    kulou   mo  mo  luei.
           1SG bring gizzard  CLS 2SG PREP
           '(and) I'll throw in a gizzard to you for free.'
11  C18:   En de  danggei^?
           PL  COP what
           'What are these?
12         =Kulou  danggei?
           gizzard what
           'What kind of gizzard?'
13  V:     Kulou   gai^^.
           Gizzard chicken
           'Chicken gizzard.'
```

At the roast duck vendor's station, the weighing tool is not a digital scale but a steelyard (杆秤 *Gǎnchèng*), a gadget made of a wooden balance beam and an iron counterweight. The expression "sheng go hang hang" in line 1 refers to the act of letting the beam stay high without moving the counterweight down, to be lenient with measuring or simply not to be too precise in the buyer's favor. The buyer inquires of the price after weighing. The seller, instead of directly announcing the price, states a round-up price inclusive of a free gizzard. Similar to what we observed earlier in Example 5.2., the buyer suspects the quality of the added gizzard and follows up with an inquiry (lines 11 and 12).

To offer larger quantity of goods for the same price is an economically and interpersonally complex action. It positions the seller in a morally positive light as the seller appears generous and gracious. Such generous gesture is genuine if it occurs at the end of a successful transaction, using free goods as a token of gratitude. However, if the generous gesture occurs before payment, it may be rejected by the buyer with moral indignation insisting on a straightforward money-goods exchange. The following segment is a case in point.

(5.4) Failed upselling move; roast duck vendor's station; C41=customer#41; V=vendor

1 V: *Mo dli ao danggei?*
2SG M bring what
'What would you like?'
2 C41: ((indistinct))
3 V: *Bok cheng chi mi?*
Duck roast little PRT
'A little bit of roast duck?'
4 *en de gang Na-ah ne.*
PL COP say Nan-duck PRT
'these are the Nan duck.'
5 *mo guan Nan-ah n guan?*
2SG eat Nan-duck NEG eat
'Do you like to buy (some) Nan-duck or not?'
6 C41: *piang o giuliao?*
half money QUAN
'How much is this half?'
7 V: *piang mi?*
half PRT
'(So) you mean this half?'
8 *heh?*
Yes
'Right?'
9 *o mo mi chi.*
five CLS light little
'For 5 dollars, it's a little light (=add some to make it 5 dollars).'
10 C41: *da gon ey lah?*
Half pound PRT PRT
'It's already half pound?'
11 V: *n dlong,*
NEG reach
'Not yet.'
12 *n dlong da gon lou.*
NEG reach half pound PRT
'It's not yet half a pound.'
13 <switching to Hainanese>
vo gao.
NEG enough
'Not enough.'
14 C41: *N ao lah,*
NEG bring PRT
'(I) don't want (more).'
15 *ao liao gua.*
bring much why
'Why getting so much?'
16 *se giuliao de giuliao lah.*
money QUAN COP QUAN PRT
'I'll give you whatever it is worth (don't make a special discount for me).'
17 V: *Ao o beng mo nia leh.*
bring money two CLS come PRT
'Then just give me 2 dollars.'

Initially, the buyer doesn't have a definite idea what she wants to buy. The vendor suggests the Nan duck (lines 3–5). The customer reciprocates the offer asking for the cost of a pre-cut piece. Similar to what Orr (2007) observed, in the transaction frame, the customer's asking for cost is interpreted legitimately as consent to a purchase. The vendor consents to the request and weighs the piece. Instead of plainly stating the price of the piece based on its weight, the vendor attempts to upsell by rounding up the price to five dollars (line 9). The grammatical design of line 9 presupposes that five dollars, as announced, is a mutually agreed amount of sale. The rounded price leads the customer to query the specific weight of the piece. The vendor eagerly confirms that the weight is not yet half pound (lines 11–12); she even switched to Hainanese, *vo gao* 'not enough,' (line 13), albeit the buyer only uses Shishan dialect. This momentary switch to Hainanese, not due to language barrier, is likely a stylistic maneuver for emphasis. Up to this point, the vendor has surreptitiously constructed the goal of the purchase to be five dollars without explicitly requesting a consent. Line 14 to line 16 is the customer's objection to the upselling move stating explicitly that she just wants the piece she has chosen, no more, no less. The vendor concedes to this explicit rejection, and announces that the payment is actually 2 dollars, much less than initially targeted through the upselling move.

The upselling maneuver can be questioned, contested, or principally rejected as seen in the examples above. Conversation's turn-taking mechanisms however "prefer" each next-turn to comply with the projected action and intention of the previous turn (Pomerantz, 1984). It takes additional vigilance and effort to reject an upselling move masked in ordinary conviviality and evocation of obviousness. Thus, it is often the case that the buyer simply acquiesces to the upselling move. In the case of the hard sale we observed earlier between a young local butcher and an urban customer from Haikou city, what finally brokered the sale is not slot-by-slot negotiation. Instead, the difficult sale finally reached a breakthrough when the butcher offered a "freebie" and the buyer acquiesced to the move.

(5.5) Young butcher's station with an urban customer, concluding a hard sale

	Verbal	**Embodied**
1 Butcher:	这个猪好吃，	Serves another
	zhège zhū hǎochī,	customer; no longer
	DEM CLS pork delicious	focally engaged with
	'This pork is delicious,'	the urban customer
2	人家一看人家就买了，	
	rénjiā yì kàn rénjiā jiù mǎi-le,	
	PRO QUAN see PRO ADV buy PRT	
	'Other people, they see it, they buy it,'	
3	不是我吹牛.	
	Bù shì wǒ chuīniú.	
	NEG COP 1SG brag	
	'It's not that I'm bragging.'	

4 Customer:	这里- 这里是哪里的? *zhèlǐ zhèlǐ shì nǎlǐ de?* here here COP where PRT '(This one) here- which part (of the pig) is (this one) here?'	Points to a piece on the counter
5 Butcher:	这里是 前脚 那里 啰. *Zhèlǐ shì qiánjiǎo nàlǐ luō.* here COP front leg there PRT 'This is the front leg, y'know.'	Moves various pork pieces on the counter, not looking at C.
6 Customer:	前脚是啊? *Qiánjiǎo shì a?* front leg COP PRT 'Front leg?'	Looks at the piece of pork, holding it up to inspect
7 Butcher:	要这块吗? *yào zhè kuài ma?* Want DEM CLS Q '(So) you want this piece?'	Reaches as if taking the meat from C's hand
8 Customer:	我看一下. *wǒ kàn yīxià.* 1SG look QUAN 'Let me take a look.'	Puts down the piece, reaches for another piece and holds it up for inspection
9	(0.4)	
10	太长了. *tài cháng-le.* Too long PRT '(It's) too long.'	
11 Butcher:	长你就割短一点也可以啊. *cháng nǐ jiù gē duǎn yīdiǎn yě kěyǐ a.* *long 2SG ADV cut short QUAN also fine PRT* 'If (it is) too long, you can just have it cut shorter. That's fine too.'	Reaches to take the new piece from C's hand but retracts his hand as C puts down the new piece too.
12	肥猪, 肥猪, 你不懂买肥猪吃? *féi zhū, féi zhū, nǐ bù dǒng* *fat pig fat pig 2SG NEG know* *mǎi féi zhū chī?* *buy fat pig eat?* 'Fatty pork, fatty pork, you don't know how to buy and eat fatty pork?'	Turns around and fetches a wrapping bag
13	你认我起来, *nǐ rèn wǒ qǐlái* 2SG recognize 1SG RES 'You will recognize my brand,'	Opens the bag as if ready to wrap C's order; simultaneously looking around and scanning foot traffic.
14	我一看- *wǒ yī kàn-* 1SG one look 'See- '	
15	要啵? *yào bō?* Want PRT '(Are you going to) buy it?'	Opens the bag as if ready to let the meat in C's hand drop in the bag, but C again puts the meat back on the counter.

16	[这个好吃-. *Zhè-ge hǎochī-.* DEM CLS ['This is delicious- '	Picks up a piece and holds it up for a new customer across the counter.
17 Customer:	[这个可以剁 *(.)* 肉丸吧? *Zhè-ge kěyǐ duò (.) ròuwán ba?* DEM-CLS M chop meatball PRT 'This can (be used to) make meatball, right?'	Inspects two pieces on the counter at the same time, looking at one piece and touching the other.
18	(1.0)	No response from the butcher; the buyer looks up and looks to the butcher; butcher appears to not hear and ignores the question.
19 Butcher:	这个好吃的. *Zhè-ge hǎochī de.* DEM-CLS delicious PRT 'This is delicious.'	Reaches out for the meat piece in the customer's hand, takes it over, puts it in the wrapping bag he's been holding. The customer's hand hesitates very briefly then lets go.
20	再给点瘦肉给你. *zài gěi diǎn shòu ròu gěi nǐ.* ADV give QUAN lean meat give 2SG '(Let me) give you some more lean piece.'	Grabs a small piece of lean meat on the counter near the buyer, holds it up and displays it for the buyer; the buyer looks at it and touches it, then takes it in her hand, looking at it intently.
21	这个卖二十八, 三十. *Zhè-ge mài èrshíbā, sānshí* DEM-CLS sell 28 30 'This sells for 28, 30 dollars.'	The butcher points to the piece in buyer's hand, then swiftly grabs it and tries to take it from her hand.
22	这个是肩. *Zhè-ge shì jiān* DEM-CLS COP shoulder 'This is the shoulder (portion).'	A slight tug-of-war over the piece as the customer momentarily holds the piece but relinquishes her grip. Butcher adds this small lean piece in the bag being weighed on the digital scale.

	<switching to Hainanese>	
23	*dai ga odie*	The butcher halfway
	front shoulder LOC	torques away to weigh
	'This is shoulder (meat).'	the meat on the scale,
		turns around and
		announces the price.
24	二十三块钱啦.	
	Èrshísān kuài qián la.	
	23 CLS money PRT	
	'(It's) 23 dollars.'	

This segment occurs near the end of a long five-minutes encounter between the butcher and the customer. Up to this point, the butcher has been patiently assisting the customer while having completed another transaction. The patience of the buyer is apparently on the wane. He evokes the positive attitude of other buyers who know better about good pork and don't hesitate to buy from him (lines 1–3). In lines 4 to 8, the butcher attempts to finalize the sale, treating the buyer's inquiry for additional product information as declaration of intent to order (line 7). Similar to what's observed earlier in Chapter 3, the buyer requests more time and negatively assesses the product, this time suggesting that the length is undesirable. The butcher dismisses the relevance of this criticism by suggesting, rhetorically, that she can simply buy a shorter cut of it (line 11). He also slightly mocks the buyer for being ignorant about the tastiness of fatty pork (line 12). His body and gaze also have disengaged from the customer, in contrast with his earlier pursuits of synchrony in body and gaze (Chapter 3). The butcher launches an explicit order request again (line 15) which is deflected again by the buyer who makes further inquiry on the utility of the pork (line 17). This time, the butcher ignores this expansion sequence initiator altogether (Schegloff, 1998). After an audible one second delay (line 18) the customer looks up toward the butcher. Without attending to the intention of the customer's previous turn, the butcher states that his pork is delicious (line 19), a "glossing" comment functioning to encompass all that needs to be said about the pork, dismissing further need for product inquiry (Garfinkel, 1963; Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970; Heritage and Watson, 1980). A verbal order not forthcoming still, the butcher finally forcefully takes the piece that the buyer is inspecting from her hand, wraps it and weighs it on the digital scale. As the meat is being weighed, likely to preempt further indecision on the part of the buyer, as, after all, an explicit declaration to purchase has not been made, the butcher picks up a small piece on the counter near the buyer, purportedly a more expensive cut, and adds it to the portion being weighed. There ensues a slight tug of war over the added piece as the buyer tries to get hold of it for a close inspection, but the seller swiftly takes the new piece out of the buyer's hand and adds it to the bag of purchase. To further preempt suspicion and resistance, the butcher voluntarily provides information about the added piece as from a much pricier cut (shoulder meat), appealing to

"obviousness" (lines 21–23). The sale now concludes with no further objection from the customer. In fact, the buyer starts to call out to her friend nearby to purchase from the butcher as well. In contrast to the proactive rational strategic deployment of negotiating moves portrayed in previous literature on bargaining, relinquishing control in the face of demonstrated evidence of a win-win situation appears effective in brokering hard deals in Shishan market.

5.5 Moral dimensions of bargaining: When conflicts escalate

Orr's research based on Cantonese data in the urban setting in Southern China suggests that customers and sellers primarily engage in price talk in genre-based formulaic bargaining sequences. In contrast, in the current Shishan data, people engage in product talk whereas price talk is minimally heard. Customers negatively assess the product they are inspecting, which results in the seller's provision of a free sample or upselling for a win-win resolution. Such "product dissing" acts sometimes appear to be habitually practiced, "dissing" the quality of the merchandise without an apparent ulterior motive, suggestive of an overall negative communicative style in the community. In the following example, C13 is a young male with a playful demeanor. When he approaches the duck vendor's station, he jocularly claims that he would like to buy a duck head to "munch on," which "keys" his playful demeanor (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b).

(5.6) Duck vendor's station. V=vendor; A=assistant; C13=customer #13

```
1 C13: ((chuckling))
       Ao    hao  boh  mo  nia  gal  lah.
       bring head duck CLS come chew PRT
       '(I'm) going to buy a duck head to munch on.'
2 V:   Ao    hao  boh  mi::^?
       bring head duck PRT
       'So you want duck head?'
3      (1.0)
4      Ao    a^ng?
       bring Q
       '(Do you) want (duck head)?
5 C13: Hu:::n    o     dum   mo  nia^^.
       intestine money three CLS come
       'Give me three dollars of intestines.'
6 V:   Hun       na^   yo^^?
       intestine which type
       'What kind of intestines?'
7      (indistinct)
8      Dum   mo  mi^^?
       three CLS Q
       'Three dollars, is it?'
```

```
9       =Lekiang mi^^?
        lad      Q
        'Is it, lad?
        ((8 seconds of indistinct interaction))
10 V:   Dum   mo.
        three CLS
        'Three dollars.'
11 C13: (Hun      en su::^ hiang la:::h.)
        intestine PL bad   very  PRT
        'These intestines are so bad.'
12 V:   He:::h?
        what
        'What?'
13      (0.6)
14 C13: Hun       en su:::^.=
        intestine PL bad
        'These intestines are bad.'
15 V:   =Hun      en su^^?
        intestine PL bad
        'These intestines are bad?'
16      (2.6)
17      Beina gang hun       en su^:: ni^^::::?
        who   say  intestine PL bad   PRT
        'Who says that these intestines are bad?'
18      Mo  gang ne      ho  lao:^ ey  su::::^^ de  ba^h cue^^:::n.
        2SG say  grandma CLS old   PRT bad      COP ADV   true
        'If you say this grandma is old-turn-bad, that's true (=Don't
        you dare say that this grandma's meat products are bad).'
19 C13: Na^ng    nan  na en jiao meng lou mi^?
        PRT (NEG) meat DEM PL even good PRT  Q
        'Are you telling me meats like these are still good?'
20 V:   Go  er? ((continuing her previous comment, ignoring C13))
        COP PRT
        'Isn't it? (like I said.)'
21      (3.0)
22 A:   Ne^!
        INT
        'Here!''
23      (2.0)
24 VR:  Hu^n      en ru  su^^^:::?!
        intestine PL ADV bad
        'These intestines are bad?! (what nonsense.)'
```

The customer's product dissing does not appear to originate from an ulterior motive, that is, it doesn't lead to a bargaining attempt, nor is it heard as a bargaining move. After all, the dissing act occurs after the purchase has been completed (the payment is announced as early as line 10 before the dissing act begins in line 11). Both the customer and the seller do not rescind their position regarding the quality of the goods purchased. The customer negatively assesses his purchase, while the seller holds her ground and retorts. The pattern of "dissing, counter-dissing, dissing back even more" has a poetic rhythm. French (2001) showed that social actors

"banter" when they bargain. As they do so, they negotiate social identities. Both parties in this example resort to moral interpretations of the situation. The seller in her seniority moralizes the situation by evoking her identity as an old grandma who can 'go bad,' but her products are beyond criticism. Her self-deprecation evokes her relational senior status ("grandma"), which, in a culture that moralizes respect to the elderly, mocks the young customer's disrespectful behavior. Similarly, the young customer's unmitigated negative assessment of the meat product (line 11 and line 14) is upgraded by resorting to allegedly observable poor quality of the product that transcends social order of seniority (line 19). The conflict ends with a curt transaction closing move by the vendor's assistant transferring the purchase (line 22) and the vendor's further expression of disbelief and indignation (line 24). In this example, both parties disagree without reconciliation, ending abruptly where each party's disparate moral interpretation of the situation remains unchanged.

Bargaining is a normative behavior (French, 2001). What can be said in negotiation and what is inappropriate to bargain are community specific. This moral aspect of bargaining lends itself to bystander spectating. As observed in Leung (2009), in disagreeable haggling, bystanders are called upon to witness a client's insulting offer or disrespectful conduct (p. 15). A bargaining attempt could end in ridicule and embarrassment for violating shared notions of "obviousness" and "fairness," the fundamental moral principles underlying acts of bargaining.

In the following example, a customer wants to buy a piece of meat but insists that a small bone in the piece be taken out before weighing for payment. The vendor refuses this request. The customer gives an "ultimatum" only to be met with ridicule.

(5.7) Duck vendor's station; V=seller; C28=customer #28

```
1C28:   Ao    n  ao?                    [an ultimatum]
        bring NEG bring
        'Will you give it to me or not (with the bone cut out)?'
2V:     Ao    giu liao?
        bring how much
        'how much do you want?'
3       Chi   bei dua ay   ying gai,
        little DEM how able sell PRT
        '(If this) little (piece) (is taken) out, (it will be) difficult
        to sell (what's left), you know.'
4       Mo-
        2SG
        'You-
5       Re- die  chi   wu   ey  n   ho   rangchong yin.
        rib part litte out  PRT NEG know how       sell
        'If I cut out the little rib bone, I don't know how to sell it
        (separately).'
```

5 *Go chi e:::::::::: h lu ye kim ao go chi wu ey?*
thing little how ADV M. bring thing little out PRT
'This small piece, why (do you) insist on cutting the little piece out?'
6 *E:::h shiangsha lu go hong o mo o?*
differ from thing CLS money CLS money
'What's the difference between that little piece in or out for one dollar or so?'
7 *lu de mo na gei ho luei lou ga?*
how COP 2SG DEM type CLS with PRT PRT
'Is there anyone else like you? (I bet not)'
8 *dao ra leh.*
tease 1SG PRT
'You must be teasing me'
9 (3.0)
10 *ziao danggei?*
laugh what
'what are you laughing for?'
11 *n da go chi lo ey, ra dli vai go chi yin o?*
NEG cut thing little into PRT 1SG M leave thing little sell PRT
'If I don't leave that thing in, am I gonna sell that little piece to other people? (How ridiculous!)'
12 A bystander: ((laughing))
13V: *zui huaidan.*
most bad
'You're the worst (customer).'
14C28: *beina he:::.lo chi ah gou wu chi*
where LOC into little ADV excessive out little
ah gou en eey de?
ADV excessive PL PRT COP
'What can I say? (To have the bone) in is too much, (to have the bone) out is too much. (You are difficult to do business with)'
15V: *Go:::::::::::::::,*
COP
'Sure,'
16 *mo duo^ duo^:: (.) migo::::*
2SG very very what
'You are so so much ..something (so reasonable as you claim).'
17 *ah hiandi rong,*
ADV shame people
'(You) only make people laugh at you,'
18 *ah dli ay gang gei ou?*
ADV M able say type sentence
'How could you say something like that?'
19 *Shianbiao gei duo^ duo^:: mi^go.*
name type very very what
'Shianbiao this kind of person is so so- something.'

This escalation of conflict centers on whether the buyer's request should even be initiated. The seller goes into length portraying the request to be utterly unimaginable, symptomatic of the buyer's moral character (line 13). The seller constructs

a spectacle out of the customer and indeed a bystander laughs at the customer's expense (line 12). Similar to earlier examples where conflicts, when escalated, evoke morality, here the vendor and the customer each appeal to morality which is closely linked to identity (what kind of person haggles in this manner).

5.6 Blocking sale advances with a negative style

In the open-air marketplace, one's presence near a vending station is legitimately an individual activity until some form of mutual orientation is established. In service shops, however, the space is enclosed such that when a pedestrian enters the shop, he or she immediately enters a transactional space unambiguous for its service purpose. In the enclosed space of a shop, the (potential) customer and the shop owner are framed by the built space in a transactional participation framework. For example, in the dressmaker's shop, when young women enter the shop, either just to chat with other loiters in the shop or to check out sample fabric and new fashion trends, their arrivals at the shop are often met with the dressmaker's sale advances. The request to have new clothes made is a negative face-threatening act to the unprepared customer, as having new clothes tailor-made is a luxury beyond necessity. However, in the small town, people tend to be acquainted with the few dressmakers in town. To not respond positively to a service offer is also a face-threatening act dispreferred by the dressmaker, to be carefully managed. A common strategy used by the young women to block the dressmaker's service advances is to speak negatively of their own welfare and ability.

To illustrate, below are two examples from different customers at the same dressmaker's shop, both pressured by the dressmaker to indicate if they will be placing orders and if not, why. Example 5.8 involves a young woman, Gui, who comes in the shop to look for her aunt who previously was resting at the shop. Gui's lack of intention to place an order is evident from the moment she enters the store; she avoids looking in the dressmaker's direction when she walks in, and instead walks directly to the far end of the shop to begin chatting with the dressmaker's assistant/seamstress.

(5.8) Dressmaker's shop. D=dressmaker; Gui=a young woman

```
1D: ((speaking to Gui's direction. Gui's back is turned to D.))
         Da  kurua   nao mo  ho  eii, Gui?
         Cut clothes new 2SG CLS  PRT  Gui
         'Have new clothes made, Gui?'
2Gui:    ((turning around to face D))
         Hee^h?
         PRT
         'What (did you say)?'
```

```
3 D:     n   da  rua     nao mo  ho  eii^?
         NEG cut clothes  new 2SG CLS PRT
         '(You are) not having new clothes made (with me)?'
4 Gui:   RA: n   meng se    ey  lah:,
         1SG NEG  have money PRT PRT 1SG NEG
         'I don't have money anymore, I can't-'
5        RA  n-((chuckle)).
         1SG NEG
         'I'm not- '
6 D:     Ga^     n   me^ng se    e^^y?
         already NEG  have  money PRT
         '(You) already got no money left?'
7        (0.6)
8        Mo  de  DI^A-  DIA:   ah  HE^H NO::. ↓
         2SG COP  credit credit ADV okay PRT
         'You can also buy on credit.'
9        (1.0)
10 Gui:  ((chuckle))
         chi::: eii na   da.
         little PRT only cut
         '(I'll) wait for a little before (having new clothes) made.'
```

Gui mitigates her rejection of D's service request by confessing financial strain (line 4). The dressmaker responds with disbelief, followed by a further offer to render the service on credit, which annuls the basis of Gui's rejection (lines 6 to 8). G switches to another strategy, namely, being vague that she will wait a while before ordering new clothes (line 10). Shishan dialect, similar to Mandarin or Hainanese, is a pro-drop language, that is, the subject pronoun, especially the first or second person pronoun to refer to the immediate interlocutors, tends to be dropped if the referents are understood and contextually shared (Li and Thompson, 1989). Worth noting is that while the majority of the utterances in this sale advance sequence use the typical implicit (zero) pronoun in the subject position, Gui's utterance in line 4, confessing her financial strain, starts with an explicit first person *ra* 'I' with an emphatic intonation. The dressmaker's suggestion for buying on credit uses the explicit second person pronoun *mo* 'you' (line 8). Personal pronouns are "sensitive indices of selves and social and cultural identities" (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 170; see also McFadden, 2011). In this interaction, the shifts from the zero pronoun to explicit first and second person pronouns in the subject position evoke concrete speaker/addressee identities. Arguably, the explicit reference to one's self, *ra* 'I,' is a plea strategy (line 4), and the explicit reference to the addressee *mo* 'you' is a challenge by evoking the addressee's agentive self (line 8). Confronted such, Gui disengages from the explicit conflict by being vague (line 10). When doing so, she reverts to the zero pronoun for self-reference, being vague in personal identity, volition and commitment.

Confessing to financial strain positions the speaker in a negative social light, thus threatening the speaker's own positive face (Brown and Levinson, 1983). A similar sequence occurs in the following example, where the dressmaker approaches a young woman, W, with a service advance. In both cases, instead of directly rejecting the offer, or resorting to personal volitional control, such as lack of interest, both customers resort to certain adverse external circumstances beyond one's control.

(5.9) Dressmaker's shop; D=dressmaker; W=young woman

1D: *Mo n hu danggei eydei o*?
2SG NEG do what now PRT
'You're not doing anything now?'

2W: *Hu danggei?*
Do what
'What is there to do?'

3 *beng lah.*
rest PRT
'(I'm) just idling.'

4 *[Hian dou pan nia ah hu ay danggei?*
weather fall rain come PRT do able what
'It's raining, so what is there to be done?'

5D: *[mo n da-*
2SG NEG cut-
'You don't cut- (you don't want to have new clothes made)?'

6D: *Mo n da rua nao mo ho ey mi?*
2SG NEG cut dress new 2SG set PRT Q
'(So) you are not having your new clothes made?'

7W: *Heeh.*
Yes
'That's right.'

8 *Ra bei rah eydei rua geida geida*
1SG go home now clothes this or that (derogatory)
en men lin ah lin lah
PL have wear ADV wear PRT
'Right now I have clothes this and that sort of stuff at home that I can still wear so I just wear them.'

9D: ((increased volume)) *GE GA^ng ge n diang DA:^ lah DE:::r (.)*
3SG say 3SG NEG like cut PRT. PRT
'She says she doesn't want to have new clothes made,'

10 *na SHIU- na SHIU n go NAO NAO EN ERRY?↑*
DEM time DEM time NEG COP new new PL PRT
'Every time- every time, isn't she wearing something brand new?!'

11W: ((increased volume overall))
da kurua en (.) RA n LI^n HE:: NO::
Cut clothes PL 1SG NEG wear ever PRT
'The clothes I custom-made I hardly ever wear them (which is why when I wear them, you think they are new).'

12 *Ra nia hiong mo da kurua en (.) ra n lin he::.*
1SG come PREP 2SG cut clothes PL 1SG NEG wear ever
'Those I've had made with you I hardly ever wear them.'

13 (0.6)

14D: *Mo bei biang rua lo lin mi?*
2SG go buy shirts set wear PRT
'So you go buy ready-made clothes?'
15W: *Heh.*
Yes.
'Yes.'
16 ((indistinct)) *bei biang rua lo na gei en nia lin*
go buy shirts set DEM type PL come wear
ah men men.
ADV good good
'It is pretty good to buy those ready-made clothes to wear.'

Confession to one's limited ability to act is a common strategy to block sale advances. Such negative self-assessment both appeals to shared local values (modesty, frugality), and effectively blocks the sale advance without confrontation. Gu (1990) suggests that self-denigration is a common Chinese cultural practice, used as politeness strategies (p. 246; see also: Kádár and Pan, 2011). Such tendency certainly finds its utility in blocking unwanted sale advances without appearing unappreciative, arguably characteristic of a rural neighborhood where long-term relationships need to be maintained with the few dressmakers in town.

Upon hearing W's implicit rejection by stating her contentment with wearing old raggy clothes, D escalates the conflict by speaking of W in the third person constituting an act of mocking (Mitchell-Kernan, 2001; Sherzer, 1993). That is, despite W's self-claimed modesty and frugality, she is always wearing new clothes whenever D sees her (lines 9 and 10). This act of mocking, similar to other acts of mocking and ridicule (e.g. the duck vendor's ridicule of rude or unreasonable customers), threatens the addressee's positive face (Brown and Levinson, 1983). Upon this escalated pressure calling her moral character into question, W appeals to D's compassion by confessing that the new clothes that she allegedly is always seen wearing are those previously tailor-made by no other than D herself. Apparently appeased by W's face-giving justification, D turns to a mellowed inquiry whether D's new clothes are those purchased from clothing shops, to which, D admits. In this case, truth is not as important as the management of fact-threatening acts at the interpersonal level. Both D and W know where W's new clothes come from. It is through verbalizing challenges and concessions that conflicts arise and subside. The party with less situational power (the young women in the dressmaker's shop) resorts to acts that damage their positive face to block sale advances, whereas the party with more situational power (the dressmaker) does not succeed in eliciting an order; neither does she lose face or risk loss of future opportunities.

These and other examples illustrated earlier comprise the "negative style" that may be community specific. As a person speaks negatively of him- or herself to block sale advances, speaks negatively of the merchandise to advance a bargain, or

ridicules the other party to gain a higher moral ground, conflicts escalate until one side resigns, concedes or departs. This negativity style functions both as ammunition and peace-offering in interpersonal conflict management.

5.7 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter analyzes sequences of conflict talk, specifically bargaining and unwanted sale advances, to be resolved through verbal interaction. Although conflict talk is universal, specific strategies and maneuvers to respond to and resolve conflicts are culturally specific. The current data manifest a communicative pattern that I call a "negative" communicative style, a tendency to use negativity, variously formulated, to resolve conflicts, such as to downplay one's agency, to undermine one's own or the addressee's positive face, to escalate face-threatening acts, to retort. The negative style is prominent in product talk. Negative product talk is not necessarily perceived as initiation of a bargain followed by setting one's upper and lower price limits. A product-dissing move is habitually heard as an insult and reacted to with indignation, epistemic authority, product demonstration, and claims of fairness and obviousness.

The concept and operation of transaction cost helps to illuminate the variations of bargaining interactions. In research based on marketplace in urban settings, bargaining appears in the form of a tug-of-war. Sellers and buyers jointly orient to the final goal of an agreeable bargain through orderly, intentional, and strategic verbal maneuvers. This model is also embraced by folk knowledge of marketplace seen in such tips given to tourists as to counter the asking price by half.

However, the tug-of-war conduct of bargaining is only one type of verbal bargain. The body of research that has shown the tug-of-war characteristics of the bargaining genre is all based on urban marketplace data. Using data from a small, local serving rural market, the analysis in this chapter situates bargain in conflict talk in general, building upon March and Simon's theory that conflicts, including bargain, is inherent in the marketplace: the buyers and sellers, each working toward their own market goals, do not fully know each other's resources, intentions and possible outcome of the transaction, namely, agents in a marketplace work with "bounded rationality" (Williamson, 1985). With less than full knowledge to judge what is the best price for the optimal gain, market dealers rely on various leverage tools such as bargaining. While a tug-of-war costs time and potentially leads to loss of future opportunity, to establish bargain as a rationalistic verbal genre protects both parties' face, make efficient use of the time necessary to reach a deal, and safeguard good faith toward future dealings.

Furthermore, less information one has, more leverage tools one needs to use to offset the limitation of bounded rationality. In urban spaces, especially in notorious tourist-catering marketplaces, information is heavily asymmetrical. The qualities of the merchandise as well as what's considered a reasonable price range are inaccessible in full scale to outside members. Thus, people tend to bargain purely for bargain's purpose to protect self-interest. The genrized, tug-of-war type of bargain in urban spaces likely results from the effect of urbanization on social interaction – with greater social distance, schematic strategies help to navigate unknown situations (Lindenfeld, 1990, 1994).

In a small-scale, local-serving marketplace such as the one studied here, shared orientation to a reasonable price range, direct access to the merchandise by vision, touch, smell, and the buyer's familiarity with the goods, all work to ensure knowledge and reduce uncertainty, subsequently reducing the need to bargain. Instead of negotiating price in a ritualistic fashion, bargaining on prices occurs rarely in Shishan market. The necessity to bargain is commonly preempted by freebie and upselling strategies leading to a perceived win-win outcome based on shared notions of "fairness" and "obviousness."

Besides costing time, money and effort, another type of transaction cost is opportunity cost (Coase, 1960; Williamson, 1985). Opportunities occur in various ways. Opportunities can be lost by losing to a competitor or by losing one's reputation. Given this future-oriented consideration of opportunity cost, it is not surprising that conflict talk can escalate to moral indignation. Product dissing is rejected with moral indignation which retains the seller's reputation and professional integrity essential for sustaining future opportunities. Maintaining a good relationship for the longer term is also an opportunity cost concern. Faced with escalated conflicts, similar to a family dispute that often ends in standoff, in the marketplace, conflicts may also be resolved by one party bidding for resignation or offering freebies.

In the current analysis, the turns-at-talk to initiate, counter and accept bargaining attempts do not fill pre-conceived structural slots of a "bargain" genre. Instead, the bargaining moves are "touched-off" by the ongoing interaction to handle rifts with persuasion. Actions are interpreted as bargaining actions, not unlike the open-ended interpretations of turns-at-talk in everyday conversation. The bargaining actions in the Shishan data thus reflect micro-managed "plan of action or course of action that at least one participant is pursuing, which may at first be opaque to others then retrospectively discernible….and then prospectively projectable" (Mayes and Tao, 2019, p. 122) Such extemporaneous, conversation-like conflict talk sequences indicate the absence of an externally imposed social order, to be discussed further in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Buyer Beware

Assessment and knowledge in the marketplace

> …The city rang with these many voices. Each food, wine, or other merchandise has its own words and melody and its special intonation, its distinct verbal and musical imagery. (Bakhtin, 1967/2008, p. 182)

Caveat Emptor, "Buyer Beware." This ancient aphorism warns of the perils of information asymmetry in the marketplace (McMillan, 2002). Buyers rightfully suspect the seller's willingness to fully disclose negative information about their goods and take time to assess product quality before purchase. Merchants demonstrate the qualities of their goods to persuade undecided shoppers. Compared to the supermarkets that rely on institutionalized means of disseminating merchandise information, verbal interaction and multimodal handling of goods are the main channels through which the qualities of products are assessed and demonstrated in the traditional rural marketplace.

This chapter analyzes the ways that buyers and sellers assess merchandise in situ of transactional activities. Buyers and sellers assess merchandise based on different motivations. Sellers demonstrate the qualities of their goods to entice potential buyers and persuade undecided buyers. Buyers assess goods for quality assurance but may strategically deploy assessment to instigate a bargain. These differently motivated assessment activities are situated in the co-participants' respective, distinct epistemic positions. The seller typically has more epistemic authority over their merchandise, but his or her role as the seller aiming for profit overshadows the sincerity of their verbalized assessment. The buyer, in contrast, has less epistemic authority over the goods, but can evoke their independent authority or utilize contextual evidence. The ways that buyers and sellers assess the same goods in joint transactional activities provide valuable empirical basis for understanding how assessment activities intertwine with the co-participants' display of and orientation to each other's knowledge and epistemic authority.

In the following analyses, I focus on three types of assessment activities that emerge from the data: (1) the oral genre of vendor spiels where the vendor interactively delivers monologue-like persuasive talk about their merchandise (Lindenfeld, 1990); (2) a process that I call "distributed assessment" where the seller and the buyer, or multiple buyers together, collaborate in assessing the same merchandise;

(3) contested assessment where the seller and the buyer challenge each other's epistemic authority regarding how to assess a particular product.

6.1 Vendor spiels: Interactive construction of quality, value and prestige

Spiel is a form of "oral advertising." (Lindenfeld, 1990) It differs from ordinary conversation structurally. In a spiel, the seller speaks in high volume with continuous low and high tempo sustained over a monologue-like stretch of discourse (Lindenfeld, ibid). Spiels differ from other advertising genres with its argumentative structure aimed for persuasion (Lindenfeld, ibid, p. 69). Lindenfeld observes that a spiel strings numerous propositions together with careful orchestration of beats, parallelism, rhetorical questions, alliterations and rhymes. Deictic forms such as the generic personal pronoun "you" (e.g. "You've never seen prices like this."), imperatives (e.g. "Come on!") and fillers (e.g. "well", "hey", "say") are common in spiels to "move" people to action (p. 72). In addition, spiels may feature performance such as telling jokes and pantomiming solely for amusement. Lindenfeld characterizes this genre as "a kind of discourse which has a lower degree of linguistic and interactional flexibility than vendor-customer communication…. a form of pseudo-dialogue which is both reflective and constitutive of a clear boundary between market sellers and buyers whose respective rights and obligations result into asymmetrical relationships, as vendors keep the upper hand through the manipulative use of speech." (p. 89)

In the current corpus, loud spiels where the seller holds an elevated one-to-many speaker right are interestingly absent. Nevertheless, the functional and discursive features of the spiel genre as Lindenfeld identified occur in the form of the vendor's multi-TCU turns, spurred on by signs of indecision on the part of the customer such as silence or product criticism. In these situations, the functions and contents of spiels emerge from and blend with their surrounding discursive environment, rather than being structurally distinct.

To illustrate, we revisit the example of a hard sale at the butcher's station where the butcher uses multi-TCU turns to praise and demonstrate the quality of his pork. Two discursive features of his multi-TCU turns align with the spiel genre as different from ordinary conversation. First, the butcher frequently looks up scanning the faces of the people approaching his station or passing by, suggesting that he is aware of his speech having a wider reach including bystanders and eavesdroppers (Goffman, 1974, 1981). Second, he primarily speaks in Mandarin even though his home language is Shishan and his immediate customer-addressee speaks Hainanese. This code choice suggests that the butcher intends to reach a wider audience beyond one specific customer.

(6.1) Young butcher's spiel

	Verbal	**Non-verbal**
1	这个猪好吃. *zhè-ge zhū hǎochī,* DEM-CLS pork delicious 'This pork is delicious.'	Looks at customer, body leans forward across the counter to the customer.
2	这个猪一年多了. *zhè-ge zhū yī nián duō le.* DEM-CLS pork one year more PRT 'This pork is more than one-year old.'	Looks down at the counter where various meat pieces are displayed.
3	农家猪的. *nóngjiā zhū -de,* farmer pork POSS '(It is) farmer-raised pork.'	Picks up a piece, offers it on stretched hand for the customer to inspect.
4	黑猪. *Hēi zhū* black pork 'Black pork.'	One hand holding the piece, the other hand taps on the piece.
5	不是光寿猪. *bùshì Guāngshòu zhū.* NEG COP Guangshou pork 'Not Guangshou pork.'	Turns head to look to his left where other butchers are stationed; his index finger points in their direction (#Figure 6.1)
6	光寿猪不好吃的. *Guāngshòu zhū bù hǎochī -de.* Guangshou pork NEG delicious PRT 'Guangshou pork is not delicious.'	Retracts his gaze, looks downward at the meats on the counter
7	这个皮你看, *zhè-ge pí nǐ kàn,* DEM-CLS skin 2SG look 'This skin, you take a look,'	Stretches his hand further toward the customer again, turns the pork sideway to show the thickness of the skin, uses thumb and index finger to spread out the skin and fat tissues (#Figure 6.2); customer touches the piece in the butcher's hand
8	像野猪一样. *xiàng yězhū yīyàng.* like wild boar same '(It's) like wild boar.'	Shifts gaze to look at another piece on the counter, following the customer's current gaze; picks it up and holds it for the customer's inspection.
9	这里你看, *zhèlǐ nǐ kàn* LOC 2SG look 'Here you look'	Demonstrates the new piece sideway to highlight the fatty and lean layers, spreads out the layers, uses index finger to tap on the skin of the pork; his body leans forward toward the customer, head also tilts forward with arresting gaze; customer looks around and down at the counter in a diffused manner

10 这个一年多了.
zhège yī nián duō-le.
DEM-CLS one year more PRT
'This is more than one-year old.'
'This is more than one year old,'

11 你看这个猪你都想吃的.
nǐ kàn zhè-ge zhū nǐ dōu xiǎng chī-de
2SG look DEM-CLS pig 2SG ADV M eat PRT
'You see this pork and you'd want to eat it.'

Nudges the piece in his hand in the customer's direction across the counter.

Figure 6.1 'Not Guangshou pork.'

Figure 6.2 'This skin, you take a look!'

The butcher's spiel is prosodic: each intonation unit (Chafe, 1980, 1987, 1993, 1994; Tao, 1996) is similar in length utilizing rhetorical parallelism. Each intonation unit pivots on its pervious unit logically and structurally, e.g., commenting and specifying (lines 2 to 6 are to illustrate line 1), identifying and negating (line 4

is followed by lines 5 and 6), directing and demonstrating (lines 7 to 8 are parallel to lines 9 to 10).

The meaning of this spiel is significantly incomplete without considering the vendor's deictic gestures. The various deictic forms such as 这个皮 'this skin,' 这里你看 'you look here,' 这个猪 'this pork' are synchronized with the butcher's swift hand motions, pointing out various parts of the meat for the customer to see, spreading out the layers of the pork (see Figure 6.2), pulling on the skin to highlight its firmness, tapping on the skin to both draw attention to the quality of the product and rhythmically punctuate his talk. While using these swift hand motions to "guide" the customer to see ("guided vision", Goodwin, 2000; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1996, 2000), the butcher also leans forward, orienting his body and gaze to the customer's shifting posture and gaze, ostensibly pursuing an interactional "togetherness" (Goffman, 1963, 1971; Chapter 3).

Pointing gestures are "analogic signs" while linguistic forms are "digital" signs (Goodwin, 2002). Analogic signs are capable of continuous variations to afford precision and flexibility at the same time (Goodwin, ibid). Rather than solely using evaluative epithets (such as 好吃 'delicious' in line 1), the butcher's spiel is heavily based on inferential meanings made possible by a range of locally specific referential expressions along with the hand motions guiding the hearer to various visual clues that substantiate the reference. The butcher does not resort to adjective descriptors such as "translucent," "clear," "natural" etc. Instead, he uses these quantificational and nominal phrases: 一年多了 'more than one-year old,' 农家猪 'farmer-raised pork,' 黑猪 'black pork,' 不是光寿猪 'not Guangshou pork,' 像野猪一样 'like wild boar,' each categorizing and identifying the pork in a particular way.

Naming and categorizing are powerful community-shared meaning-making tools (Sacks, 1992, Chapter 12; Schegloff, 2007b; see also: Stokoe, 2009, 2010, 2012). Categorization evokes "category-bound qualities" which are situated in local epistemic and evidential systems (Sacks, ibid, p. 469). Categories are "inference rich" (Sacks, 1992, pp. 40–48). That is, any person / object of a category is a representative of that category, which can work as "internal system of social control." (pp. 42–43) Categorization thus is a process of attributing social meaning to a concrete object transcending its particularity. By naming some person or object in a particular way, the speaker controls the hearer's impression of the named object. For example, likening the pork to "wild boar" evokes deliciousness and naturalness as well as prestige through cultural inference. Identifying the pork as "one-year old" presumes the hearer's local knowledge concerning how pigs grow naturally vs. using growth hormones, thus evoking such qualities as natural, safe and tasty. The categorization, 农家猪 'farmer-raised pork' activates the knowledge that local farmers do not use growth hormones, antibiotics or animal feeds. Each recognitional categorization affirms the qualities associated with that particular category and the absence of

(undesired) qualities which are sometimes explicitly stated such as 黑猪，不是光寿猪 'Black pork, not Guangshou pork.' The customer is treated as a knowledgeable, competent shopper, who knows what these categories mean and needs just to know where and how to look in the immediate context for visual evidence.

Mayes and Tao (2019) demonstrate that people do not enact categorization as a linguistic activity but instead as part of naturalistic social semiotics, grounded in social actions. Referring expressions, along with gaze, posture, gesture, facial expressions, do not simply refer to and categorize the merchandise; they constitute purposeful communicative actions. Particularly in this spiel, the moment when the butcher claims that his pork is not "Guangshou pork" (line 5), he turns his head to the left, hand pointing to the direction where other meat vendors are stationed (see Figure 6.1). As such, the referential expression "Guangshou pork" is assigned a specific referent in the context, namely, the pork sold by his immediate competitors. Through these embodied declaratives and pointing gestures, the vendor not only promotes his pork but also demotes his competitors. Goodwin (1986) suggests that "through the use of gestures…the speaker is able to make shift[s] in visual focus an intrinsic part of the work of understanding the talk in progress." (p. 33) This swift multi-functional spiel is both enabled by the physical space where competition is in close proximity and by the integrated use of speech, pointing gesture, body orientation, and the material context with its semiotic potentials.

The vendor's spiel achieves its effects; the previously silent customer finally speaks. Example 6.2 is a continuation of the excerpt presented earlier in Example 6.1. The line numbers are preserved to reflect this continuation. Interestingly, despite the seller's lengthy spiel in Mandarin, the buyer opts for her vernacular choice, Hainanese.

(6.2) Continuation of Example 6.1.

```
<Switching to Hainanese>
12 Customer:   Ehh zhe me  du   di     shiang
                   DEM  CLS pork indeed beautiful
               'This pork is indeed beautiful,'
13             Zhe-me  du-
               DEM CLS pork
               'This pork-'
<Switching to Mandarin>
14 Butcher:    对啊.
               duì a
               correct PRT
               'That's right.'
15             那个- 那个政府的- 那个-
               nà-gè- nà-gè zhèngfǔ-de- nà-gè-
               DEM-CLS DEM-CLS government POSS DEM-CLS
               'That- that government's- that- '
((two turns omitted where S talks to an acquaintance passing by))
```

16 那个政府的,
nà-gè zhèngfǔ de
DEM-CLS government POSS
'That guy from the government,'
17 他来买了八百多块钱,
tā lái mǎi-le bābǎi duō kuài qián,
3SG come buy PRT 800 more CLS money
'He came and bought 800 dollars' worth.'
18 他放在冰箱里面,
tā fàng zài bīngxiāng lǐmiàn
3SG put at refrigerator inside
'He put (the pork) in the fridge.'
19 我那个肉跟人家那个肉不一样的,
wǒ nà-gè ròu gēn rénjiā nà-gè ròu bù yīyàng de,
1SG DEM-CLS meat with PRO DEM-CLS meat NEG same PRT
'My pork is different from other people's pork.'
20 青青的,
qīngqīng de,
dark PRT
'It's dark colored,'
21 那个肉像牛肉一样,
nà-gè ròu xiàng niúròu yīyàng,
DEM-CLS meat like beef same
'The meat is like beef,'
22 你看,
nǐ kàn,
2SG look
'You see,'
23 是不是?
shì bù shì
COP NEG COP
'Right?'
24 那个肉肯定好.
nà-gè ròu kěndìng hǎo.
DEM-CLS meat M good
'The meat for sure is good.'
25 那个猪是黑猪哦,
nà-gè zhū shì hēi zhū ó,
DEM-CLS pork COP black pork PRT
'The pork is the black (haired) park (let me tell you).'
26 不是白猪,
bù shì bái zhū
NEG COP white pork
'(It's) not the white (haired) pork.'
27 白猪-
bái zhū-
white pork
'The white (haired) pork-'

((The following part of this spiel occurs earlier in Example 3.3 of Chapter 3.))

28 Butcher: 知道 啵?
zhīdào bo
know PRT
'(You) know?'

29 要 多少 斤?
yào duōshǎo jīn
Want QUAN pound
'How many pounds (would you like)?'

30 Buyer: 让 我 看 一下.
ràng wǒ kàn yīxià.
let 1SG look QUAN
'Let me take a look (first).'

31 Butcher: 随便 你 看.
suíbiàn nǐ kàn.
let 2SG look
'Look as you like.'

32 这 猪 好吃 咧,
zhè zhū hàochī lie,
DEM pork delicious PRT
'This pork is delicious,'

33 你看 这 皮.
nǐ kàn zhè pí.
2SG look DEM skin
'Look at this skin.'

34 Buyer: 这个太肥了.
zhège tài féi-le.
DEM CLS too fat PRT
'This is too fatty.'

35 Butcher: 喔!
ō!
INT
'Wow!'

36 肥猪 才 好吃 啦.
féizhū cái hàochī la.
fat pig ADV delicious PRT
'Fatty pork is delicious (contrary to what you think).'

37 Buyer: 啊?
A?
INT
'What?'

38 Butcher: 肥猪才好吃!
féizhū cái hàochī!
Fat pig ADV delicious
'Fatty pork is delicious! (contrary to what your think).'

39 这 个肉 好,
zhè gè ròu hǎo
DEM CLS meat good
'This meat is good,'

40 那个皮 好 硬哦,
nà-gè pí hǎo yìng o,
DEM CLS skin really hard PRT
'The skin is so solid,'

41 很香哦,
hěn xiāng o,
very tasty PRT
'(It's) really tasty.'

42 一年半了.
yī nián bàn-le
One year half PRT
'(This pig is raised for) one and half years,'

43 我不骗你的.
wǒ bù piàn nǐ de.
1SG NEG deceive 2SG PRT
'I'm not lying to you.'

44 我那个 猪 都- 三百 斤 我 都卖完了,
wǒ Nà-gè zhū dōu sānbǎi jīn wǒ dū mài wán-le,
1SG DEM CLS pig already three hundred pound 1SG already sell finish PRT
'That pig of mine, I've already sold three hundred pounds of it,'

45 你-
nǐ-
2SG
'you- '

<Switching to Hainanese>

46 Buyer: *da bie gian ah*?
Three hundred pound PRT
'Three hundred pounds?'

47 Butcher: *da bie gian la.*
Three hundred pound PRT
'300 pounds of course.'

48 *da bie leng di gian eylah.*
three hundred extra four pound PRT
'304 pounds actually.'

<Switching to Mandarin>

49 看那个皮,
kàn nà gè pí,
look DEM CLS skin
'look at the skin,'

50 看那个皮啊,
kàn nà-gè pí a,
look DEM CLS skin
'Look at that skin,'

51 你要吃,
nǐ yào chī,
2SG M eat
'if you eat (it),'

52 像野猪一样,
xiàng yězhū yīyàng,
like wild boar same
'(it's) like (eating) wild boar.'

53 不是我吹牛,
bùshì wǒ chuīniú,
NEG COP 1SG brag
'I'm not bragging.'

54 明天 还 有 一 条 猪.
míngtiān hái yǒu yī tiáo zhū.
tomorrow yet EXIS one CLS pig
'Tomorrow (I'm) gonna have another pig.'

```
<Switching to Hainanese>
55 Buyer:      bui digia  wu.
               fat little PRT
               'Just a little too fatty.'
56 Butcher     vo,
               NEG
               'No,'
57             vo  di  bui ah,
               NEG COP fat PRT
               'It's not fatty,'
58             zhelai pei  gao   ah.
               here   skin thick PRT
               'The skin here is thick.'
```

The customer's choice of Hainanese (line 12), not influenced by the seller's lengthy spiel in Mandarin, marks her independent epistemic stance. She used the emphatic copula *di* 'is indeed", which agrees with the seller's assessment but does so from an independent epistemic source (line 12; see "second assessment," Pomerantz, 1984). The seller accommodates the buyer's code choice by switching to Hainanese (line 47, line 56); however, he switches immediately back to Mandarin after completing each minimally required adjacency pair. Mandarin is the lingua franca choice for a multilingual audience, enabling the vendor to address the direct addressee without excluding the collective clientele who are constantly walking by, casting glances or pausing to listen in (Goffman, 1981).

Upon hearing the customer's agreeing assessment (line 12), the seller eagerly launches another spiel (line 14 overlaps with the customer' second utterance in line 13 resulting in an interrupted turn). In his second multi-TCU persuasive talk, the seller focuses on the status and prestige of his pork. Variationist sociolinguistic research uses the concept of "prestige" to explain the distribution of linguistic variants across social settings; variants that occur more frequently in "high-status" or formal situations are associated with social prestige (e.g. Labov, 1972). The seller here constructs the prestige of his merchandise by describing a high-status order from the government.

Similar to the initial spiel, this second spiel extensively uses deictic forms. The butcher's deictic choices of "I, now, here" position his professional identity and professional activities in a continuation of time and space (Stukenbrock, 2014). The butcher states that he's already sold three hundred pounds this particular day (lines 44) and further authenticates this assertion by adding details (line 47; Bergmann, 1993). The seller treats the pork as part of his identity as a butcher, e.g., he focuses on his distinction from other venders (line 19, "I" vs. "others"), uses frequent references to "I" in speech acts and possessive forms, demonstrates his busy schedule due to high demand, and boasts of his professional reputation.

These discursive features are not just one vendor's personal style; the same characteristics appear in other vendors' spiels too. In the following example, two customers huddle around a basket of freshly made tofu. The middle-aged female tofu vendor multi-tasks, weighing tofu for a number of buyers while leaning forward to spiel to two undecided customers.

(6.3) Tofu vendor; Shishan dialect

1 *Shuang vei hu di no.*
whole year do PRT PRT
'I sell (tofu) all year round.'

2 *Ziang ziang yan yan ah*
hot hot delicious delicous PRT
'(It's) so hot and so delicious, you see.'

3 *ao moho zang zei zei hu di no.*
bring bean black pure pure do PRT PRT
'(It's) made purely from black beans.'

4 *Ra de gang hu dli zou sanguan ey dleng na gei chi*
1SG COP say do M goat restaurant PRT remain DEM type little
'I say, I make this for the goat restaurant. (After I sold to them), there is just this little bit left.'

5 *Ra de yin gase na mo*
1SG COP sell price DEM CLS
'That's why I'm selling it at this price.'

6 *Rong sop mo*
Others six CLS
'Other people (sell tofu at) 6 dollars.'

Similar to the butcher's spiel seen earlier, in this example, the tofu vendor presents her professional identity in a continuous flow of activities ("I sell this year-around"), in relation to high-status orders ("I make this for the goat restaurant"), small quantity and high demand ("just this little bit left"), and better price than her competitors (line 6). She also evokes sensorial evidence that the buyers can authenticate for themselves, such as the tofu is still "hot" (freshly made), and naming the ingredient (e.g., black beans) which indexes positive qualities locally known. Similar to the butcher's spiels, the tofu vendor's spiel recounts the source, origin, quality, status of her goods through a range of deictic and temporal references where the worlds of the past and the future are connected by the vendor's proud professional identity and activities.

Deictic references to merge the past, the present, and the future into a continuous time and space (Bühler, 1934/1990) create an authentic professional identity where professional pride, reputation, skills and market demand are authenticated. As the tofu vendor spiels, the buyers listen to the seller's spiel without appearing to engage in it, their gaze and attention fixed on the tofu, taking up pieces to smell, to assess the texture haptically, body torqued away from the seller, and occasionally

lifting the lid of the tofu vendor's basket in search of fresher tofu not yet brought out. These sampling behaviors are ordinarily practiced, the vendor's spiel working as a rhythmic persuasive backdrop.

The following example illustrates a spiel from a peddler selling leafy vegetables. The peddler recounts how she harvested the leafy greens freshly that very morning. The recounted details authenticate the values the vendor constructed for the vegetable, fresh, locally sourced, limited in quantity, and grown with her professional care.

(6.4) in Shishan dialect; vegetable peddler

1 *ao chi nia gui dlong go en dum di*
bring bit come together reach thing PL three four
gap nia ying en-eey.
bundle come complete PRT.
'All of these together are just three or four bundles, that's it.'

2 *Go dlou gang rai mu ey?*
brother 1PL say exit pick PRT
'My brother said, is this really ready to pick?'

3 *ra gang ah rai mu guan lah der!*
1SG say ADV exist pick eat PRT PRT
'I said, these look ready!'

4 *rai go en dum di gap di,*
exit thing PL three four bundle COP,
'only three or four bundles get ready for harvesting.'

5 *n dle liao der,*
NEG get much PRT,
'(I've) not got much.'

6 *li ven dum di gap eneey,*
every day three four bundle PRT
'There are only three or three bundles each day.'

7 *vong- dum beng vong en-eey na mu dli shiu.*
day- three two day PRT only pick each time
'(I) only get to pick them every two or three days.'

The goods are viewed not just in their current condition, but in relation to the dynamic process of natural home farming. The vegetable peddler focuses on the natural short supply of her vegetables – it's a product of nature where vegetables grow at their own pace, to be carefully monitored and intuited. Limited supply is emphasized using various quantitative references and adverbial particles such as *ying* 'to be completely gone,' *na* 'only then..,' *no dle liao der* 'not get much," relative quantities *dli ven dum di gap* 'each day only three or four bundles.' The spiel does not appear different from ordinary conversation except that the speaker occupies the floor and the listenership is multiple. As she spiels, similar to the tofu vendor and the butcher seen earlier, the customers focus on the goods, without displaying attentive listening.

6.2 Distributed knowledge and sensorial assessment

The market is an economically stratified place. The accessibility of merchandise has an indexical relationship with its economic status. Expensive goods tend to be guarded with physical barriers such as enclosed vending stations, counters, and cabinets, where buyers rely more on speech and interaction for obtaining product information. In contrast, in the daily peddler's huddle spaces, goods can be directly accessed and manually inspected.

As illustrated earlier, in the peddler's vending spaces, while the seller spiels to a generic audience, the buyers huddle around the goods, using various sensorial processes to assess the quality of the goods on their own terms: observing colors and textures; tapping, weighing goods; bending, squeezing, smelling, tasting. These assessing processes, and the purpose and sequential positions of these acts in transactions, embody localized systems of material meaning. As Mondada (2018) states, "Sensoriality is locally recognized as the ultimate criteria for choosing and deciding, since it provides for direct access to the object and its sensorial qualities." (p. 746) Such inferential logic is locally specific, culturally shaped, and individually different. For example, butchers often praise their soup bones by drawing the customer's attention to the color and texture of the bone marrow as resembling milk. Coconuts are assessed by shaking them to listen to the coconut water swashing inside. Clams are hit with a spoon to identify whether the sounds are dull or crisp, indicative freshness. In the traditional marketplace, sensorial assessment, visual, haptic, olfactory, etc., ordinarily practiced, is based on a remarkably rich local material culture.

Not everyone is privy to effective mechanisms for assessing specific goods. People co-present at the marketplace have different degrees and types of knowledge, expertise, legitimate claim of authority, and confidence vis-à-vis specific products, leading to different representations and negotiations of epistemic primacy in the marketplace (Heritage, 1984, 2011; Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Stivers et al., 2011). Below is an extract of a multi-party conversation on how to assess the quality of sugarcanes before purchase. The conversation occurs in the dressmaker's shop between the dressmaker D, D's seamstress V, D's acquaintance M, and O, an elderly woman and acquaintance to both D and M. O is the oldest among the group. The occasion for this conversation is that M wishes to go to the market to buy sugarcane but is concerned that the sugarcane may be hollow inside. In Shishan, sugarcanes are sold by bundles of whole stalks with the purple hard skin on. Whether the interior is sweet and juicy is not accessible from observations alone. The four women share and contest each other's knowledge regarding how to assess the quality of sugarcanes prior to purchase.

(6.5) How to assess sugarcane; Shishan dialect

1M: *No di go en mang dli hai pongpao ey.*
Big COP thing PL afraid M too puffy PRT
'Those big ones I'm afraid are too puffy.'

2 *ru bei biang nia pai shen en di nei.*
ADV go buy back bad money PL COP PRT
'If I go buy them they may be a waste of money.'

3O: *Pongpao mo n ho pe liu kuanko mi?*
Puffy 2SG NEG know lift look heavy-light PRT
'If it is puffy, don't you know to lift it and weigh it in your hands?'

4D: *N meng.*
NEG have
'That's not it.'

5 *Go no en lu de pong.*
thing big PL all COP puffy
'The big ones are all puffy inside.'

6O: *Ho?*
PRT
'Is that so?'

7M: *Go no lu der?*
Thing big all COP
'Big ones are all (puffy)?'

8D: *Go no en lu de long da.*
Thing big PL all COP puffy inside
'The big ones are all puffy inside.'

9M: *Go no en long da gang?*
Thing big PL puffy inside say?
'The big ones are all puffy inside, you say?'

10 *Go ni en-*
Thing small PL
'The small ones-'

11D: *Go be be ni ni en leh.*
Thing slender slender small small PL PRT
'The slender and small ones (are good).'

12M: *Go ni ni-*
Thing small small
'The small ones- '

13V: ((standing up, waiving hands and pointing at M))
Go ni na ziu de mang n long da
Thing small DEM like COP afraid NEG puffy inside
ping go no en leh
compare thing big PL PRT
'The small ones compared to the big ones may not be puffy inside.'

14M: ((standing up, argumentally moves her head))
Rong gang mai en na ni de na do.
others say sugarcane PL DEM small COP DEM robust
'People say that the sugarcanes that are small are indeed solid.'

15 *Mo dli na no en de na pongpao*
2SG M DEM big PL COP DEM puffy
'The big ones are indeed puffy.'

16D: *He^h,*
Yes
'Yes,'

```
17      Chuang di  no.
        true   COP PRT
        'That's true.'
18M:    Na   yan       ne. ((gesticulating the motion of eating))
        Only delicious PRT
        "Only those (small ones) are delicious"
19      Ra  bei liu  eii.
        1SG go  look PRT
        'I'll go and take a look.'
```

The conversation starts with M's disclosing her concern that large sugarcane, which she intends to purchase, may actually be hollow (puffy) inside. O, who is the most senior in the group, asserts to M that it is an obvious technique to weigh the sugarcane in her hand. This haptic sensorial assessment was challenged by D who categorically asserts that all large sugarcanes are puffy inside. After several turns of expressing surprise but recalling similar advice from another source, M concurs with D's assertion. This segment shows a change of the dominant assessment method from manual handling to abiding by categorical knowledge that smaller sugarcanes are more desirable. Guarded with this new knowledge, M heads out to the market. This episode is ordinary yet extraordinary. We observe in real time how knowledge is displayed, negotiated, augmented and hereafter enacted.

6.2.1 "Tasting moments"

Earlier in Chapter 3, as part of illustrating the asymmetrical focus structure at the beginning stage of transactions, I presented a case of a loofah buyer assessing the quality of the loofah by bending it. Her body is torqued away from the seller framing the product inspection as a private moment. I also illustrated the case of a wampee buyer who took a wampee fruit to sample without having to solicit permission from the seller; her tasting of the wampee fruit and subsequent departure constitute a continuous, individual decision-making activity.

Customers partaking in merchandise assessment on their own (touching, smelling, manually handling) is common in Shishan market, occurring at all stages of transactional dealings. How people assess merchandise in non-remarkable ways reflects local "social order." Mondada (2018) presents a multimodal interaction analysis of a common, recurrent participation framework in retail shops (e.g. gourmet cheese shops) categorized as "tasting moment;" that is, moments where the customer tastes cheese samples and the store clerk waits for an assessment. Analyzing video recordings of tasting moments in European contexts based on diverse data of 12 languages across 15 European cities, Mondada demonstrated that the customer's tasting moment is treated as an individual "silent moment," embedded in the global activity of a purchase. The global activity is "relevant and consequential" for the

tasting moment's structural progression leading to the seller's right to access the result of tasting (p. 767).

Mondada shows that tasting moments, while silent, are interactive and public. Shoppers do not just taste and assess the sample; they use their body to "express, manifest and display their sensory access to the world." (p. 745) The tasting moment creates a "tasting space" where both the shopper and the seller withdraw their mutual gaze to allow for concentrated tasting. The action is demonstrably engaged such as visible chewing and swallowing followed by verbalization of the outcome of tasting. Individual shopper's sensory experience is made "publicly accountable," a pre-cursor for further talk and progression of the sales activity (p. 749). The shopper is shown to have some responsibility in interacting, chewing in a particular way to maximize the experience, observable and displayed for others. The clerk's gaze, while disengaged, remains alert to monitor the activity, albeit away from the "eye-to-eye ecological huddle" (Goffman, 1961, p. 17). Tasting in situ of purchasing is profoundly intersubjective.

Mondada's micro video analysis is based on data recorded in European languages in European urban settings and in shops that cater to middle-class clientele. The difference between the tasting moments in urban European middle-class context and the rural marketplace of Shishan in Southern China allows comparison of culturally specific adaptations of interactional universals. From a drastically different social class, local culture, literacy level, and marketplace setting, the tasting moments in Shishan market nevertheless manifest remarkable similarities to the European context in being treated as an individual activity. However, in Mondada's study, the private yet public display of tasting is an official moment linked sequentially to the official, global activity, preceded by an invitation to taste and followed by responsibility for disclosing evidence-based assessment. The same orderly sequentiality and progressivity occur in the Shishan data, however, variations occur across different goods. Expensive goods, which correlate with restricted access, see access restriction and information curation. Low prestige goods such as home-made produce by non-licensed, daily peddlers tend to correlate with assessment methods that are distributed and shared between seller and buyer without verbal sequentiality. Contrasting with Mondada's data where the clerk and the shopper both temporarily retreat to construct the silent, private tasting moment, the tasting behaviors of shoppers in Shishan, such as smelling tofu, eating wampee, manually bending and squeezing loofahs, originate from the right of the buyers to treat the entire transaction, not just the tasting moment, as an individual activity than a social encounter. Permission to proceed to taste and post-tasting disclosure of assessment are both rare and not expected.

When decision to purchase has been declared, including nonverbal means such as taking a plastic bag to start bagging selected goods and putting them on the scale to weigh, the social contract of purchase is complete. At this stage, distributed, rather than customer-private, sensorial assessment takes place. For example, at the loofah vendors' stations, it is common that the peddler cuts the tip of the loofah off and hand the loofah with the freshly cut surface to the buyer who would then lick the freshly cut surface to detect hint of bitterness. If there is no bitter taste, the shopper uses the vendor's knife to cut off the licked surface and add the newly assessed gourd in the bag to be weighed and purchased. Occasionally, the seller would join in the act of cutting and licking the cut surface, helping the buyer to inspect the loofahs efficiently (see Figure 6.3). The process is streamlined too. The knife to cut the gourd is passed from hand to hand, a communal practice. The entire process is pragmatic with no apparent attention to preserving a private sensorial space, which contrasts with tasting for assessment before intention to purchase is declared. As illustrated earlier, when tasting occurs before decision-making, the tasing moment is similar to Mondada's analysis, protected and individual (marked by silence, body torque and non-reciprocation of verbal advances from the seller). Licking, which is a much intrusive mechanism for quality assessment than bending and squeezing the gourds, also only occurs after decision to purchase has been made and made known.

Figure 6.3 A loofah vendor licks the cut surface of a loofah for a customer

These variations in sensorial assessment suggest that: sensorial assessment serves divergent functions before and after purchase intention is declared, arguably related to perceptions of product ownership and the global activity as locally defined. Once purchase intention is made known, the contract is agreed upon; then product inspection prioritizes efficiency and collaboration is desirable.

6.3 Contesting epistemic primacy

Knowledge is crucial in marketplace assessment activities, Knowledge ranges from epistemic access (e.g., who can access information and through which channels), epistemic primacy (e.g., individuals' relative rights to knowledge and claim of authority), and epistemic responsibility (e.g., who is normatively expected to know certain states of affairs) (Heritage, 1984, 2011; Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Stivers et al., 2011).

As markets become more networked and economy globalized, local markets begin to see more imported goods whose reputations and prestige compete with local goods. Local goods and imported goods have different sources resulting in different conceptual and experiential knowledge. The following example is a conversation between a customer and the duck vendor. The customer intends to purchase roast lamb only to be disappointed that the lamb vendor is absent from the market on that particular day. He then strikes a conversation with the duck vendor. Not purchasing roast duck, C35 nevertheless shows that he knows about Beijing roast duck which he claims to be worthier than the local roast duck.

(6.6) Beijing roast duck. C35=Customer #35; V=vendor

1C35: *Bageng-kaoah leng nia yin roh Rongxing.*
Beijing roast duck return come sell at Rongxing
'(Someone has brought) Beijing roast duck to sell in Rongxing (a town adjacent to Shishan).'

2V: *Bageng kao ah:: n ga:::ng ah n danggei yan.*
Beijing roast duck NEG say ADV NEG what delicious
'Beijing roast duck, don't (people) say that it's not that delicious.'

3C35: *Gang en.*
Say PL
'(People) say those (nonsense).'

4V: *Ra ho en gang en-eey lah.*
1SG know PL say PL PRT PRT
'I just hear people say these things.'

5C35: *Vidao rong gei yan hian leh.*
Taste people type delicious much PRT
'Their (Beijing roast duck) taste is really delicious.'

6V: *Ca chi mo de shiu eii.*
cut little 2SG taste time PRT
'I would like to cut a little bit (of my duck) for you to taste for once.'

7C35: *Ra rang meng guan,*
1SG NEG have eat
'I don't want to eat it.'

8 *lu hao ra n dia go na en no.*
since beginning 1SG NEG like thing DEM PL PRT
'I never ever like these things .'

9 *mo::: nan bok na zhuang rong ah jiao diang no.*
2SG meat duck DEM category people ADV ADV like PRT
'You know, those type of ducks (Beijing roast duck), people just love it (I'm telling you).'

10 V: (indistinct)…*Bei-ging ah dle….*
Beijing duck get
'Beijing duck has…..'

11C35: *Dli bei- bei Ba-ging gei kao-ah dlian mo guan,*
M go go Beijing type roast-duck restaurant CLS eat
'(if you) go to a Beijing roast duck restaurant to eat (the roast duck),'

12 *di ho ho o dum dot ba mo.*
Each CLS CLS money three ten eight CLS
'Each duck is 38 dollars.'

13V: *Heh heh.*
Yes yes
'Yes, yes (I know).'

14 *Le-kiang ra ho ah dle pengro ho ba-gin gai.*
son 1SG CLS PRT have friend CLS Beijing PRT
'My son has a friend who is in Beijing.'

15C35: *di ho o dum dot ba mo leh.*
Each CLS money three ten eight CLS PRT
'One duck costs 38 bucks (my goodness)!'

16V: *nang guan kon mo ba-ging kao-ah di,*
however eat up, 2SG Beijing roast-duck PRT
'However when you (=generic) actually eat it, you know, even if it's Beijing roast duck,'

17 *ah n sha danggei.*
PRT NEG differ what
'There is not much difference (from our local duck).'
((V then calls out to a passerby, starts to talk to her and no longer talks to C35))

Line 1 is potentially face-threatening to the vendor as it introduces the prestigious Beijing roast duck into the conversation, which is not only sold in the capital city of Beijing, but also in the nearby town Rongxin, presenting looming competition and casting V's local roast duck in an inferior light. V's response rejects the connotation in C35's news-sharing, claiming that the famed Beijing duck is underwhelming. V treats C35's reference to the Beijing roast duck as evoking category properties. V mitigates her disaffiliative stance by marking her negative assessment as based on hearsay. C35 outrightly dismisses V's disagreement as indeed due to

hearsay. V then excuses herself by emphasizing it is indeed hearsay and she's just a messenger. Enfield (2011) suggests that when speakers evoke different voices in ordinary conversation, despite different speaker roles, namely, the speaker can simply animate a voice (animator, voice box), create the wording (author), or be a representative of the view (principal) (Goffman, 1981), communication tends to proceed with an "animator bias." That is, in ordinary interaction, one's statement, despite stating a secondary source such as hearsay, would be heard as representing the speaker's own view (the animator is the principal). C35's energetic dismissal of V's statement about Beijing roast duck illustrates this animator bias; C35 considers' V's hearsay-based assessment of the Beijing roast duck revealing V's own ignorant view, needing correction. Interestingly, C35, in contention, does not provide his information source nor other forms of validation for his self-acclaimed epistemic primacy on the matter.

V offers a piece of her roast duck for C35 to provide a first-hand experience for C35 to offset his fascination with the Beijing roast duck. C35 instead utters an unmitigated face-threatening act, rejecting categorically V's offer to sample, asserting that ducks in general are not to his taste, and he has never tried them nor does he wish to do so now. C35 continues to praise Beijing roast duck ignoring V's bid for floor, relaying Beijing roast duck's hefty price along with generic praises. C35's spiel for the Beijing duck, on the surface, appears to be similar to the spiel features of Shishan sellers, i.e., appealing to popularity and fame. However, C35's spiel does not have other substances such as concrete persons, activities, and sensorial descriptions.

The referential expressions used by C35 and V in the competition toward epistemic primacy are in sharp contrast. When referring to the local duck, C35 uses high focus deictic forms both marking immediacy and marking contention, *n dia go na en* 'not like these things here" (Strauss, 2002). In contrast, Beijing roast duck is referenced in categories, first as a proper noun *Bageng kaoah* "Beijing Roast Duck," then in association with non-specific third person generic reference (e.g., *rong* 'people,' *veidao rong gei* 'their taste, their type of taste," *nan bok na zhuang* 'that type of duck meat'). Such category-based references construct the Beijing roast duck as an exotic "other."

V reclaims her ground by associating herself with someone who factually tasted the Beijing roast duck in Beijing, the original birthplace of the famed duck, not the copycat brand in the town nearby. She thus re-claims her independent epistemic authority on the subject matter (Fox, 2001) dismissing its hefty price as unworthy and validating her initial assertion of its underwhelming taste. Afterwards, V switches to talk to another customer, ending the unpleasant conversation.

6.4 Discussion and conclusions

Assessing goods is a key activity in the marketplace. Vendors assess their goods verbally and multimodally to construct the quality, value and prestige of their goods; buyers carefully assess goods of interest for quality and value assurance both before and after purchase. The materiality of the merchandise interlinks with its socioeconomic status and prestige situated in the local material culture. Goods of lower economic status are sold in the un-licensed "huddle" spaces where goods are directly accessible and free to sample, leading to elaborate sensorial assessment. Goods of higher economic status or of an imported nature tend to be guarded with physical barrier along with social cues for restricted access, leading to reliance on the seller's verbal spiels to construct the quality of the goods.

Shishan market, due to its transition from a traditional rural market to a hybrid marketplace going through standardization and urbanization, displays a continuum of tendencies of relying on sensorial and experiential ways of assessing goods to assessment based on reputation and categorization. Imported goods, without local familiarity, tends to rely on generic references, reputation and prestige and utilize awe-inspiring categorical qualities of "otherness." Local, familiar goods tend to be presented in locally specific categories coupled with personal experiential narratives. Shishan merchants construct and demonstrate the qualities of their merchandise using recognitional categorization, i.e., naming, categorizing, classifying the merchandise in ways that are locally inferential-rich. This practice positions the customer as knowledgeable who has direct access to material evidence in the immediate context. Quality is constructed not only on value, bargain, demand, supply, but also through narratives that authenticate the seller's self-claims and brand the goods as part of the seller's professional and personal identity. The sellers' worlds thus extend beyond the market to other displaced, recalled, imagined, past and future spaces where the quality and value of goods are contextualized in professional activities.

Vendors and buyers also evoke categorizations that are not rooted in local practice, filled with imagined qualities through advertising, word of mouth, reputation and other such pre-packaged representations of value and prestige. Imported goods, which have no local sources of knowledge and shared assessment methods, tend to rely on verbal means of assessment. In such cases, sensorial qualities give way to imagined qualities based on verbal, discursive construction. As local markets are increasingly linked to wider economy through urbanization and globalization, such non-embodied, generic categorization for assessment likely will become more common in vendor spiels and assessment, a point we will return to in the final chapter.

The similar as well as contrastive findings of Mondada (2018) and the current study on "tasting moments" suggest that social actors' individual space in the public setting is given different meaning in different cultures. In Mondada's data, the individual shopper's sensorial space is created to shield a private sensory experience thus the social motivation is primarily to guard and respect privacy in a social encounter; the act of privacy-protection itself is institutional. As Mondada states, the "individual sensory experience is not merely a private one…. (it is) interactively created and remains deeply embedded within this asymmetric silent interaction and its organization." (p. 751) Further, such space is "created" specifically for "tasting," a moment sequentially within an overall cooperative interactional situation. In contrast, in Shishan market, the buyer's individual space is an embodiment of the buyer's stance of epistemic independence and the normative pragmatic (than social) orientation to the transactional encounter. The tripartite "buyer-goods-seller" participation structure enables the buyer to focus primarily on the goods from the very beginning of the transaction unless and until need for information and persuasion arises. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, treating a low-stakes transaction as an entirely individual activity alleviates the buyer from responsibility for incurring operation and opportunity costs for the seller. The seller is free to engage with other customers. This individual activity on the part of the Shishan buyer thus is deeply rooted in self-preservation.

The difference between the tasting moments before and after a purchase decision is declared can be explained in the transaction cost framework. Before the purchase contract is drawn, the tasting moment is costly, as it costs merchandise, takes time, opens space for uncertainty and negotiation, which may not culminate in a sale. The Shishan shoppers' torqued away posture frames the tasting moment as separate from the seller's attention and time, innocent of costing the seller time and effort. These tasting moments show variations based on the status of the goods too. As seen from the pork vendor station in the premium vending section, while the vendor verbally excuses the hesitant vendor for taking her time, he carefully monitors as the customer touches the goods, and at various moments takes the sample away from her hand in order to expedite the sale. The buyer in turn doesn't freely handle the pork, inspecting the meats in a reserved and diffused manner. But when the purchase contract is drawn, the communal effort is fast and streamlined in product assessment, which arguably is an effort to create efficiency as well as signaling gratuity.

CHAPTER 7

Relationships in the marketplace

On phatic communication

> Their inner world requires a layer of the outer world as delimiting material; their quivering solo voices cannot do without the support of the chorus. They are unclear natures, rather lost without the certainties which the feeling gives that they are a little part of a whole (to whose tone and color they contribute).
>
> (Alfred Polgar, "Theory of the Café Central")

The marketplace is more than a space for economic transactions. It is a "zone of encounters," (Wessendorf, 2014) a social space where people chat in-between services, loiter to partake in the latest gossip, catch up with friends and acquaintances, and share tips about life's sundries. Markets provide natural opportunities for strangers, acquaintances and friends to encounter each other with or without planning. In the marketplace, "phatic communication" is a prominent function of language through which people renew and build relationships. Social encounters are a byproduct of the economic function of the marketplace, but for many, social encounters also constitute a chief allure of the marketplace.

"Phatic communication" (i.e. phatic communion, Malinowski, 1923) or various forms of small talk occur abundantly in the marketplace, especially in rural areas where "Officialdom" is the least exercised (Bakhtin, 1967/2008). Malinowski (1923) distinguishes goal-oriented transactional talk from "phatic communion," the latter serving no transactional purpose but is significant for creating and maintaining social relationships. By initiating a small talk, the speaker acknowledges the "social worth" of the addressee and shows good intention toward them, a performance of "relationship as usual" (Malinowski, ibid). Linguistic anthropological work on phatic genres, such as greetings (Basso, 1972; Duranti, 1992, 1997; Irvine, 1974; Sherzer, 1983), conversational storytelling (Bamberg et al. 2010; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Norrik, 2000; Ochs and Capps, 2000), small talk (Coupland, 2000, 2003, 2009; Coupland and Jaworski, 2003; Schneider, 1988), gossip (Besnier, 2009; Bergmann, 1993; Coates, 1998; Cameron and Coates, 1988; Deppermann, 2007; Dunbar, 1996; Pilkington, 1998; Thornborrow and Morris, 2004), amply show that small talk is polyfunctional beyond signaling and renewing social contact. Phatic communication re-affirms relational identities, releases emotion and stress, and acts as a relationship management device. On the societal level, phatic genres reveal and often reify existing normative social orders.

Traditional marketplace is replete with casual conversations, some brief and functionally driven, some carefully crafted to sustain and create relationships as well as broker economic deals. This chapter focuses on two phatic speech genres where the management of social relationships is central: greeting and gossip. Both activities seem to serve no apparent utilitarian ends, occupying the opposite ends of the continuum of social propriety. On one end, greeting ritualistically maintains social propriety. On the other end, gossip puts both the subject of the talk and the participants of the gossip activity in a morally precarious position (Bergmann, 1993). I illustrate that greeting and gossip, seemingly unrelated and distinct in their functional, social, and moral characteristics, share a common underpinning: the structural properties of both genres pivot upon using language to control information (cf. Duranti's [1997]s thesis on the function of greeting).

7.1 Greetings: Rituals that control information flow

Greetings, among the different genres of small talk, are unique in their sequential placement. Greetings occur at "boundary" locations, marking "a perceived change in the physical and social accessibility of two individuals to each other" (Goffman, 1981, p. 21). Obviously, people don't greet each other repeatedly in the same environment, but re-issue a greeting, often via a different register, to transition from an informal activity to a formal one, sometimes vice versa, in the same physical setting.

Greetings tend to be viewed in theoretical writing as occurring in formulaic pairs, such as the following pair in Goffman (1981):

A: Hello.
B: Hello.

Goffman (1981) writes on the formal felicity of greeting expressions that "an interpersonal ritual such as a greeting proves to be linked with a matching expression, but now much more loosely than is true of other adjacency pairs." (p. 64) Goffman suggests that the second greeting (as in B) is not a reply to the first greeting in A. Both are reactive responses to the "sudden availability" of the participants to each other. The social function of greeting is ritualistic, to "enact an emotion that attests to the pleasure produced by the contact." (p. 47)

Duranti (1997, p. 67) distilled the various behavioral variations of greeting down to the following six essential criteria:

1. near-boundary occurrence
2. establishment of a shared perceptual field
3. adjacency pair format
4. relative predictability of form and content

5. implicit establishment of a spatio-temporal unit of interaction
6. identification of the interlocutor as a distinct being worth recognizing.

Despite these common genre-defining features, greetings utilize community-specific "self-contained, packaged meaning" (Goffman, 1981, p. 15). Different communities have different conception of what constitutes (appropriate) greeting behaviors. Basso (1972) shows that the Western Apache community favors silence and bodily deference when relationship is uncertain or ambiguous (e.g., no eye gaze and no body contact). Basso further shows that involvement strategies, common among strangers in western society such as voluminous talk, high tempo, involvement inquiries, exaggerated elevation in pitch, repetition, visual and body contact, are rather alienating in the Apache community. Asking the addressee's well-being and requesting an update from the addressee, albeit intended as involvement strategies, demand actions on the part of the addressee and can be considered discourteous and presumptuous. Basso's studies suggest that involvement rituals are not the default contents of greeting rituals. Even the need to show recognition of an acquainted person upon his or her sudden appearance will depend on local norms governing interpersonal distance.

Duranti's (1992, 1997) research on Samoan ceremonial greetings shows that ritualized greetings often do contain propositional content than entirely phatic. They don't have to be "expressive" in the traditional sense of an "expressive" speech act (i.e. expressing pleasure of seeing the other person; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Greetings can control information and consequently control behavior, accomplishing consequential tasks beyond registering contact (Duranti, 1997).

Sales encounters between strangers do not typically include phatic greeting sequence between strangers in the marketplace in Southern China as shown in Orr and Pan's Cantonese-based research. Both researchers related the absence of greeting rituals to the "avoidance" outgroup norm in the Chinese collectivist society. However, given that the primary goal of greeting is to signal recognition and social worth of the addressee, the act of recognition can be non-verbally executed. As illustrated in Chapter 3, the customers can indicate their attempt to initiate a transaction by approaching the vending station. The vendors typically indicate their recognition of the customer by standing in a service posture, using sales beckons or uttering transactional inquiries such as *ao danggei*? 'What (would you) like?", together with address terms. At the initial stage of ambiguous purchase intention, greeting pairs enter both parties in a sales relationship which, as illustrated in Chapter 3, is enacted differently by the seller vs. the buyer.

Among acquainted persons however, greetings can be extensive in Shishan market. Greeting sequences amongst acquainted persons tend to initiate by stating certain observation of the interlocutor's current activity which sequentially transfers the conversational floor to the interlocutor thus initiates contact.

7.1.1 B-statements as greeting rituals

In the Shishan corpus, the most typical type of sequence at the contact-initial position among acquainted persons, treated ritualistically, is various forms of "B-statements." B statements are such statements where speaker A describes a situation pertaining to his or her interlocutor (speaker B) of which speaker B has direct, first-hand knowledge (Labov and Fanshel, 1977; Pomerantz, 1984; Xiang, 2012b). In social interactions, B-statements function as a "fishing device" leading to the addressee's voluntary first-person disclosure. For example, speaker A says to speaker B, "Your phone's been busy;" seemingly an innocuous statement, this B-statement positions speaker B in a sequential position to provide a first-person account to explain the busy phone line (Pomerantz, ibid).

Previous literature on B-statements has not related B statements to greeting rituals, but the Shishan data show that B-statements are commonly used and heard as greeting rituals. To illustrate, Example 7.1 takes place initially when a female customer walks into the hair salon. The hairdresser uses a B-statement and a confirmation marker to initiate contact with the customer. Sequentially, this question is heard and reacted to as a ritual greeting.

(7.1) H=salon owner; FC2: female customer #2

```
1H:     Nia   ho          mi?       [B-statement to establish contact]
        come market question-marker
        'So you've come to the market?'
2FC2:   Heh.                          [reciprocates the recognition]
        yes
        'yes.'
3       Gio so   mo  eii di.       [elaboration with a service request]
        cut hair CLS PRT PRT
        'Come to cut hair.'
4H:     Nia  ou  he   loh.              [compliance to service request]
        come sit here PRT
        'Come  and sit here.'
5       Ou  he   ey no.
        sit here PRT PRT
        'Come to sit inside over there.'
```

The hair salon is located at the center of the market area. H's utterance in line 1 signals her partial knowledge of FC2's current activity, formulated as a confirmation whether FC2 has come to the market. This question is self-evident, vacuous of informational value. The pragmatic force of the grammar and the turn-taking mechanism employed (a question expects an answer, a first pair part awaits a second pair part) creates a greeting easily reciprocable. Naturally, FC2 confirms and specifies that she has come to the market for a haircut. The simple confirmation completes the greeting ritual and smoothly segues into a service request (lines 2

and 3). H then invites FC2 to sit on one of the salon chairs and the service proceeds (lines 4 and 5)

It is not surprising that B-statements are co-opted into ritual greetings. This type of question-answer sequence accomplishes the phatic task of "recognition" without interactional burden. In addition, the B-statement structure not only solicits a second pair part; the force of B-statements to "fish" for more self-disclosure functionally invites the interlocutor to disclose personal information and expand the conversation.

Example 7.2 further illustrate this unique function of "B-statement" initiating a greeting sequence that results in personal disclosure. This segment occurs between three acquaintances at the convenience store. Kai, who stops by the convenience store to chat with the store owner B, converses with B's friend Mo who is keeping B's company at the store.

(7.2) B=store owner; M=Mo, B's acquaintance who chats with B at the store; Kai=B and Mo's mutual acquaintance.

```
1 B:     ((Beckons to Kai as he walks toward the convenience store from
         the street))
         Hai^kou MI^^^?
         Haikou PRT PRT
         '(Are you going to) Haikou?'
2        (1.0)
3        Heh?
         okay
         'Right?'
4 Kai:   (indistinct) ((arriving at the store))
5 → M:   Whei?
         INT
         'What? (What did you say?)'
6 Kai:   (xx)Mo, =
             Mo
         '(indistinct) Mo,'
7 → M:   =Mo  dli [bei ne::^::? (.) Ee?
          2SG  M    go  where
         'Where are you going?'
8 → Kai:          [bei Hangga-
                   go  Hangga
         '(I'm) going to Hangga.'
9 → Kai: Bei  Hangga hu go chi::      eii.
          go  Hangga do thing little  PRT
          '(I'm) going to Hangga to do a little bit (of something).'
10 →     (1.6)
11 M: →  Bei ne eydei?
         go where now
         'Where are (you) going now?
12       (0.3)
```

```
13          Hu danggei?
            do what
            'What (are you going to) do (there)?'
14 → Kai: (indistinct) hu gong chi::   eii.
                       do labor little PRT
            '(I'm going there) do a little bit work (there).'
15 → M:     O::h.
            PRT
            'Oh. (I see)'
           ((B starts to talk to Kai about his business endeavors
           in a general fashion.))
```

As Kai approaches the store, B greets him with a B-statement ending with the question particle *mi* which marks an assertation computed from the immediate context (Xiang, 2012a). Kai reciprocates with an acknowledgment (inaudible on the recording, line 2). Mo joins with a response cry "*whei,*" (line 5) that signals newsworthiness, likely reacting to Kai's sudden appearance on the scene and B's initial B-statement alluding to a certain future event of Kai which perks M's curiosity. Following M's expression of surprise, Kai recognizes M's presence by calling out her name (line 6). M returns with an information-seeking question, delivered in fast-tempo pressing for an answer (line 7). Compared to B's inquiry in line 1, M's question in line 7 is genuinely information seeking, evidenced by Kai's answer specifying the destination of his travel (line 8). However, Kai remains vague disclosing only the general location of his travel (the town's name). He further repeats this information with additional vague language *hu go chi eii* 'do a bit of thing.' (line 9). After a noticeable silence (1.6 seconds, line 10), M again inquires of the goal and the specific location of M's travel (lines 11 to 13). Kai again deflects M's inquiry with vague language (line 14). In Grice's terms (1975), Kai's response to M flouts the "quantity" maxim of the cooperative principle of human interaction by being intentionally less informative. The interaction between Kai and M suggests that a B-statement greeting initiates a phatic sequence as well as potentially initiates an expansion sequence. M and Kai work to manage the cooperative expectations built in the conversational give-and-take. M finally treats Kai's vague answers as having to suffice, evidenced in her use of a slightly exaggerated news receipt token "oh" (line 9), marking Kai's preceding answers as sufficiently informative (Heritage, 1984).

In these examples, the initial interactional sequences remain ritualistic that tightly control what is and is not revealed beyond ritualistic necessities. The difference between B and M's inquires to Kai illustrates the fluid gradation from ritual greetings to genuine information-seeking inquiries.

7.1.2 Greetings to manage norm expectation

In the marketplace, one's sudden appearance in a service shop without a purchase intention tends to threaten the shop owner's positive and negative face, that is, the act of entering a service shop both costs the shop owner's time (negative face), and not in alignment with the owner's financial motivation (positive face). Playful greetings often occur in these settings to manage the face needs of the situation (also see Haakana and Sorjonen, 2011 on playful language as face strategies in the convenience shop setting).

The following example occurs at the dressmaker's shop. A middle-aged woman, Hia, comes into the store with a bag full of grocery in her hand. As will be evident soon, Hia has no intention to have new clothes made. She comes by to chat with acquaintances.

(7.3) Greeting with acquaintance at the dressmaker's shop

```
1Hia:   ((walks into the shop with a bag full of grocery))
        Mo guan dia  ey lou, D?
        2SG eat meal PRT PRT  D
        'Have you eaten, D?'
2D:     Guan ey lah.
        eat  PRT PRT
        'I've eaten.'
3       Weilo!
        INT
        'Wow!'
4       Mo  he  pe   danggei le  er^:::::?
        2SG LOC carry what    BAG PRT
        'What are you carrying in that bag coming here (to my shop)?
5Hia:   Pe    kurua   le  nia MO:::^ @@@@@.
        carry clothes bag come 2SG
        'I'm carrying a bag full of clothes for you.'
```

Line 1 is a typical greeting around mealtime, reciprocated ritualistically with a mere confirmation (line 2). D then utters a response cry (*weilo* 'wow', line 3) to mark Hia's carrying a bag full of goods as newsworthy. In line 4, the locative reference *he* 'here' evokes the service nature of the setting, and the verb *pe* "carry," which denotes effort to carry a heavy load, "keys" a humorous frame (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b). Hia's humorous retort in line 5 befits the setting too: she jokes that her bag is full of clothes for D (the dressmaker also provides alteration and amending services). Hia's statement is obviously untrue due to its laughing key (Goffman, 1981, p. 106; Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989, p. 18), flouting the truth maxim of Grice's cooperative principle in conversation (Grice, 1975). Keying this faux order for service preempts an actual service inquiry from the dressmaker. It also works to register recognition of the interlocutor's space as indeed for business, appealing to the interlocutor's positive face.

This type of playful greeting to manage the expectation of a business setting is similarly practiced in Example 7.4 that occurs at the hair salon. A male acquaintance of the salon owner comes to the salon to shave himself with the shaving tools in the salon. His intended activity obviously misaligns with the business purpose of the shop and his wish to borrow shaving equipment is at the mercy of the salon owner. His initial greeting keys a joking frame.

(7.4) H=hairdresser; MP1=male passerby #1; M=H's older relative

```
1H:      ((Upon seeing MP1 appearing at the salon entrance))
         Whei↑
         what
         'What?'
2MP1:    Dia  sao     ey lou?
         meal morning PRT PRT
         'Have you had breakfast?'
3H:      Ranggei,=
         what
         'What (are you up to)?'
4Mp1:    =Ranggei?↑
         what
         'What (am I up to)?!'
5        Dli chong ma:shia lo na:^n  lah.
         M  set up mahjong into play PRT
         'To set up a mahjong group to play of course.'
6        Ra^nggei,=
         what
         'What (am I up to),'
7M:      =Jiang hao::^ ey lah.
         cut   head     PRT PRT
         "You should get a haircut of course.'
8        Ranggei lou?
         what  PRT
         '(Isn't that) what (you should be up to)?'
9H:      Hao  mo  mo  dli jiang n jiang?
         head 2SG CLS  M   cut neg   cut
         'That hair of yours, you want it cut or not?'
```

H's response cry in line 1, *whei*, said with an exaggerated intonation, registers MP1's sudden appearance at the salon as surprising. MP1 greets H through a formulaic expression typical at mealtime (line 2). The ritualistic nature of this inquiry is evident in H's response which reacts to MP1's inquiry as in no need of an actual answer. Instead, H retorts, *ranggei* 'what (are you up to)?" treating MP1's greeting as a presequence for some hidden agenda (Schegloff, 1988). This retort is answered with feigned innocence. MP1 repeats H's *ranggei* 'What (am I up to)?' and claims that of course he is here to play the team game *mahjong*. In saying so, he opts for the utterance-final particle *lah* which marks the attitude of "of course," "obviously," "nothing else but…" (Xiang, 2011). This retort playfully recasts H's earlier inquiry *ranggei* 'what' as self-explanatory framing his presence as both expected

and non-intrusive. M comes to H's aide (lines 7 and 8), using the same word for retort "*ranggei*" albeit appended with the particle "*lou*" which has the overtone of a verbal challenge (line 8). She also opts for the same particle for "obviousness" *lah,* but with a different proposition that of course the reason to come to the hair salon is to have a haircut (line 7). H joins in with a request of business derogatorily emphasizing "that hair of yours" (line 9).

In both examples above, playful greetings help to manage the newcomer's sudden, non-business-related reason to loiter at a business premise, both to preempt service advances and to stake out a legitimate loitering presence in the business-oriented space.

7.1.3 Negative style to preempt topicalization

B-statements about the addressee's here and now are both face-giving and face-protecting. It respects the positive face of the addressee by initiating contact and considers the negative face of the addressee by doing so ritualistically with self-evident inquiries needing little effort to reciprocate. In the previous examples, ritual greetings have potential to expand into informational exchanges beyond phatic due to the turn-taking mechanisms of conversation. If one does not wish to go beyond ritual greetings, a common strategy is to provide negative answers with little informational value which both conforms to the question-answer norm and controls the degree that a greeting can topicalize.

The following example occurs between the dressmaker D and an older woman, Y, whom D calls "auntie." D stands at the entrance of her shop looking out to the street. When seeing acquaintances passing by, D sometimes calls out to them to come in the shop for a chat. Upon seeing Y, D calls out to Y to come to spend time in the shop. The interaction between D and Y begins with a ritualistic B-statement.

(7.5) D=the dressmaker and shop owner. Y=D's elderly acquaintance and friend of D's mother

1D: *Mo biang sa dah?*
2SG buy grocery PRT
'Are you buying grocery?'

2 *Ayi dah?*
Auntie PRT
'Auntie?'

3→ Y: *Mmm ma dou ga bei rah ey lah?*
mother 2PL already go home PRT PRT
'(So) your mom has already gone home?'

4D: N *meng rung ho ey.*
NEG have down market PRT
'(She) hasn't come down to the market.'

```
5       Mo  biang sa    danggei liao ay?
        2SG buy   grocery what  much PRT
        'What grocery have you bought, so much?'
6→ Y:   Ah ho  biang  sa    danggei?
        ADV know buy  grocery what
        'What do I know about buying grocery? (=I don't know anything
        about grocery shopping.)'
```

D greets Y with a B-statement and the kinship term, *ayi* 'auntie' indexes their familiar relationship. Y's response in line 3 is a type-mismatch, which supports the analysis that the B-statement in line 1 is ritualistically heard as a greeting than information-seeking. Instead of answering the question literally, Y opts to initiate a parallel inquiry on the whereabouts of D's mother. In line 3, D answers Y's question and continues with the social talk, remarking positively on the abundance of the grocery that Y has purchased. This positive assessment is double-edged. It both complements Y's financial capacity, which appeals to Y's positive face, and positions Y to have to account for this large quantity of grocery.

Y gives a dismissive response that there is nothing to explain about her grocery (line 6). This practice exemplifies the negative style I illustrated earlier where Shishan speakers tend to downplay their ability and agency to preempt further inquiry. In this case, the negative style closes the need for self-disclosure and keeps the conversation just phatic.

This negative style to preempt topicalization is not idiolectic. Below I briefly illustrate two additional examples from different speakers where the same strategy is used to keep the greeting sequence phatic than topicalizing. Example 7.6 occurs between an elderly woman O, the convenience store owner B and B's friend M. The three women are acquaintances. O has been listening in on M and B's chat outside the entrance of the convenience store. She now enters the store and joins in the conversation.

(7.6) B and M are of the same age. O is older whom M addresses with the kinship term *ma* 'mother,' a polite term for someone of the speaker's mother's age.

```
1 M:    ((greets O as she enters the store))
        Ma.
        Ma
        'Ma.'
2 O:    Heh.
        yes
        'Yes.'
3→      Mo ah  dun    ho     dah?
        2SG ADV stroll market INT
        'So you are also resting in the market?'
4 M:    Heh.
        yes
        'Yes.'
```

```
5→        Nia ho mi?
          come market Q
          '(So you) are coming to the market?'
6 O:      (xx)
7 M:      Dun    beng roh he mi bei ne?
          stroll rest at LOC or go where
          'Are you resting here or are you going somewhere?'
8 → O:    Dun beng lah
          stroll rest PRT
          '(I'm just) strolling around and resting of course.'
9 →       Bei ne?
          go where
          'Where can I go? (I am not going anywhere).'
10 M:     Dun    lah,
          stroll PRT
          'Just stroll around for sure.'
11        huan   ne de nia beng   di.
          free then COP come rest INT
          'When you are free, come here and rest (with us).'
12 O:     Heh lah,
          yes PRT
          'Sure.'
13        Huan  ne  de nia  beng di.
          free then COP come rest PRT
          'When I have time I will come and rest (with you).'
14 →      dou hu gong  n huan  he,
          2PL do labor NEG free ever
          'You (business people) have to work and are never free.'
15 →      dlou na en meng huan shuan vei di,
          1PL  DEM PL have free whole year PRT
          'We people (farmers) are free all year round.'
16 →      dou hu shuan vei.
          2PL do whole year
          'You work all year round.'
```

The following segment occurs at the dressmaker's shop, between the dressmaker D and a young woman W who enters the shop.

(7.7) D=dressmaker; W=a young woman. Lines 13 to 17 were analyzed earlier in Chapter 5, Example 5.9.

```
1→D:      Mo  nia  ho     gang ey?
          2SG come market PRT  PRT
          '(So) you've come to the market?'
2→W:      Yi   dlou roh ho    mi  ah?
          aunt 1PL  at market PRT PRT
          'Is my aunt at the market?'
3D:       Beina?
          who
          'Who?'
4W:       Yi   dlou lah
          aunt 1PL  PRT
          'My aunt surely.'
```

```
5D:      Yi  dou mi?
         aunt 2PL PRT
         'Your aunt?'
6        Yi   dou bei biang mai     ey.
         aunt 2PL go  buy sugarcane PRT
         'Your aunt went to buy sugarcanes.'
7W:      Bei biang mai ey?
         go  buy sugarcane PRT
         'She went to buy sugarcanes?'
8D:      Heh.
         yes
         'Yes.'
9W:      Ge  ru gang  ge roh he yin
         3SG ADV say  3SG at  LOC past
         'But she said she'd be here.'
10D:     Ge  biangmai.
         3SG buy sugarcane
         'She went to buy sugarcanes.'
11       Mo  biang sa    liao ai da?
         2SG buy grocery much PRT PRT
         'You've bought a lot of grocery, haven't you?'
12→W:    En de hiong nian so  dlou en nian dlou en biang luei
         PL COP PREP   big aunt 1PL  PL aunt 1PL   PL  buy  PREP
         'These are together with Big Aunt, together with Big Aunt.'
13D:     Mo  n   hu danggei eydei o?
         2SG NEG  do what    now   PRT
         'You're not doing anything now?'
14→W:    Hu danggei?
         do what
         'What is there to do?'
15→      Beng lah.
         rest PRT
         '(I'm) just idling.'
16→      [Hian   dou  pan  nia  ah  hu ay   danggei?
         weather fall rain come PRT  do able what
         'It's raining, so what is there to be done?'
17D:     [Mo  n  da-
         2SG NEG cut-
         'You don't cut- (you don't want to have new clothes made)?'
```

In both segments, "B-statements" are used to initiate a greeting ritual by inquiring of a certain self-evident fact of the addressee, transfering the conversational floor to the addressee without locutionary burden (line 2 and line 5 in Example 7.6; line 1 in Example 7.7). Their corresponding responses are ritualistic as well, either simply reciprocating the inquiry as in Example 7.6, or ignoring it altogther as in Example 7.7, supporting analyzing these turns as phatic greetings to initiate contact and signal recognition of the addressee's "social worth." In addition, both segments illustrate that the interlocutors downplay their own agency over the inquired situation (lack of choice, lack of knowledge, lack of options, engaged in nothing but routine, as in lines 8, 9, 14 to 16 in Example 7.6; lines 12 to 16 in Example 7.7).

Goffman (1981) suggests that "ritual interchanges" are "norm-abiding," conveying the speaker's willingness to adhere to social conventions and do so to respect the addressee (p. 17). The negative style works to control the extent that information is to be shared despite the pressure to comply with the turn-taking mechanism where a question requires an answer and a B-statement entices a self-disclosure.

The information control aspect of greeting posits interesting contrast to the activity of gossip. Gossip, similar to greeting, is a discursive activity that reflects and substantiates social relationship between the interlocutors. However, unlike the façade of social courtesy maintained by greetings, gossip is a morally precarious activity where bonding through sharing privileged information with the immediate addressee may be at the expense of a non-present third party (Bergmann, 1993).

7.2 Gossip

Definitions of gossip are not uniform in previous research. Gossip may be viewed as loosely interchangeable with small talk (Coates, 1998) or defined narrowly as negative talk concerning a non-present third party (Bergmann, 1993; Thornborrow and Morris, 2004). Eggins and Slade (1997) defined gossip as talk marked by "sharing opinions and judgements about a person's behavior or physical attributes." (p. 276) I adopt Thornborrow and Morris's definition that gossip is "pejorative talk about an absent third party" (2004; similar definitions are used in Bergmann, 1993 and Blum-Kulka, 1997). Gossip has a "triad" structure, namely, the gossip producer, the gossip recipient and the absent subject of the gossip (Bergmann, 1993). The overall negative stance of the talk toward the subject of the gossip, who is not present to defend him- or herself, renders this genre morally precarious, which, ironically, also creates bonding between the interlocutors.

7.2.1 Gossip's dubious reputation

The word gossip evokes a gendered bias that women engage in gossip (see Coates, 1998 for a critical discussion of this gendered bias). But ample research has shown that both males and females gossip, albeit to different extents, on different subjects, with different styles. Bergmann (1993) suggests that it is due to the "private matter" characteristic of gossip that women tend to be associated with gossip as a result of historical labor inequality, that is, gossip tends to occur in the laundry and home care professions which were traditionally taken by women. Gossip is often used to practice and enforce social orders. In traditional normative settings such as the school, boys tend to gossip about other boys' behaviors for not being masculine,

such as sulking and asking the teacher for help (Evaldson, 2002, p. 199). Pilkington (1998) shows that women tend to be highly cooperative in their gossip, while male groups give longer pauses and gossip in a subdued manner in general. On the other hand, Brenneis (1990) illustrated that gossip among male groups can be highly collaborative with frequent overlaps, simultaneous speech, and stylistically strong rhythm where each party contributes to a narrative chain.

Far from inconsequential, gossip normalizes traditional values of the community. Based on data from a small town in Germany, Deppermann (2007) shows that males tend to gossip about outgroup members naming them pejoratively; such acts increase bonding within the group and regulate social order. Gossip also establishes and negotiates the speaker and his/her status in the group and brings interpersonal conflicts to the awareness of the larger community. For women in particular, gossip helps to create solidarity and friendship (Brenneis, 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1997; Coates, 1998; Dunbar, 1996; Haviland, 1977; Pilkington, 1998).

Bergmann (1993) suggests that gossip is a form of "discrete indiscretion;" its sequential organization and its linguistic features are motivated by the double bind of gossip as talk based on privileged personal information and the speakers' awareness of the moral problem of engaging in such behavior socially and publicly.

Gossip in the marketplace is different from gossip amongst ingroup members talking behind closed doors. In a closed private group, especially with homogeneous gender groups and socioeconomic classes, such as boys in the same school, or women sharing coffee hours in a close-knit circle at home (Coates, 1998), the effects of gossip for social control, solidarity, bonding are arguably amplified. However, in the marketplace, due to the loose relationships and chance encounters typically found in the marketplace, gossip, if occurring at all, is much more tentative in general. In the current data, gossip tends to occur in service shops where people can idle and talk even with total strangers. Unlike close circles of friends of regular gatherings behind doors (e.g., Bergmann, 1993; Coates, 1998), gossip in a public space such as service shops in the market is less intimate and with less pressure to conform or corroborate. Thornborrow and Morris's (2004) research on gossip as occurs on a reality television show demonstrates that gossip in a public space occurs in a subdued manner; the participants are aware of the "surveillance" of home viewers. Similarly, in the marketplace, gossip is a high-risk activity which may result in the participants resisting a gossip initiation or not fully aligning with the initial speaker's moral overtone, to be discussed in the following sections.

7.2.2 Touched off gossip

Previous research on gossip tends to look at gossip as occurring "behind doors" (fraternity groups, dormitories, coffee time at home); in such private settings, gossip begins by sharing "newsworthy" information of common acquaintances (Bergmann, 1993). In the open marketplace, however, the initiation of a gossip sequence is typically through a contextual "touch-off," that is, gossip is sparked by noticing something or someone in the immediate physical context. Arguably, the "touching off" extemporaneous manner of initiating a gossip frees the speaker from intentionally "speaking ill" of a non-present third party in public.

To illustrate, the following example occurs in the hair salon. H, the hairdresser and owner of the salon, chats with M who has come for a visit. The salon is at the center of the market area, its front door facing the main street. M spots a heavy-set man walking past the salon. The heavy-set passerby becomes the subject of gossip.

(7.8) Gossip about someone walking by.
(M=H's relative who visits H; H=hairdresser; FC1=female customer#1)

```
1→M:    Weilo! ho  no   hao  mang la!
        INT    CLS  big  very fear PRT
        'Wow! What a big man!'
2H:     Le  Yan ho lah.
        son Yan CLS PRT
        'That is Yan's son.'
3M:     Gu-lin-gu-dun eey.
        chunky-bunky  PRT
        'He is so chunky-bunky.'
4FC1:   Gongdie ho bei ne   er?
        son     CLS go where PRT
        'Where is his son (=what does he do)?'
5M:     go    ho  dei:: n:: n   dei::::n dei  de  Yan e::r?
        thing CLS  like  NEG NEG  like  NEG like COP Yan PRT
        'That guy like, (he) doesn't look like, (he) doesn't look
        like Yan, right?'
6H:     ((chuckles))
        Yan  rai   mi?
        name birth Q
        '(So you think) Yan gave birth to him?'
7M:     Heh (surprise)?
        right
        'What?'
8H:     Yan  rai   mi?
        name birth Q
        '(So you think) Yan gave birth to him?'
9M:     Ho  de  dai  nia  mi?
        CLS COP  take come Q
        '(So) you mean he is brought over (=he is Yan's stepson)?'
```

10 *Heh*?
right
'Is it?'
11H: *Dai le di ho luei nia*
take child four CLS together come
'(Yan's wife) brought along four children (when she married Yan).'
12M: *Dai le di ho?*
take child four CLS
'(She) brought over four children?'
13FC1: *Yan déi nian ho dai le di ho nia di o?*
name marry wife CLS take child four CLS come PRT PRT
'The woman that Yan married brought four children with her?'
14H: *Rai ho luei nia.*
birth CLS PREP come
'(She) gave birth to one child (after she married Yan)'
15M: *Mmmmm* ((grunting))
16 (2.0)
17→ *Mi:: me::ng meng dei ziu ma ho ang di,*
PRT have have resemble appearance mother CLS PRT COP
'If so, it is fine if (the children) look like their mother,'
18→ *na dli dei* – ((this utterance is not completed))
only M resemble
'But if (they) look like (their biological father, then it is not good.)'

Bergmann (1993) suggests that gossip has to meet three necessary conditions about the subject: (1) the subject of the gossip is absent; (2) the subject of the gossip is at least an acquaintance of both the speaker and the recipient of the gossip; (3) secrecy, i.e., the content has to do with private affairs of the subject not known to the public. These three criteria apparently exist in this segment, rendering the talk gossip.

The exclamatory *weilo* in line 1 is a response cry (Goffman, 1981, p. 106) marking a noteworthy "sighting." At this moment, the talk is not yet gossip; it turns to a gossip activity through H's provision of privileged information about the subject. M's initial response cry and the context-bound deictic person reference *ho* 'that one' frame the person as a total stranger, only remarkable due to his large size (line 1). Yet, this is the son of a common acquaintance, a realization now brought forth by H (line 2). M continues to comment on the physical attribute of this person equipped with the new information that he is the son of a mutual acquaintance. Based on the new information, M notices a lack of physical resemblance between the man passing by and their mutual acquaintance who is the man's father. The final particle "*er*" marks surprise (line 5).

In response to M's puzzle over the lack of physical resemblance between the man in the immediate context and his father who is M and H's mutual acquaintance, H lets M discover her own misconception based on her own logic (line 6 and line 8) by resorting to the context-computing question particle *mi* (Xiang, 2012a). Through this prompted reasoning, M realizes her erroneous assumption. M twice

uses the repair initiator *heh* 'what?' to register surprise and prompt a confirmation (line 7 and line 10). H cooperates more plainly: in line 11, she provides further information, with added tellability (Ochs and Capps, 2000) that their acquaintance's wife brought four children to her second marriage. This additional information is again received with surprise and newsworthiness evident in both M and FC1's echo and confirmation requests (lines 12 and 13).

FC1 has been quiet in the background with her initial inquiry ignored by H and M. Her rephrase of H's information registers disbelief (line 13). H then corrects herself that one of the four children is Yan's own. A two-seconds silence ensues after a concerned grunt-like vocalization from M (lines 15 and 16). Now the new information is no longer new; M starts an assessment using a conditional clause (lines 17 and 18). Although M did not complete the conditional structure, it is clear from the context that M considers it better if the children resemble their mother; the situation would not be desirable if the children resemble their biological father (see Akatsuka, 1985, 1997, 1999 for the affective stance of desirability constructed by conditional clauses). M's assessment is based on the social norm of monogamy; raising another man's children is subject to gossip. If the children physically resemble their mother, the second marriage and the complex father-son relationship can be kept unknown to the general public; in turn, ironically here, the family would be less susceptible to gossip.

Among the three participants, H has more knowledge and privileged information about private affairs of the subject of the gossip. Both H and M cooperate in rendering a mere sighting of a passerby in the marketplace the subject of gossip. This gossip does not impinge on the moral integrity of the subject himself or his family, but it frames their life as a concerning breach of normalcy. Bergmann shows that participants of gossip tend to cast themselves in the light of compassion to offset the moral precariousness of engaging in gossip. In this example, the participants, especially M in line 17, express good will and sympathy toward the subject of the gossip while the exact act of gossip re-affirms the prevalent social stigma toward the subject's non-normative family structure.

7.2.3 Contested gossip

What makes a topic susceptible to gossip is its specific type of tellability where certain private behaviors break the moral code of the community (Thornborrow and Morris, 2004, p. 4; see also: Sacks, 1992, p. 776). Bergmann (1993) suggests that "the central theme of gossip lies precisely in this tense relationship between a revealed 'first' and a concealed 'second' world," (p. 53) i.e., "what a person does publicly and what he or she seeks to keep secret as his or her private affair." (p. 53) What is kept

unknown to the public may invite shame and embarrassment. This characteristic of gossip leaves room for contestation of the moral interpretations of gossiped events.

The following example occurs at the dressmaker's shop. The dressmaker D talks to M about a mutual acquaintance who, according to D, is frugal to a fault.

(7.9) Gossip about a frugal laborer. D=dressmaker; M=D's acquaintance

```
1D:     Se ni^::an ge ho   luei le::h.
        money wife 3SG CLS PROP PRT
        'His wife has income too (along with his income).'
2       Ge::: hu gomo RAI: ay lah,
        3SG   do work able RES PRT
        'He has a job and is able to earn a living.'
3       (1.0)
4→      le:^ng jiang n  dle lap   roh lo^  no^^:,
        bed    CLS   NEG get sleep at  into PRT
        '(But they) don't even have a bed to sleep in (let me tell you)!'
5→      (0.4)
6→ M:   Bei wu  de  ai        hu.
        go  out COP difficult do
        'It's difficult to work as a migrant laborer.'
7→ D:   Ge  n biang leng jiang roh lap   lo  no^,
        3SG NEG buy  bed  CLS    at sleep into PRT
        'He didn't even buy a bed to sleep in.'
8       Jiao po      po    li  rong   lualo    en eey la  ro  lo no^,
        ADV  spread spread like people mainland PL PRT sleep at into PRT
        '(He) just spread out a bedsheet (on the floor) like those
        from the mainland, like that, to sleep on.'
9→ M:   Ge  n  biang leng lou?
        3SG NEG buy   bed  PRT
        'He didn't buy a bed?'
10D:    >po    wu  rah  nao nia  lap.<
        spread out home new come sleep
        '(He just) spread out a sheet (on the floor) in his new home
        to sleep on.'
11M:    Hm?
        INT
        'What?'
12D:    Ge  n  gang di  ra n  ho   de  ne.
        3SG NEG say  PRT 1SG NEG know COP PRT
        'He didn't say, I wouldn't know about it.'
13      Gua   ne gua  de   ho
        pass PRT pass COP know.
        '(I didn't know) until (I) stopped by his place.'
```

The subject of the gossip is a migrant laborer who, according to D, does not own a bed despite being able to financially afford one. The subject's choosing to sleep on the floor than a proper bed is a private matter, but through gossip, the domestic choice is viewed through a normative moral lens. Bergmann theorizes that the gossip activity is structured around "discrete indiscretion," where the gossip participants both are aware of the indiscretion of gossip and use discrete discursive

means to manage the indiscretion. In this instance, D negatively assesses the subject of the gossip by juxtaposing his financial success with his frugal lifestyle. Initially, D delivers the fact of not owning a bed as sufficient information to elicit a response (line 4). However, a response is not forthcoming. The delay on M's part signals some hesitancy and misaligned position (Stivers et al. 2011, p. 22). After an audible delay (line 5), M provides a mis-aligning response that working as a migrant worker is difficult (line 6). M's assessment is a de-particularized "my side" assessment, evoking generalized experience (Heritage, 2011, p. 168). In this way, M participates in the topic without fully entering it (Heritage, ibid). D then modifies her description by an upgrade of the tellability of the situation (line 7), changing the verb of possession *dle* 'to have (a bed)' to a volitional action verb *biang* 'to buy (a bed'), framing the frugality as not circumstantial but intentional. D also categorizes the situation as similar to the behaviors of mainland laborers, evoking the existing stereotype of the rough and tasteless lifestyle of mainland laborers (line 8). This process of social stereotyping characterizes a specific individual's particular behavior as exemplifying the behavior of a group thus evoking pre-existing stigma. Polarization of us vs. them, where "them" is negatively categorized, is a common practice in gossip (Deppermann, 2007).

D's modified account constitutes a bid for a better aligned position from M. Finally, M registers the migrant laborer's behavior as newsworthy, deviation from normalcy, thus sanctionable (line 9). Encouraged, D adds details depicting how the migrant worker spreads out a sheet on the floor to sleep on; the repeated verb *po* "spread out" and the detail that the home is brand new strengthen the depicted image of frugality without care or taste (line 10).

M retains her reserved stance with a non-specific receipt token *hm* (line 11). D treats it as a bid for more information and reveals how she obtained this private information. Sharing private information about a third party is face-threatening to both the gossiped subject and the deliverer of gossip (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Thornborrow and Morris, 2004) as it reveals privileged access to someone's private affairs which is morally problematic (Bergmann, 1993; Heritage, 2011). The gossip producer tends to utilize linguistic and interactional resources to exonerate him- or herself from moral judgment, such as using specific details amidst very general statements where the general statements provide a conversational façade, and the specific details provide authentication that the story is genuinely witnessed than conjectured (Bergmann, ibid). Not surprisingly, H marks the private piece of information as knowable to her only accidentally without prying intention (lines 12 and 13).

Although M remains a passive recipient, she is however implicated in the activity's moral conundrum. The gossip recipient is a co-teller due to the social pressure on the part of the recipient to display interest. One may refuse to reciprocate, but the interactional pressure to align with the storyteller's stance is immediate. M's

behaviors from initially misaligning with D's negative stance to later discretely affiliating with D reveals the double bind of the gossip activity: it exerts both interactional pressure on the recipient to align and moral pressure on the recipient to misalign.

7.2.4 Laughing together: Gossip in chorus

Gossip is a reconstructive genre (Bergmann, 1993). It re-enacts a past incident to the current audience. The triad of a gossip activity, namely, the subject, the producer and the recipient of gossip behave discretely in orientation to the moral precarity of this talk genre (Bergmann, ibid). As the subject of gossip is by definition an acquaintance, gossip has an ambivalent stage where the gossip producer tests out the degree of acquaintance of the subject to his or her audience. In the case of a well-known subject in the community, the gossip can ride on a "carousel" and spread from person to person (Bergmann, ibid).

The following example occurs at a fruit vendor's stand. It is a collective jovial telling of a common acquaintance's lottery purchase. The subject of the gossip is a man who has faithfully purchased lottery tickets daily until one day he finally won five dollars. The prize is so embarrassingly low that the lottery winner wishes to keep the award a secret. But the news of his winning has travelled fast; before he reaches home, the news of his embarrassing lottery win has spread throughout town.

The following analysis focuses on how the storytelling is initiated and co-constructed in the context of gossip. The principal storyteller is FW1. The story occurs after 15 seconds of silence upon the closure of a previous story. Line1 is the first line of the gossip. FW2 treats it as news; FW3 has prior knowledge of the story and occasionally joins in to co-tell the story with FW1. FW4 is not familiar with the story.

(7.10) Gossip about a small lottery win
((FW1=female worker #1; FW2=female worker #2; etc.))

```
1FW1:  Shijia len    ey,
       name   return PRT
       'As Shijia got home,'
2      Rong   diu Shijia gang,
       people ask name   say
       'People asked Shijia (they) say,'
3      Go    qun  mi go    gia   er?
       thing true or thing false PRT
       'Is the thing true or just rumor (that you won a small lottery)?'
4      En-eey,
       PL-PRT
       '(They ask Shijia) like that.'
```

```
5       go  rong   gang  mo jiao dlao  go   qun  ang ah er?
        thing people say 2SG ADV   get thing true Q PRT PRT
        '(They asked him), the thing people say about you (winning the
        lottery), is it true?'
6FW2:   dlao danggei?
        get  what?
        'What (did he) get?'
7FW1:   rong   ziang gang Shijia dlao jiang     o    o    mo.
        people spread say  Shijia get  lottery money five CLS
        'People spread the news that Shijia won 5 dollars lottery.'
8FW2:   hmm?
        INT
        'Really?'
9FW1:   Shidi dlao  o     yep mo  o
        name  get money two CLS five
        'Shidi (Shijia's brother) won 2.5 dollars.'
10FW2:  hmm?
        INT
        'Really? (that is hilarious!)'
11FW3:  @@@@@
```

Shijia, the subject of the gossip, is initially referenced by a proper noun which marks the referent as known to the addressees (line 1). The key tellable piece of the story, Shijia's winning a small lottery, is referenced with a direct reported speech (lines 2 to 5). In this reported speech, Shijia's friend allegedly interrogated Shijia as soon as he reached home, re-enacted by FW1, moving the audience right in the middle of the event as it unfolded (the "complication" stage of a narrative, Labov and Waletzky, 1967). FW2's question reveals her lack of knowledge of the story (line 6); shared local knowledge is useful here as revealing the amount of Shijia's lottery win alone is sufficient to trigger a series of joyous "response cries" (lines 8, 10 and 11). Response cries are non-lexical responses, primarily through prosodic details, "to index directly the state of the transmitter." (Goffman, 1981, p. 116).

The gossip continues such:

(7.10) (continued)

```
12FW4:  Bei rah  ey,
        go  home PRT
        'When (they, the two brothers) got home,'
13      Rong   ga      ziang  en-eey    la?
        people already spread like-that PRT
        'People had already spread the news like that?'
14FW3:  Heh.
        Yes
        'Yes,'
15      Ra  n  man     ay  ziao.
        1SG NEG control able laugh
        'I couldn't help laughing,'
```

16 *Shijia n heng ling*
name NEG agree admit
'Shijia didn't admit to it.'
17FW1: *Jia, go jun mi go gia?*
name thing true or thing false
'Jia (Shijia), is that thing true or just a rumor?'
18 *En-eey*
PL -PRT
'Like that'
19 *Ra dui ge (xxx)*
1SG ask 3SG
'I asked him (indistinct).'

FW4's utterance in lines 12–13 seeks specification of the timing of the bystanders' interrogation of Shijia. FW4's curiosity increases the tellability of the story, not only asking for confirmation but also showing that the exact timing of Shijia's being interrogated is the most hilarious part of the story. It is not only the amount of lottery win but the amount of publicity and the news' travel that took Shijia by surprise and made him the town's laughingstock. FW3's independent access to the story now is clear as she takes over the telling momentarily by answering FW4's question (line 14) and adds further sharing through personal experience, that is, FW3 also asked Shijia about the win and Shijia didn't admit to it (lines 15 and 16). The viral spread of the news and the subject's embarrassment and futile denial present a laughter-inducing juxtaposition.

The gossip further expands with more details and reported speech:

(7.10) (continued)

20FW1: *dieji rong meng ziang dlou jiang o o mo,*
fact people have spread RES lottery money five CLS
'In fact people already spread the news that (Shijia) won 5 dollars lottery,'
21 *er::: Shidi dlou o yet mo o.*
name get money two CLS five
'Shidi (Shijia's brother) had won 2.5 dollars.'
22 *dou n man ay ziao @@@@@*
1PL NEG control able laugh
'We couldn't help laughing.'
23 *Ey ra gang eii,*
PRT 1SG say PRT
'then I said,'
24 *ra gen Yinxiang ey,*
1SG go Yinxiang PRT
'when I went up to Yinxiang (town),'
25 *ra gang eii,*
1SG say PRT
'I said,'
26 *Guivei gang,*
name say
'Guivei said (to Shijia),'

27 *hmm ra ah dunbi diu mo,*
1SG ADV prepare ask 2SG
'I was about to ask you,'
28 *ga'er ra ru mang dli diu mo ey,*
but 1SG ADV fear M ask 2SG PRT
'But I was also afraid that if I ask you,'
29 *[o na gei mo da mo n heng ao.*
money DEM type CLS half 2SG NEG agree take
'This little amount of money, a dollar or half, you won't admit to taking it.'
30FW3: *[Guivei ah ho?*
Guivei ADV know
'Guivei also knew about it? '
31FW1: *Gang mo gei ho dai kang ey lah der,*
say 2SG type CLS die half PRT PRT PRT
'(Shijia) said: 'you are half dead for sure (spreading rumor about me).'
32 ((in Shijia's voice))
Gu-se mo ho go,
No-surprise 2SG know thing
'It's no surprise (to me) that you know about the truth (that I didn't win the pitiful money,)'
33 *mo n heng gang gua…(indistinct)*
2SG NEG know say words
'(but) you didn't have the mind to speak (and clear my name).'
34 ((in Shijia's voice))
Mo dai kang ey lah der.
2SG die half PRT PRT PRT
'You are half dead for sure.'
35 FW4: *hmmmm, guagei zian mang go na der.*
INT why always fear thing DEM type
'Hmmmm why does he (Shijia) always get worked up like that.'
36 FW1: ((in Shijia's voice))
Mo ga ho rong gang ey,
2SG already know people say PRT
'You already heard people spread the rumor (about me),'
37 *mo men n ho gang hiang!*
2SG ADV NEG know say ever
'You didn't ever have the mind to speak up for me ever!'
38 *Vennei ra n gen nia gang mi,*
today 1SG NEG up come say PRT
'If today I didn't come to the market to talk to you,'
39 *mo ah din din gang ra ah dlong jiang di da.*
2SG ADV silent silent say 1SG ADV reach lottery PRT PRT
'(I bet) you will still keep quiet and let other people say that I really won the lottery.'
40 *dai lah!*
die PRT
'Gosh!'
41FW3: *Hmmm*
INT
'Really?!' ((=Shijia's reaction is so ridiculous.))'

```
42 FW1: ((lowered voice))
        Ra gang eii,
        1SG say PRT,
        '(So) I explained,'
43      ra gang,
        1SG say
        'I said (to Shijia),'
44      ra ah  ho   rong  gang,
        1SG ADV know people say
        'Indeed I heard people say (those things),'
45      ga  ra  n  gong diu mo  di,
        but 1SG NEG dare ask 2SG PRT
        'but I didn't dare to ask you (whether it's true or not),'
46      ru gang dlou jiang  gei  mo  da   en dei   ey,
        ADV say get  lottery type CLS half like like PRT
        'After all, it's only a dollar or half, stuff like that,'
47      n::: n diu  ai   wu
        NEG  NEG ask able out
       '(I) didn't know how to ask you (without embarrassing you).'
```

In this gossip, the four participants each played a role: FW1 is the principal storyteller, FW2 is a curious listener treating the story as new, FW3, while not new to the story, learns new details; and FW4 imposes moral judgment on the subject's behavior. Various rhetorical devices, especially direct quotes, caricaturize the protagonist's verbal reactions as futilely, comically, and vainly indignant. Gossip indeed jeopardizes a third party's public reputation and image in the service of immediate bonding and verbal delight.

7.3 Discussion and conclusions

For Shishan residents, coming to the marketplace can be an enjoyable event beyond buying and selling. The two genres analyzed in this chapter are part of the social allure of the marketplace. The local market is a public setting for happenstance social encounters. In this public condition, greetings and gossip take on particular characteristics. These characteristics both deepen our understanding of how these universal genres of small talk are practiced locally and offer insights into how and why these small talk genres may begin to play a vital role in new market models for branding, marketing and customer outreach.

Compared to other settings with stable, close and long-standing social relationships, marketplace encounters are transcient and temporary. The temporary relationships often do not have prior intersubjectivity to build on, relying to a great extent on how the spontaneous verbal interactions unfold. The analyses of gossip and greeting sequences in this chapter reveal that information access and control continue to be essential. The format of greetings among acquaintances in Shishan uses information-based inquiry to signal good intention and contact.

The turn-taking properties of greetings are structurally indistinguishable from ordinary information-seeking interaction, but the content, information status and response together illustrate the utterances' ritualistic, phatic orientation. Rituals can evolve into true conversations when new information is allowed to flow. Negative responses prevent information from topicalizing thus keep greetings phatic.

In the traditional marketplace, explicitly courteous but informationally vacuous greeting rituals are not suited in the transactional frame, as they incur transaction cost (principally, time and effort and by implication, opportunity to engage with new customers). Greetings in Shishan are typically reserved for acquainted persons. If used in the transactional frame, the phatic talk would appear out of place, even insincere with an ulterior motive. Thus, in goal-oriented marketplace activities in Shishan, at the beginning of a transaction, using the body and service tools to signal recognition of service intention and using product talk to activate the transactional frame are efficient, sufficient, mutually accepted way of establishing contact and recognizing the social worth of the addressee.

In gossip, information plays an essential role as well, as newsworthiness and deviation from normalcy are to be acknowledged by both interlocutors to render a topic worthy of gossip. It requires interactional skills to resist the tendency to align with the dominant moral position in an unfolding gossip. The function of gossip is also quite alarming as it can create a new layer of reality where the truth and the tall tale no longer can be differentiated and no longer matter. The caricature itself lies in the tellablity of the event as recalled and re-created by the persons who have the floor. The loose relationships among people at the marketplace can expedite the diffusion of gossip as seen in the previous example of a chorus laughter over a third party's embarrassing moment.

As will be discussed in the final chapter, new market models utilize these small talk genres. Greetings are co-opted into sales interactions in the form of extensive feel-good interactions in "social e-commerce" (Lung, December 31, 2020). Although small talk such as greetings should incur transaction costs in a transactional frame, greetings also render the addressee in a bind to respond socially, as well as becoming the object of attention with social worth. In addition, the ways that greetings can grow into an actual conversation by topicalizing personal information is one of the common ways that economic frauds occur. Economic frauds utilize the power of phatic sequences to surreptitiously pry open an interpersonal space to "fish" for personal information from an unsuspecting interlocutor.

Gossip's precarious yes engrossing moral conundrum also lends itself importantly as a marketing canon. In the traditional marketplace where individuals act as their own micro-agents, the moral precarity of gossip controls the degree and type of gossip activities. However, when individuals in the marketplace are no longer their own micro agents responsible for what they say and do morally, when they

merely act as employees of a non-human corporate entity, gossip can be used for marketing beyond an individual speaker's volitional control. A case in point for economic exploitation of the gossip genre is the new digital genre of "clickbaits" where social media use gossip-like titles to allure reader clicks that maximize advertisement monetization (Chen et al. 2015). The micro-analyses presented in this chapter provide in-depth understanding of the ways that small talk genres work discursively, interactively and socially. The final chapter will discuss how small talk genres find their ways in new market models.

CHAPTER 8

Market has a heart

Empathy in conversational storytelling

> I would rather consider myself in the rather romantic position of the old storyteller in the marketplace: you sit down on your little bit of carpet with your hat upturned in front of you, and you start to tell a story. (Philip Pullman)

The title of this chapter pays tribute to Ochs and Schieffelin's (1989) "Language Has a Heart." Based on a broad range of languages and communities, Ochs and Schieffelin argued that affect is not an optional veneer overlain onto referential meanings. Affect is encoded in linguistic systems and interactional mechanisms. When people speak and interact, they convey degrees of epistemic certainty toward the described situation, and indicate the source, validity and importance of what is said and known. People also express affective stances such as preference, abhorrence, resignation, sadness, regret, confusion, fascination, amusement and so forth. Language not only expresses the speaker's own subjective orientation toward the subject at hand and the world around them, but also guide interlocutors to understand each other's affective orientation and communicative intention at any given moment of interaction.

This chapter focuses on conversational storytelling, another oral genre peripheral to the transactional function of language in the marketplace, but pervasive in traditional marketplace as people talk to fill the in-between time of transactions and services. I specifically focus on the role of affect in storytelling. Earlier I have analyzed affect as an emergent facet of sociality in goal-oriented transactions (Chapter 4) and as an essential component of gossip (Chapter 7). In this chapter, I pay special attention to what Ochs and Schieffelin call the "pragmatics of affect," that is, how affect is expressed and reciprocated in context, molding the structural organization of conversational storytelling (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Enfield, 2011; Heritage, 2011; Schiffrin, 1994; Stivers et al. 2011; among others). Market has a heart, or rather, people act and orient to each other with subjectivity when they interact in the marketplace. Although storytelling in the traditional marketplace only occurs outside of the transactional frame in the current data, an in-depth understanding of affective storytelling in public setting gives us insight into the reasons that the traditional marketplace is not only an

economic entity but also a social space where one's own self understandings are juxtaposed with the varied affective and epistemic positionings of other co-present individuals. Understanding the pragmatics of affective storytelling also gives us insight into new ways of marketing that prioritize storytelling and affect in creating market demands.

8.1 Conversational storytelling

Storytelling is an expressive tool through which we understand the past, navigate the present and imagine the future. We use stories to entertain ourselves, relieve stress, bond with each other and socialize children into competent members of the community (Bauman, 1984, 1986; Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Bruner, 1986, 1991; Ochs and Capps, 2000; Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989; among many others).

In the fields of linguistics and psychology, epic storytelling has been accorded significance as a tool to document the oral traditions of indigenous cultures (Bauman, 1984, 1986), as a research methodology for linguistic variation (Labov, 1972) and as a clinical approach to treating patients who suffer from traumatic experiences (Bruner, 1991; Labov and Fanshel, 1977). Such epic-story approach prioritizes the monologic mode of storytelling, crafted, elicited, performatively told and re-told. In everyday lives, everyone engages in storytelling, epic or small. A story may consist of a few utterances or a long stretch of discourse. Ordinary conversational storytelling however is closely co-built than monologic (Ochs and Capps, 2000). Story co-telling has gained significance in the emerging field of "conversational storytelling" and "small stories" (see Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). Structurally, a conversational story does not appear to have significant genre markers as epic stories do; a conversational story may be embedded in and indistinguishable from generic conversations except for its resemblance to certain recognizable structural elements of an epic story such as contextual orientation, complicating actions, temporal progression and some degree of resolution (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). Conversational storytelling structurally is similar to other ordinary speech events of unequal speaker roles where one speaker is given right to use multi-TCU turns (Goodwin, 1984; Sacks et al., 1974, p. 226). Speakers are oriented to an unfolding activity as storytelling when the storyteller is given the primary floor (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 5). Given how much we tell small stories on a daily basis, small stories, while "atypical" compared to the "narrative canon" of epic stories, is the typical kind of storytelling in daily lives.

In the marketplace, storytelling tends to occur at idling moments in service shops. The public space of service shops in the busy market is a home-like yet public

"diversion space" (Bergmann, 1993). In this space, storytelling is often self-initiated, with no specific significance toward a transactional outcome. In rural towns where people tend to know each other in various capacities, it is not unusual that acquaintances and friends come to service shops for conversations as an end to itself.

To understand conversational storytelling as built differently from epic stories, we first reflect on "conversation" as an interactional genre. Goffman (1981) defines "conversation" as talk that occurs "when a small number of participants come together and settle into what they perceive to be a few moments cut off from (or carried on to the side of) instrumental talks; a period of idling felt to be an end in itself, during which everyone is accorded the right to talk as well as to listen and without reference to a fixed schedule; everyone is accorded the status of someone whose overall evaluation of the subject matter at hand-whose editorial comments, as it were–is to be encouraged and treated with respect; and no final agreement or synthesis is demanded, differences of opinion to be treated as unprejudiced to the continuing relationship of the participant." (p. 14) Goffman's delineation of conversation as an informal activity with an egalitarian distribution of speaking right bears an intriguing resemblance to Bakhtin's (1967/2008) conception of the marketplace as a place where people can be equal, away from Officialdom, free from an externally imposed social hierarchy.

However, conversational storytelling is patterned in its own systematic ways. Story participants display "implicitly and indirect referencing and orientation to social positions and discourses" (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 3; see also Bruner, 1986). The affective frames of storytelling tend to be based on normative expectations of the community and serve to validate the speaking self. The story world is pitched on the basis of world knowledge and cultural expectations that are normative too ("story schemas," Chafe, 1994).

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of two conversational stories that arise from those idling moments away from a transactional frame. In both stories, the protagonist of the story is also the narrator herself. One story narrates the speaker's ongoing conflict with a non-present third party. The other story recounts a childhood trauma. Both stories center on the principal storyteller's own experiences distinct from gossip that concerns the behaviors of an absent third party (Chapter 7). Such autobiographic stories inevitably reveal some aspects of the speaker's identities thus the storytellers are particularly vulnerable to whether or not empathic responses are forthcoming.

Stivers et al. (2011) define empathic response as "an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition, and that is similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel." (p. 161) Stivers et al. suggest that, "when persons report first-hand

experiences of any great intensity (involving, for example, pleasure, pain, joy or sorrow), they obligate others to join with them in their evaluation, to affirm the nature of the experience and its meaning, and to affiliate with the stance of the experiencer toward them. These obligations are moral obligations that, if fulfilled, will create moments of empathic communion." (pp. 160–161)

The demand for empathic responses in public storytelling is subtler than stories told behind closed doors or along a hierarchical social power structure. The social obligation to offer empathic responses is more ambiguous and less straightforward when the setting is public and audience roles are varied without pre-determination (Goffman, 1981). The micro-analyses of two first-person stories presented in the subsequent sections suggest that, knowledge, i.e., to what extent the story builds upon shared experiences or universal truths, plays a pivotal role in the ways that empathic responses are forthcoming.

8.2 Story 1: "He lost his temper!"

When telling a story, the storyteller projects the story in advance and constructs its development sequentially (Heritage, 2011). This progressive design can be seen in the use of pre-announcement in news delivery sequences where the news teller first bids for the floor before telling the news story (Maynard, 2003) and uses story prefaces to bid for multi-TCU turns (Goodwin, 1984).

In this section, I analyze a two-pronged story where the storytelling is embedded in the global activity of requesting for help from the interlocutor. The story acts as the backstory to justify the speaker's request for help. I illustrate that empathic responses from the hearer do not simply play a reactive role. The story is spirally built by empathic responses, embedded in the co-participants' intersubjective orientation to the activity of favor requesting.

The storytelling occurs at B's convenience store. At the beginning of the storytelling, the store owner B is standing in the countered space in her store, chatting with S across the counter. S, an electrician and a friend of B's son, comes by to look for B's son who happens to be out. S stays a while to chat with B. B takes the opportunity to ask S to help repair a broken electric fan in her house. This request then leads to, and becomes the overall activity frame of, B's subsequent narrating of a backstory. B's storytelling, immediately following the initial favor-request, puts S in the dual-role of having to show empathy to B's experience and displaying willingness to render the requested favor. These two activity frames, storytelling and favor-requesting, jointly shape S's empathic responses in-situ of B's first-person storytelling.

(8.1) Story #1: Convenience Store; B=store owner; S=friend and colleague of B's son

```
1→ B:   Mo:: (.) eydei huan ey lo^^u?
        2SG      now   free PRT PRT
        'Are you free now?'
2 S:    Hua^^n.
        free
        '(I'm) free.'
3 B:    He^h?
        PRT
        'What?'
4 S:    Hua^^n.
        free
        '(I'm) free.'
5 B:    huan,
        free
        'If you're free,'
6       ven eii,
        day PRT
        'some day,'
7       mo  gen nia luei ra bei liu::: (.)  de::: huangdi mo?
        2SG up  come PREP 1SG go  see          PRT    fan     CLS
        '(can you) come up and take a look at my fan (which is broken)?
8 S:    He^h.
        yes
        'All right.'
9       Na shiu rang huA::^^n!=
        DEM time NEG  free
        '(There is not) a time (I'm) not free. (I'm always free).'
10 B:   =Huang-di mo (.) mo de   nia ven eii
         fan    QUAN    2SG COP come day PRT
        'The fan- you come (one) day (to look at) (the fan)'
11      gen nia  eii luei Nabo  gen  bei  rah  rou
        up  come PRT  PREP  Nabo  up   go   home look (at)
        huang-di mo  eii no
        fan      QUAN PRT PRT
        'come up with Nabo (B's son) and go home to look at the fan
        (to be repaired).'
12      [Gu-gei gei (.) go:::::-
        in case in case thing
        'Just in case the thing…'
13 S:   [chi    eii  ra   shiang gen.
        little  PRT  1SG  then   up
        'I will go there (check up the fan for you) later'
```

Line 1 to line 4 form a pre-sequence of the subsequent favor requesting, where B ascertains S's availability. Pre-sequence is a sign of the requester's caution to preempt a negative response, that is, checking the addressee's availability gives the requester an opportunity to not initiate the request if the condition is not favorable (Bergmann, 1993; Schegloff, 1998).

B's request is done through various negative politeness strategies (e.g., referring to a specific time, *eydei* 'today,' using the utterance-final particle *ey lou* 'yet' in Line 1; a conditional clause *huan, ven eii*, 'if you are free, on one of the days…' in lines 5 to 7). S's response reflects the overall "negative" communicative style illustrated earlier (Chapter 5): S downplays his agency to the degree of hyperbole, that is, there is not a time when he is not free, i.e. he is always free (line 9). Because S is an electrician, stating that he is free categorically downplays the market demand for his service, freeing him to render the favor to B at any time. This courteous response gives us insight into the relationship between B and S: B is polite and S is deferential. Such interpersonal courteous tone contextualizes the subsequent extensive display of empathy on the part of S. Following S's gracious reply, B eagerly specifies the request and further provides politeness to soften her request, such as volunteering her son to be S's companion on the requested favor and emphasizing doing the job only out of S's convenience (lines 10 and 11).

Having secured S's willingness, B transitions to a prefatory utterance to tell the backstory that has led to the favor-requesting. In line 12, B initiated a conditional, *gu-gei, gei (.) go*::::- 'just in case the thing..'. Although the conditional is interrupted before it can be fully formulated, the structure introduces an undesired situation that B wants to avoid (Akatsuka, 1997 and 1999 on the correlation between conditionals and (un)desirability).

The story unfolds thus:

(8.1) (continued)

```
14 B:    Ang Zi-shing ho^^:: (1.0) shiu-ah de luei ra  ze^:::ng
         PRO Zi-shing PRO          once   COP PREP 1SG repair
         diu-yin-gi mo,
         radio    QUAN
        'The person from Zi-shing came one time to repair (my) radio.'
15       ra gang ge ey^.
         1SG say 3SG PRT
         'I picked on his work,'
16       ziu ge gang bei zeng  go    mo eii::::::
         ask 3SG say go repair thing QUAN PRT
         '(I) asked him, (I) said that could (you) go to repair that
         thing (fan),'
17       ge:::: padi^ng    ey^^.
         3SG    lose-temper PRT
         'He lost his temper.'
18       =Mapou gei.
          angry type
         '(He) got all angry and stuff like that.
19       ge  n  ya  nia^:::-
         3SG NEG want come
         'He doesn't want to come (to repair my fan).'
```

20 [(.) ge *bei su DU^^m shiu e^y LA^^^!*
3SG go push three time PRT PRT
'He (my son) went and asked (him) three times already (and he refused).'

21 S: [*ey ah, n nia pa^h la::::::h.*
PRT PRT NEG come PRT PRT
'Well (if the repairman) doesn't (want to) come, so be it!'

Lines 14 to 20 constitute the first telling of the story: a repairman came to repair B's radio on a previous occasion. After B criticized his work on that occasion, the repairman has been refusing to repair B's broken fan despite repeated attempts to reason with him. These lines start with a narrative orientation (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 12; see also Hymes, 1995), using several "glossing" devices: *gang ge* 'lit. say to him', and *pading* 'lose temper'. Glossing is a way to mitigate the report of trouble (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 183). The word choices provide an impression of the overall stance of the storyteller. B characterizes her own action with a neutral activity verb, the euphemistic "say" (which means "criticizing" only through context), while the repairman's action is glossed with a dynamic verb encoding volatility and lack of rational control, *pading* '(to) lose temper.' This gloss is joined by a vague expression *mapou gei* 'got angry and all that,' where *gei* 'type' categorizes "losing temper" as one of a range of emotional, volatile behaviors that the repairman displayed.

At this initial stage of the storytelling, B's affective stance is situated in a generic recount of the story. Only after B has received S's empathic response did she start to elaborate with details which in turn substantiate her original emotive stance, to be illustrated below.

S's response in line 21 occurs right at the complicating stage of B's story (Labov and Waletzky, 1967) where B is frustrated without an outlet. In line 21, S uses a conjunction marker *ey* 'if so…', which links his response to line 19, speaking in B's voice for B, *ey ah, n nia pa^h la::::::h* 'if (he doesn't want to come), so be it!.' This emotive expression uses the zero pronoun in the subject position that helps this emotive response to stay within B's displaced consciousness in the storyworld (Chafe, 1994 on displaced consciousness; Li and Zubin, 1995; Xiang, 2003 on zero pronoun to express empathy). S thus sides with B, not only sharing her emotive stance toward the event and the repairman, but also aiding B in the storytelling by evoking a resolution coupled with indignation, pride and contempt for the repairman within the storyworld.

Not coincidentally, the empathic response, at the expense of the absent third party, adds fuel to the emotional intensity of B's storytelling. The story unfolds further:

(8.1) (continued)

```
22 →B:      Ra ga^ng wheilo^! (.) .hhhaha.
            1SG say  INT
            'I said, 'Wow' (what a big ego)'
23 →S:      Ang    dei-gun       zhuang mo dli pa ding     na en
            Person make a living type   2SG M  lose-temper DEM PL
            'People who make a living (by providing service), if they
            will lose (their) temper like that'
24          =dlong rung [danggei^,
              reach use what
            'What's the use? (=it is no good for a service person to
            lose temper at their customer as it only ruins their own
            business).'
25 B:                   [pading!
                         lose-temper
            '(He) lost (his) temper!'
26           = ra gang  n  PA^^^h!
               1SG say  NEG PRT
            'I said, so be it!'
27          gansui n  aop  ziu ge::: eeh eeh,
            ADV    NEG want ask 3SG
            '(I'll) not ask him then,'
28          chi    eii-
            little PRT
            'Later- (I can ask someone else).'
29→S:       Ey n meng lengvo   hu ey^ mi^^::!=
            PRT NEG have people do PRT  Q
            'So (he thinks) there are no people who can do it!'
30→B:        =n  meng lengvo hu ey  mi danggei
              NEG have people do PRT PRT what
            'Aren't there people who can do it or what!'
31          [ziu ge:::,
            ask 3SG
            '(Who wants to) ask him.'
32S:        [yinwei  n  meng se^^  di de^:::::r,
            because NEG have money PRT PRT
            '(It's only a problem) if there is no money!'
```

Spurred on by S's empathic response and co-telling (Ochs and Capps, 2000), B vividly quotes herself reacting to the repairman in her storyworld. She utters a response cry portraying herself as taken by surprise in the storyworld, finding the repairman's attitude uncalled for (line 22). S follows this escalated telling by adding a rhetorical question (lines 23 and 24). S uses a categorizing device, *na gei* 'this kind' to evoke the repairman's profession as a type and *na en* 'stuff like that' to categorize the repairman's action as a behavioral type (Sacks, 1992). These two categorization devices moralize the situation by questioning the handyman's professionalism.

Similar to the earlier sequence where S's empathic response spurs S's storytelling, S's empathic responses in lines 23 to 24 incentivize B to further tell her version of the story. The further escalation is manifest in an overlapped turn (line 25), another response cry situated in the storyworld, followed by a direct quote of

resolution and dismissiveness (lines 26 and 27). In line 29, S continues to align with B's stance and stay within B's storyworld, using the zero pronoun for self and other reference coupled with a conditional marker and the question particle *mi* (which is an inferential marker, similar to 'so…") (Xiang, 2012a). These linguistic resources facilitate S to stay within B's storyworld constructing B's voice directly speaking to the repairman in tones of disbelief and indignation. By staying within B's frame of telling and speaking for B, S engages in "observer response" as if he were on the scene (Heritage, 2011, pp. 171–172). Research on conversational storytelling has shown that tellers often raise the granularity of their story to prepare for the punchline (Schegloff, 2000). Jointly, through collaboration in extensive indirect and direct reported speech, S helps B to complain about the repairman with an "exquisite put down" (Heritage, 2011, pp. 172–173).

B takes over the floor in line 30. She further quotes herself expressing indignation toward the repairman in the storyworld. Her voice is parallel in content and structure as the retort offered by S in line 29. S's empathic responses thus provides not only affiliative actions but also rhetorical devices that B immediately incorporates into her own voice.

In line 32, S further stays in the storyworld to ridicule the repairman as falsely assuming he has ability to agitate B without realizing that B has complete financial freedom to hire someone else. With such an expressive alignment from S, verbally, emotively, and morally, B again launches a retelling of her story, this time adding more factual details in a chronological order, illustrated below:

(8.1) (continued)

33 B: *ey venhen ba^h ge ru chong*
PRT the day before yesterday dad 3SG again on:purpose
na na gi dlianwei bei,
only only make telephone go
'Just the day before yesterday, his dad (=my son's dad, my husband) made the telephone call to (him, the repairman) again.'

34 *gang whei, mo guagei n nia dlang ra hu go mo eii er?*
say INT 2SG why NEG come for 1SG do thing CLS PRT PRT
'(He) said, "whei, why didn't you come to do that thing for me (to repair the fan)?'

35 *ge gang >he^h he^h he^h< eneey lu venhen.*
3SG say yes yes yes DEM PRT since the day before yesterday
'He said, okay, okay okay (I'll come), like that ever since the day before yesterday.'

36 *n CHI^::: ey la^:::h!*
NEG stop PRT PRT
'It's not (the day before yesterday)!'

37 *(.) DI:: arp ven mo luei ey^ la^^::::h.*
four five day CLS together PRT PRT
'It's been four to five days altogether (since my husband called him).'

38 *ey^ ge > ah n meng hu <.*
PRT 3SG ADV NEG have do
'But he still hasn't (come to) do it.'
39 *ra gang,*
1SG NEG
'I said,'
40 *n arh hu,*
NEG want do
'(if he) doesn't wanna do it,
41 *n arh ziu ge la^h.*
NEG want ask 3SG PRT
'(I don't) want to ask him.'

Narrative research has shown that storytellers add details to authenticate their (negative) first-person account about a third person's behavior (Bergmann, 1993; Heritage, 2011). B's further elaboration demonstrates an increase in quotatives including direct quotations of her husband interacting with the repairman. The storyteller's identity in the storyworld is portrayed with dynamism, reacting to new developments with emotions and actions while the direct quotes attributed to the repairman appear irresponsible (e.g. vague agreement tokens *he he he* 'okay okay okay', line 35).

In response to B's additional portraiture with pronounced affective framing of herself and the repairman, S further moralizes the situation by categorizing the repairman as an unprofessional type who would reject a service job on account of its low profit margin. This new interpretation rationalizes and supports B's reaction from a moral stance beyond particular encounters or personality clashes.

(8.1) (continued)

42 S: *go:: (.)*
yes
'Sure.'
43 *go ho de:::::r*
thing CLS COP
'That person is…'
44 *Ge ho huangdi mo n meng se-sao danggei*
3SG know fan CLS NEG have money-cash what
'He knows that (repairing) the fan doesn't bring in much money',
45 gei *ziabwo mo eh:::eh:: yum ey ge (.)*
type generally 2SG tired PRT 3SG
dei dei gang ge- (.)
like like say 3SG
'Most likely, you know, he got tired of (such work that makes little money), (so it) it looks like that he-
46 *[ge de pading na yo en-eey di no*
3SG COP lose-temper DEM DEM PL-PRT PRT PRT
'he just (pretended to) lose his temper, like that.'
47 B: *[Hum*
INT
'Hum.'

In line 42 to line 46, S imposes a moral frame onto the incident, that is, the repairman's mannerism is due to his (mis)calculating nature, which recasts the conflict as caused by the repairman's greed and dishonesty. Heritage (2011) suggests that responses in conversations range from minimal tokens to elaborate empathic responses, or even initiating a parallel topic that usurps the current speaker's telling (p. 181). Although S is not starting his own story that parallels B's, his empathic responses offer independent evaluations which transform how the event is told and understood. In this vein, empathic responses not only co-tell a story, but build on independent knowledge which alters the original moral frame of the story and potentially adds new logic and coherence to the chain of events.

Line 48 to line 73 below is a long stretch of added details retelling the story yet again, with extensive direct quotations from B in conversation with her family members, talking to herself and reasoning with the handyman, largely repeating the same information, albeit in more detail, likely to discharge her emotion as well as authenticate her story.

(8.1) (continued)

48 B *ra gang n arh ziu hmmmm:::*
1SG say NEG want ask
'I said, (let's) not ask (him) anymore.'

49 *Gang ge gua ey ge na de::: ziu ge hu ru:: ru ah :::*
Say 3SG pass PRT 3SG ADV COP ask 3SG do ADV ADV PRT
'(I) picked on him before, (he might not feel happy to work for me anymore), then (if I) ask him (to work for me again), (it is not good).'

50 *Ang dlua-lu ho chi nia na ziu ang dlua-lu ho lo hu*
person mainland CLS M come ADV ask person mainland CLS into do
'When the mainland guy comes, (I'll) ask him to do it.'

51 *N arh ziu ge guagei di no*
NEG want ask 3SG what PRT PRT
'(I will) not bother asking him or whatever.'

52 *Huangdi mo pai ey lun,*
Fan CLS break PRT hot
'The fan broke down, it's hot,'

53 *ge lu hian go lun,*
they all dislike thing hot
'All my family are complaining about the heat,'

54 *ao nia pwai pwai liu liu go mo gang::: (.) giang-sah liu*
bring come turn turn see see thing CLS say check see
'(I asked him to) come in, turn (the fan) on a bit, look at the thing, check it out, see (what the problem is).'

55 *Ge ru n dong gang danggei pai en-eey*
3SG ADV NEG know say what broke PL PRT
'(But) he didn't know what caused the problem (with the fan).'

56 *Gang ao nia zeng liu chigu,*
Say come come repair see conditionally
'(He) said, (he'd) come and try, see if (he) can fix it,'

57 *Ge gang zeng de zeng,*
3SG say repair COP repair
'He said, repair is repair,'
58 *wa go de wa lo,*
swap thing COP swap into
'Swap is swap (he'll just do whatever it is to be done).'
59 *en-eey,*
PL–PRT
'like that, '
60 *ge gang-*
3SG say
'He said-'
61 *Gi dlianwei bei ziu ge ey,*
make telephone go ask 3SG PRT
'(We) made the call to ask him (to come)'
62 *ge hen lu ven gei ge n arh nia he*
3SG agree from day type 3SG NEG M come ever
'He agreed to come since the day (we) called (him), (but) he never showed up.'
63 *gua ge n arh dui ge.*
pass 3SG NEG M ask 3SG
'(even if) I pass him (on the street), I won't ask him again.'
64 *ra gang zaigu ziu mo ah der.*
1SG say never ask 2SG PRT PRT
'I said (to myself) I will never ask you again.'
65 *mo eh… chu mo na ah hu go mi?* !
2SG only 2SG only ADV do thing PRT
'You- (so you think) only you alone can do the job?!'
66 S: *eeh-eh N nia de pa^^^h la^^h!*
NEG come COP cease PRT
'(If he doesn't) come, so be it!'
67 B: ((laughs))
68 S: *mo gang dli n meng se men di^ DE^^^^^r,*
2SG say M NEG have money ADV COP COP
'You know, only not having money is it (the real trouble)'
69 *dli meng se mmmm danggei n he^^^h:::?*
M have money what NEG okay
'If (one) has money, what can't be do? (Anything is do-able).'
70 *Gong^?*
COP
'Right?'
71 *O ho^::::*
fool CLS
'What a fool!'
72 (4.0)
73 B: *Ey dou dli mo dli bei Haikou eydei^ mi^::?*
PRT 2PL M 2SG M go Haikou now PRT
'(So) Are you, are you going to Haikou now?'
74 S: *Bei Haikou.*
go Haikou
"(I'm) going to Haikou.'
((Leave taking sequence ensues))

The story is now fully revealed, and S's empathic responses have begun to repeat themselves. In line 66, S repeats what he already said earlier in line 21, the very first time that S offered an empathic response. Not only does he repeat the original utterance, but also he expands its rational reasoning (line 68 to line 71) launching a verbal putdown about the repairman and evoking a categorical assertion (that money can solve any problem). At this stage, the repairman has been depicted as greedy and a fool whereas the storyteller has full agency afforded by her wealth. The two antagonists' identities are now fixed in the story, B and S's relationship strengthened and loyalty confirmed. Coming to this point, the storytelling has run its course. Four full seconds of silence later (line 72), B initiates a pre-closure sequence which is reciprocated by S (line 73 and line 74; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973).

This micro-analysis of conversational storytelling shows that empathic responses not only affiliate with and morally support the storyteller; they also essentially mold the story as it is being told including its granularity of details, its moral interpretation, internal logic (such as cause and effect), ultimately formulating a new version of the story as a compass to guide future actions.

8.3 Story 2: "Tears kept rolling down."

Stories do not act equally in their potential to receive empathic responses (Heritage, 2011). In the previous story, empathy is provided through the hearer's aligning with the storyteller's moral judgment, as the story involves a third party who is a stranger to the story recipient. Empathic responses may however create a dilemma for the recipient if the recipient ostensibly lacks either a similar experience, epistemic rights, or subjective resources to show empathic stances appropriate for the story (Stivers et al. 2011, p. 161).

In the following example, the interlocutors are acquaintances of the same age and in the same restaurant business. BC and NL are husband and wife, operating a noodle eatery near the entrance of Shishan market. M is a restaurant owner herself and her entire family has relocated from Shishan to the capital city Haikou for better education for their children. BC was classmate with M in primary school many years ago. The overall occasion for M's autobiographic storytelling documented here is sparked by an earlier conversation where BC's wife NL expressed her disbelief that M should ever have any hardship in life because, as NL recalls, M's father owned a great deal of land which must have secured wealth for the family for life. Unbeknownst to NL is that M's father was extremely patriarchal; favoring male offsprings and having only daughters, he gave away his entire estate to a distant male relative to carry on the family name. M's early life was filled with hardships and poverty, the most painful of which was being forced to quit school when she excelled in it. This painful memory was recounted in the following story.

(8.2) Story #2: A Childhood Trauma

1M: *Mo liu mo de dlang…dlang dlang de dlang Gimdeng*
2SG look 2SG COP with with with COP with Gimdeng
gei bei rangho shiu.
type go school time
'You know I (remember the time) when I went to school with Gimdeng,'

2 *ao ra bei dlong Rongxing ey nanda ngai.*
bring 1SG go reach Rongxing PRT tear cry
'when we reached Rongxing, I started crying.'

3BC: *ra n go hian mo, hian Gimdeng, hian Bo,*
1SG NEG COP with 2SG with Gim-deng with Bo
'Isn't that I was with you, with Gimdeng, with Bo,'

4 *dlou gi ho kao bei Rongxing shiu loh?*
1PL several CLS exam go Rongxing time PRT
'Just the few of us were admitted to Rongxing (middle school) that time?'

5M: *kao gen ey,*
exam up PRT
'(when I was) was admitted to (middle school),'

6 *diamai ao se bei der*
parents bring money go COP
'(I asked) parents for money to go (to school) (=I asked my parents for tuition to attend middle school.)'

7 *na shiu dlong,*
DEM time reach
'At that time,'

8 *mo bei ey,*
2SG go PRT
'(my parent said) if you go to school,'

9 *n rong mo leng guan dia.*
NEG use 2SG return eat meal
'(we) don't need you to come back to eat our food (=we will disown you).'

10 *n rong mo:: leng na shiu n ao se mo o!*
NEG use 2SG return DEM time NEG bring money CLS PRT
'We don't need you. When you come back next time we will not give you any money, you understand?'

11→ *Eeh eeh diamai n ao se mo mo [rang bei rangho?*
parents NEG bring money 2SG 2SG how go school
'If (your) parents didn't give you money, how could you go to school?'

12→ BC: *[ay ah.*
difficult PRT
'It's difficult.'

The story starts with a metapragmatic expression *mo liu* 'you see' (line 1), seeking the hearer's attention (Biq, 1991). The second *mo* 'you' in the same utterance refers to M's childhood self 'you,' a "reversed pronoun," using the audience-involving pronoun 'you' for self-reference to evoke the hearer's empathy (Hsiao, 2011) and to bring the hearer to M's storyworld. When M begins to recall her childhood memory, which turns out to be a traumatic story, she zooms in on a moment marked by

an extreme sense of sorrow, resignation and self-pity, with her best school friend by her side to share in the despair. The first verb *nanda nai* 'tears rolling down' keys the overall affect of this story (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989, p. 17).

M's initial telling is abrupt going directly to the resolution of the incident in the storyworld, e.g., she could no longer continue with school because her parents would disown her (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). BC then offers his memory of being in the same cohort with M as the lucky few from the same class who were admitted into middle school that year. This information offers BC's independent knowledge of a part of M's storyworld, authenticating M's telling and potentially creating a chance to topicalize a parallel telling (we note that the same piece of information is offered three times by BC throughout the telling but fails to develop further).

In lines 5 to 10, M reverts to a more distant telling, using indirect reported speech, where she asked her parents for school tuition only to receive the reprimand that her parents would disown her if she would choose to continue school. This indirect quote is escalated further with a direct reported speech of her parents. In line 11 M lifts herself out of the narrated storyworld, with an expression of resignation, using the second person *mo* again to construct a coda for the story. It is at this point that BC offers an empathic response that overlaps with M's expression of resignation. BC aligns with M's stance with an adjective and a sigh. The adjective *ay* 'difficult' is a glossing and an "affective comment" on the entire narrative (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989, p. 19).

BC's empathic response, albeit subdued, aligns with the emotive stance of M and in turn encourages more detailed telling. Right after BC's empathic response, M brings the hearer back into her storyworld where she was again that little girl and this time just had the doomed conversation with her parents. Now her childhood self was on the way back to school, knowing that her school days were over.

(8.2) (continued)

13M: *bei dlong rangho ey,*
go reach school PRT
'I went to the school,'
14 *eeh ngai nanda ce.*
cry tear drop
'I (started to) cry and tears kept dropping,'
15 *Gimdeng, ra aybo ah der. (indistinct)*
name 1SG sad ADV COP
'(I said to Gim-deng), Gim-deng, I was so sad… (indistinct).'
16 *dlou hian Gimdeng shiu mai-mai en-eey.*
1PL with Gimdeng time close PL PRT
'At that time Gim-deng and I were very close.'
17NL: *hmmmm*
18 M: *beng na bei ga-ga-ka en-eey,*
Two only go fitted well PL PRT
'Only if we two can (attend school together),'

19 *duo duo haokuan der*
very very comfortable COP
'how nice that would be.'
20 *De hip hip hip hip,*
COP hop hop hop hop
'(we would) hop, hop, hop, hop,'
21 *en-eey.*
PL PRT
'like that.'
22 *Lela n bei rangho de n bei di.*
child NEG go school COP NEG go COP
'For children, (if they've) never been to school, (they've) never been (to school) (=there is nothing to say).'
23 *bei dlanggo [nan nan hao-hao-la en-eey leng nia*
go together play play very happy PL PRT return come
'but once (you've) been to school, play (with classmates), being so happy, then (quit school) and return home (it's very sad).'
24→ BC: *[na vei dui-o pei de ra dla:::ng*
(indistinct)
DEM year elementary school time COP 1SG with
'That year, in our elementary school, it's me and…(indistinct).'
25→ NL: *mo ho ay de ey mo de nianeng di no.*
2SG know able word PRT 2SG COP unsettling COP PRT
'If you have the talent for school (but are unable to continue) that is indeed very unsettling.'

This segment is filled with affective details based on the temporal progression of routine school activities steeped in senses of finality and sadness. M's telling combines descriptions of her inner thoughts, direct reported speech with her friend (line 15), and friendship and joyful action only to be imagined (lines 18 to 21), culminating in a meta commentary on the depth of her sorrow universally shared (lines 22–23).

Perhaps to distract M from her intense reverie, BC again relates the fact about the elementary school class of which he has first-hand knowledge (line 24). BC's repeated attempts to indicate that he and M were in the same class could be viewed as "ancillary questioning" (Heritage, 2011, pp. 164–168) and "refocusing" (Maynard, 1980) that bid for a departure or a shift in direction from the current story without losing affiliation (Heritage, ibid). Such act "avoids" the emotional undertone of the unfolding story, which may be characteristic of the communicative style of the traditional male listener. In contrast, NL offers an empathic response (line 25) which fully embraces the tellability and the moral undertone of M's sorry (Ochs and Capps, 2000).

Encouraged by BC and NL's empathic responses, M continues to tell her story with more details as ensues below.

(8.2) (continued)

26M: *Leng nia de pin giu le.*
return come COP sick month odds
'After I came home that day, I fell sick for more than a month.'
27 *Eeh, lap dlong leng en leng*
sleep reach bed PL return
'I slept in bed all day.'
28 *n meng dongde hu danggei.*
NEG have mood do what
'I had no mood to do anything.'
29 *ra ah gang mo- mo- jiao mo liu mo dli…*
1SG ADV say 2SG 2SG ADV 2SG look 2SG M
'I just say this to you, so you- just let you see (that I indeed had a hard time).'

These details do not co-occur with any explicit first-person pronoun. M's "self" in the remote storyworld is understood by her audience, vividly re-enacted. The contrast between the scene at school versus the scene of the home adds authenticity and granularity to the story, obligating the recipient to display empathy. Again in line 29, M lifts herself out of the storyworld, challenging her listener to decide whether or not M's life has ever been care-free. It is at this moment that BC re-offers his first-hand knowledge regarding the story, in more specificity, as seen below.

(8.2) (continued)

30BC: *dlou dui-o pei de dlou so ho,*
1PL elementary school time COP 1PL six CLS
'Our elementary school class at that time, it's the six of us.'
31 *kao gin Rongxing dong-o pei loh.*
Admit up Rongxing middle school time PRT
'who were admitted into Rongxing middle school at that time.'
32M: *Heh.*
Yes
'Yes,'
33 *bei dlong ey de gang ao bei di,*
go reach PRT COP say bring do PRT
'(my parents) said if I were able to be admitted, (they) would bring me to go (=they would support my studies.).'
34BC: *Ra:: Gen, mo, Gimdeng de Dua hian Wen,.*
1SG Gen 2SG Gimdeng COP Dua with Wen
'There were me, Gen, you, Gimdeng, Dua, and Wen,'
35 *so ho.*
six CLS
'six people (who were admitted to middle school).'
36NL: *Ey mi mo liu gang lo ko ah de::::r.*
PRT PRT 2SG look say into bitter PRT PRT
'(Based on what you said) it looks that your life is really hard.'

BC's comments (lines 30 and 31 and lines 34 to 35) repeat the same information that he offered twice in the past without topicalizing, only this time adding a more specific detail that six of the classmates were admitted into middle school. This parallel telling may indeed be to re-focus (Heritage, 2011). BC's behavior here, to repeat the same content over and over, appears to be a way to respond empathetically without showing complete affiliation and alignment. M doesn't attend topically to BC's additional information except in line 26 where she finally signals agreement. NL's empathic comment (line 28) is mitigated by the conditional clause *ey mi* 'if it is so (as you said)…', presenting an empathic yet aloof stance.

(8.2) (continued)

37M: *Gu de gang shiu diamai dlou hu meng se hong dlou bei ni.*
But COP say time parents 1PL do have money send 1PL go PRT
'but say if my parent had money to send me to school that time,'
38 *Dlou ah rai huan ey lah,*
1PL ADV able easy PRT PRT
'I must be able to have an easy life now.'
39 *Ra ah n rai ko.*
1SG ADV NEG able hard
'I wouldn't need to have to go through (all the) hardship.'
40 *dlou hu danggei dli bei rangho hu der mi,*
1PL do what M go school do word PRT
'I can do anything if I could go to school to study.'
41 *ra ah ho ay bei,*
1SG ADV study able go
'I believe I can continue (=I believe I will do well in school).'
42BC: (indistinct)
43→ NL: *ho ay bei ey chong zai mo.*
study able go PRT also let 2SG
'If you were good at school, it would have allowed you (to do well in life).'
44M: *Ra bei rangho shiu ra de ah zui meng dong-de wojiu gai.*
1SG go school time 1SG COP ADV most have mind heart learning PRT
'At the time when I went to school, I was one of the students who spent all her heart and mind in the studies,'
45 *Ra zui yan bei rangho gai,*
1SG most like go school PRT
'I really liked going to school,'
46 *gu de gang-*
but COP say
'but, on the other hand- (I couldn't continue).'

Lifting herself out of the storyworld again, M adopts a distant perspective commenting on what could have happened if the past were different. (lines 37–41). NL responds with another hypothetical statement (line 43). What NL has engaged repeatedly is a type of "subjunctive assessment" (e.g., "that'd be…", "I bet..", "it sounds…") (Heritage, 2011, p. 179). Conditional clauses turn the forerunning story into a glossed antecedent (Akatsuka, 1985, 1997, 1999; Schiffrin, 1996). This

construction transfers responsibility for empathy on to the truthfulness of the story, a way to display mitigated empathy (Schiffrin, 1996).

(8.2) (continued)

```
47M:    Ra:: guse      duan   le   en eydei loh.
        1SG  therefore scold child PL now   PRT
        'that is why I always tell my children now.'
48      ra gang,
        1SG say
        'I say,'
49      dlou qishi dou,
        1PL support 2PL
        'We support you guys,'
50      mo  liu diamai   dui  bei dlong ne.   du  kiao,
        2SG look parents pair go reach  where all struggle
        'You see, you parents work so hard wherever they go.'
51      Weiliao dou bei rangho.
        for     2PL  go school
        'Just in order to support you in school.'
        ((More tellings of this nature leading to a new story about
        M's youngest son who didn't like school.))
```

In line 47, the temporal phrase *eydei* 'now' marks a temporal juncture (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 177). M reverts to the current time of speaking as a mother determined to provide her children with the education she didn't have.

M's distant childhood trauma, as retold, creates a subtle task for empathic listening. The hearers do not have first-hand experience nor any rights to claim insights into someone's childhood traumatic memory especially as the trauma was caused by the storyteller's own parents. In this case, the act of lending moral support is less straightforward, since to empathize with M is also to condemn her parents. The second story contrasts structurally with the previous story. Empathic responses in the second story are hesitant and vague. When an empathic response is not forthcoming, M lifts herself out of the narrative frame to state generic moral interpretations of the experience which then succeeds in soliciting empathic responses.

When empathic responses are offered, they tend to be through mitigated means such as conditionals and parallel telling. M moves frequently from inside the story, in the displaced consciousness of a child going through hardship, to the current time outside of the story, as a mother supporting her children's education with full conviction. It is these junctures connecting the concrete distant past to the generalized present that succeed in soliciting empathy from her listeners. This juncture-based timing of empathic responses suggests that to hear a story and display empathic response derives from the hearer's own independent knowledge. It is the intersubjective space between the hearer's knowledge and the teller's experience that creates the moments of empathy.

8.4 Spiral story structure

The two stories, with very different time scales and trouble sources, have remarkable structural similarities both at the interactive level and at the textual level. Structurally, both stories begin with a skeletal telling of the story evincing the storyteller's general affective orientation. Labov and Waletzky (1967) identify such initial stage of a storytelling as offering an "abstract" to orient the hearer to the story's time, place, and participants. The abstract would then be followed by utterances relaying the complications and resolutions of the story. This linearly segmented internal structure nevertheless appears to be a reflex of the genre of the interview-based narrative research method, favoring the traditional epic, monologic mode of storytelling. Conversational storytelling, naturally emerging in casual conversation, uses its initial affective orientation to test its "tellability" (Ochs and Capps, 2000), to be elaborated through the encouragement of empathic responses. Affect motivates the story's momentum to be retold and expanded in intensity and granularity. Thus, tellability is not just an inherent quality of the story itself; it is co-constructed, encouraged, reciprocated, and sometimes pushed. The hearers' initial empathic response consents to the story's tellability and moral undertone, which encourages further telling. In turn, the responses enhance and authenticate the story's tellability within the interpersonal space created by the acts of telling and listening.

Stories are highly textured internally (Goodwin, 1984, p. 227). Structurally, the two stories analyzed here do not show a linear progression; they manifest a response-driven spiral development where the same story is told and retold with different granularity, focus, and purpose. The storytelling oscillates between generalization, which appeals to a broader context where empathy relates to shared social norms and universal experience, *vis-à-vis* vivid details which solely belong to the teller authenticating the story, characterizing or caricaturizing it. In both stories, the pre-closing of the story is signaled by the hearer's repetition of an earlier empathic response that bids for closure by signaling that nothing more needs to or can be said (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 178).

8.5 Identity and quotative

Identities are not prescribed; they are achieved, negotiated, discursively constructed. People enact identities when telling stories, as desired by oneself, desired by others, required by society or a compromising solution in conflicted circumstances. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) framework of small stories shows that identity construction is two-fold: identities are constructed referentially in the

storyworld where individuals are portrayed as characters in the story in concrete time and space; identities are also created in how the storytelling is interactively engaged, in ways that the storyteller "wants to be understood." (p. 3) The two stories analyzed here reveal the storyteller's sense of self, the storyteller's own identity in the storyworld and in the act of telling. Such storytelling requests the hearer to participate in particular ways, to agree, affiliate, empathize with the storyteller beyond mere backchanneling.

To tell a personal story is to engage in self-portraiture where quotatives work for "impression management." (Goffman, 1959; see also Labov and Waletzky, 1967) Quoting is a type of metapragmatic discourse, "talk about talk" (Schiffrin, 1980, p. 200) to typify speech acts and social structures, indexing the speakers' awareness of local normative orders. The two stories analyzed here include authenticating details using quotatives which ascribe personality traits to the persons depicted in the story. Direct reported speech, through animated voices that belong to others or to a different time and space, separate the three speaker roles (e.g., animator, author, principal, Goffman, 1981), allowing the current speaker to imbue different identities and personalities onto the characters in the storyworld (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 186).

These effects are amply manifest in the two stories. In the first story, indirect quotes are used in more generalized, summative telling. Direct quotes occur in minute details where emotion is high, spurred on by empathic responses. For example, earlier in the story, B quotes herself saying *bei zeng go mo eii*, '(please) come to repair that thing,' which is courteous and mitigated. B quotes herself in various response cries, resolutions, emotional distress and ultimately speaking with regained agency and control. Especially important is that the sense of agentive control occurs after her hearer's empathic responses that re-frame the conflict. In contrast, the repairman's direct quotes are facetious, for example, the simplistic receptive token *heh heh heh* (okay, okay, okay), *zeng de zeng, wa go de wa lo* 'repair just repair, swap just swap', creating a caricature of irresponsibility and falsehood.

What is most distinct in the second storytelling is that M used the story to relive her childhood sorrow. The distant past, as enacted, has two distinct worlds, the one at home and the one at school. The two worlds involve different protagonists and actions. In the home domain, M's childhood self had no voice. Commands and ridicules were said to her by her parents, in harsh and non-negotiable terms. The little girl had no agency, had no voice, and was entirely passive (she couldn't eat, couldn't sleep). In the school domain, she had voice, she could express her emotion to her best friend as tears rolled down her cheeks. The action verbs to depict the scenes at school are varied and lively. The sense of self enriched by friendship and freedom contrasts with the self at home, repressed and silent. When the child went to school, she could talk using the first-person pronoun, and express her emotions

appealing for compassion, *Gimdeng, ra ay-bo ah der.* 'Gim-deng, I was so sad… .' The child's voice vs. the voice attributed to her parents created their respective identities in stark contrast of power and control.

In the second story, M's identity as a child was portrayed differently vis-à-vis herself as a mother now interacting with her own children. M also shows conflicted stance toward her parents. Her identity as a filial daughter is in conflict with her feeling of being wronged miserably. Some form of reconciliation occurs through her appealing to resignation to her family's poverty which excused her parents' actions, but the direct quotes she constructed for her parents in the storyworld are voices of harshness and neglect. These multiple identities, as a daughter, an independent woman, a mother, a woman with a painful past, co-exist at the moment of the storytelling without resolving their disparate perspectives, except that volition and acceptance prevail at the end of the storytelling.

8.6 Discussion and conclusions

We make sense of the world through storytelling, where concrete, lived moments are connected to selected "master narrative" of societal discourse (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 13). Language has a heart, and language gives voice to the affects and emotions with which we experienced life events. Without opportunities to verbalize the stories, the affects and emotions are ambiguous albeit affecting us deeply. With opportunities to verbalize the stories to recipients who may or may not align with the stories' emotive stance, the storyteller obtains a deeper view of the past as lived. The marketplace as a public open space with numerous chance encounters, provides rural residents such important moments of making sense of the past, understanding the present and anticipating the future.

Stories as told could typify causes and effects that reinforce stereotypes, as in the first story, and heal old wounds, as in the second story. Because of the unknown, unplanned, public nature of conversational storytelling in the marketplace, the empathic responses, forthcoming or not, play a significant role in shaping the ways that the stories unfold along with the moral undertones given to the stories. The above micro analyses demonstrate that stories are not told in a linear progression. Structurally, empathic responses are pivotal moments where the unfolding narrative revisits itself and expands in depth, granularity, and affective intensity.

The two "small" stories analyzed in this chapter show that people are intuitively skilled at signaling need for empathy in their storytelling; the story recipients hear such bid for empathy and act accordingly, or according to their own worldview. Knowledge plays an important role in the pragmatics of affect in storytelling. Epistemic stance is deeply intertwined with emotive stance. To know

is to empathize. Both Heritage (2011) and Enfield (2011) illustrate that the interlocutors, even though locked in the moment-by-moment co-telling of a story, prefer demonstrating their independent access to the situation narrated and seek opportunities for independent telling, arguably due to humans' tendency for agency (Enfield, 2011). In both stories analyzed here, the story recipients signal their independent knowledge through a range of listening devices, such as using conditional expressions to impose a generalized logic onto the story, offering independent re-assessment, providing a parallel telling, and typifying concrete, particular events and behaviors into categories.

Empathy is displayed differently in the two stories. In the first story, empathy is offered through extensive co-telling. The recipient stays within the teller's story frame, augmenting it through categorization devices. The empathic stances displayed by the hearers in the second story are much more distal, offering primarily parallel assessment and logical reasoning. Such differences in empathic responses likely correlate with the speaker and hearer's relative access and legitimate claim to epistemic primacy of the story being told. Compared to the first story used to complain about a non-present third party, the second story, revealing the speaker's heart-wrenching childhood memory, albeit full of emotions demanding empathy, contains knowledge solely of the speaker's own, making it difficult to respond with empathic utterances without sounding presumptuous.

An element of risk-taking applies to telling a story about oneself in a public space such as in the marketplace. The open space affords an assortment of audience roles such as direct addressees, indirect addressees, overhearers and, in the current digital age, even surveillance (Goffman, 1981). The storyteller's own identity is inevitably revealed in the act of telling. The reactions of the audience, especially their empathic responses, half-heartedly or energetically, formulate the moral interpretations of the stories and to some extent influence the storyteller's ongoing reconciliation of senses of the self.

Such storytelling only occurs in transitional, loitering spaces and between acquaintances in the current data. The absence of storytelling in the transactional frame in Shishan market is explainable in the context of transaction costs. In the traditional marketplace without a one-to-many elevated performance stage, using storytelling to sell goods is not a cost-efficient mechanism. The conversational storytelling analyzed in this chapter shows that interactional stories take time to build, have ambiguous moral undertones, and depend on empathic reciprocation on the part of the hearer. It is a great deal of transaction cost.

The role that storytelling plays in the marketplace is bound to change with the advent of digital technology, e-commerce and urbanization. As urbanization occurs, sellers from out of town come to Shishan market to sell unfamiliar, non-local goods. Not captured in the current recorded data, fieldwork observations in Shishan

in recent years show that the cost of storytelling can be reduced by pre-recorded stories now playing in loops on megaphones in the marketplace. Selling products through personal storytelling becomes a genre onto itself. Further, the power of storytelling for building causes and effects and eliciting empathy have significant potential for e-commerce where stories can reach millions. Indeed, as will be discussed in the final chapter, storytelling and other small talk genres are central to the new "pan-entertainment" social e-commerce model.

However, as will be discussed in the final chapter, storytelling in new e-market models are heavily pre-manufactured "epic," one-to-million types of stories. "Risky," personally meaningful stories such as the two stories analyzed in this chapter, deeply personal awaiting reconciliation, may not have a place to emerge when the traditional marketplace as a social space disappears. To what extent substituting traditional marketplace with e-commerce affects rural social life need to be carefully considered and built into future research.

CHAPTER 9

Language as a transaction cost

As market models evolve

> If you visit Sina Weibo every day, you'll think there will be revolution tomorrow; if you go to the farmer's market every morning, you'll think a revolution is not going to happen for another hundred years.
>
> (Quote from research interviews in China, personal communication, Meng, 2016)

Bakhtin (1967/2008) reveled in "the unofficial" nature of the marketplace. For Bakhtin, the marketplace "enjoyed a certain extraterritoriality in a world of official order and official ideology." The egalitarian marketplace observed in Bakhtin is echoed in the current analyses of language and social interaction in a small rural town in Southern China. The traditional local marketplace, where people aggregate temporarily for buying and selling activities, is indeed a place away from Officialdom, a place where ordinary people act on their own initiatives in accordance with their own interpretations of social orders. However, it is not the marketplace *per se* that determines its "extraterritoriality." It is the particular economic model that the marketplace executes, and the particular policies that govern the marketplace as a shared public space. The economic models that connect buyers to sellers continue to shift, along with which social interactional norms as understood and enacted by individuals in the marketplace also shift.

The previous chapters analyzed language and social interaction in Shishan market including the ways that transactions begin (Chapter 3), characteristics and variations of the transaction genre (Chapter 4), sequences of bargaining and conflict talk (Chapter 5), and how products are promoted and assessed (Chapter 6). The interactional patterns that emerge from these analyses show that the co-participants of economic activities in the rural retail marker are attuned to the paradoxical nature of language and social interaction as both incurring transaction costs and a powerful tool of information access, control and persuasion.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 focused on the peripheral and the "in-between," namely, small talk genres that are not essential components of economic activities but are emblematic of the social attraction of a traditional marketplace. By focusing on three small talk genres, greetings, gossip, and conversational storytelling, the analyses revealed that information continues to mold how small talk sequences

unfold. The flow or nonflow of information through the turn-taking mechanism influences whether a ritual greeting topicalizes into a substantive conversation. Information, elicited, shared and diffused, is subjective and moralized; the given vs. the new, the public vs. the private, the normal vs. the stigmatized are evaluated and contested in situ of the conversational give-and-take. Information also drives the ways empathic responses may appear hesitant or readily forthcoming.

These interactional patterns are inseparable from the fact that in the traditional marketplace, sellers and buyers are free agents. Each transaction's gains and costs are spontaneously judged and managed at the fleeting, micro-interactional level. Transactions between micro-agents thus double as interpersonal spaces for affective connections, aesthetic pleasures, self-knowledge and short and longer-term relationships.

These interactional norms will however take on new forms as market models evolve. This final chapter reflects on current developments of retail market models rapidly changing China and changing the ways people interact with each other. I will first provide a recap of the thesis of language incurring transaction costs drawing on the interactional patterns identified in the preceding chapters. I then provide preliminary reflections on language and social interaction in new market models in China which expands our view of the economic utility of the Janus nature of language.

9.1 Language, multimodal interaction and transaction cost

Interacting through language is a linear time-based mechanism; speech unfolds through time and verbal interaction unfolds through turn-taking. Time alone is a considerable transaction cost. Another aspect of language and verbal interaction incurring transaction costs is that interaction is fundamentally social, governed by community-specific interactional norms. Each turn-at-talk leads to a forward-moving action (Schegloff, 1979, 2007a; Stivers and Robinson, 2006). When individuals act as their own free agents, the direction and real-world consequences of verbal interactions are unpredictable although regular and normalized. These unpredictable processes incur costs to negotiate, clarify, bargain and remedy misunderstanding. Verbal processes also carry opportunity costs. Emotions arise from conflicts in interaction and can overwhelm rationalistic judgment where deals may end in a standoff.

As much as language incurs costs, it is also a powerful tool of information access, control and persuasion, especially for individuals with the gift of the "gab" (Crystal, 2016). Sellers who can codeswitch swiftly and strategically are much more advantageous in diversified marketplace. The power of language to influence others

is particularly evident in situations where the buyer and the seller's intersubjectivity is reduced. Volubility increases when the goods are of an imported nature less known to the buyer, when the buyer is a community outsider less familiar with locally sourced goods (e.g. a city patron), or when the buyer wishes to bargain (e.g., different senses of fairness and obviousness). Volubility also increases when access to product information is restricted such as when the goods are restricted for access physically and socially. In such situations, the customer is practically and socially obligated to interact verbally to learn of the goods and be persuaded of its quality and value.

Thus, even though language and verbal interaction carry costs, micro agents use language to mediate and accomplish transactions. In this process, intended or not, social needs such as identities, humor, aesthetics, ingroup solidarity and senses of face and pride can develop and be fulfilled.

9.1.1 Verbal vs. non-verbal: The balance between efficiency and social norm

Social interactions in the traditional marketplace are multimodal, sometimes primarily nonverbal. The transition from verbal to non-verbal modes, the integration of verbal and nonverbal signs, as well as verbal vs. non-verbal division of labor are neither linear nor dichotomous. The choice of modality relates to the materiality of the setting which provides social and physical cues for how to interact and how to access information. In Shishan market, the premium sections with built structures contrast with the daily peddlers' huddle formations. In service shops, the residential layout of the location affords multiple frames of activities to overlap where the main service activity can be relegated as a non-verbal byplay. Allowing verbal and non-verbal modes to overlap and co-occur is a cost saving strategy in economic activities. For example, peddlers can both spiel to undecided buyers and handle transactions with decided buyers. In service shops, the overlain activity frames enable the simultaneity of the needed service and the socializing needs of co-present members of the community.

The interactional patterns in Shishan market contrast with markets in middle and upper class European mainstream language contexts. In the latter, transactional interactions appear to proceed in orderly, genrized sequences. Greeting, thanking and leave-taking are present, executed verbally, bracketing the core transactional moves. Lindenfeld's (1990) study of a Parisian urban marketplace depicts skillful, strategic sellers and buyers who reciprocate each other's bids for attention readily and graciously (p. 91). Nevertheless, verbal interactions are not uniformly practiced across communities nor within the same community. Vélez's (1987) comparative study of service encounters in San Juan in Southern America vs. in service shops in North American universities showed that English-speaking clerks in American

university service shops use more verbal sequences and more ritualistic phatic moves than San Juan servers. University service encounters use formalized syntactic structure indicative of an overall orientation to an externally established service encounter genre and convivial register. On the other hand, San Juan servers tend to be less reliant on verbal means of interacting and less adherent to genrized syntax and sequences. Overall, Vélez finds that the degree of genrized verbalization as transactional moves is one of the main differences of service encounters across the two communities.

Similar variations exist in the current Shishan data. Vendors with outstanding verbal skills, such as swift codeswitching, persuasive techniques, abilities to retort, ridicule, push and entice, are able to create pressure, resolve conflicts, and accomplish goals. Verbal skills are not as important when goods are manually handled by the buyers in the "huddle" layout; open access tends to occur with locally sourced goods where information is shared, accessible and apparent. However, in the increasingly globalized and diversified marketplace, sellers who have limited linguistic repertoire to code switch, less aware of genrized phatic sequences for the sole purpose of verbal conviviality, less accustomed to using verbal means to demonstrate and construct the quality of their goods, will not participate equally in increasingly standardized markets for diversified clientele.

9.1.2 (Cross-) cultural factors

Transaction costs based on economic terms alone do not account for the data. As illustrated throughout the preceding chapters, "language has a heart." When language occurs, either as monologic spiels or interactive exchanges, language reveals the co-participants' epistemic and attitudinal stances, construct notions of obviousness, fairness, prestige, value, trust, integrity, as well as address emergent face needs and renew relationships, all of which bear culturally specific characteristics. For example, instead of a tug-of-war bargain, bargaining attempts in Shishan are emergent discontents voiced by the buyer based on contextual information and appeased by the seller with acts of persuasion, freebies and other practices of "fairness."

In addition, languages are not value-free; languages have relational social capitals (Bourdieu, 1991). In a multilingual marketplace, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hainanese, local vernacular such as Shishan, maintain their own relative social values in relation to the buyer and the seller and the goods being sold. For a seller who only speaks the Shishan vernacular, her language is not valued by an urban buyer who may insist on speaking Mandarin or Hainanese. However, a seller who easily code-switches can reach a wider audience and construct the quality of her goods based on the cultural preferences of the recipient or the valued style of the time.

Not speaking the local vernacular with local prestige induces costs for both sides of the transaction and may result in perception of rudeness and widen social distance.

As part of the current research on marketplace interactions, I interviewed young university students living in Haikou, focusing on their experiences with the marketplace locally and in other parts of China. One of the interviewees described an experience where language is a social barrier.

(9.1) Excerpt from an interview with a university student in Haikou

…之前有去过上海，我觉得可能是初到一个地方有点不适应，然后觉得在那边买东西没有感受到就是像在老家买东西一样，那种温情，就感觉那边的人态度好冷淡，就那种，你问他一个东西，比如说这个酸奶，你问她价格多少，然后她给你来一句就是那种上海话，可能我也听不懂，然后我就会再重复再问一遍，阿姨这个多少钱，她就加大声量告诉你多少钱，就会让你觉得有一种距离感，我问你价格，你怎么就是，我就是没听到，你怎么会就是这样态度对我呢？然后可能有时候他们会用方言说话，一般就用上海话，你也听不懂，然后就感觉跟他们交流起来就会有困难，而且你说普通话的时候，你会觉得人家像如果是上海本地人的话，她看你，其他人都是说这上海用上海话在交流，你一个就是一个人突然冒出一句普通话，她会上下打量你一下感觉，然后我就觉得自己好像是一个不能融入那个群体。

…I have been to Shanghai before, I think it may be because I was a bit uncomfortable when I first arrived in a place, and I felt that buying things over there was not like buying things in my hometown. I felt the attitude of people there were so cold. You asked them something, for example about a yogurt, you asked them about the price, and they'd answer you in the Shanghai dialect that I couldn't understand. I'd repeat my question again, "How much is this, auntie?" She would increase the volume and tell you how much. It would make you feel a sense of distance. I just asked you about the price, why were you like that? I just didn't understand you, how could you have an attitude toward me? They sometimes spoke in dialects, in Shanghai dialect, and you didn't understand it, and then you'd feel it was difficult to communicate with them. When you spoke Mandarin, you'd feel like, they were from Shanghai and they looked at you in a strange way. Everyone else is speaking Shanghai dialect. Here you are, suddenly speaking Mandarin. She'd look at you up and down, and I'd feel like I couldn't fit in that group. (Translated by author)

In this instance, it is not the language barrier *per se* that prevents a successful transaction, as gestures or manually exchanging money for goods would suffice. However, the language barrier as perceived creates and evokes self- and other- perceptions with existing social stigma, and business can go elsewhere.

9.1.3 Outgroup and ingroup dynamics

The current findings align with previous research on the marketplace context in southern China where transactions are treated as goal-oriented activities between outgroup members necessitating no involvement strategies. This goal-orientation is reflected in the absence of explicit phatic verbal sequence of politeness. In Orr's study, which is in the urban Southern Chinese Cantonese -speaking setting, the outgroup norm is observed throughout the transactions across buyers and sellers except in occasions where the successful completion of a transaction can lead to courteous leave-taking. Orr argues that a successful transaction changes the customer from an outgroup to an ingroup. However, based on Shishan data, I illustrated that the ingroup-outgroup norm in the Chinese society interplays with the transaction cost mechanism of the marketplace. Shishan vendors use extensive involvement strategies at the beginning of a purchase but promptly resolve the focal attention when the purchase contract is declared and mutually accepted. Shishan buyers and sellers also do not engage with each other focally in the same way. While sellers use extensive involvement strategies at the beginning of a transaction, buyers restrain from entering into a one-on-one face huddle with the seller and focus on the merchandise instead. Both types of asymmetries are explainable in the transaction cost framework. That is, the seller's tapering interactional pattern reflects using language to provide information and broker a deal until such use is no longer necessary. The buyer's restraining from entering a one-on-one focal interaction with the seller appears to be a self-preserving strategy, to be free from claims of incurring transaction costs for the seller. These interactional patterns do not suggest that the co-participants lack orientation to being social to each other. As analyzed, when we move away from the logocentric position that essentializes speech for transaction, and away from Eurocentric norms that essentialize sequential, orderly interactions for transaction, it becomes clear that service readiness and alert recognition of the customer are amply embodied nonverbally.

The above discussion provides a recap of the central thesis that language and verbal interaction incur transaction costs, but they are also powerful tools of information control and persuasion. Given this thesis, the following prediction follows: If language, particularly social interaction, incurs costs, an economy's motivation to reduce transaction costs will include reducing language and verbal interaction. However, on the other hand, the role of language in constructing information, creating desire, rendering persuasion and creating social bonding is uniquely powerful. Both predictions, as will be discussed in the following sections, are borne out in the extreme successes of new e-commerce models in China. On the one hand, AI-based automation of retail transactions reduce language, especially spontaneous social interaction. On the other hand, "pan-entertainment" new retail genres use

language, especially social interaction, to manufacture desires, grow consumer fanbase, and use social bonding to sell for profit.

9.2 Language and social interaction in new models of e-commerce

E-commerce is rapidly growing in China in both urban and rural areas with the advent of wireless internet and mobile device technology. In this section, I reflect on two new e-commerce models that have polarizing impact on the role that language plays in transactional activities. On the one hand, delivery e-platform giants such as Meituan-Dianping (美团点评) lead in automation of the retail process from automated warehouses to automated retail exchanges and delivery. Meituan-Dianping is also encroaching local retail market with AI operated mobile shops (Lung, October 20, 2020). In contrast to automation through AI where language is pre-manufactured, another e-commerce model, known as 网络直播间 ("Web Live Broadcasts"), hosts lengthy, verbose "talk show" like sales broadcasts where merchandise from various retailers are aggregated and sold live by celebrity "anchors." (Lung, December 31, 2020) Various social talk genres, gossip, storytelling, affective small talk, traditionally emergent and peripheral in the marketplace, are centerstage in the new genre of live sales broadcasts.

The role of language in the two new e-commerce models contrasts drastically. However, what both models have in common is that the individuals directly interacting to complete buying and selling activities are not micro-agents with freedom to measure gains and costs; they are employees of companies where resources and decision making are highly institutionalized and centralized.

9.2.1 Vertical integration of markets: Officialdom and synthetic personalization

Writing on the "costs of using the price mechanism" in the 1930s and in the subsequent decades, Coase sheds a critical light on the laissez-faire economic theory, pointing out that if production and consumption should adjust automatically based on the price mechanism alone, the economic market should be an organism without needing to organize into firms. But in reality, firms exist, and 80 years after Coase' original writing, firms are the dominant economic entities driving world economy (Coase, 1937, 1960, 1988). As Cheung (1998) points out, transaction costs are not necessarily visible which include invisible costs such as costs of legal enforcement and costs to secure the right to use market resources. Visible and especially invisible transaction costs lead to corporatization, automation and standardization which reduce transaction costs and increase profit margin.

Analyses based on Shishan market have shown that information and persuasion are two central reasons that people interact during transactional activities including information about goods, intention, preferred ways of dealing, and the need to persuade and bargain. Another factor, outside of the cost-gain equation, are needs of the aesthetic, personal and interpersonal nature as well as social needs such as face, honor, solidary, empathy, emotional release, and moral obligation.

Coase (1960) suggested that individuals behave differently in a firm than as free agents. In the firm, individuals' relations to transactional activities are employees executing tasks determined by professional entrepreneurs who make centralized, vertical decisions. In the firm's vertical integration of resources, employees are single cells in a large structure, not conscious of the wider role they play (p. 39). In a firm, efficiency, which reduces transaction costs, is the paramount incentive for actions (Williamson on Institutional Economics Theory). Efficiency is high when information is shared, accessible and transparent, leaving no room for inquiries, negotiation, or bargain. Consequently, verbal interaction will either be reduced to a minimum or become a mandated service register. A case in point is Lou (2017) which compared social interactions in the street markets to supermarkets in Hong Kong illustrating that social interactions at the supermarkets occur minimally, only in the form of institutionally standardized greeting, thanking and other gratuitous verbal sequences.

Vertical integration of the marketplace is one of the most significant economic changes in China in the past two decades, initially in the form of brick-and-mortar supermarkets and currently in various forms of e-commerce. The supermarket model in China started in the late 1990s, with the investment of foreign capitals propelled by the central government's urbanization initiatives (Veeck, Yu and Burns, 2008). China's central government has overseen nation-wide renovations of street markets under the initiative of "农贸市场超市化" (*Nóngmào Shìchǎng Chāoshì-huà,* 'Transforming Farmer's Markets into Supermarkets') based on the model of leasing out the construction and management of supermarkets to large corporations.

With corporate-owned supermarkets, vendor-customer relationship is replaced with employee-customer relationship, where the employee's behaviors are answerable to, and bound by the regulations of the non-physical presence of the corporation. Customer serving conviviality is "synthesized," to appear individualistically attentive (Fairclough, 2001; Talbot, 1995; Talbot et al. 2003). Corporations gain by mandating a convivial attitude from their customer-facing employees with little extra cost beyond the existing contractual terms of employment. Ordinary social courtesy thus is institutionalized into codes of conduct to enforce desirable behaviors for all employees in all circumstances. In these circumstances, sociality is no longer a micro agent's in-situ reaction to context based on behavioral norms

in the individual's habitus (Bourdieu, 1991/2018). Cameron (2000) analyzes employee training practices in an auto-insurance call center where socially courteous behaviors are codified into the call center workers' performance guidelines. For examples, workers are expected to "use language which conveys understanding of and empathy for the caller's individual situation, e.g., 'are you OK?' 'was anyone hurt?' 'that must have been distressing for you." (p. 335) Cameron argues that such institutionalization of social behaviors in the globalized service economy creates gendered biases in clerk-customer relationships. The practices, as revealed in Cameron's study, institutionalize a caring persona out of stranger relationships ignoring the heavy imbalance in the existing employee-client-institution power structure. Consequently, rather than emergent, unpredictable, "unofficial", sociality is made "official," scripted externally and mandated into sequential slots.

The institutionalized, synthetic personalization can gradually exert influence on personal interactional norms outside the corporate world. One of my interview participants, who has worked in a customer-service call center in Southern China, recalls how she was trained to conduct service calls and the effect of such training on her style of communication:

(9.2) Training at call center

我们第一句话就是说, 先生, 如果听到那边是个男生，我们不能说，喂，或者说我们接到电话，我们第一声有- 如果说了一个喂，绝对是要扣分，所以导致我现在还有一种习惯，就是一般接到别人的电话，我一般都是你好或者是您好。第一句话就是您好，然后后面如果是个节日，你一定要跟别人说节日快乐，然后挂机的时候就是如果对方有没有挂机的意愿，这边的话就是要给别人相应的祝福与感谢您的来电什么的那种。然后, 所以, 现在的话, 导致我接电话感觉就是有一点，在结束的时候，一定就是要等别人先挂机之后，然后我才我在挂机。

The very first sentence we should say is, "Sir,…", if we hear a male voice. We can't say, "hey…", or if we get a call, if we say "hello", we definitely will get points deducted. Therefore, even now I still have a habit that when I receive calls, I'd usually say "how are you" or "How do you do". The first sentence is "How do you do?" Then, if it is a holiday, you must tell the other party "happy holidays," and then you'd monitor whether or not the other party has intention to hang up. You'd give the other party the corresponding blessings and thanking them for their calls, etc. So, now, it makes me feel a bit… whenever answering calls, I must wait for the other party to hang up first, and then I will hang up.

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has dramatically expedited Chinese retail market to move online and created even heavier vertical control of resources. E-commerce now not only competes with traditional retail markets but also with traditional supermarkets. Meituan-Dianping (美团点评), Pinduoduo

(拼多多), and JD.com (京东) alone comprise 83.5% of China's retail market in 2020 (Cramer-Flood, 2020). On these e-commerce platforms, product information is narrowly categorized, multimodal, and browsable at the customer's fingertips. Consequently, the need for information and persuasion through social interaction is significantly reduced. When social interactions do occur, digitally mediated interactions are to a large extent pre-manufactured and under corporate surveillance. To illustrate, the following is extracted from text chat messages between a customer and a sales representative of a retail shop on T-mall, one of China's leading e-commerce platforms.

(9.3) Excerpt of chat messages with T-mall shop sales representatives; C=customer; SR=sales representative.

Chat messages	Translation
1. C: 你好。	1. C: Hello!
2. SR: 您好。	2. SR: Hello (with honorific 'you')
3. 在的亲。	3. I'm here dear.
((turns omitted where the customer asks about a chair brand))	*((turns omitted where the customer asks about buying a chair brand))*
4. C:你是天猫店还是淘宝店?	4. C: Are you a T-mall shop or a Taobao shop?
5. SR:是天猫专卖店的亲.	5. SR: I'm a T-mall authorized shop dear.
6. ((uploaded an image of the online store's homepage))	6. ((uploaded an image of the online store's homepage))
7. C:触摸屏是大屏幕的吗?	7. C: Is the touchscreen large size?
8. S:触摸板是大屏幕的亲。	8. SR: The touchstone is large size dear.
9. 嗯嗯是。	9. Yes yes it is.
10. ((uploaded an image of the said touchscreen))	10. ((uploaded an image of the said touchscreen))
((turns omitted where the customer asks about promotions))	*((turns omitted where the customer asks about promotions))*
11. C: 双*11*的活动呢?	11. C: What about the promotions for Double 11?
12. SR: 亲亲,目前不清楚双*11*的活动哦。	12. SR: Dear dear, Double 11 promotions are uncertain yet currently.

It is worth noting that the live chat interface has a built-in customer service feedback mechanism at the bottom of the app on the mobile device screen. With the press of a button, the customer can initiate a service evaluation at any moment. The chat interaction follows the traditional turn-taking sequence where the customer initiates a turn and the sales representative provides an answer (line 1 to line 3 is

a greeting sequence; line 4 to line 6 and line 7 to line 10 are two question-answer sequences with preferred responses, line 11 to line 12 is a question-answer sequence with dispreferred response; cf. Schegloff, 2007a). The sales representative's service conviviality is evident in the promptness, relevance and politeness of the responses. Interestingly, the sales representative provides redundancy of information verbally and multimodally. Each second pair part provides some additional, repeated information in a different formality or modality. For example, in response to the initial greeting, the sales representative opts for the formal, honorific 您 (*nín*) (line 2), followed by a declaration of focal attention and readiness to serve (line 3). The endearing address term 亲 *(qīn)* 'dear' occurs in lines 3, 5, 8 at the turn-final position, followed by verbal formulaic acknowledgement tokens (line 10) and image clarifications (line 6 and line 11). When the answer is dispreferred (line 12), the address term "dear" occurs twice in "dear dear" at the turn-initial position, to soften the dispreferred response as if pleading for understanding. The extreme conviviality appears formulaic and institutionally mandated and semi- pre-manufactured.

As seen in the preceding chapters, in the traditional marketplace such as Shishan market, when vendors and customers act as their own agents in transactions, as soon as interactions occur, epistemic and affective orientations are revealed (Ochs and Scheffelin, 1987). Through interaction, people disseminate information and knowledge as well as gain views of each other's value systems; in the process, we understand, explore, concede, reject, constantly shifting and adjusting our own views in the intersubjective space. However, when the relationship changes from micro-agents to employee-customer, verbal interactional norms are no longer independent. Officialdom, in Bakhtin's sense, is looming in the background.

9.2.2 Manufacturing desire: The power of language in social commerce

The role of social interaction in economic activities has a double bind. It appears personal but raises suspicion of an ulterior motive. One of my interview participants comments on her discomfort with social commerce marketers using language of intimacy with her.

(9.2) on the customer-serving register common in the social commerce e-platform Taobao and WeChat Business.
…淘宝专用语，就是亲, 在吗? 亲, 你好, 亲。…好多女生就说话的时候会用那种"亲爱的", 就跟你套近乎，比如说那种做微商的，她就会跟你掏心，我也是, 亲爱的。一来就一句亲爱的，我就觉得好尴尬。特别是那种做微商卖化妆品的，她第一次跟你打招呼，亲爱的，在吗？我是什么谁，然后就那种，然后我会觉得我有点尴尬，我跟你从来都没有就是说有过任何交流，你我叫亲爱的，我觉得有点…

> (There is a) Taobao special term, "dear, are you there?" "dear," "Hi, dear." Many girls will use this kind of "dear" to be close to you, for example, the kind of people who do WeChat Business, she will talk to you, I am also like, 'dear.' "Dear" is the first word people say, I feel really awkward about it. Especially those who sell cosmetics on WeChat Business, "Are you there, dear?" and then they tell you who they are, like that. I feel a bit awkward about it. I've never communicated with you before, and you call me "dear", I feel it's a bit…
>
> (Translated by author)

However, this awkward feeling likely fades as synthetic personalization becomes the interactional norm with the advent of e-commerce (see Example 9.3). Not only address terms, traditionally reserved for intimacy, are used by strangers with normality in e-commerce, other personalizing talk genres, typically for in-between moments and private settings, such as joking, gossip and storytelling, become the main frame of economic activities in the new genre of "pan-entertainment" e-commerce live broadcasts (泛娱乐网购直播).

Live broadcasts are an innovative model of e-commerce launched in 2016 by Taobao *(*淘宝*)* with sensational success. The rags-to-riches story of Taobao's most well-known celebrity salesperson, Li Jiaqi *(*李佳奇*)* epitomizes the power of personalizing language in e-commerce. Originally a young cosmetics salesperson at a brick-and-mortar departmental store, Li was hired by the sales talents incubator company "Beauty One" (美 *One*) in 2016 to be a member of the first cohort of live anchors for Taobao's live sales broadcasts (网购直播主播). In his debut public lecture on his success as a Taobao sales talent, Li Jiaqi pinpoints language ("语言探索" or "language exploration") to be the first and foremost factor of his success (Read01.com, November 22, 2019). The expression "manufacturing" befits the ways that sales occur in this new genre. "What we do is to bring good yearning to customers, longing for a better life in the future," as Li revealed. According to Li's 2019 public lecture, each of his live broadcasts is a teamwork of carefully choregraphed virtual party with innovative formats, celebrity guests, interacting with the home viewers via live commenting and chats. A new merchandise is brought out every five minutes while, for the home viewers, the live shows appear to be a continuous entertaining party.

Chapter 8 illustrates that conversational storytelling resorts to shared knowledge to elicit empathic responses from the recipient. In the heavily personalized sales talk show genre, storytelling is the main mode of selling goods. In Li Jiaqi's own words, "我觉得商品需要一个会讲故事的人，把每支口红讲成一个个有血有肉的不同性格的女生." ("I think the merchandise needs a good storyteller, to tell the stories of each tube of lipstick as real girls with different personalities.") (Read01.com, November 22, 2019). In his own words too, Li's live broadcasts combine

"理性和感性" ("sense and sensibility"). The following transcript is excerpted from one of Li's live sales broadcasts, demonstrating this commercial blend of "sense and sensibility", which, arguably, manufactures desire through affect and authority.

(9.3) Excerpt from Li Jiaqi's Taobao Live Sales Broadcast.

来，下一个！娇兰御廷兰花黑兰面霜来啰！娇兰御廷兰花黑兰面霜来啰！今天这个应该是我直播间最:::贵::: 的一个单品，一万:::一千::: 两百:::八十:::块钱的娇兰:::黑:::兰:::面:::霜，全球限:::量:::一:::千:::两百瓶:::。我跟你们说，贵妇姐姐们! 贵妇姐姐们! 买:::它::: :::！这个，我跟你们说，超:::级:::贵妇，超级贵妇产品，来了，我真的, 我家里每次用完的空瓶我都舍不得丢。美们，首次直播，也是乘风破浪姐姐们的最爱面霜，这个，我给你们说，珍稀:::黑:::兰:::花:::粹，每年只有三周的花期可以采集到，黑兰精华在这里面，它:::来:::了:::，*oh::: my:::gersh.* 美们，娇兰，兰花精华，为了把兰花精华提取出来，所以法国娇兰把整个云南的一个天子山保护下来，重造雨林，让它的菌群可以适合兰花的生存，所以这瓶面霜，我跟你们说，黑兰科技，雨林传奇，法国娇兰研究了一十五年，研究出来的，黑:::兰:::面:::霜:::。啊::: :::，我跟你们说，流口水了，我都。

Lái, xià yīgè! Jiāolán Yùtíng Lánhuā Hēilán Miànshuāng lái luō! Jiāolán Yùtíng Lánhuā Hēilán Miànshuāng lái luō! Jīntiān zhège yīnggāi shì wǒ zhíbòjiān zuì::: guì::: de yīgè dānpǐn, yī wàn::: yīqiān::: liǎngbǎi::: bāshí::: kuài qián de Jiāolán::: Hēi::: Lán::: Miàn::: shuāng, quánqiú xiàn::: liàng::: yī::: qiān::: liǎngbǎi píng:::. Wǒ gēn nǐmen shuō, guìfù jiějiě-men! Guìfù jiějiě-men! Mǎi::: tā::: :::! Zhège, wǒ gēn nǐmen shuō, chāo::: jí::: guìfù, chāojí guìfù chǎnpǐn, lái-le, wǒ zhēn de, wǒ jiālǐ měi cì yòngwán-de kōngpíng wǒ dōu shěbudé diū. Měi-men, shǒucì zhíbò, yěshì Chéngfēngpòlàng jiějiě-men -de zuì ài miànshuāng, zhège, wǒ gěi nǐmen shuō, zhēnxī::: Hēi::: Lán::: Huā::: Cuì, měinián zhǐyǒu sān zhōu- de huāqí kěyǐ cǎijí-dào, hēi lán jīnghuá zài zhè lǐmiàn, tā::: lái:::le:::, oh::: My:::Gersh. Měi-men, Jiāolán, lánhuā jīnghuá, wèi-le bǎ lánhuā jīnghuá tíqǔ chūlái, suǒyǐ Fǎguó Jiāolán bǎ zhěnggè Yúnnán -de yīgè Tiānzǐshān bǎohù xiàlái, chóngzào yǔlín, ràng tā -de jùnqún kěyǐ shìhé lánhuā -de shēngcún, suǒyǐ zhè -píng miànshuāng, wǒ gēn nǐmen shuō, hēi lán kējì, yǔlín chuánqí, Fǎguó Jiāolán yánjiūle yīshíwǔ nián, yánjiū chūlái -de, Hēi::: Lán::: Miàn::: Shuāng:::. A::: :::, wǒ gēn nǐmen shuō, liú kǒushuǐ-le, wǒ dōu.

'Let's go, the next product! Guerlain Court Orchid Flower Black Orchid Face Cream is here! Guerlain Court Orchid Flower Black Orchid Face Cream is here! This should be the mo:::st expe::::nsive item on my live broadcast today, ele::::ven thou::::sand:::: two hu:::ndred ei::::ghty yuan. Gue:::rlai:::n Bla:::ck O:::rchid Fa:::ce Crea:::m, li::::mited quantity of o:::nly o:::ne thousand and two::: hundred bo:::ttles globally. Let me tell you, high class lady sisters! High class lady sister! Bu::y i:::::t! Let me tell you, this is su:::per high class ladylike, a

> super high class lady product. It's here! Truthfully, I don't even throw away the bottles that I've finished at home. My beauties, this is the first time this product is on a live broadcast, the most beloved face cream of the actresses in "Sisters Who Make Waves." This is, let me tell you, ra:::re bla:::ck o:::rchid bloo:::m e:::ssence. There is only a window of three weeks to harvest the flowers. Black orchid essence is in it. I:::t i:::s he:::re. Oh::: my::: gersh. My beauties, Guerlain, orchid essence, in order to extract the orchid essence, Guerlain from France preserved the entire Tianzi mountain in Yunnan, rebuilding the rain forest to provide the right kind of flora for the growth of the orchid. So this bottle of cream, let me tell you, black orchid technology, rainforest legend, Guerlain of France researched for 15 years, this is the result of the research, Bla…ck O::::rchid Fa:::ce Crea:::m. Ahhh. Let me tell you, drooling already, I am.'

Despite the new format of e-platform live broadcasts, the above excerpt is filled with familiar traits of spiel such as repetition, elongation, orchestration of rhythm, beats and tempo as well as the use of metaphor, humor, response cries, direct addressee pronoun, endearment markers, dropping names of celebrity and evoking the image of scientific research (see Chapter 6 and Lindenfeld, 1990). As illustrated in Chapter 6, in the traditional marketplace, product assessment is done through the customer's direct multimodal, multisensory processes of product handling as well as locally rich and meaningful categorization devices. With e-commerce, where the customers/home viewers do not have means for in-person multimodal and multisensorial assessment, assessment is done through verbal means to demonstrate, assure, persuade and even create desire. In addition, compared to spiels about local products in Shishan market where the shoppers are treated as knowledgeable only needing expert guidance on how to touch, look and taste, on e-platforms, the goods are from various aggregated retailers including as far as foreign countries; exoticism, prestige, rarity and scientific research, mingled with celebrity endorsement tend to be the core contents of spiels.

E-commerce anchors with "gift of the gab" are not unlike the direct television home shopping channels popular in the US in the 1990s. Popular shopping channels such as QVC also used live hosts who gained celebrity status and interacted with the audience through storytelling, personalized small talk, affective bonding and interactive phone-in. Permeating the televised pan-entertainment direct marketing channels is a "feel-good" ideology (Lauerbach, 2004). On Taobao live sales broadcasts, the "feel-good" ideology is also one of the attractions of the genre. Address terms in these live shows are creations to signal inclusiveness and solidarity in playful ways such as 所有女生 (*suǒyǒu nǚshēng* 'all girls'), 美们 (*měi-men*, 'beauties'), 贵妇姐姐们 (*guìfù jiějiě-men*'high class lady sisters"). Consumers stay in the live room for a long time, interact with the host via chats and screen

commenting while the anchor provides expert-sounding advice, personal stories, empathy and connect the home viewers with celebrity guests who tell "feel-good" celebrity-induced stories and gossip. On these live shows, consumerism is branded with language of empowerment. For example, Li Jiaqi's famous clichés: "买它*!*" ("Buy it!"), "他不配*!*" ("He is not worth it!"), "银行卡的余额可以变, 男朋友可以变, *999*不能变!" ("Bank account balances can change, boyfriends can change, (Dior Lipstick) No. 999 can't change!") frame the customers' purchasing power as making independent life choices that transcend gender inequality and promise an immediately empowered future.

It appears paradoxical that if large corporate firms such as Taobao should aim to reduce transaction costs to increase profit margin, language, particularly social interaction, should be reduced in the same way as the automation model pursued by Meituan-Dianping. But the phenomenal success of Taobao's pan-entertainment sales broadcasts exactly shows the paradoxical Janus nature of language. As much as language incurs costs, language, particularly social interaction, is a powerful tool to manufacture information and render persuasion. The costs for the individual anchors are too high if the fanbase is small. Li Jiaqi purportedly was on the brink of giving up until a breakthrough moment came after a six-hours live cast video went viral (Read01.com). When the anchors have reached a solid fanbase, the gains are enormous. Li Jiaqi is now a self-made millionaire with celebrity status and a shareholder of Beauty One, the company that initially hired him as an anchor talent. For companies such as Taobao that manufactured the sensations around celebrity sales anchors and "shopping festivals," the costs of hiring celebrity talents are considerably high compared to hiring traditional salespersons. However, such costs reach certain ceiling while the audience and fanbase continue to grow. The transactional process is also one click, mediated by the technology of e-platform and digital currency, two means of operations that are extremely cost-effective, owned by the same mother company. Alibaba-controlled Taobao has tens of thousands of live shows a day (Li, June 1, 2016). Li Jiaqi's live shows allegedly emptied the entire inventory of any product featured on his live broadcast less than a minute of showing. This heavy blend of synthetic personalization and consumerism creates new ways of knowing, new ways of being, new ways of connecting with each other, new ways of yearning for a better life. Research is yet to fathom the impact of these new market models on ordinary social life.

9.3 Conclusion

As Bourdieu argues, "it is the habitus that make the habitat." (1991/2018, p. 106) In the small rural town of Shishan, rational behaviors of costs and gain combine with emergent sociality to create the marketplace traditionally experienced: diverse, efficient, self-serving, not without laughter and amusement, namely, a sense of "extraterritoriality away from Officialdom." (Bakhtin, 1967/2008) In new marketplace models, with the advent of digital technology and e-commerce, ordinary sellers become employees of large corporations, part of a machinery whose goal is to be efficient, reduce costs and increase the company's profit margin. Officialdom subjugates individual sellers into the role of employees where costs and gains are no longer micro-decisions. In these new socioeconomic contexts, the roles of language for mediating transactional processes differ. The roles of language for opening interpersonal spaces and fulfilling social needs change as well. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, the traditional equalizing effect of the marketplace, that Bakhtin celebrated, will no longer be obtainable.

Market activities can't be planned fully without localized implementation (McMillan, 2002). Shishan town in many ways embodies the enigma of the rapid socioeconomic restructuring and urbanization of rural China, situated in the greater contexts of globalizing and the hidden, invisible hand of capitals. Broad-scale socioeconomic transformations, novel technology, non-human corporate motivations to increate profit margin create new habitus to which we are quick to adapt but have little time to pause and reflect what we are adapting to. Through documenting the rich oral speech genres and dynamic interactional norms in the traditional local marketplace, the current study presents a snapshot of a local multilingual ecosystem at the crossroads of large-scale socioeconomic developments and urbanization.

In the marketplace, language and social interaction induce transsaction costs as well as operate as a powerful tool of information control, access, and persuasion. Moreover, when we engage in social interactions, be it joking, mocking and negotiating "fairness," or storytelling, gossip, small talk, language has a heart that goes beyond economic gains and costs. The current data show that interacting toward no apparent functional ends has a legitimate and enjoyed position in the traditional market. Interactional spaces create opportunities for empathy, information sharing, emotive releases and various other kinds of non-functional human needs. With the advent of e-commerce and the centralization and standardization of local marketplaces, the egalitarian social space where social actors from all walks of life have a legitimate loitering presence is increasingly smaller and restricted.

Language is a cultural artifact, a key constituent of a community's "culture and social psychology." (Malinowski, 1923, p. 305) Language and interaction are

rooted in the daily realities of mundane practices and cannot be explained without reference to the broader contexts of macro and micro socioeconomic conditions that humans live in and live through. Speech patterns, from ethnographic views, help us to see "adaptive variations" (Hymes, 1974) across communities. These variations hold clues to how language and human society co-evolve and co-adapt. By expanding our knowledge of how language and social encounters play a role in the marketplace, and how such roles change as marketplaces change, we can gain a deeper understanding of how we live our lives in unprecedented, unforeseeable social changes. In doing so, we and the society as a whole move forward with bounded rationality.

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APPENDIX A

The transcription conventions

A. Adaptions from Gail Jefferson (2004)
   1. Overlapping utterances [
                                [
   2. Contiguous utterances =
   3. Intervals within and between utterances (.) (2.0). Untimed pause indicated by a dash –
   4. Characteristics of speech delivery (elongating, falling intonation, rising intonation, increased volume, stress, and contour)
      a. Increasing volume indicated by CAPITAL LETTERS
      b. Elongating indicated by colu:::mn
      c. Contour indicated by ca^rrot
      d. Speaker's stress indicated by underlining
   5. The conversational background indicated by double parenthesis (( ))
   6. Transcriptionist doubt indicated in (parentheses)
   7. Laughter tokens indicated by @@@@

B. Data presented in Chapter 3, focusing on the interplay of gaze, body and language, are transcribed according to the transcription conventions in Charles Goodwin (1984).
   1. "X" represents gaze
   2. "_____" represents a gaze's duration
   3. "…." represents gaze's preparation
   4. "„" represents gaze's retraction

C. Data of spiels in Chapter 6 focus on the interplay of verbal and non-verbal signs. The two-column layout of the transcription has been adopted for this purpose from Zhu et al. (2017).

APPENDIX B

Abbreviations

1SG	first person singular
1PL	first person plural
2SG	second person singular
2PL	second person plural
3SG	third person singular
3PL	third person plural
ADV	adverbial
CLS	classifier
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
DUR	durative marker
GEN	genitive marker
INT	interjection
LOC	location
M	modal verb
NEG	negation
PL	plural marker
PRT	particle
RES	resultative
Q	question marker

Index

Xuehua Xiang examines multimodal interaction in the marketplace in a multilingual town at the juncture of urbanization in Southern China. Using a collection of data that span nearly 20 years from ethnographic fieldwork, *Language, Multimodal Interaction and Transaction: Studies of a Southern Chinese marketplace* analyzes multimodal talk-in-interaction in the traditional marketplace as both an economic mechanism and a localized social space. Focusing on how buyers and sellers interact to complete transactions as marketplace shifts from sedimentations of road-side peddling to centralized built space and further to corporate e-commerce, Xiang takes into account the Janus nature of language as both incurring transaction costs and a powerful tool of information and control. By analyzing the socializing functions of language in the marketplace outside of and beyond economic dealings, the study additionally documents and depicts the roles of affect and morality in marketplace encounters. The study offers an overarching framework for future research on the mediating role of language and multimodal interaction in economic activities as well as on the interplay of information, knowledge, affect and morality in social encounters.

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